

## CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORLD EVANGELIZATION

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How does the new humanity being created by the risen Christ break in with meaning upon the contemporary world? This issue confronts the "community of Christ" on every front as we seek to live under the direction of our Lord. Education is not an auxiliary to the life and mission of the Christian community in this age; it is rather an essential part of the Church in that mission. World evangelism means the crossing of linguistic and cultural boundaries, and such involvement calls for education. With the cross-cultural interchange, the philosophical framework of our time, the impact of secularism, Marxism, Islam, and Buddhism, it may well be that Christian education now becomes a frontal aspect of the mission of the Church.

Christian faith is most authentically expressed by the lives of people transformed by the Holy Spirit into a covenant community in Christ. Proper articulation is important, but not apart from the evidence of the new humanity Jesus is creating in the fellowship of faith. For this new age it is new people that are important in authenticating the evangelizing Word. Christian education will promote both the quality of the new community Jesus purposes to create and a clear expression of the New Testament kerygma of Christ the Lord.

### *The relation of Christian education and evangelism*

By education is meant, of course, the transmission of cultural, social, and spiritual values from one generation to another, with stimulus of analysis and interpretation. Christian education is education which happens from the stance of a Christian world view, from the mind and heart of one who answers to the Lordship of the risen Christ, and who as a disciple lives and thinks under the direction of the Spirit of Christ. Such a person in education will be true to the Heilsgeschichte, to the saving acts of God in history, to God's revelation of himself ultimately in Christ, and to the heritage of the spiritual and ethical dimensions which we know as the Christian faith.

Christian education is the communication of a perspective and spirit by one who teaches; it is a stimulus which creates within his students an interest in understanding the Christian world view and the claims of the risen Christ. Christian education takes seriously the mission to which Christ calls us, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." With this calling we live with a unique responsibility to the three billion people today who do not know Christ. The Christian educator in many countries of the world may serve in state-operated schools or in university settings. He may serve in special training programs designed by the Church for discipling of people in commitment to Jesus Christ, providing

specific training for the representation of Christian faith in Bible institutes, seminaries, etc. Or, for others, Christian education will happen in the context of that unique type of school in North America known as the "private" Christian college. But wherever it takes place, Christian education is not so much the structure of the institution nor of the curriculum in itself as it is the perspective which is guiding that education, and the purpose which it is fulfilling in introducing students to an adequate understanding of the work of God in history and the claims of the risen Christ in a contemporary world. Nothing stimulates world evangelism more than the conviction of God's will for men, as it is known in Jesus Christ.

Education and evangelism are by their very nature directly related. Both are essential aspects of the life and existence of the Church. Emil Brunner is quoted as having said, "The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning." The Bible says, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Faith is response to evidence: Christianity with its historicism rather than mysticism needs to be understood to be adequately experienced. Education, if it is Christian, shows the relationship of the perspective of faith in Jesus Christ to all of the disciplines studied; sciences; arts; humanities, etc., because the total world stands in relationship to the Creator and to the purpose of that creation. "All truth is God's truth," and when truth is properly understood it will be seen in consistency with the One who is the personification of Truth itself, Jesus Christ our Lord. Of him, Paul writes, "The truth is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:21), and, "All things are by Him and through Him and unto Him, and in Him all things cohere" (Col. 1:16-17). When this is understood in the context of the normal education experience rather than only in special courses of indoctrination in the Christian creed, the student discovers the relevance and universality of the Christian faith. Christian education, like evangelism, is making faith in Christ an option for thinking men. In fact, education may appear to be a more tolerant aspect of Christian mission than evangelism, as the latter is usually conceived.

This does not mean, however, that Christian education can be primarily theoretical and less concerned about evangelism. Professor Jan M. Lochmann has said regarding his book, *The Church in a Marxist Society*, "Tolerance is to be differentiated from indifference, hence the ideological struggle." Education is called to engage in the dialectical approach by its very nature. Reinhold Niebuhr has interpreted dialectic as meaning that there is always an "ideological taint" in our interchange. The recognition of this is Christian realism. The tolerant man is aware of this taint, but his tolerance means that he takes his fellowman seriously! Tolerance will seek to interact with others in the struggle for truth.

Christian education must prepare people for honest interaction with persons of differing ideologies. Tolerance recognizes that truth is something for which you stand; and that it can only be corrupted when persons seek to settle an issue by force. Christian disciples will seek for interaction in the world, which interchange itself attests freedom and calls all men to pursue the quest for truth. We must recognize especially in the interaction between East and West that ideology is the function of man, man is not the function of ideology. In this connection Professor Lochmann expresses a word of caution, "It is better to speak of the

ideology of a Christian, than of a Christian ideology, as though all Christians must agree." This is especially relevant for missions as we think of cross-cultural dimensions.

If our faith is an authentic, New Testament faith, it will be concerned for its articulation. We are not authentic if we only enjoy a "private" spiritual piety, if we only pursue our career in education for personal advantage, but we are authentic when we relate deed and word in expressing the character and articulating the meaning of our faith. We do not express faith in a "solid" form, rather we express the action of faith; rooted in the sovereign promise of God in his faithfulness as he continues to act in history.

### *The responsibility of Christian education in global perspective*

Living in the last half of the twentieth century, in a day in which the world has become as interrelated as one neighborhood, it is imperative that we think of education for the whole world. Christian education serves with full awareness that Jesus Christ introduced the kingdom of God and in doing so announced a kingdom that is *global*. This kingdom is among us, but does not come by observation, it is made up of people whose lives are transformed by the Spirit of God, who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. It is a global, or universal, Kingdom, for God's purpose is to bring to all men the knowledge of Christ. It is the new humanity in Jesus Christ, a new people of God in whose lives the *Imago Dei* is being restored. The church is a new community, a covenant fellowship. As such, we reach out hands to persons unlike ourselves, affirming that greater than our differences is our oneness in the fellowship and purpose of Jesus Christ. To be a part of this kingdom means to be a disciple of the risen Lord. In education we are disciples, and we seek to develop around the globe a chain of disciples who will be disciplers of others.

This new humanity in Jesus Christ is to be a model which speaks to society. There is no Christian culture as such, and no Christian nation as such; the field is the world. Jesus taught that the kingdom is as a field in which good seed had been sown, but in which, also, the enemy has sown tares. The Christians, or the disciples, Jesus said, are the good seed. The tares are the children of the age who are not servants of Christ. The field is the world and in the world the two grow side by side until the judgment. As disciples of Christ, as the new humanity, we are in the world but not of the world. But in the world we are an exhibit of a new people of God, and this exhibit serves to make faith an option of those who do not know the life of Christ.

But we must beware of absolutizing the nature of the act of faith in our interpretations. God is the Personal Being who became clear in Jesus Christ, therefore we do not use the Incarnation or the Cross as something with which to "crush" others. With our Trinitarian understanding of God, the ultimate expression of mutual love, it is incumbent upon us as Christians to extend love to all men as a means of communication. Christian education is thus directly related to the evangelistic mission of the church, for the dissemination of Christian insight is being true to the dialectic of truth, and makes possible believing faith on the part of the inquiring mind.

Christian education has about it the possibility of becoming the cutting edge of the church for "this one world." As a Christian I am a man in Christ, and in the humanity of Christ I am a man in context with other men in society as a Christian. I can thus relate in the freedom and character of the humanity of Christ. Now, from the global nature of the Christian community, from the primary nature and meaning of the kingdom of Christ and of my membership in that kingdom, I must share in the development of a worldwide fellowship of the redeemed. This calls for a clear sense of evangelical mission. As Christians, we, more than anyone else, need to develop world understanding, respect, and appreciation for the variety and values of other cultures. The love of Christ will enable us to accept and esteem one another in our various cultures as children of God, the values of those cultural practices standing or falling in relationship to the Lordship of Christ and not in relationship to the judgments of one culture upon another. The charge that missions are a form of imperialism can be answered by the trans-cultural nature of the kingdom of Christ. The global Christian community needs to rediscover the New Testament meaning of fellowship. In the Acts of the Apostles, when the three thousand people converted to Jesus Christ from a variety of cultural orientations, they committed themselves to the covenant of the redeemed in a fellowship which transcended every other commitment (Acts 2:42). Education for such a fellowship will deal with the total life in relationship, not simply with the mind and its intellectual criteria.

### *The relevance of Christian education for the Third World*

Christian education has as its goal the development of informed disciples who in turn will disciple others. This perspective calls for an authentic awareness of compassion, the ability to identify with the needy, and the willingness to suffer in service. The meaning of Jesus' own calling breaks in upon us, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19). To understand compassion is as valid in the educational enterprise as any other aspect of the studies of sociology and psychology. To experience this we must understand authentically the culture of our neighbors lest we misinterpret and fail to read the true character of human need. The need is not primarily in cultural differences, and we must avoid seeking to impose our culture upon another or to transform that culture into something that reflects our own.

In the Third World, today the frontal area for the growth of the church and the spread of the kingdom of Christ, it is imperative that those of us from the Western world respect what God is doing among our brothers. Last year in Africa alone, some eight million people were baptized. In the Far East in countries like Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand, India, and Pakistan, thousands of persons have been baptized into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. The education of these new disciples must be with the understanding of Christian faith in terms of their own culture and their own history.

In most of our educational programs history, for example, is taught from the perspective of "colonial" history. This one illustration alone

points up the challenge for Christian educators to be fair to our brethren and honest with history in educational transmission. In the review of African history, the Western world teaches from the perspective of colonial history. While attention should be given to David Livingstone and to H.M. Stanley, we should consider hundreds of dedicated Africans who worked with Livingstone, giving their lives in Christ to his work and cause. Are they not also martyrs in building the kingdom of Christ in Africa? Do they not belong in the annals of history even with far greater prominence than Stanley?

Or how do we educate for understanding by Africans whose question has not been, "Is there a God?", but rather, "How can one know and walk with this God?" How does one bridge from an African pattern which often is quite Old Testament, to a New Testament pattern where the God who revealed himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and who revealed himself to the African fathers is now fully known in Jesus Christ? Who better than the African in education can show his brethren the knowledge of God in Christ which supersedes the sometimes valid but preliminary insights of the past?

Education is the transmission of the great heritage of history in which man stands, but there is selectivity in that transmission. What we select is determined by our perspective. Christian education will select the best in humanness, for Jesus Christ demonstrated in his person the greatest expression of humanness that the world has ever seen. Even in his resurrection, as Carl F.H. Henry has put it, He expresses "the character of humanity God approves in the eternal order. He is the moral image to which all the people of God will ultimately be conformed." In the Incarnation it became clear that humanness and sinfulness are not synonymous, otherwise Jesus Christ as the Son of God could not have become man. Thus in his Incarnation we have the greatest affirmation of humanness the universe has ever seen. This is also the evidence that Christian truth deals with the whole person. This provides perspective for the church in evangelism. We, like Jesus, must relate to men where they are.

In many nations of the Third World, when independence came and the peoples were freed from the colonial powers there were some major changes. Two of these strike us now as quite significant. First, banished was the old colonial propaganda that permitted a people to be a people for themselves with their own self-image. Second, the Christians were now seen to be helping with social problems, the building of schools, construction of water dams, the building of hospitals, etc. This is Christian concern for the total need of man. A third change which followed, but was not immediately seen, became effective in the next years, for as the older missionaries retired, the leadership in the church became national. Such leadership meant that now the people who were preaching Christ were people who were among their own people, they were people who had to live what they preached.

These three basic changes have followed independence in country after country of the Third World. There is now a new thrust of people reaching others for Christ in their own cultural or ethnic group. These new communities of disciples are reaching their neighbors and calling

them to be disciples. The role of the common man is elevated and as he lives the Christian life and studies the Bible his society is affected, and principles of love, righteousness, and equality come to the fore.

A further dimension that has already dawned is the preparation and sending of missionaries from the Third World to the rest of the world. This appears to be the current program of the Holy Spirit in missions. The rise of missionary societies in Third World countries is God's answer to the charge that evangelism is the Western world spreading its religion. While it is true, as Donald McGavran has so effectively pointed out, that the evangelizing power of the church is most effective in its own cultural or ethnic group, there is a dimension of power in the confirmation of witnesses to Christ who come from various cultures. The witness from the Third World may be the very confrontation the secular world needs to call it to look seriously at Christ. An example in this regard outside the Christian faith is the impact of the Indian guru in the United States. This is the age of the international man, and missions must use this international interest to communicate the Gospel. What better way for persons from the Third World with a New Testament faith who are sent to the West in missions than for them to serve in centers of education and reach secularized youth?

### *The role of Christian education in "This One World"*

Dr. Lesslie Newbigin has written effectively about "a Faith for This One World." With similar perspective I am emphasizing education in faith and in missions for this *One World*. Since the Church of Christ is global, and the kingdom of Christ transcends nationalism, it would follow that what belongs to the church in one setting belongs to the total Church in the total world. In countries where the Church has resources in persons and in things, we have a direct responsibility to share, as did the church in Acts, with the church in other countries that have so little.

Our greatest resource will continue to be people, disciples. There will be a continuing place for specialists who can serve as agents of reconciliation through relief work, through agricultural work, and through educational work in a variety of countries. But such must recognize that they are their brother's brother, and they must work under his direction, as partners in the kingdom of Christ. The Western man must give up his ambition to administer programs. He must be willing to work in the Spirit of Christ with the towel and basin, washing his brother's feet. His ministry in another culture must have an altogether different image than that of being an administrator of others. This means that education for this One World must teach us to understand, to respect, and to esteem our brethren in their culture — to benefit from their faith and experience.

Another factor in education for this One World is prophetic discernment as to where God is working. It is his work, therefore we must ask, "What is God doing in his time? What is the cutting edge of the church?" It is easy on the one hand to say that God is working most evidently in the Third World context today, that this is the frontal area of growth in the church. We must be cautioned, however, that we do not abandon the more difficult area of evangelism — the Western secularized world with

its philosophies of either secularism or Marxism. Significantly, several analyses of Church growth in the last several years point up that the Christian Church has grown during the last decade in every country except Europe. Regardless of whether this can be demonstrated other than numerically, the Western world is not seeing the impact for conversion to the Christian faith as has been recently a characteristic of the Third World.

This is a challenge especially for Christian education. It is basically the intellectual or philosophical aspects of life which appear to have undercut the impact of the Christian faith in the Western world. The issue of atheism is at the forefront again in the challenges confronting theology, whether in Marxism or in secularism. This is the issue to which Joseph Hromadka addresses himself in *Evangelium fur Atheister*. Western man has taken the Christian values from the Christian Gospel and by claiming to give these respect in his philosophy of life has insulated himself against the claims of the risen Christ as Lord. Secularism has become the new religion for Western man. With this stance, he claims to have found in ethics the essential values of the Christian faith and sees faith as primarily self-actualization. Secular man has sought to free himself from what he calls the "myths" of the resurrection of Christ, the reconciliation of man with God and the regenerating transformation of the Holy Spirit. This atheism must be met with the "Good News" of the Gospel, that God can be known in Jesus Christ.

Secular man can be confronted with the awareness that the secular cannot claim wholeness for itself. The Christian educator must interpret the dimension of the Spirit, as known and understood in Jesus Christ, as the only dimension which offers man meaning and the fulfillment of his own essential personhood. The understanding of reconciliation has a central place in Christian education, both in the experience of faith by which man is reconciled to God and in the related aspect of reconciliation to God being the ground for reconciliation between men.

This also has about it an eschatological dimension, for education must take seriously man's relation to the future. Concern for the future is no longer thought of as "pie in the sky" for tomorrow. Christian awareness, that relation with Jesus Christ as Lord, which has in it our anticipation of his return and ultimate purpose, has also an understanding of meaning for the future in the way we relate to his created world and expedite its care for the sake of posterity. The ecological concerns of our time, the increase of the human population, the need for food production and sharing on a worldwide scale, the care and stewardship of the natural energies and resources, all serve to focus our attention on the importance of our brother. These are also basic dimensions of Christian mission. Education for this One World must give priority to the needs of our fellowman, recognizing his place in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

### *The renewal of missions in Christian education*

Christian education must grapple with the newest dimensions in missions. The word "missionary" is not a bad word. We must, however, remove the expatriate image from the word "missionary." We can then reinstate the term missionary as an important concept, even as a better

term than "fraternal worker." The missionary must no longer be thought of as the foreigner but as the national, as the Christian worker who fulfills the calling of Christ in his life by being a person with a redemptive mission among his fellows. We need a renewed emphasis on the "vocational missionary" as a person who gives his life to this cause of evangelism, to sharing the Christian message in every way possible.

There is a unique value in Christian mission when the preaching-leadership comes from people who live their Gospel at home among their own people. Those who are expatriates, serving, teaching, or preaching in a culture other than their own, need to discover how to accept what Bernard Joinet calls being "a stranger in my Father's house." To serve with this perspective if I am a missionary, he says, "I must 1) accept myself as a stranger, 2) accept to serve the others as they want to be served and not as I would like to serve them, 3) accept to receive and become interdependent in the same way Christ struck up a dialogue with the Samaritan woman by asking her, 'Give me a drink.' Only then can I give."

The missionary must respect the fact that the dynamic for the new period of missions is not in his articulation but in the community of believers. In this new community, worshiping and discipling one another, loving and learning from one another in Christ, a new people of God breaks in upon society. The message is one of reconciliation to God in Christ, a reconciliation expressed in the agapaic relation of the community of disciples. As Marshall McLuhan has said, "The medium is the message," so our method of evangelism, of education must be an extension of the fellowship aspect of the new people of God. This fellowship can include the expatriate as a "brother" in the local "anywhere congregation" of disciples.

For Christian education to fulfill its mission of discipling people, it will need to accept the challenges before us. First, we need some of the greatest minds of the Christian Church involved in the mission of evangelism. Second, we need a responsible scholarship with respect to the intellectual or philosophical framework of our own time, the development of understanding which enables us to interact with the thought patterns of the age without surrendering to their structure in a compromise of Christian faith. Third, we need the humility which does not have to have the right answer on every occasion but can stand alongside to learn from others while sharing the love and joy of Jesus Christ. Fourth, we need to maximize the value of the human personality, that our first calling is to love as Christ loved and thereby enhance the fellowship of the new people of God which the risen Christ is creating. Fifth, we need an obedience to the Holy Spirit which will permit him to express compassion through us.

Education should not surrender the calling to confront people with the knowledge of Jesus Christ, but should confront persons in a manner that will make faith an option through intellectual awareness. But neither should education yield to the temptation to assert itself as more credible than direct evangelistic preaching. To do so, would be to intimidate persons who with less intellectual sophistication still may communicate most effectively by love and human understanding. Christian education must

prepare whole persons to minister in the Spirit of Christ. At best, education must always confess that it is a tool, seeking to understand and represent the Christ who is far greater than its own understanding.

We acknowledge with joy that we are able to experience the love of Christ which passes intellectualizing! The experience of the Lordship of Christ goes beyond the articulation of the mind — this is our strength, and our corrective.

## CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORLD EVANGELIZATION

*Secretary: J. Houston*

This was a small group, indicative of the low profile that higher education has in education. And yet it was clearly seen that some of the greatest minds of the Christian Church today are needed in the tasks of evangelism. For we need a responsible scholarship that equals the intellectual and philosophical framework of our time. This was the theme of the first paper presented by Dr. Myron S. Augsburg, "Education and Evangelism for This One World." "Education," he argued, "is not an auxiliary to the life and mission of the church community in this age; it is rather an essential for the church in that mission." For education and evangelism are by their very nature related. Education, if it is Christian, will show the relationship of the perspective of faith in Jesus Christ to all the disciplines of the campus. It will show that all the world stands in relationship to the Creator and to the purpose of that Creation (Col. 1:16-17).

This is desired in secular education, so Christian education must prepare people for heart interaction with people of differing ideologies, living in this *one* world. But we must realize too that ideology is the function of man, and that man is not the function of ideology. Faith, however, cannot be authoritative if we enjoy only a "private" faith, pursuing our careers for personal advantage. We need to articulate its relevance in all aspects of our lives.

Considerable emphasis was made on the relevance of Christian education for the Third World as the frontal area of church growth. In addition to its emphasis by Dr. Augsburg's paper, Dr. Okgill Kim made this her theme in "Christian Education and the Evangelization of the Third World." She saw "that the first and foremost job for Christians in the Third World is to avoid those desperate searches for identity and to solve problems of survival."

Curricula must center, therefore, around the cultural identity of the people or nation concerned, eliminating the colonial biases that the Western educators have imparted. Students need to see the true picture of their cultural makeup. They need also to see their relationship to the world community in ways deeper than the jealousies and arrogance of the "have-nots" and the "haves."

After her paper much of the discussion centered on the need to have more interchange of personnel between the West and the Third World, so that educators on sabbatical leave, as part of their integral teaching experience, could volunteer to serve in Third World educational needs.

Dr. David L. McKenna stressed in his paper, "Christian Higher Education and World Evangelization: A Strategy for the Future," the need to economize resources by avoiding duplication and waste. Reference was made to the need to promote a worldwide talent bank of Christian scholars that could be developed by a computerized directory. This already exists in the United States resource coordination in the Christian College Consortium. The open university system pioneered in Britain might also be a pattern Christian educators could imitate.