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Education Department of Seventh-day Adventists

**TRAINING ASIAN THEOLOGIANS TO TEACH FOR FAITH**

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Prepared for the  
31<sup>st</sup> International Seminar on the Integration of Faith and Learning  
Friedensau Adventist University  
July 2003

## TRAINING ASIAN THEOLOGIANS TO TEACH FOR FAITH

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To the Theological Seminary of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies come the teachers and leaders of the church in the Asia-Pacific, and increasingly, even of Africa, for advanced training. These pastors and teachers are more often recognized for their preaching and teaching skills, which is why they are sent to the seminary for upgrading. They are sent to improve their education so that they can be better pastors, evangelists, administrators, and teachers.

I teach several of the classes where we try to improve the theological skills of students. I teach Theological Research Methods and Writing which is required for all Masters in Ministry, in Religion, and Doctor of Ministry. The goal for the course is to sharpen the thinking and writing skills as applied to theological research. Let me briefly describe, even as the risk of oversimplification, the shift most of our Asian students has to make in this thinking.

To be scholars, we teach our student to explore or understand a problem or situation analytically and systematically. This is a struggle because generally Asian thinking is characterized by indirection. The approach is to turn in circles around the subject and describe the subject from a variety of tangential ways. The subject is never looked at directly. Things are developed in terms of what they are not, rather than in terms of what they are.<sup>1</sup>

To be scholars, we teach them to formulate an answer or a point of view or position that is clearly stated. The view should not be from mere opinion but derived from justified judgment, meaning, the method in arriving at conclusions is reasonable. Again this is a struggle because generally, thought and action are shaped more by immediacy rather than deliberation or reflection, where most learning is by observation and imitation. Asian thinking is intuitive, psychological reasoning rather than logical and

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<sup>1</sup>Lieberman, Devorah, "Ethnocognitivism, Problem Solving, and Hemisphericity," in *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., ed. by Larry Samovar and Richard Porter (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1994), 178-193.

linear.<sup>1</sup>

We teach the pastors and teachers that to be scholars, they are to present their findings clearly. According to Western academic standards, clarity of thought is characterized by unity, coherence and precise language. Again this is a struggle for many of our students because they come from cultures where the flow of ideas in communication is not in a straight line but in circles, characterized not by brevity but graphic and emotive description. Our students struggle to communicate in an academic way. It is indeed a struggle to think and write in an abstract way because most think and speak in the concrete, symbolic level. To be precise and direct in thought and language is almost renouncing one's culture because in many Asian cultures, precision is a sign of rudeness and low education. The wise in Asia are those who can grasp things through hints, allusions, and intimations. Imagination, not precise definition is a sign of wisdom.

As a teacher I struggle too. I have asked several students to repeat the course because I know unless they develop these basic thinking and writing skills, they will have difficulty in writing the papers required in classes, much more write their thesis, projects, and dissertations.

So after much struggles, our seminary students graduate and go home robed in their scholar's gown, sporting additional stripes on their sleeves, a more colorful academic regalia. Most of them go back to assume or resume teaching roles in the colleges and universities in Asia and Africa. Others serve as pastors, directors and administrators in the local fields. We feel proud because we have successfully trained our students.

But many times the feedback from the field when our graduates return home makes us question whether indeed we have been successful in their education. The feedback of course is stated in symbolic language. Yes, they return as better teachers because they know more but many college students say their professor's teaching is deep, too deep from which to draw lessons, high standard but high, too high to apply in real life. The church members' feedback is that the pastors returned with a lot of information but their sermons are not inspirational anymore. Sermons are very erudite but do not touch the heart and change lives. As the leaders of the sending fields put it, our students were sent to the seminary because they were on fire, but returned with very little fire. It seems we have been very successful in putting out many fires. We have been successful to some extent in training our student to the become theologians in various fields but it seems we have not been very successful in training them to minister to the needs of the people and the churches. We may have broadened and deepened their mind and therefore they can

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<sup>1</sup>Peter S. C. Chang, "Steak, Potatoes, Peas and Chopsuey—Linear and Non-Linear Thinking," in *Missions and Theological Education in World Perspective*, ed. by Harvie M. Conn and Samuel F Rowen, (Farmington, MI: Associates of Urbanus, 1984), 113-123.

speak about academic issues and currents but it seems they cannot more effectively and powerfully speak about life and faith on the level of the people. In many ways I feel responsible because not only do I teach the research classes but also another required class, which trains them to be teachers.

This gap is a problem for the church in Asia and Africa because we cannot afford the luxury of having two separate classes of workers: thinkers and pastors/preachers/teachers. The church needs leaders who can integrate scholarship to the ministry of preaching and teaching. In many ways, the faculty of the AIIAS Theological Seminary has addressed many of the challenges mentioned, specially the practical application of courses and degree programs. Yet the challenge of being more culturally sensitive remains. The greater challenges are the continuing implications of notions of what it means to be “professional,” usually understood as being trained in the Western academic way. Related to this is another big challenge: to reinvision the self-image and self-identity of seminary professors and the graduates we train. The present notion is that to be a scholar is to be academic in the Western way, a notion which as pointed out, often makes theological education irrelevant to the situation and needs of Asia.

This essay is a reflection on the dominant teaching method used in theological education and how perspectives about faith and the teaching method of Jesus can be integrated into such method. Accordingly, the aspects of theological education going on in AIIAS that shape the thought and practice of our graduates are first of all described. What follows next is a reflection on the nature of faith and on the teaching methods of Jesus. The essay ends with some practical suggestions or training approaches that will better prepare religion teachers for Asia to teach in ways more consistent with the biblical-theological understanding of faith and how Jesus taught.

### **Academic Theological Education and Its Implications to How Our Graduates Teach**

There are several directions or means in their graduate education that form or shape the students into the teaching methods they tend to use after their seminary training. These are, (1) their training to critical academic thinking and, (2) the fragmentation of theological disciplines. I will only discuss these directions briefly because the main purpose of this section is to show the connection of how they are trained to how they will teach.

#### **The Formation of an Academic Mind**

We train or improve in our students in the development of scholarly thinking. The norms for scholarly thinking used in our seminary in Asia are the notions of knowledge

and methods of inquiry that evolved in the western civilizations. So in order to be considered as respectable theologians, we train our students to think in the conceptual mode and in the abstract level. Specifically, they are to think critically, clearly, and correctly, following the rules of argumentation, and presenting ideas systematically. The findings of their inquiry have to be presented through literal and precise language, the structure of presentation based on "logic." As already hinted above, scholarly thinking, as it has been shaped in the development of knowledge in Western civilizations is quite different from the ways and modes of knowing and thinking (structure of thought) in most Asian cultures. It is indeed a big shift in terms of thinking and writing for our students. However, I see benefits in such a training from the Asian cultural perspective.

Emphasizing the cognitive process of forming reasoned and reflective judgments about what to believe and what to do has many benefits for the Asian situation. Basically the emphasis on rational inquiry balances the weaknesses of Asian ways of thinking. Processing information, examining experience, studying examples, and observation of what is happening is present in our cultural traditions. However, reflective and deliberative thinking is not highly valued in Asian cultures. The ideals and the highest value in Asian cultures are social harmony, and avoidance of conflict and disagreement. The mode of thinking promotes respect for tradition and belief on what the authorities say. One generally does not challenge authorities and put one's private view above tradition.<sup>1</sup>

Seen in the light of the Asian cognitive inclinations, the emphasis on critical thinking serves as an appropriate counter balance. Students are challenged to properly interpret the situation, to go beyond what is apparent or the immediate, to analyze and evaluate the situation and what is being said, to move beyond intuition and draw evidenced conclusions. In other words, to think and reflect so that one's way of understanding and actions are based on solid foundations. We need these directions badly, as seen by the ill-effects of popular religious movements in Asia. But in the present theological education in Asia, we have very little intentional attempt for balance but often a one-sided emphasis on academic method persists. For with the benefits of theological education patterned after the universities of the West also come ill-effects.

The perspectives I present here about the continuing ill-effects of Western theological education, specially the overemphasis of the cognitive dimension in academic theology, are not originally from me but voices from other theologians, even coming from the West itself. Even in the late 1980s, mainstream Protestant theologians have already called for changes in theological education. David Kelsey described the debate

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<sup>1</sup>Soraj Hongladarom, "Asian Philosophy and Critical Thinking: Divergence or Convergence," available from <http://pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~hsoraj/web/APPEND.html>; Internet; accessed 6 August 2001.

between the “Athens” or “Berlin” approaches to theological education and that of the “Jerusalem” approach.<sup>1</sup> Another voice calling for a revision of theological education is Edward Farley. For Farley, theological education has become too academic, focusing more on abstract concerns rather than the practical setting of the student and the church. Theological education should not only develop the mind but the person’s spirit and character. Crucial to theological education, for Farley is the development of the disposition for ministry.<sup>2</sup>

In this essay however, I will use the analysis of Ellen T. Charry because she writes more from the perspective of method.<sup>3</sup> For Charry, the academic focus of Protestant theological education developed because of the very nature of the Protestant cause. In early Protestantism, Luther and Calvin tried to recover the theological method of the ancient church and rejected scholasticism.<sup>4</sup> For these two reformers, the purpose of theology is to help people “know God, love, and enjoy God, that they might live a noble, righteous, and godly life by dwelling in God on earth and beyond.”<sup>5</sup> The purpose of knowing the wisdom or sapience of God was to partake of it and to be transformed by it.

But part of the Protestant cause was to assert its authority against Rome. The task of Protestant theology was, as the struggle evolved, to show how that authority was based on the Bible. The Bible needed to be interpreted and its teachings made clear. Protestant theologians turned to the developing theories of knowledge on how to show the authority of their teachings. Roman Catholics would claim authority on the basis of apostolic succession and historical continuity with Christian tradition. Protestants on the other hand, claimed authority on the basis of truth, truth based on the Bible, derived through the scientific rational method. Although Charry did not discuss it, the critical interpretation of the Bible espoused by the renaissance humanists was already adapted as the basic

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<sup>1</sup>David H. Kelsey, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: The Theological Education Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993). See also idem, *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological about A Theological School* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1992).

<sup>2</sup>See Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), and *The Fragility of Knowledge: Theological Education in the Church and the University* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

<sup>3</sup>Ellen T. Charry, “To What End Knowledge: The Academic Captivity of the Church,” in *Theology in the Service of the Church*, ed. Wallace Alston, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 73-87.

<sup>4</sup>I use the word “theology” and “theologians” here in the broad sense, inclusive of the divisions of biblical, historical, systematic, and applied theological disciplines.

<sup>5</sup>Charry, 74.

approach to Protestant hermeneutics early in the Reformation.

Charry's main discussion is on the directions taken by systematic theology. In order to claim authority from the Bible, Protestant theologians attempted to show how objective truth can be derived from the Bible through the appropriate method of reasoning. Protestant theologians adapted to the modern thinking which emphasized method as the key to arriving at truth and knowledge. In the scientific theological method, not only is tradition ruled out but also emotion. "Truth and knowledge became the function of cognition alone; cognition was separated from attachment [emotions]."<sup>1</sup> Knowledge is certain when it can be rationally demonstrated objectively. Though early Protestantism rejected scholasticism, what resulted later was, according to Charry is "biblical scholasticism."<sup>2</sup>

In the desire to show the authority of the Bible then, modern Protestant theology has tried to respond to modernity in its own terms: adopt its method of arriving at truth and knowledge. What Charry noted as the result of such epistemology to a systematic theology can also be said about the other theological disciplines. The purpose of knowing is to arrive as impersonal, objective truth. Truth is defined in terms of well-organized doctrines or properly interpreted meaning of biblical passages. Accordingly, the proper response of the believer in such a notion of truth and knowledge is assent. For Charry, "defining truth and knowledge as that which compels assent to logically presented ideas is a clear departure from truth as knowing the sapience of God."<sup>3</sup>

The directions labeled by Charry as "biblical scholasticism" generally characterizes our training in AIIAS, which is patterned after theological education in the United States. The purpose of theological education is to equip workers who can demonstrate through reasoning the authority, clarity and the literal meaning of scripture, and to present biblical teachings rationally. Our students are trained in this direction, specially those taking doctorates because they are trained longer.

The results of their theological education become evident when our graduates go back to their fields and schools as pastors and Bible teachers. As they were taught in their graduate education, they pass on information that demonstrates the reasonableness of the biblical teachings. Generally, the purpose of classroom teaching is to compel through sound arguments and clear presentation rational assent to the biblical teachings.

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<sup>1</sup>Charry, 80.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 78-82.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 74.

## The Fragmentation of Theological Disciplines

The second training method that has implications on the way our graduates teach is the fragmentation that characterizes theological disciplines. The AIIAS Theological Seminary organizes departments into three areas: Biblical Studies, Historical and Theological Studies, and Applied Theology. This organization is again patterned after traditional Protestant theological education that arose in the German universities. These departmental distinctions are not only on the organizational level but even on the purpose, content, and methodology of the disciplines and courses.

George E. Ladd's view represents well the boundaries set in his discipline: "Biblical theology is primarily a descriptive discipline. It is not initially concerned with the final meaning of the teachings of the Bible or their relevance for today. This is the task of systematic theology."<sup>1</sup> Millard Erickson's book, *Christian Theology* has been translated into several Asian languages so his definition of systematic theology is well understood by our students: "That Christian discipline which strive to give a coherent statement of the doctrines of the Christian faith, based primarily on Scriptures, placed in the context of culture in general, worded in contemporary idiom, and related to issues of life."<sup>2</sup> However, as systematic theology is taught and practiced, the cultural context wherein the doctrine is explicated is a problem. Protestant systematic theology dialogues with Western philosophy and culture. In the case of Asia the philosophical or cultural context is animism and other world religions. But the current boundaries in the discipline does not venture to dialogue with Asian religions and cultures because as it is now, these religions are in the province of missions and not systematic theology. When one relates biblical teaching to Western philosophy and culture, he is a systematic theologian. When one relates biblical teachings to Asian culture, he is a missiologist. As such the dialogue partner, the conceptual framework in determining coherence, and even the idiom used are very much Western, and therefore often irrelevant to the church in Asia.

The realistic and concrete applications take place in the province of applied theology. However, Christian life, ministry and mission should be rooted in the Bible and its teachings. But sometimes, spending time on the biblical-theological foundations is just too much in a course. More time is spent on the actual methods and their anthropological-sociological basis rather than on the biblical foundations. So while strong on the application side, applied theology is weak on the biblical side.

I observed that these distinctions and fragmentation are carried over into college religious education. The courses required for college students are often taught like minia-

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<sup>1</sup>George Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 25.

<sup>2</sup>Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 23.

ture seminary courses. Courses are taught following the purposes and methodologies of the disciplines where the professor was trained in. For example, the course “Christian Beliefs,” required of all students in our colleges regardless of their majors, are often taught by those trained in systematic theology. The purpose is to show that our doctrines are true because they are based on the Bible and are logical, and how they are better than the teachings of other denominations. There is very little said on what the biblical doctrines mean in daily living, on the quality of life that results in living out those teachings. The course, “Life and Teachings of Jesus,” is also a course required for all. The course is often taught by professors trained in biblical studies. The course as it is taught to the college student is often a combination of New Testament backgrounds and the exegetical problems of the Gospels. The focus is often again cognitive rather for the students to know the life and teachings of Jesus so that such a knowledge can lead to worship and a personal faith.

I have argued that the academic focus and fragmentation of graduate theological training have several implications in the way AIIAS graduates teach when they go back to their ministry. Another result that often results is that our graduates, as properly trained academics, teach in the same language level they use when they wrote papers and thesis for their professors in the seminary. Scholars speak and explicate ideas to each other on academic level. Needless to say, such a language is above the level of their college students, and therefore have very little impact. I sometimes think that were they preaching, it is easier to make the transition. But in the school context, it is hard for many of our graduate theologians to stop teaching like their seminary professors. The main mode of learning in Asia is by imitation. It appears to me that our graduates are merely imitating their seminary teachers and training.

### **Foundational Perspectives that Need to be Integrated into Theological Education**

There are several biblical-theological perspectives that need to be integrated into graduate theological education.

#### **The Nature of Faith**

The first perspective for integration is the multidimensional nature of faith as derived from the Bible. The Hebrew word for faith, *aman* denotes "the comprehensive, exclusive and personal relation between God and man."<sup>1</sup> This personal relationship

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<sup>1</sup>Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976), 6:196.

includes inner attitudes and feelings, external conduct, knowledge, will, and even fears.<sup>1</sup> The Greek word for faith, *pistis*, means "to rely on," "to trust," "to believe."<sup>2</sup> *Pistis* connotes (1) to accept as credible, to accept as true, (2) obedience, trust, and hope, and, (3) faithfulness.<sup>3</sup> On the basis of the biblical descriptions of faith, Richard Rice views faith as having three dimensions: the receptive, cognitive, and volitional dimensions.<sup>4</sup>

It has been noted that the primary focus of an academic theology is the cognitive or rational dimension of faith. Rice points out that because of the cognitive dimension of faith, indeed reason has several contributions to the development and practice of faith:

1. Rational inquiry into the contents of faith increases knowledge and understanding and these, in turn, can deepen religious commitment
2. Intellectual activity can answer questions or resolve doubt about beliefs
3. Reason strengthens the foundations of faith by finding evidence to support them<sup>5</sup>

However, Rice points out that because faith is not just cognitive but has other dimensions, reason plays a very limited role. Following are bases and the limitations:

1. People seldom come to faith through a process of rational investigation
2. Depth of personal religious commitment is not directly proportional to intellectual ability
3. Since faith is also volitional and receptive, faith affirms and trusts in more than what reason can ever demonstrate
4. The factors that lead people to the point of commitment are typically private (personal experiences, etc.) rather than public
5. Rational inquiry into religion yields limited results
6. The fundamental symbols and metaphors through which faith comes to expression contrasts with the conceptual language often used in rational inquiry<sup>6</sup>

Ellen White also presents faith as multidimensional. Faith is something that is received from God: "Faith that enables us to receive God's gifts is itself a gift, of which

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 203.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 208.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Rice, *Reason and the Contours of Faith* (Riverside, CA: La Sierra University, 1991), 16-29.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 254-258.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 260-280.

some measure is imparted to every human being.”<sup>1</sup> Faith is cognitive for she states that “faith is the medium through which truth or error finds a lodging place in the mind. It is by the same act of mind that truth or error is received.”<sup>2</sup> Faith is also volitional because “faith is trusting God--believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good.”<sup>3</sup>

It seems however, that of all the dimensions of faith, the most crucial dimension for White is not the rational or cognitive aspect but the will, the power of choice. She writes of a person whose “love for Christ is superficial” because his love is “exercising little controlling power over his reason.”<sup>4</sup> The priority of love over reason does not mean that there is no conceptual content in that love. She writes that “the character of Christ must be understood before men could love Him.”<sup>5</sup> What she probably meant is that the emotive dimension of love is the deciding factor rather than the cognitive aspect. Another volitional act in addition to love is loyalty. In describing Adam and Eve in their sinless state, she writes that “So long as they remained loyal to the divine law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love would continually increase. They would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unfailing love of God.”<sup>6</sup> Even this cursory treatment of White’s understanding of faith indicates already that for her, the volitional or dispositional aspect of faith is the primary dimension.

White’s understanding of the primacy of love and of choice over the cognitive dimension is consistent with what Charry termed as “attachment.” Attachment that is knowing, loving, and enjoying God is a major component of the knowledge of God in the thought of Luther and Calvin. For Charry then, bringing back attachment, in view of the over emphasis on reason, into knowing God is the central task of modern theology.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, another theologian working from Wesleyan perspectives, calls for the recovery

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen White, *Education*, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903) 253.

<sup>2</sup>White, *Signs of the Times*, June 5, 1893.

<sup>3</sup>White, *Education*, 253.

<sup>4</sup>White, *AUCR*, July 15, 1902.

<sup>5</sup>Ellen White, *Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 273.

<sup>6</sup>Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 51.

<sup>7</sup>Charry, 85.

of “holy affections” in theology.<sup>1</sup>

“An intellectual belief in the truth” is not enough for White.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of teaching for her is what she calls “experimental knowledge. “It is certainly important that we become acquainted with the reasons of our faith, but the most important knowledge to be gained is the experimental knowledge of what it means to be born again.”<sup>3</sup> “It is our privilege to know God experimentally, and in true knowledge of God is life eternal.”<sup>4</sup>

### The Teaching Method of Jesus

The second perspective for integration is the teaching method of Jesus. There are several elements of Jesus’ teaching method that has implications to theological education. More often the concern is faithfulness to the content of biblical teaching. I believe we should also be faithful and obedient to the methodological directions given in the Bible.

The first characteristic of Jesus teaching method is realism. The sources of his teaching and the language He used were taken from ordinary life. The raw material of Jesus’ teaching and language was the everyday world of nature and human activity.<sup>5</sup> Even in occasions when He taught within a conceptual (abstract, topical) framework, such as His discourses with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) and the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-21) He still used concrete images.

The second characteristic of Jesus teaching style that is related to method is that He taught metaphorically. He was teaching the disciples and specially the crowds almost entirely pictorially, explaining his ideas in and through stories, and not just using stories as an aid to illustrate his points. Jesus taught in metaphorical language in the narrative

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<sup>1</sup>Henry H. Knight III, “True Affections: Biblical Narrative and Evangelical Spirituality,” in *The Nature of Confession: Evangelicals and Postliberals in Conversation*, ed. Timothy R. Phillips and D. L. Okholm (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 194-198.

<sup>2</sup>White, *Review and Herald*, February 14, 1899.

<sup>3</sup>White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1938), 65.

<sup>4</sup>White., *Review and Herald*, March 9, 1897.

<sup>5</sup>John Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable: Metaphor, Narrative, and Theology in the Synoptic Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 13-14.

framework<sup>1</sup> rather than discoursed within a rational framework and teaching in conceptual language.

Perhaps a brief discussion on the connection of the metaphoric framework to the development of faith will be helpful. Rice points out that there is a big contrast between conceptual language that best express rational inquiry and the metaphorical language that express religious experience.<sup>2</sup> Because of the nature of faith, concepts and the use of conceptual language plays a very limited role in the development of faith. Following are some of the important points he brings out:

1. The fundamental language of religion is in the world of symbolic speech (parable, narrative, metaphor, etc.)
2. Human thinking is inherently metaphorical, metaphors pervade our personal experiences, so we think and speak in metaphors naturally
3. Our basic religious metaphors are pre-rational, and they speak to us on a deeper psychological and emotional level than concepts alone could ever do
4. Metaphors speak to the whole person as a feeling, acting being, not merely as an intellect<sup>3</sup>

To summarize, faith is multidimensional. To focus teaching on the cognitive dimension alone, much more make reason primary ignores the nature of faith. Following Ellen White, teaching for faith with primary appeal to the dispositional dimension may have more enduring effects. The teaching method of Jesus suggests that to teach for faith one must teach primarily in the level of the everyday life, using mostly metaphorical language in the narrative framework.

### **Some Suggestions for Integration**

Before the specific proposals for integration are given, it must be stated that most of these suggestions are not unique. They may be being implemented already in other places. As mentioned, the faculty in AIIAS have already done a lot to address the issues raised here but still there remains work to do.

1. Clarify the role of rational or conceptual inquiry in building up a mature faith, both individually and as a church. Indeed the cognitive dimension and rational inquiry have a limited role in the development of faith. If the example of Jesus and the ideas

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 21-25.

<sup>2</sup>Rice, 269-270.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 270-274.

given by White are to serve as a methodological base, it seems that putting more emphasis on the will or the dispositional dimension could be a more effective direction for teaching. Individuals and churches must however, not drop the cognitive dimension altogether. They must examine critically their religious experiences, as well as the metaphors and narratives used in expressing their faith, to see whether they are consistent with the Biblical worldview and teachings. Concepts and experience must not be separated.

2. Intentionally help the students in the courses being taught to apply the results of rational inquiry into the life of the church. Applications at present are primarily on the theoretical level, with papers and projects written for academic audiences and issues. The assumption is that the students will by themselves make the shift when they are out of the seminary. But this does not usually happen. The academic thinking and focus continue to pervade the ministry of the student even after graduation.

The shift therefore must take place even when the student is in the seminary. Perhaps some papers and projects should continue to be in the conceptual level, to train the student in critical reflection and in the construction of ideas and methods that are biblically-sound. These papers should show sound rational inquiry and are expressed on the conceptual level. However, in the same course the teacher can also require and guide the student in the application of that knowledge on the practical, popular level. Papers and projects could be written for actual situations, in the thinking mode and language level of the people. Critical reflection must also be done on proposals for action and on what is being done. These application papers can be in the metaphorical mode, written in the narrative framework.

3. Related to the above suggestion is the revision of courses and even the curriculum so that they go beyond traditional methodological boundaries set in the disciplines. For example biblical exegesis should result in sermon outlines. Doctrinal studies should result in pastoral or missiological reflection and applications. A reexamination of what it means to be “professional” needs to be done. Rather than base the standards of professionalism on rules set by universities, perhaps the actual needs and life of the church could be a better basis for such a standard.

The basic assumption of the suggestions above is the point of Luke 6:40: “A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.” (NIV). If we want our seminary graduates to teach for an integrated faith, the teaching methods of graduate theological education must be characterized by such an integration. Such a shift may mean that our credibility as a university might be questioned. But I feel sometimes that we are not aware of the purpose of the model of theological education we are imitating. Theological education in many Western universities primarily aim to produce researchers. The reality is, none of our students go back to their schools and work as researchers. None of the schools we are serving in Asia

and Africa are research universities. Our graduates go back and serve as religious educators in the colleges and theological educators for the basic ministerial program. Therefore, our purpose for theological education should be the formation of pastor-teachers, and not of academics.

4. Revision religious education courses in the colleges. This proposal is beyond the control of the AIIAS Theological Seminary. Yet to some extent we can encourage such a process. As mentioned, we are requiring on Methods of Teaching Bible, which I also teach. In the course we encourage the students, as part of their course requirements, to develop a course on subjects they will probably teach when they go back to their schools. The challenge is to develop courses in the college level that teach faith and life, prodding college students to think Christianly and live Christianly, thus developing an integrated faith. The main focus of the courses should be life as it is lived, to address issues that are going on in the lives of the students. The realism that characterized the teaching method of Jesus should also be seen in college teaching. Religion courses should not primarily address academic issues but the Christian life and mission in the everyday life. The aim of college teaching should be the development of faith, faith as it is defined in the Bible and further explained by Ellen White. Similarly, following the teaching method of Jesus, the basic teaching method should not be so much conceptual as it should be metaphoric and in the narrative.