

Some Trends in the Development of Theological Education in India

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Beginnings: Theological Education for Pastoral and Preaching Ministry

One of the first things that Ziegenbalg, the first Lutheran missionary, started as soon as he began his ministry in India in 1705 was a 'mission seminary for training workers'. Though he did not think any of his converts so distinguished 'for their zeal and ability as to make him desire their ordination', he was happy to have trained a team of catechists. In 1740 the demand for a more serious training was raised by a sensitive Indian, under a pseudonym, Immanuel, in an anonymous letter (probably he did not have courage enough to face the missionaries of his day!) to the director of the Halle Mission. He wrote: 'According to my humble opinion, the main design of the mission from the beginning has been, not so much to enlighten a confused crowd of Asiatic heathens by means of European missionaries, as to obtain and to instruct a sufficient number of enquiring Indians who might be educated in an Evangelical Seminary at Tranquebar for the ministry among their countrymen; and until this design is more effectively carried out than hitherto, even much sowing will produce but very little fruit' (Fenger's *History of the Tranquebar Mission*, p. 275, quoted by C. W. Ranson, *The Christian Minister in India*, Lutterworth, 1945, p. 44). The desire for quality theological education, we note, was there from the beginning of modern Church history in India, and the purpose was that of effective communication of the Gospel.

In 1818, when Carey published the prospectus of a 'College for the instruction of Asiatic Christians and other youth in Eastern Literature and European Science', he also had this missionary purpose. He wrote a year earlier, 'I conceive, that the work of preparing as large a body as possible of Christian natives of India for the work of Christian pastors and itinerans is of immense importance. . . India will never be turned from her grossness of idolatry to serve the true and living God unless the grace of God rest abundantly on converted natives to qualify them for mission work, and unless by the instrumentality of those who care for India, they be sent forth to the field. In my judgement, therefore, it is on native evangelists that the weight of the great work must ultimately rest' (quoted in Ranson, *op. cit.* p. 45). Thirty-seven students were, enrolled in the first year of whom nineteen were Christians. The

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medium of instruction was Bengali, Carey rejecting the hope of some persons to impart a sound education to the people of the country through the medium of a language not their own as altogether fallacious. Christians and non-Christians earning together, theology and arts together, in Bengali and English, was of unique significance in Carey's vision. With the royal charter given by the King of Denmark in 1827 the College continued to be related to the University till 1884, when the Baptist Missionary Society decided to close university classes. Bishop's College was started in 1820 as an ambitious project of Bishop Middleton, to be a 'proud pre-eminence in the world of conversion, such as no other Protestant church had yet possessed' and it continued to be mainly an arts college till 1918. It must be remembered that theological education was related to higher education in general from its inception in Serampore and Calcutta, and so a good academic standard was one of the early concerns. Training of catechists began to be felt as a need and schools were organised at various centres in the country. Early in the nineteenth century Pettit, a missionary in Tinnevely (*Tinnevely Mission*, p. 404) wrote: 'We had no machinery whatever for leading on our catechists and for imparting to them that amount of education, general knowledge and theological training which we regard as needful both to qualify them for the sacred ministry and to enable them afterward to sustain its dignity among their own country men.' A divinity school was started by CMS at Madras in 1838 and by SPG at Sawyerpuram in 1844, followed by many regional schools at different places. By the middle of the nineteenth century there was moderate provision for theological training in various institutions.

The beginning of this century saw a great advance in higher theological education, strengthened by the passing of Serampore College Act in 1918. The United Theological College was founded in 1910; Serampore was upgraded and Bishop's College reorganised in 1918; United Theological College was affiliated in 1919. A new theological college was started by the Methodists in 1922 (since 1931 known as Leonard Theological College). Ranson sums up this trend as follows: 'The revival of the Serampore Charter and the system of collegiate affiliation associated with it have thus exerted a far-reaching influence upon the development of higher theological education and made a distinctive and most valuable, if limited, contribution to the building up of our indigenous ministry, adequate to the needs of the Church in India' (*op. cit.*, p. 59).

The N.C.C. of India requested the Lindsay Commission on Christian Higher Education (1930-31) to include the higher theological college also in its study. The Commission recommended that 'the resources of theological colleges be used for co-operative research in applied Christianity, that higher theological colleges, while retaining their character as separate institutions with their own life of devotion and discipline, be located in close proximity to the central colleges, where research and extension are carried on and that there should be co-operation of all colleges in an area.

Evaluation and Guidelines for Future

Within about two decades of working under the Serampore Act, there seems to have arisen dissatisfaction with the system and attempts were made to reform, a trend which has continued ever since.

The Tambaram meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1938 observed that the present condition of theological education is one of the greatest weaknesses of the whole Christian enterprise and so called for study and action in this regard. The NCCI set up a commission in 1940 to investigate and report on the situation in India, on the following:

- (a) Whether the existing relationship between theological and general education is satisfactory;
- (b) Whether the present curriculum and the period of training for the various grades of theological training need to be revised;
- (c) Whether the existing facilities in various language areas are sufficient for the training of the different types of ministers needed;
- (d) Whether adequate provision is being made for the care (spiritual and intellectual) of the men after they leave the seminary;
- (e) What possibilities there are for giving higher theological training in the vernacular;
- (f) Whether adequate provision is being made to supply national teachers who could impart training in specialised branches of theological education.

Relationship with general higher education, relevant curriculum, meeting of ministerial needs, seminary ethos, medium of instruction, continuing education and the question of national staff were, we note, the concern of the day. A careful and thoroughgoing report of the study was finally edited by Ranson in his memorable volume, *The Christian Minister in India*. The study suggested a plan for theological education in India, which included:

- (1) Establishing one united theological school in each main language area of the country organised on the possible basis of co-operation (p. 194);
- (2) Following the ideal that 'theological schools should attempt to do one work and one work only, and to do it thoroughly well', that being the purpose of training men for the work of the ordained ministry (p. 201);
- (3) Introducing a comprehensive curriculum;
- (4) Encouraging Indian teachers to pursue advanced study, mostly in the West but also creating opportunities here.

The report also pointed out the responsibilities of the Church in recruiting, supporting, supervising and continuous caring for ministers. Ranson called the concluding chapter of his report, 'The Strategy of

Concentration' and said: 'The example of our Lord and the experience through the centuries of His Church sustain the conviction that the strategic point in the missionary task is the preparation of Christian pastors and teachers. The concentration of adequate resources at this point is, humanly speaking, the only guarantee both of the Church's stability and of its power to meet widening opportunities' (p. 271). The Indian Church owes a debt of gratitude to Ranson for highlighting the strategic importance of theological education in the Church's mission in India.

M. H. Harrison continued Ranson's study at the request of the Board of Theological Education of the NCCI and a report was published under the name *After Ten Years* (1957). This study reports an increase of the number of theological institutions from the twenty-seven which Ranson enumerated to thirty-three. While the Ranson plan of co-operation had been achieved only in certain regions, Harrison reiterated the continuing validity of this plan. He also called for the strengthening of colleges with adequate personnel and finances, and stressed the need for an advanced centre for research. The interest in advanced research has continued since then and has become one of the important concerns leading to the formation of the Indian Theological Research Institute.

The Increasingly New Concerns in Theological Education

By the middle of the century new concerns were felt, centred around the purpose of theological education in the Indian context and its relationship to the Church's ministry. A meeting of representatives of different theological colleges and Church leaders at Poona in 1942 organised by the NCCI is important in this respect. Father W.Q. Lash issued the following threefold call as the purpose of the conference (A. M. Ward, *Our Theological Task*, C.L.S., Madras, 1946, p. ix):

- (i) To meet the need for training in theology for other than pastoral purposes, that men may be equipped to give a reason for the hope that is in them and that in the circles of the wise in India today the Gospel may be stated with confidence.
- (ii) To examine how original research in theology may be encouraged in India, so that the Indian Church may bring its full contribution in this sphere.
- (iii) To answer the demand for a presentation of the eternal Gospel of Christ in contact with Indian thought and life and not in foreign guise.

We note here three emphases in relation to the purpose of theological education, which go beyond that of the purely pastoral:

- (a) Theological—to help the student to grapple with and to understand the full implication of the Gospel so that he could effectively communicate the same;

- (b) Ecumenical—to help the Indian Church to make its theological contribution to the world Church;
- (c) Missiological—to indigenize theology and so to make the eternal Gospel meaningful to the Indian situation.

The Serampore Senate and the Board of Theological Education of the NCCI have been at the same time concentrating on the form of theological education to suit the needs of ministry in the Church.

In 1956 the Senate of Serampore confirmed the findings of this consultation, regarding the purpose of theological education in India as expressed in a statement made regarding the L.Th. and B.D. courses. It was said that the L.Th. was to be oriented towards the pastoral ministry with a bias on practical training, and the B.D. was to be academically oriented for special functions.

The Church in India as in other countries has in the past been served by persons both from India and from overseas of high general education and equipped with a theological training of the graduate type. Such persons have therefore been fitted especially to minister to congregations with a higher proportion of members of good general education, to commend the Gospel to the non-Christian educated world and to contribute to the service of the Church in its wider aspects. These forms of service will continue to be required and, in addition, the Church will continually need the service of those who are equipped to teach in theological colleges, translate and revise the translation of the scriptures, to write the books, articles etc. by which the Church is built up in the faith and to commend the faith itself in its power and relevance within the context of the intellectual and other challenges of the age (*Serampore Senate Minutes*).

In spite of a note that B.D. and L.Th. are not to be understood as 'higher and lower', we note here a tendency for an elitist approach to higher theological education. In this period there was also continuous reform in curriculum, mostly of a static academic nature, adjusting the number of papers or changing the scope of each course, with a centralised evaluation system. The traditional theological disciplines were faithfully taught, though it must be mentioned that courses on Indian Christian theology or Indian Church history remained optional, which meant that they were not taught at many places, till very recently.

The New Role of Theological Colleges

A new era in theological education in India began in 1968 when an All India Consultation was convened in Bangalore jointly by the Board of Theological Education of the NCCI and the Senate of Serampore in which many Church leaders, theologians and lay leaders participated, as the consummation of many such previous meetings in individual colleges and regions. The findings were published in a report, which, I am sorry to say, has not received sufficient attention in the Church and theological colleges.

A. This report attempted to relate theological education more dynamically to the ministry of the Church in India and defined what ministry means today:

It means sharing India's search for new meaning, for new humanity, not only ministering to men's poverty but also seeking to lead them out of poverty.

It means specialised ministries to men in urban and rural situations.

It means an open-minded encounter with the renascent religions of India, a readiness to discern values in them and to minister to the intellectual and religious aspirations of those involved in this renaissance, along with its cultic expressions.

It means learning to minister to men who face new and unprecedented decisions in their political, economic, intellectual, religious and cultural life.

In and through all this involvement with the world, the Church's primary concern is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and to learn how to draw men to Him who alone is able to bring meaning and wholeness (p. 7 of the report).

B. The role of theological colleges in theological thinking was defined in the following ways:

- (i) 'The theological colleges must understand that they are not merely 'training institutions', but are directly involved as servants of the Church's mission. In the field of theological thinking the colleges must stimulate the Church, must be *with* the Church, and be *ahead* of the Church.'
- (ii) The colleges must be involved in pioneer theological thinking. This, if done, it was noted, will create an inevitable tension with traditional theological thinking.
- (iii) For such pioneer thinking, the colleges need freedom. 'The college staff and students must be free to ask questions of the widest variety, and to give adventurous answers, in a spirit of responsible freedom. . . In the serious and committed search for truth there must be freedom even to go beyond traditionally accepted formulations.'
- (iv) The source of theology is not traditions, but the living Christ and the Holy Spirit. Therefore there is no need to depend too much on Western theological traditions and old Church Fathers. Today, 'God is calling for modern fathers, for Asian Fathers and for new theological formulations.'
- (v) 'The direction of pioneer thinking should also include the pastoral function of theology. Pioneer theology is part of a people's movement, which must have as its aim the making clear to all men, whether highly educated or not, the meaning and the implications of the Christian Faith. Such theology should result in meaningful preaching, and in the authentication of the character and example of the pastor himself.'

C. The task of the college in building up the devotional life of the student also found a place in the report. Development of 'holy living', a life of discipline and discipleship, development of a genuine community life for teachers and students, development of prayer life, and helping the students to understand the Indian heritage of worship, the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of worship, the danger of compulsory stereotyped devotional exercises, were all mentioned in this regard.

D. The Consultation saw the need for building relationships with other academic communities and with academic men of other faiths. 'Distinguished scholars of other faiths should be invited as visiting lecturers to speak on their faith. . . The possibility of a special course for educated laymen open to both Christians and others should be investigated. This might be a full course leading to a B.A. or M.A. in Christian Religion or Theology, given either by the college or a university' (p. 15).

E. Another important function of a theological college is in the field of Theological Education of the Laity. This training is to be given in the context of the Church's mission today in India. 'Today in India the Church has the prophetic role of being an agent of social change in society and should be able to point out the 'new man' in India's quest for a true and responsible humanity for its people' (p. 18).

F. The theological colleges are places to train pastors. The role of the pastor is understood as a servant, a leader, a prophet, evangelist, teacher, shepherd, priest and ecumenist. There is an urgent need for revolution in teaching methods. Students must be so taught that they learn to be able to help others learn, and that they might mobilise the lay people for these ministries. The pastor's role is mainly that of an enabler.

The inclusion of subjects like pastoral psychology, pastoral counselling, sociology, anthropology to help the students to develop certain skills and the exchange of students between colleges were also suggested.

Theological Education and the Ministry of the Church

In 1969, the Kretzmann Commission Report on theological education in Andhra Pradesh was published. This report placed a great emphasis on the ministry and the need for different forms of ministry.

Our major concern should be the provision of an adequate ministry in the Telugu Church. When we use the term theological education the emphasis is on the equipping of the student from an academic standpoint. It is true that it also contains the concept of preparing the student for a particular vocation. However, what is most urgently needed is a Church and Ministry-oriented programme of education and training. The primary question must be what is the type of ministry needed in the Church and how can we best prepare men and women for it. The primary question should not be what kind of academic education will be best suited to make the student

equal to people in other professions. This does not mean that training for ministry and theological education are mutually exclusive, or that the former must of necessity be of a lower standard than the latter. But it does mean that we shape our theological education for the performance of ministry in the Church. With this emphasis it is possible to do away with the false distinction which has arisen between 'higher' and 'lower' forms of theological education. If an adequate ministry is our main concern then it is clear that one type of ministerial training can prepare people well for a particular kind of ministry, for example, in a rural area, while another type of ministerial training can prepare people for other types, such as urban ministry, or a ministry to the intelligentsia. The present situation in Andhra Pradesh and the concepts which people have of ministry must be adjusted to this understanding of the different forms of ministry (p. 11).

A follow-up of this study has resulted in identifying four forms of ministry suitable for Andhra Pradesh: a teaching ministry (theologically highly qualified); a sacramental ministry (men who are natural leaders with minimum theological training) development ministry (persons involved in service to society and concerned with socio-economic concerns); and lay voluntary ministry. (Cf. *Renewal of the Ministry in Andhra Pradesh*, Hyderabad, 1974; also the paper read by Dr V. Premasagar at Serampore Senate, 1975.) It is heartening to hear that ACTC and the Andhra Church have implemented some of these recommendations already.

It is in this context that mention should be made of a study made by J. A. Bergquist and P. Kamar Manickam in 1967-68 regarding ministry in the Lutheran Church in India. The scope of the study has been enlarged and is now published as *The Crisis of Dependency in Third World Ministries* (C.L.S., Madras, 1974). The study brings to light that only 6.5 per cent of pastoral responsibilities are carried on by ordained pastors and priests, 93.5 per cent being the responsibility of unordained people, usually theologically non-trained catechists. (The question is to be asked if the percentage is based on the number of ministers and workers serving or the number of Christians served.) The study raises questions against the present form of ministry, a 'missionary standard model', which has become dysfunctional at two critical points. 'It is often unwholesomely elitist; it is often top sidedly authoritarian.' It is into this system that theological institutions feed their graduates. Unless the whole concept of ministry is reinterpreted and rightly understood, theological education cannot fully serve the needs of the ministries of the Church. The authors make suggestions by which change can be effected (pp. 127 ff), pleading also passionately that increased priority should be given to grass-root training of Church workers.

Cultural Orientation in Theological Education

In 1970 there was a consultation arranged by the Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary in co-operation with CISRS on cultural orientation in theological education. The concern has been to relate theological education and theological thinking to the culture of Tamil Nadu, for effective communication of the Gospel for the sake of mission.

The report was published in the December issue of *Religion and Society* of that year, and the goals of theological education in this regard were formulated as follows:

- (1) To create in the student an awareness of and sensitivity to the cultural context and changes that are taking place in it.
- (2) To enable him, in the light of his faith, to discern and to evaluate them.
- (3) To enable him to participate in the shaping of the ongoing process in society.
- (4) To enable the student to understand his faith within the context and to present Jesus Christ as the Lord who gives meaning to culture and total life.

New Emphases in the Roman Catholic Church

There has been a movement in the Roman Catholic Church also to rethink the task of theological training. A 'Programme of Priestly Formation for India' was prepared by the *Commissio Technica* for Seminaries set up by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (Madras, 1970).

Importance is given to and methods are suggested for the human formation, the spiritual formation and the intellectual formation of the trainees. The Indian context is also very much stressed and indigenisation seems to be a major concern.

Concretely and in particular, our seminary studies must prove themselves relevant and meaningful in the actual Indian context. Professors are to strive assiduously to accommodate the entire doctrinal formation to the culture of the land, so that students may be able both to grasp and to express the message of Christ in forms and thought patterns of their own.

The priest should receive training to discover the treasures God has distributed among our brothers in this country, the wealth of truth and grace and spiritual experience enshrined in their rites and traditions, so as to lead them to a larger life and freedom in Christ. . . The logic of the incarnation requires that much more attention be given to a thorough appreciation of genuinely Indian values. The Church and even Christ and his message will not become acceptable as God's word to India unless they become truly incarnate in India. Training given in the semi-

nary should make provision for a larger and deeper acquaintance with and appreciation of the cultural heritage of our country in its philosophy, religion, art, science and symbolism (pp. 31 ff).

Doing Theology in Context

At the ecumenical level, the context of theology and the method of theology have been the new concerns. The findings of a workshop held at Manila arranged by the East Asia Christian Conference is published as *Theology in Action* (1972). The TEF has given considerable lead in this field, publishing the studies *Ministry in Context* (Bromley, 1972), *Learning in Context* (Bromley, 1974) and *Viability in Context* (Bromley, 1975).

Two concepts are brought to focus in these consultations and studies, namely *Involvement* and *Contextualization*, which have been reiterated by many thinkers at the present time.

M. M. Thomas writes in *The Christian Response to the Asian Revolution* (London, 1966, p. 104): 'Participation in the struggle of Asian people for a fuller human life in state, society and culture in a real partnership with men of other faiths and no faith is the only context for realising the true being of the Church exercising the Church's ministry and mission.'

The report on the workshop on Theology-in-Action (*op. cit.*, p. 2) asked the question: 'Can responsible theology be "done" anywhere but in the midst of a concrete involvement in the sufferings, conflicts and struggles of the poor and oppressed?' It further observed that 'weak involvement produces weak theology; cool involvement produces cool theology; hot involvement produces hot theology' (p. 25).

New experiments at different institutions are being attempted on this principle. There are in some colleges programmes concerned with involvement in the Church, such as teaching missions; theological education for the laity; involvement in the secular world, for example with students living in slums; political action programmes; involvement in the religious world, for example through dialogue with persons of other faiths; participation in religious meetings; and involvement in the world of higher education like Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary programme with Madurai University, educational conferences in co-operation with AIACHE, and mass education programmes. Such involvement is found useful in conscientizing the students, the Church and the society.

This type of involvement is necessitated by two factors, pedagogical and missiological. There can be no adequate learning without doing. Practical training can no more be an extra in the pastoralia department, but must be an integral part of the whole theological enterprise. Theology now moves away from being statement-oriented to being action-oriented, from learning only from tradition to learning by involvement. It is by a process of action and reflection, that one *learns*, rather *does*, theology. In the process of such involvement, one

grapples with the meaning of the Gospel and discovers insights hitherto unknown. And in this process theology also helps to release the power of the Gospel. Thus involvement moves on from pedagogical level to missiological level, empowered by the Gospel to be redemptive.

The second concept which is having its impact on theological education is *contextualization*. So far we have been talking about indigenisation which was mainly concerned with cultural values, religious thinking, ways of worship, style of life and so on. Different aspects have been attempted at different times.

But the emerging perspective is different. While indigenisation is backward looking and static, contextualization is dynamic, pushing forward, discerning what is good in the present and in the past. It is an attempt to be relevant to the context. It implies the response of the Gospel to traditional culture but also to the new processes, such as secularization, technology, liberation struggles. It is not adaptation to the context, nor dilution of the Gospel. While the text continues to be decisive, contextualization emphasises the 'capacity to respond to the context in theological education', and is necessitated by the nature of the Gospel itself. 'Contextualization of the Gospel is a missiological necessity' (*Ministry in Context*, p. 30). In theological education, contextualization has four concerns, four marks of responsive faithfulness, as the TEF study has pointed out:

- (1) Missiological contextualization: Does a theological institution seek to develop a style of training which focuses upon the urgent issues of renewal and reform in the churches, and upon the vital issues of human development and justice in its particular situation?
- (2) Structural contextualization: Does a theological institution seek to develop a form and structure appropriate to the specific needs of its culture in its peculiar social, economic and political situation?
- (3) Theological contextualization: Does a theological institution seek to do theology in a way appropriate and authentic to its situation? Does it offer an approach to theological training which seeks to relate the Gospel more directly to urgent issues of ministry and service in the world? Does it move out of its own cultural milieu in its expression of the Gospel?
- (4) Pedagogical contextualization: Does a theological institution seek to develop a type of theological training which in its approach attempts to understand the educational process as a liberating and creative effort? Does it attempt to overcome the besetting dangers of elitism and authoritarianism in both the method and the products of its programme to release the potential of the servant ministry? Is it sensitive to the widespread gap between the 'academic' and the 'practical'?

Theological Education for a Ministry of Liberation

The Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore, held a consultation on 'Pastoral Ministry for Liberation' and published its report in 1973. The report of the National Study Consultation held in 1974 at Yeotmal on the theological training of the whole Church and new patterns of training is also now available. In these consultations, there is a great emphasis on the purpose of Christian ministry, as a ministry of liberation. The Bangalore consultation formulated its concern as follows: 'How can a pastor be equipped to meet the challenge of our changing society, to be an agent of change rather than a protector of the *status quo*?' (*Pastoral Ministry for Liberation*, Bangalore, p. 7). The Indian Church has been traditionally concerned exclusively with social service and relief work. The call of the day is to move on to areas of social action for a just society, for liberation of people from all kinds of oppression. If the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of liberation, then the Church must actively engage itself in this ministry and theological training must train the ministers and the whole Church to this end. This means that we must train the Church to be at points of human struggles and aspirations. The Yeotmal Consultation observed: 'To do theology means to be present at the bleeding points of humanity. It means today to organise the unorganised and exploited, to enter into the area of value orientation, to strive for distributive justice, and for education for liberation. If we do this, we are at the place where we really ought to be, i.e. at the points of real needs and struggles. Being anywhere else is a betrayal of our calling' (*Report*, pp. 5, 6).

According to Ross Kinsler of Guatemala, the structure of theological education should contribute to contextualization. The methodology of theological education should achieve conscientization and the context of theological education should be liberation. He says:

We all recognise that the heart of the Gospel is redemption and redemption is synonymous with liberation. Western Christianity has narrowed and distorted this concept so that it means primarily liberation of the individual from personal sin and condemnation. But the historical basis of this concept is the liberation of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt, an event which was at one and the same time religious, cultural and political. We live in a time when this message of liberation is anxiously awaited by people everywhere. This message will not be effective if it is proclaimed by political demagogues or by intellectual theorists or by religious elites. It must be proclaimed by God's people through their liberating action in the world (*Learning in Context*, p. 47).

Conclusion

The new trends in the Indian theological scene can be summarised as attempts at contextualization, conscientization and liberation. There is the new awareness that theological education is for the whole Church and so many institutions have started effective programmes for

the theological formation of the laity. Theological extension has come to play a significant role in this laity education and also offers a contextualized alternative form for formal theological education. The concerns of the former Senate for quality of education, of the Board of Theological Education of the NCCI for the needs of the Church's ministry, of the Indian Theological Research Institute for advanced theological research have now been brought together into the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore, breaking long years of structural tradition. The staff institutes, curriculum revisions, freedom given to colleges to evolve their own curricula point towards the recognition of the need for urgent reform in teaching methodology. The new trends in co-operation and fellowship not only among theological institutions affiliated and non-affiliated to Serampore but also with the study centres and research institutes point to fruitful co-operation between theology and other disciplines like sociology, politics, economics. This will definitely prove to be very fertile for meaningful theological education in India. These trends are sufficiently compelling to assert that in this last quarter of the century theological education in India is entering a very creative and fruitful period of its history.