

focused. David Lonsdale refers to the danger of understanding “spirituality” as catering for the soul at the expense of the body, so he prefers to talk about “discipleship” as a term that can refer to every area of our following of Christ. He speaks of the need for social responsibility, and growth in freedom. He says we should try to nurture personal gifts, rather than to strive after pre-established models of perfection. Other articles deal with the political context of spirituality, evangelical spirituality, spirituality and the charismatic movement, spirituality and feminism, and training laity for growth and ministry. The article on “Evangelical Spirituality in the Inner City” even tackles the question of how culture affects spirituality in a way that may be useful in asking how to construct local spiritualities.

The concern of all the writers to combine form and vitality, belief in God, and engagement with everyday life, should make their work of value, far beyond their own background.

*Revd Christopher Garland.*

*Apologia: Contextualisation, Globalisation, and Mission in Theological Education*, Max L. Stackhouse, ed., Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1988.

How is theological education affected by the modern awareness of the extent to which all thinking is influenced by the society in which it takes place? Do we have to give up the attempt to ground our teaching in the truth, itself, and be content with training people to be useful to their church and society? If we do that, we encourage them to reduce church and society to be whatever is going on in them at that place and time. They have no lasting frame, in which to build a consistent view of themselves and their society. They become patchers-up of passing problems. Yet, if we detach them from all changes of time and place, in order to search for a fixed view of perfection, do we leave them in a void, a never-never land? How can a priest or minister stand, at once, in the presence of God, whose truth never changes, and in the presence of human beings, who exist in a changing world? Max Stackhouse suggests that the modern dilemma is a continuation of the classic debate between “realism”, concern for what is universal, and “nominalism”, concern for what is particular and local. He says that the search is not just for appropriate

thought: truth, but also for appropriate action: justice. Therefore, he says: “we need to note that, insofar as theological education is genuine education, in and about religious matters – and not indoctrination into a cult, a leap of blind faith, socialisation into a subculture, mobilisation for political action, or an exercise in therapy – and, insofar as theological education is conducted as a scholarly enterprise, for which we give academic degrees to certify that some people are prepared to preach and teach these matters in public – and is neither an initiation into an arbitrary and idiosyncratic worldview, nor a sophistical learning of skills about how to influence people, without regard for the validity of what we say and do – theological education must, above all, centre its life on the question of what is objectively true, and not just in religious matters” (pp. 147-148).

In order to relate the contextual to the universal, Max Stackhouse draws upon Robert Schreiter’s method of constructing local theologies, with the help of sociological and semiotic theory. According to such a method, we have to read actions and beliefs as signs, which carry a particular set of associations, within the culture in which they are used. Only when we have interpreted a custom, or story, within culture can we translate it into another culture, and see how it can be used there as a sign to make associations, which would have an equivalent meaning.

In order to relate knowledge and belief, Max Stackhouse draws upon the work of Edward Farley, who commends the teaching of “theologia”, which he describes as “sapiential, and personal, knowledge of divine self-disclosure . . . wisdom, or discerning judgment, indispensable for human living”. The teaching of theologia should reconcile reason and faith, thought and action, life in the church, and life in the study.

With the aid of these and other thinkers, we are led to the conclusion that theological education can, and should, be based on a commitment to truth. On the one hand, we can no longer be content with teaching propositional statements from within a particular church or society, as if they were universally true. On the other hand, if we address our particular context with an attitude of faith and reason, which involves the whole person in thinking and acting, there will emerge certain patterns of thinking and acting, which are common to all human kind. It is as we reflect on these patterns of thinking and acting, in the light of the gospel, that we will discern the universals, by which to test our theological

education. The more wholehearted our commitment to our particular local context, the more we expose the roots of our humanity, from which can grow a theology, whose truth can be recognised by all people.

*Revd Christopher Garland.*

*Theology: the University and the Modern World*, Robert Runcie, Paul A. B. Clarke, Andrew Linzey, and John Moses, London UK: Lester Crook Academic Publications, 1988.

This book is of obvious relevance to the discussion over the re-establishment of a Department of Religious Studies at the University of Papua New Guinea. It was compiled to mark the opening of a Centre for the Study of Theology, that is in, but not of, the University of Essex in England. The opening lecture is by Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury. He argues that the study of theology at a university is a sign to both the ecclesiastical and academic worlds: "To the ecclesiastical world, it is a sign that the pursuit of truth is inseparable from the search for God; to the academic world, a sign that, without God, the search for truth is incomplete. Either way, it is the product of that vision, which refuses to separate faith from thought."

Despite the attempt made since the Enlightenment to divorce faith and reason, Dr Runcie argues that they meet in "that experience of wonder, which so often accompanies a scientific discovery". He maintains that Descartes, the direct precursor of the Enlightenment, maintained the link between truth and God, for he thought that thinking works, because it is upheld by the graciousness of God. Descartes, therefore, took as his watchword that "God will not deceive".

Dr Runcie goes on to say that secular society has limited its own concerns to the pursuit of individual happiness, and dismisses any wider vision of religion as irrelevant. Yet, such a narrow view belittles the importance of education, for education is, in itself, a spiritual activity, concerned with the development of the whole person. If a person is just seen as an economic resource, then his scope is limited, so he or she needs to be seen as a child of God. By providing a vision of the whole person as a child of God, a department of theology can provide a vision of man and society, which is relevant to the whole University.