

programme in which the student was forced to integrate and expand his thinking in a purely 'secular' setting. A first step in this direction might be an Interdisciplinary Centre for Religion and Culture, at which such work could be undertaken at the M.A. level. Such a programme would assume that a new impetus from growing departments of religion in this country had led to more teaching in this area at the B.A. level. Theological schools, as we know them, would thus be freed to concentrate their efforts on specific training to meet denominational requirements, leading to a Master of Ministry degree (or some comparable designation). Close integration with clinical training programmes, professional schools of social work, etc., would also become more practical.

We would argue that an experimental programme along these lines could benefit all concerned. If they were exposed to relevant theological research, colleagues from other disciplines would no longer be able to label theology as a subject out of step with contemporary concern. If theologians were called upon to defend their affirmations and methods in partnership with other disciplines, they might discover that rigid dogmatism is characteristic of other disciplines as well. Attempting to work together for the common good is a form of ministry which we need to recapture. Is there a faculty and student body in Canada with the courage to attempt such a task?

2 ELLIOTT B. ALLEN, *csb*

The Roman Catholic Seminary: Changing Perspectives in Theological Education

One of the interesting and encouraging developments of the present time is revealed by the fact that the phrase 'theological education' cannot any longer be spontaneously taken as somehow equivalent to 'clerical education.' Of course it is true that, taken in its broadest and most elementary sense, theology has always been 'done' whenever a believer sought to understand or apply his faith. But within the church of today we find theology, taken now in a more sophisticated and technical sense, to be an area of interest engaging an ever-wider spectrum of the laity, and at increasingly profound levels of commitment. The number of professional lay theologians is rapidly growing, as university departments expand on both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

It is true, of course, that theology is 'in' at the moment as the euphoria of Vatican II lingers on. But, however much this heady atmosphere dissipates in the next few years, there is no reason to think that old patterns will be resurrected in this aspect of the church's life. Theology will not again be considered a narrowly professional necessity for clerics. As more and more Roman Catholic Christians come spontaneously to live with the understanding of the church brought into focus by the teaching of Vatican II, there will come the sharpened realization that the mission and apostolate of the church cannot

be reduced to the apostolate of the ordained.¹ And to engage in the apostolate is, especially in the world of today and tomorrow, to enter ever more deeply into the work of theology, by necessity as well as by right.

Having said this, I would limit my remarks in this present article to some problems and perspectives in relation to Roman Catholic clerical theological education in English-speaking Canada. (Of course, as is obvious, one of the factors demanding new perspectives in clerical education is precisely the situation described above.) Within this area the following remarks will be limited to some rather general views that suggest themselves at this moment and from our limited vantage-point. To make specific and detailed proposals would seem the height of presumption, because of both lack of intimate knowledge of the variety of local institutional structures in which such education is provided, and also the speed with which changes are taking place.² At the same time, however, it is only fair to say that what follows is not without anchorage in recent experience. The views elaborated in this article reflect in large measure perspectives which have developed during the course of a year devoted to matters of curriculum and structural reform. The effort in these directions has taken place both within my own faculty and in collaboration with other theological faculties.

When one works one's way through some of the problems connected with present-day clerical education, one becomes progressively impressed not only with the importance of renewal, but also with the complexity of the issues involved. Problems of content and aim cannot really be separated from those of institutional structures and methodology. To attempt to isolate these factors and deal with them independently would be, I am convinced, a fairly fruitless project. But if there can be no separation, there are distinctions which impose themselves if one is to achieve any kind of ordered analysis. I will, therefore, turn first to a consideration of some perspectives relative to aim and content before commenting on certain institutional or structural issues. Finally, a brief comment will be made on the relationship of these matters to the spiritual formation of theological students.

Pastoral Orientation:

New Perspectives on Purpose and Content

There can be little doubt that the documents of Vatican II are having and will continue to have a profound influence on the movement of clerical education within the Roman Catholic Church, in Canada as elsewhere. This influence will not only be that of the authoritative guidelines formulated by

1. A cursory glance at the long pre-Vatican II history of the various Catholic Action movements would, of course, dissipate any illusion that the Council originated this development.

2. It is interesting to note that before this article appears there will have been held in Toronto an 'Institute on Seminary Renewal,' under the auspices of the Episcopal Commission on Seminaries (English Sector). This meeting will involve representatives from institutions in every part of English-speaking Canada.

a council of the Church, but perhaps even more that of the new spirit, the new vitality and opening to contemporary issues and values which has blossomed in the life of the Church. Vatican II consciously viewed itself as a *pastoral* council and this orientation is clearly visible in its treatment of the problem of theological education. In its decree on priestly formation the Council distinguishes three aspects of the formation given in the major seminary: the 'spiritual,' the 'pastoral,' the 'doctrinal.' What is particularly interesting from our point of view is the emphasis given to the pastoral finality of the entire educational process. For the Fathers of the Council, the purpose of seminary theology, as of the entire seminary programme, is the formation of pastoral priests.³ The studies are not aimed at the education of men learned in the subtleties of Christian teaching, but rather must be ordered to the formation of capable pastors. (It should be noted that 'pastoral,' in view of perspectives opened up by the Council itself, is not to be limited to the context of the parochial ministry only.) The final paragraph of number 4 of the Decree makes this absolutely central: "Therefore, every program of instruction, whether spiritual, intellectual, or disciplinary, should be joined with practical implementation and directed toward the aforementioned pastoral goal."⁴ In number 14 the Decree, in speaking of the necessity of a suitable introduction to clerical studies, again emphasizes the fundamental orientation: "That this understanding may be communicated to students from the very start of their training, ecclesiastical studies should begin with an introductory course of suitable duration. In this initiation, the mystery of salvation should be presented in such a way that the students will see the meaning of ecclesiastical studies, their interrelationship, and their pastoral intent."⁵ Within this over-all orientation of the entire formation programme, the role of theological studies is pivotal. Theological studies are to be ". . . taught in such a way that students will accurately draw Catholic doctrine from divine revelation, understand that doctrine profoundly, nourish their own spiritual lives with it, and be able to proclaim it, unfold it, and defend it in their priestly ministry" (number 16).⁶

Finally, the decree illumines what have been called the historical and dialogical dimensions of such pastorally oriented theological studies.⁷ The general context would seem to be this: the priest must speak to, and minister within, his own time, in terms of its questions, problems, possibilities. At the same time he must communicate a message and a life received by the Apostles and handed on through time in the living tradition of the church through its liturgical, doctrinal, and canonical institutions, as well as through the faith-witness of its historical adventure and that of its multitude of members, great and small. The 'pastoral priest,' in other words, must be one who in his

3. Cf. T. O. Barrosse, csc, 'Updating and the problem of theology,' in *Curriculum for Renewal: National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin*, 63, 1 (August 1966), 93.

4. W. M. Abbott, sj (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Herder and Herder/Association Press, 1966), p. 442.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 450.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 451.

7. Cf. Barrosse, 'Updating and the problem of theology,' 93.

ministry somehow joins sensitivity to the needs of men today and tomorrow with the role of faithful witness and servant of the apostolic message and responsibility.

I do not intend to draw out in detail the implications of the above general perspective for curriculum renewal and pedagogical methodology. Some general comments may be in order, however. As to the over-all shape of such renewal, Bishop Alexander Carter of Sault Ste Marie has noted the scope and depth of the required reshaping:

If intelligently interpreted and applied, the directives on theological studies will completely renew the theology course. The theology of renewal is recognized and acclaimed. Recent developments in the study of Scripture and in the whole catechetical and liturgical movement find their place here. The mystery of Christ, the history of Salvation, is made the center of all theological studies. Moral theology must be restated, and canon law and Church history must be taught in that context. A double note of ecumenism is sounded: the contribution of the Greek Fathers and the Eastern Church is recognized, and the students are to acquire a real knowledge of other religions.⁸

This desired global reshaping must, it seems to me, embody two basic features. In the first place, the ideal of 'total coverage' will have to be abandoned or significantly modified in view of contemporary needs. Traditionally, Catholic seminary curricula were based on this ideal and were rigidly structured to ensure uniform maximum coverage of required content. Electives and options were severely limited, if indeed opportunity for them was present at all. Now, however, it is essential that the curriculum be marked by a significant degree of flexibility and diversity. Some sort of 'core' programme will no doubt be necessary, along with generous opportunity for diversification and specialization. Such a structure is demanded by a more sensitive recognition of the wide diversity of student backgrounds and aptitudes, along with the diversification and specialization of ministries for which candidates must increasingly be prepared.

Accompanying some such change in the shape of the curriculum, there must be a continuing creative effort in renewing the methods of instruction. The teaching of theology and related disciplines to clerical students has indeed its own peculiar formalities. But it *is* 'teaching,' and it must be carried on in vital recognition of the psychological, sociological, and cultural dimensions of the current pedagogical situation. Clerical education is 'clerical,' but if it is realistically to be 'education,' it must be adapted to the needs and aptitudes of the students who are presumably expected to benefit from it. It is no secret that, generally speaking, Roman Catholic theological students have been overburdened with formal classes and all too often underdeveloped in habits of personal reading and writing. Whatever may have been the necessity of this approach, its day is over.

8. Abbott, *Documents*, p. 451.

Mere reduction of class hours is not in itself the prime consideration. But it is a fact that men in their middle and upper twenties are not stimulated by an unrelieved diet of listening and note-taking. They come interested in theology; there is increasingly abundant material available, and they are eager to participate actively in all phases of their development, including their theological education. Reduction in lecture hours must be accompanied by increased attention to wider reading assignments and to growth in both written and oral articulateness. It would seem that experience in critical theological reading, writing, and discussion would provide valuable background for the ministry in today's world. It is doubtful, on the other hand, that the habit of going to classes will prove of enduring significance after ordination!⁹

It is interesting to note in this connection that the Council Fathers did not think it unnecessary to comment on such details:

Since doctrinal training ought not to aim at a mere communication of ideas, but at a genuine and deep formation of students, teaching methods should be revised as they apply to lectures, discussions, and seminars and with respect to the promotion of study among students, whether individually or in small groups.

The unified and substantial quality of all this training should be carefully provided for; hence excessive multiplying of subjects and classes is to be avoided. Those questions should be omitted which retain scarcely any significance, or which should be left for higher academic studies.¹⁰

Finally it should be noted that the Council affirms the necessity of developing in clerical students '... the abilities most appropriate for the promotion of dialogue with men, such as a capacity to listen to other people and to open their hearts in a spirit of charity to the various circumstances of human need' (number 19).¹¹ In the pursuit of this necessary feature of a pastorally oriented education, the study of pedagogy, psychology, and sociology has its legitimate role to play.¹² But the classroom is not the only setting for adequate theological education of this kind; art is involved and, if art, practice – hence the integral place of what we can recognize as supervised field-work.¹³

Institutional Structures: Problems and Possibilities

Any attempt to advance significantly along the lines suggested above would in itself provoke an examination and modification of the structures within which Roman Catholic theological education has been carried on in English-speaking Canada. When to these considerations are added the pressures generated by radically altered economic, cultural, sociological, and vocational

9. E. B. Allen, csb, 'Seminar techniques in the theology course in the seminary,' *Curriculum for Renewal*, 115.

10. Abbott, *Documents*, p. 453.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 455.

12. Cf. number 20, *ibid.*

13. Cf. number 21, *ibid.*

patterns, the necessity for profound analysis and rapid adjustment becomes absolute.

It is not my intention in what follows to anticipate such analysis or to specify such adjustment in the relation to given institutions. Rather I intend merely to suggest perspectives which seem implied by the contemporary situation in English-speaking Canada, and, if not to give final solutions, to risk suggesting the general directions in which such solutions must be sought.

If it is true that the contemporary Roman Catholic Church is engaged in renewing its life and structures, such renewal, if faithful to the impetus of Vatican II, will involve an adventure in a new 'opening-out' of the Church — to other Christian churches and communions, as well as to the legitimate aspirations and values of the temporal life of human society. If clerical education is to be truly 'pastoral' on all of the levels demanded today, the question of appropriate institutional settings for such education becomes a critical one. As I indicated at the outset of these remarks, questions of content and aim cannot be separated from questions of institutional structure. No doubt a variety of institutional patterns will be found possible and even necessary, but all of them must be validated by their capacity to serve realistically the demands of this time of the Church as she seeks to serve faithfully her Lord and his mission.

It would seem helpful to try to link together my brief comments on the 'institutional-structural' aspects of this topic by means of some sort of unifying theme or focal notion. I have already noted that a kind of 'opening-out' movement might serve to characterize certain fundamental dimensions of the current process of renewal. In terms of our present concern this orientation might be specified easily enough in terms of *relationship*. Putting it quite simply, we might say that the immediate needs of English-speaking clerical education demand that its institutional structures be prepared to explore, and *effectively to enter into*, varying new relationships, both within the over-all structure of Roman Catholic clerical education, as well as beyond its frontiers as at present established. I will limit myself here to brief comments on four dimensions in which new or renewed relationships demand creative thought and action: (1) the internal relationship of seminary to seminary; (2) the university relationship; (3) the ecumenical relationship; (4) the professional relationship. Priorities and opportunities will no doubt vary from situation to situation but adequate renewal will scarcely be possible apart from serious consideration and resolute, if not hasty, action.

The internal relationship. There are at present in English-speaking Canada perhaps as many as a dozen institutions engaged in teaching theology to candidates for priestly ordination, whether for diocesan service or for service in religious orders.¹⁴ Although there should be no critical acceptance of consoli-

14. There are three in metropolitan Toronto alone: Regis College, St. Augustine's Seminary, St. Basil's Seminary (St. Michael's College). As the result of increasingly close co-operation and prolonged discussions involving all three, a start was made on a unified programme in September 1968.

dation for its own sake, it is obvious that a strong case can be made for the need to undertake some sort of regrouping of both human and material resources. Given the complexity of the ceaselessly changing conditions in which the priestly ministry has to be exercised, it would seem harder and harder to justify the continuation of such a duplication of institutions, some of them quite small and increasingly hard-pressed to provide adequate staffs and educational opportunities.

There must be no illusions on the part of ecclesiastical authorities, however: the realignment and possible consolidation of Roman Catholic seminaries must not be pursued in the hope that it will provide spectacular savings in men and resources. Some such economies would no doubt result, but it would be unwise to hope for too much in this area over the long run. Indeed I think it safe to say that, if clerical education is going to begin to meet the challenges of the coming decades, increased resources will have to be devoted to it. In any effort at realignment of institutional resources, we must look rather to the possibilities of more adequately meeting the needs for richer, more diversified, and specialized clerical education. The small isolated seminary simply will not be able to provide for such needs, no matter what other contributions (and they are many) it has been able to make in the past. At the same time, however, the values of a favourable staff-student ratio must be maintained even if changes permit the unification of facilities; we have only to look at the dissatisfaction apparent on large campuses to be convinced of the drawbacks of large educational establishments with their tendency to handle students in groups too large for effective active student participation in the educational process.

The university relationship. The experience of English-speaking Roman Catholics in the matter of Canadian university education has been marked by a rich diversity in patterns of development, and by an often bold and imaginative willingness to take risks and to adapt to changing circumstances. This in itself should restrain us from seeking any one ideal formula for relating clerical theological education to the world of the university, while at the same time it encourages us to seek solutions appropriate to most varied situations.

The desirability of seeking, where it does not already exist, some truly effective opening to the university world would seem to be without serious challenge, at least on the theoretical level. But, as a matter of fact, values and desires often conflict, and the question of seminary-university relationship will not be immune to such conflicts – some of which may indeed present formidable obstacles to successful and really vital inter-communication. There is, for example, the problem of meeting more demanding academic prerequisites, and this at the very time when the immediate future will apparently see acute shortages in priestly vocations. Again, there is the risk contained in the often bewildering and unsettling intellectual atmosphere of the contemporary university.

Here, again, it is a question of priorities; if the establishment of such an opening to the university is thought important enough, obstacles will not

readily be admitted to be insurmountable. Certainly if dialogue with, and knowledge of, the contemporary world are to be constitutive elements of a pastorally oriented theological education, it would seem that a university setting would offer unique and perhaps irreplaceable opportunities. At the minimum it would enable theological students to receive their education in close contact with the education of those with whom they are to work and among whom they are to minister. At the same time such a setting could do much for the development of theological learning and teaching, for a living theology demands intimate contact with the movements and challenges of secular learning. It could ensure, too, that the pedagogy of theology would be in a position to benefit from the mainstream of developing educational methodologies and techniques. The latter may not be a factor of prime importance, but it is not negligible, in my opinion, if clerical education is going to command the respect of its own participants as well as of other professionals.

The ecumenical relationship. As far as Roman Catholics are concerned, the new ecumenical thrust of Vatican II impels them to seek new opportunities for collaboration in the area of theological education. And, of course, with these new opportunities have come new questions to be explored, new problems to be faced and (we may hope) solved, and this on the level of institutional interrelationship as well as on that of theological understanding and curriculum content. If we must explore the possibilities of institutional 'openings' to the university and the world, we must also make a serious effort to enter into positive co-operation with the structures of theological education developed by other churches and communions.

Here again the situation is not a simple one; complex doctrinal and disciplinary issues are involved – vital concerns and values which must be sensitively appreciated on all sides. These complexities and divergent viewpoints must be honestly and responsibly faced while we seek structures within which to achieve closer union and collaboration, along with necessary and often enriching diversity. Once more we shall need to ask ourselves honestly just how much we ought to value the opportunities which such collaboration will bring to the Roman Catholic Church and to its mission. Along with the conviction of its desirability we will need great resources of understanding, patience, and creative imagination, the fruit of broad vision and firm hope. With these present in sufficient measure we may well – indeed, we *should* – find large areas of co-operation leading to mutual enrichment through the sharing of material resources and dedicated and highly trained manpower. Certainly the existence of sensitive areas and of complex problems should be a challenge to our imagination and determination, rather than a reason for not entering seriously upon the painful effort.¹⁵

The 'professional' relationship. This title is not perhaps very apt as a description of the dimension I have in mind. Briefly what I mean is this: as was noted in the first part of this article, a truly pastoral education demands

15. In this connection it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the work during the coming year of the 'Committee on Co-operation in Theological Education in Toronto.'

the development of arts and skills which can best be acquired through supervised practice. Thus the system and programme of clerical education must be adjusted to allow for and to facilitate such activities as one of its integral features. While much progress has been made here of late, this kind of training must be more widely adopted as an essential part of the entire theological programme, rather than as an aspect to which only secondary attention is given.

It is a mistake, I believe, to apply the notion of 'profession' too univocally to the ministry. But there is undeniably a 'professional' side to it which must be effectively operative in clerical theological education. Thus, as I have mentioned, 'field-work' and involvement in 'apostolic works' are to be seen as a normal and necessary element in an adequately conceived theological education. Not only the academic programme, but also the disciplinary pattern of the seminary or theological college, must be such as to recognize and serve this purpose. Perhaps too, new training centres will have to be created and vitally related to the more traditional institutions of theological teaching, if this need is to be realistically met.

Certainly a positive acceptance of this dimension by the teaching staff will be required, along with a willingness to work together in the common enterprise, each giving his specialized knowledge to the service of the general pastoral aim, rather than isolating himself within his own speciality, however important and valuable it may be. In the pursuit of the general goals new structures of communal teaching and learning are an urgent requirement. Increasingly, it would seem, different kinds of co-operative teaching, group projects, interdisciplinary seminars, etc., will take their place as widely used instruments of theological education. Collaboration, dialogue, communion – these must find their realistic acceptance within the very institutional structures of the clerical education demanded by our times.

Spiritual Formation:

Permanent Urgency and New Demands

Finally, there is the crucial problem of the spiritual and personal growth of theological students. It is true that this area does not fall directly within the limitations of my treatment in this present article. But there are several interlocking reasons for saying a word here on the challenge which it poses to clerical education, today as always. Certainly the Fathers of Vatican II insist upon the intimate link between theological studies and the Christian life of the clerical student: 'Spiritual formation should be closely linked with doctrinal and pastoral training' (number 8).¹⁶ At the same time the decree on the 'Ministry and Life of Priests' emphasizes the reality of the priestly ministry as both the context of, and something dependent upon, personal holiness and union with God.

16. Abbott. *Documents*, pp. 444f.

It is fashionable now to speak of the priesthood or ministry in 'professional' or 'functional' terms, but, while this has a proper value, it is not by itself adequate to the whole of the mysterious reality. At its best the ideal has always been to achieve a kind of identification of 'function' and 'being' in the person of the priest. The Catholic tradition has insisted upon the necessary distinction between man and office, but this distinction can never be regarded as a justification for separation.

Nor can the emphasis on the necessity for personal growth in faith and charity be dismissed as somewhat outdistanced in modern conditions. Indeed, perhaps rarely before have men in general, and especially young men, been more dissatisfied with mere legitimacy or validity as adequate criteria for the presence of gospel values. While their views may sometimes lack balance, they are surely right in demanding and expecting the witness of life and person as an essential accompaniment of the ministerial function.

Catholic clerical education has long been noted for its insistence upon the absolutely fundamental role of spiritual formation as integral to the whole educational process. This is a precious and much-needed heritage. But even this does not escape the need for genuine renewal; if we can and must speak of the 'renewal of theology,' we must also speak of the 'renewal of spirituality' – of the way in which man, in the concreteness of his historical-cultural existence, approaches God. There is vital need, especially in the context of clerical education, to explore new ways of prayer, of worship and contemplation, of spiritual direction, in order to encourage the deepest realization of living in faith in the presence of God, in total personal communion with God and his love, a communion which does not draw one away from the lives of men, but opens out into loving union with the Father's gift of himself to all through Jesus Christ and in his Spirit.

Conclusion

These are, in brief scope, some of the problems and possibilities which confront Roman Catholic theological educators in English-speaking Canada. This rather cursory treatment makes no pretense at completeness,¹⁷ but the above remarks do point to some of the critical problems to which any significant effort of renewal must address itself. The very tension which marks the Church's effort to adapt to the contemporary world, its questions and needs, while remaining faithful to her own deepest nature and to what has been received 'once for all' – this will inevitably be present in the effort of Roman Catholic clerical education to be creatively faithful to its mandate from the Church to educate priests for ministry among the men of today and tomorrow. As the content and institutional instruments of this education develop in the directions described, there will be the insistent necessity to explore new ways, while remaining deeply faithful to what is essential in the heritage of the past.

17. We have left untouched, for example, the urgent problem of the role of seminary or theological college in the continuing education of the clergy.