



*CETELA's (Comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuemenica Latinoamericana y Caribeña)
Sixth Meeting in Cumbayá, Ecuador, July 2000.*



This quarterly journal aims to encourage sharing and cooperation among all who are working for the renewal of the churches through programmes of ministerial formation. All correspondence regarding MINISTERIAL FORMATION should be sent to the address below. Submission of relevant articles, reports and news is welcomed. Items in this journal do not necessarily reflect the views of the WCC and its programme on Education and Ecumenical Formation (formerly Programme on Theological Education).

P.O. Box 2100, 150, route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

MINISTERIAL FORMATION – JULY 2001 – No. 94

Letter from the Staff	3
Notes on Contributors	5
Introduction: Pedagogy and Vocation in Theological Education <i>Jose Duque</i>	7
Globalization: A Challenge for Theological Education – A Third World Perspective <i>Wati Longchar</i>	8
Escuela Vida: Perspectiva Pedagogica en las Escuelas Biblicas Populares <i>Fernando Torres Millán</i>	12
The School of Life: A Pedagogical Perspective on the People's Bible Schools <i>Fernando Torres Millán</i>	17
Pedagogia Teofeminista: Una Pedagogia-teológica Emergente con Vocación Liberadora y Transformadora <i>Anaida Pascual Morán</i>	22
Theo-feminist Pedagogy: An Emerging Theological Pedagogy with a Liberating and Transforming Vocation <i>Anaida Pascual Morán</i>	33
Learning to Learn Slowly: Vocation, Transformation, and Theological Education in the Context of Globalization <i>Sturla J. Stålsett</i>	43
Between the Seminary, the Sanctuary and the Streets: Reflections on Alternative Theological Education <i>Ched Myers</i>	49
Third Congress of Asian Theologians – Yogyakarta, Indonesia, August 6-11, 2001	53
Tribute to a Great Educator and Pioneer in Inter-Faith Dialogue: Rev. Dr. Stanley Jedidiah Samartha	56

This periodical is indexed in the ATLA Religion Database, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Dr., 16th Flr, Chicago, IL 60606, E-mail: atla@atla.com, WWW: www.atla.com/.

MINISTERIAL FORMATION is produced four times a year by the staff of Ecumenical Theological Education, Cluster on Issues and Themes. Subscription: US\$ 15 (or equivalent) for one year, although free copies are available for those persons or institutions, who, for whatever reason, cannot make a payment. Please note that in the interest of economy, receipts are not issued for payments made by cheque or bank draft unless specifically requested. Thank you for your understanding.

Cover photo: CETELA's (Comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuémica Latinoamericana y Caribeña) Sixth Meeting in Cumbayá, Ecuador, July 2000.

LETTER FROM STAFF

Dear friend and colleague,

Transforming theological education in the context of globalization has become an urgent matter in the life and mission of theological educators. In this July issue we listen to a few theological educators who invite us to critically, imaginatively and creatively wrestle with how Christians learn and teach theology in its diverse disciplines.

In light of this daunting task of attempting to provide quality, contextual and relevant theological education, we encourage our readers and especially theological educators, church and ecumenical leaders to send articles that can be included in future issues of *Ministerial Formation* on topics and methodologies that they would like to see discussed in theological institutions and churches. We are particularly interested in how theological institutions and programmes are integrating aspects of our lives that have been neglected in theological discourse such as economics, health and healing (HIV/AIDS pandemic), overcoming violence and peace-making, ecumenism, inter-faith dialogue, theological and pastoral voices from women, indigenous people, people living with disabilities and other minority-oppressed groups.

We would appreciate double-spaced typed articles of 5,000 words on diskette or email. Please remember to include a sentence on your biographical note. The articles should be edited with complete information on endnotes and bibliography. Articles can be written in French, Spanish and English.

Finally, we are pleased to announce the appointment of the long-awaited ETE Consultant for the Asia and Pacific Region, Dr. Wati A. Longchar, of Nagaland in North East India. Wati has worked for many years as a theological educator and administrator (dean) at the Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, Assam, India. Wati is working 50% for WCC-ETE Programme and 50% for the Faith, Mission and Unity of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA). Wati's office is c/o Eastern Theological College, Rajabari, Jorhat - 785 014, ASSAM, North East India, Telephone: 91 376 329 146, Fax: 91 376 330 041, E-mail: longchar43@hotmail.com or longchar@sancharnet.in

We are looking forward to hearing from you through well-informed articles, reports and news.

Nyambura Njoroge

Magali Roussel

Françoise Faure



Wati Longchar
ETE Consultant for Asia and Pacific
Based at the Eastern Theological College, Assam, North East India



José Duque
ETE Consultant for Latin America and the Caribbean
Based at the Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano, San José, Costa Rica

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Jose Duque is the WCC- ETE Consultant for the Caribbean and Latin America and Professor of Missiology and Ecclesiology at the Latin American Biblical University (UBL), San Jose, Costa Rica.

Wati A. Longchar is the WCC-ETE Consultant for Asia and the Pacific Region and for the Faith, Mission and Unity of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA).

Fernando Torres Millán is professor at the Dimensión Educativa en Bogotá, Colombia, in the area of formation and popular education.

Anaida Pascual Morán is Professor at the Department of Graduate Studies, the Faculty of Education, University of Puerto Rico.

Sturla J. Stålsett is the Co-ordinator of the International Network in Advanced Theological Education, University of Oslo, Norway.

Ched Myers is a theological popular educator based in Los Angeles. He is the author of several books, most recently the co-author of *Say to This Mountain: Mark's Story of Discipleship* (Orbis, 1996).

**INTRODUCTION:
PEDAGOGY AND VOCATION IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

Jose Duque

In this issue, we would like to share a new perspective on Pedagogy and vocation in theological education. Within the framework of the system of worldwide globalization, which makes use of technological development to the extent that there are those who consider them to be one and the same, it is necessary to return to the topic of pedagogy and vocation in transforming theological education. The following are some of the reasons for rethinking these themes within the framework of worldwide globalization:

Globalization is not the same thing as technological development. It is centralizing, expansionist, and vertically oriented. Globalization is a systemic instrument that facilitates the growth of the free market economy. Technological development can be equally useful for human development if we channel it in that direction. Unfortunately, today's world is fascinated by the system of globalization and technology seems to have been co-opted and consumed by this same system. Theological education can, and must, also reclaim technological resources for alternative and transforming ends. The internet as well as the "virtual classroom" can be tools to be placed at the disposal of theological education and other sciences focused on human development.

Technological development is not the answer in and of itself. There are those who are using video, the internet, virtual classrooms and other technological tools but with the same old centralized and vertical academic pedagogies. Therefore, a pedagogical critique is urgent as we look to technological resources. Technology in and of itself is not the answer (Cf. *MF*, 75, 1996, Workshop IV).

The timely question then, from the perspective of an alternative and transforming education, is how this education participates in the strengthening of active subjects who are developing their own formative path? We know that a large number of educational programs don't go beyond repetition and the passive transmission of knowledge. Of course, today this educational concept facilitates globalization. Globalization does not make formation accessible to those who have no acquisitive capacity. Theological education must be accessible to all.

Participation, even very active participation, is not enough. Much of the participation that takes place in classrooms, workshops, seminars, and churches is nothing more than simple activism that seeks to facilitate the repetition and transmission of preformulated concepts. Participation is construction. It is creation from a particular context and culture, in this case formative creation, making us perfect "unto all good works". Participation is also inclusiveness. i.e. how does a transforming pedagogy and vocation allow the participation of all the excluded groups (Indigenous, women, black, people with disabilities etc.)? How do we provide space for their concerns in the creation of theological reflection and teaching methodologies or issues such as HIV/AIDS, which we did not have to deal with 20 years ago?

Historic vocation. In traditional theology, vocation has been spiritualized and hierarchalized. Thus vocation is often institutional, has nothing to do with the realities of this world, and is reduced to the clergy. But vocation from the Biblical perspective of the gifts and ministries that flow from the Spirit, includes the ministry of all believers. Vocation is a transforming task that comes to us from the very creation narratives. It is a holistic task, a transforming task, that has to do with peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

A transforming vocation requires a transforming pedagogy. We believe this is a time that allows us to develop this necessary mutual tie between pedagogy and creation. Vocation as a concrete task for personal, theological, ecclesial and social transformation, must create its own pedagogy driven by the horizon to the Kingdom of God and God's justice. These are some ideas with which to begin the debate on a timely and urgent topic in our schools of theology.

**GLOBALIZATION :
A CHALLENGE FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
A THIRD WORLD PERSPECTIVE**

Wati A. Longchar

Globalization has come to be a principal characteristic feature of the new millennium and it has become an inescapable reality in today's society. No community and society can remain isolated from the forces of globalization. The cyber society has come with a bang. The computer culture is spreading rapidly. Even in a poor country, coca-cola, cars, cosmetics and clothes seen in the cities and towns hide the reality of poverty and suffering of the people. We have almost reached a point to believe that "We cannot reverse the trend; we can only go forward!" We need to ask: What is the role and priorities of theological education in this fast changing situation?

Positive Aspects

Today globalization has led to the opening up of national boundaries to international trade and global competition. Developments linked with globalization have opened up boundless possibilities for human development, enormous new opportunities and enhanced the quality of life for many people in the third world countries. For example, the production of goods for consumption on a massive scale has brought not only a better and more varied goods available to every citizen, but also has brought enormous change in people's value system. Those who have and are able to buy the goods have attained greater comfort, speedier communication and faster travel. Information technology has converted the world into a "global village". The events far-off lands are easily accessible in our living rooms. This process has promoted exchange of ideas and customs between peoples of different countries. And this has been reciprocally beneficial. For this reason, it is irrational on our part to reject it outright; an uncritical attitude towards it is unwise. We need to affirm the positive side of this development and make use of the many opportunities it offers for our development.

Negative Aspects

Many people in the third world look at this process with much apprehension. They look at the global village as an order or mechanism for greater economic exploitation and political oppression. Globalization has many dimensions: economic, technological, political, cultural, social, environmental, ideological, etc. Each of them affects the local either positively or negatively. Let us see some of its negative aspects:

a) Economic aspect: The world market has emerged as the dominant economic force. The development of all third world countries has to be related to the world market, which in turn is controlled by the market of the industrialized countries. The multinationals and other institutions with the help of the state control all development processes. The foreign debt works as an instrument to control the development process in these countries. Terms and conditions on the loans are imposed on them, which make them almost impossible to develop on their own terms. An unfettered growth of the multinationals and the emphasis on foreign trade are not conducive to a development pattern that is oriented to the basic needs of the people. The production needs and patterns are often determined by the market forces. It is unfortunate that they seldom take into consideration the basic needs of the people. The production of the goods for export or for the conspicuous consumption of the rich becomes the market force today. In the globalized free market, the only people who count are those who have goods to sell and those who have the money

to buy. This in turn drives many to the margins of the economic life. The small entrepreneurs have very little chance of survival in this system. Only the stronger and successful competitors survive. The weak, the poor and the inexperienced ones are pushed to the outer rims of the society. Therefore, globalization works for the benefits of the rich and the poor have become commodities since they are used as cheap labour.

b) Political aspect: The development of the third world countries with the help of industrialized countries has many political implications. The process of globalization from the beginning was fraught with competition, conflict, domination and exploitation. The opening up of the national boundaries for free market has led to a neo-colonialism allowing not only economic domination, but also political domination over the poor nations. For example, the policies of liberalisation and withdrawal of subsidies, which are the conditions imposed by the IMF and the World Bank, have resulted in the curtailing of the power of the State. Many third world countries are forced to abandon its social responsibilities. While the state is rendered relatively powerless, it has become a mere tool of the rich and the powerful. Its sole function is to suppress any organized resistance by oppressed people of the unjust system.

c) Social aspect: The market ideology of globalization gives a notion that people who cannot afford goods and live in rural areas are considered uncivilized and backward. They feel isolated from the privileged groups. This wrong notion creates an inferiority complex among the poor rural masses that urges them to migrate to the cities and towns, leading them to involve in all sorts of anti-social activities. This social exclusion is deeper than the economic level. The profit-oriented free market has also let loose the present day social realities. Consumerism and materialism have overwhelmed modern society affecting every aspect of life. Society has become impersonal, mechanical and inhumane. The present society and its penchant for unprincipled living, selfishness, corruption, opportunism, violence are the product of consumerism and materialism.

d) Cultural aspect: Globalization involves cultural invasion. Technology is power. It becomes the carrier to those systems and ideologies (values and cultures) within which it has been nurtured. The whole idea of progress and development is decisively shaped by western life-style, worldview and its structures. A mono-culture is fast emerging. When we say “mono-culture”, it means the undermining of economic, cultural and ecological diversity and the acceptance of a technological culture developed in the West and the adoption of its inherent values. The tendency is to accept the efficiency with productivity without any concern for compassion or justice. The indigenous culture and its potential for human development and the earth from destruction are vastly ignored.

e) Ecological aspect: The pattern of development that we uphold today is capital-intensive. An ever-increasing economic pattern and the expansionary character of mechanization and massive industrialization of the economic world-order are reducing the non-human segments of creation to mere status of object without any intrinsic value. People simply view nature from the point of view of its usefulness to humans and ready to be exploited according to their wishes. The sustaining power of the earth for nurturing life is being destroyed. The whole planet is at threat. Thus, the ecological catastrophe today is the direct product of modern industrial and technological growth, and the modern lifestyle.

f) Impact upon indigenous people: With the accelerating deterioration of the global economic and political situation, the indigenous people face further marginalization and graver threats of continuity and sustainability. In many parts of the world, the indigenous people have become the victims of big reservoirs, mega projects, wild life sanctuaries, mines, industries, etc. They are forcefully evicted from their ancestral land and the abode of the various spirits they worship using repressive measures and often without

proper compensation. They are simply ignored, silenced and despised. For example, in India, 100,000 people are going to be displaced by the Sardar Savovar Project in Gujarat, 60-70% of whom are indigenous people. Around 130,000 are expected to be displaced by the Narmada Sagar Project in Madhya Pradesh of whom 65-70% are indigenous people. It is said that there are currently 1,600 dams under construction in 42 countries worldwide. According to the World Bank, the construction of 300 large dams each year will mean the displacement of more than 4 million indigenous people from their territories. Likewise, in the name of development, the indigenous people who are already powerless and exploited are further reduced to powerlessness and bondage. It is disheartening to see that indigenous people are made environmental prisoners in their own land.

g) Religious aspect: Threatened by the forces of globalization and the ideas of secularism, some sections in all religions assert a fundamentalist posture. Under the pretext of an identity struggle, the fundamentalists, particularly in the majority community, want to achieve their dominance by controlling the political process through militant organizations. Religion is used for political control. This process distorts both politics and religion. Moreover, the role of religion moves towards mere private affair, without accepting any social responsibility. Indeed, faith has lost its community anchorage.

Challenges for Theological Education

We have looked into some of the positive and negative aspects of globalization. While affirming the positive contributions, we need to be critical of the problems linked to globalization process and affirm certain priorities for theological education. The relevance of future theological education lies in addressing the complex issues that emerge from the process of globalization.

Considering today's complex realities, theological education needs to move into new areas that have not been part of the traditional realms of knowledge. For example, globalization, ecological crisis, genetic engineering and ethnicity – all these areas have been outside of our traditional schemes of theological inquiry, though they all impinge on our life and relationship. However, many of the theological educators are ill-equipped to meet the challenges of new technology and cyber culture. We need recourse to disciplines that specialize in them. A theological education that does not take into consideration of these issues will have no impact. A clear methodology and perspective have to be worked out. Some of the challenges that we need to face seriously are:

a) A perspectival change: For any theological inquiry we need to have a perspective. From which perspective do you look at the discipline that matters in theological education? For too long, an elitist perspective has been dominant. The perspective of subaltern groups like indigenous people and women and their struggle for new life has been overlooked in our research. A very clear scripturally directed perspective is the subaltern perspective. An addition of one subject like feminist theology or indigenous people's theology in the existing courses is not sufficient. We should aim to integrate the perspective of the marginalized people in the whole theological curriculum. We will discover an alternative view of life and vision of human bond to one another and to the earth in the voices of the marginalized people. This new vision of life sustaining values has to be re-discovered and integrated in our theological research.

b) An inter-disciplinary approach: The present character of theological education is too much disciplinary approach and compartmentalized. This approach alone is not sufficient in the third world context. The reality of our experience is complex and we need a confluence of tools to unravel its significance. We need to develop an inter-disciplinary character of our study and research.

c) A transformative approach: Gaining new knowledge should help us in the transformation of our lives. It is sad that theological education has fallen into the trap set by the philosophy of modern educational system. Education has become skill oriented. That is why the theological education has been reduced to mere abstract and intellectual exercise. Theological education cannot and should not be reduced to mere skill orientation. It has to be directed towards transformation. Praxis-thinking challenges us into thinking that occurs apart from critical involvement ends up in constructions of theories about existence that keep us away from the real world. We need rigorous theoretical reflection, but it should emerge from the practice that is directed to transformation. In order to do theological praxis we need social and cultural analysis of our context. They should form an integral part of theological curriculum.

d) Protection of diversity: Plurality is an integral part of the Creator. No culture, no community is excluded from this God's structure of creation. All are unique in their own ways and, therefore, no one has the right to dominate and suppress the other. Life is protected and it can grow to its fullness only by affirmation of the beauty of diversity. Therefore, a perspectival change in theological education to understand and appreciate the diverse religious and cultural resources of human kind as the common property of humanity becomes crucial. A positive approach especially to the people of other faiths, culture and languages can provide a new paradigm of pedagogy to theological education.

Conclusion

We cannot find easy answers to these complex problems. Theological education needs to help people to discern justice and speak for justice for the victims of globalization. It also needs to constantly engage in helping people to search for an alternative vision of human bonding to one another and to the whole of God's creation. It is also important to recognize that an indispensable role of theological education in the context of globalization is to strengthen the prophetic ministry of the church so that it can become the salt, light and leaven against the ill-effects of globalization.

**ESCUELA VIDA:
PERSPECTIVA PEDAGÓGICA EN LAS ESCUELAS BÍBLICAS POPULARES**

Fernando Torres Millán

“Jesús mismo se acercó
y caminaba con ellos”
Lc 24:15

Nadie explica por qué las “escuelitas” bíblicas gustan tanto a los pobres de la ciudad. Allí hay un misterio encerrado. El mismo que ha llevado a la gente de los barrios a inventar espacios de encuentro, oración y solidaridad mutua alrededor de la Palabra de Dios. Lo cierto y lo fascinante, es que cada vez hay más personas buscando estudiar e interpretar la Biblia a partir de las preguntas, clamores y desafíos que la vida urbana tan profundamente les va planteando.

Sin duda, aquí en estos procesos intersubjetivos transcurre una formación teológica y social de base, no académica, cuyo eje central es el círculo hermenéutico Vida-Biblia-Vida. Pero ¿cómo se desarrolla? Intentaré una aproximación pedagógica que brinde algunos elementos para la discusión desde la perspectiva dialógica e intercultural, y desde la experiencia personal de acompañamiento a las escuelas bíblicas de los barrios marginados en el sur de Bogotá. Para ello seguiré el texto bíblico de Emaús (Lc 24:13-35) como hilo conductor e inspirador de la presente reflexión.

1. Conversaciones y andaduras

El relato tiene como punto inicial una conversación y una andadura: “*iban dos de ellos a un pueblo llamado Emaús... conversaban entre sí sobre todo lo que había pasado*”. Ambas situaciones comunicativas son cruciales en la actual discusión sobre educación popular en América Latina¹ y qué decir, en la intervención sobre las relaciones y las interpretaciones eclesiales y sociales de quienes participan en los proyectos pastorales y educativos. Son cruciales en cuanto mediaciones pedagógicas en donde se llevan a cabo procesos intersubjetivos de definición de problemas y de estrategias de acción para enfrentarlos. A través de ellas “los actores construyen la realidad de una determinada manera; interpretan y anticipan las intenciones y motivaciones del otro; promueven entendimientos mutuos, establecen compromisos de acción frente a los problemas definidos”². Mediante una *pedagogía divina*³ el Resucitado enseña el discipulado de la Palabra, a través del cual, se produce un cambio de una situación inicial de “ojos vedados” (v.16) a una situación deseada y buscada de “ojos abiertos” (v.31). La comunidad discipular hace camino de lo que “es” a lo que “pueden” y “valen” sus ocultas posibilidades. Esto es precisamente “Emaús” como metáfora educativa. Allí efectivamente se desarrolla un proceso educativo que incide “en la organización y distinciones que operan en los sistemas interpretativos de los sujetos”⁴. El cambio esperado es de naturaleza político-religiosa, pues “se interviene en los conocimientos o saberes cotidianos de los grupos, es decir en su sistema cognitivo, para producir nuevos saberes y distinciones que cualifiquen sus criterios de priorización y de interpretación de lo problemas que los afectan”⁵.

Las escuelas bíblicas populares trabajan sobre “la premisa de que los sujetos actúan sobre su realidad conforme a la representación que estos tienen de ella”, de tal manera que “los cambios que se promueven aspiran a producir una verdadera “subversión cognitiva” que transforma la visión del mundo de los individuos y de los grupos con los cuales trabajan las instituciones”⁶... son los “ojos abiertos” de la comunidad discipular de Emaús... sólo que en Emaús y en las escuelas bíblicas “la subversión” operada,

además de cognitiva, es afectiva e ideológica. Si no hay una manera diferente de interpretar la realidad los sujetos no van a producir ningún cambio significativo en ella. El proceso intersubjetivo buscará ante todo la construcción colectiva de esa “manera diferente” de interpretación que nos propone el Evangelio; para ello serán indispensables las conversaciones y las andaduras como veremos a continuación.

2. Escuchas y acercamientos

El relato introduce nuevos elementos pedagógicos, típicos en la práctica educativa de Jesús: “*se acercó y siguió con ellos*”. Es un acercamiento para escuchar, acompañar y aprender. El Maestro, en el silencio y la escucha crítica, se hace primero discípulo de la comunidad discipular, para luego conversar y desarrollar un proceso educativo junto a ella. Ya Paulo Freire insistía en su “Pedagogía de la autonomía” que enseñar exige saber escuchar, “Si en verdad, el sueño que nos anima es democrático y solidario, no es hablando a los otros, de arriba hacia abajo, como si fuéramos portadores de la verdad a ser transmitida a los demás, que aprendemos a *escuchar*, sino es *escuchando* que aprendemos a hablar *con ellos*. Solamente quien escucha paciente y críticamente al otro, habla *con el...*”⁷. Aprendizaje indispensable para desplazar la actitud y el discurso autoritario e impositivo por parte de quien pretende enseñar a otros. Hablar y escuchar exige la disciplina del silencio acompañante en la educación dialógica. Quien ha aprendido a hablar escuchando “es *cortado* por el silencio intermitente de quien, hablando, calla para escuchar a quien, *silencioso*, mas no *silenciado*, habla”⁸. La maestra o el maestro que escucha discipularmente está abierto al habla del otro, al gesto del otro, a las diferencias del otro; “Aceptar y respetar la diferencia es una de esas virtudes sin la que la escucha no se puede dar (...) Si me siento superior al diferente, no importa quien sea, me estoy rehusando a escucharlo o escucharla”⁹. La diferencia del educando se expresa en la “lectura del mundo”, como producción cultural, con la que llega y entra al proceso educativo. Respetar esta lectura significa tomarla como punto de partida en un proceso intersubjetivo para la producción de conocimientos. Aquí nos encontramos con la dimensión ecuménica e intercultural de la educación dialógica, en donde, por lo mismo, no se puede dar el traspaso o la transmisión de criterios o contenidos “de un lado a otro” como si la “lectura del mundo” del otro”, o los “saberes previos” como llaman los constructivistas, fueran “errados”, “carentes” o “incompetentes”. Inferimos, por lo tanto, una particular pedagogía del acercamiento que pasa por la escucha discipular, como condición de toda práctica ecuménica e intercultural a la manera de “Emaús”.

La legitimidad de las hermenéuticas bíblicas específicas se sustenta en la legitimidad de las identidades populares, desde donde el texto es leído e interpretado. La diversidad de lecturas y el diálogo entre ellas “permite el enriquecimiento con la lectura del/a otro/a y no cerrarnos en nosotros/as emitiendo ecos sordos/as”¹⁰. Escuchas y acercamientos mutuos que ya hacen parte del discipulado de la Palabra en las escuelas bíblicas populares, más aún, cuando estas se desenvuelven en contextos urbanos tan propicios para el desarrollo de la *hibridación* cultural. En las escuelas bíblicas urbanas como en los textos bíblicos se vive intensamente “distintas mezclas interculturales”¹¹, lo que hace aún más desafiante la práctica democrática de la escucha discipular frente al, cada vez mayor, impacto de la globalización cultural. La especificidad cultural-religiosa es reconocida y fortalecida, así como su interrelación y articulación con otras identidades aliadas.

3. Preguntas y respuestas

Los actores educativos han creado el “ambiente” pedagógico propicio para preguntar. Cierta confianza ha crecido en el camino mientras se escucha, se acompaña y se aprende discipularmente. Ahora el Maestro pregunta: *¿Qué conversaciones son éstas que tienen entre ustedes mientras caminan, y por qué están tristes?* Las subjetividades involucradas abren la interlocución en donde lo que más importa no es la

información que, aparentemente se “transmite” de un lado a otro, ni los resultados tan ansiosamente esperados, “sino lo que ocurre y realiza en dicho intercambio”¹², puesto que en últimas, de ello va a depender el éxito o el fracaso del proceso educativo. La intervención propiciará “un proceso inferencial de interpretaciones a través del cual los participantes expresan, adoptan, transforman y coordinan sus maneras de priorizar y de analizar el problema (...) la nueva información es integrada por los sujetos a una red de categorías que le son familiares contrastándolas y asimilándolas a través de un proceso cognitivo de tipo interpretativo”¹³. No se trata sólo de intercambiar mutuamente saberes y categorías de interpretación mediante preguntas y respuestas, sino que a través de ello los interlocutores crean un “espacio” afectivo para “tejer” la proximidad y la reciprocidad necesarias, si se quiere que las nuevas informaciones sean efectivamente integradas por los sujetos. Tenemos una zona de desarrollo próximo –ZDP- según Vigoski, en donde, mediante la negociación cultural, se diseñan “rutas” de interacción para el aprendizaje, “La negociación consiste en desafiar a los individuos para que accedan a puntos de vista (conceptuales y prácticos) diferentes a los que poseen; pero son puntos de vista asequibles y por ende existentes dentro del “espacio” de la Zona de Desarrollo Próximo”¹⁴, pues de lo que se trata es de aprender algo nuevo a partir de lo ya aprendido. De ahí que cuando Jesús pregunta “¿Qué cosas?” la respuesta da cuenta de un aprendizaje teológico acumulado a partir de una experiencia excepcional (vv. 19-24). Es lo que Martinic llama “red de contenidos y categorías de priorización familiares”, los que a su vez “forman parte de esquemas de pensamiento y acción más amplios y son producto del curso mismo de la interacción”¹⁵.

Pero Jesús no sólo pregunta por “saberes y categorías de interpretación” sino también por el “estado afectivo” de los interlocutores. Al fin y al cabo el diálogo educativo es algo más que un intercambio cognitivo, allí “afloran emociones, convicciones, saberes, intereses, sin que podamos prever ni su aparición, ni su secuencia, ni su intensidad”¹⁶; lo que nos hace pensar en la insuficiencia del mero “diálogo de saberes”, pues éste “no es sólo sobre algo, sino fundamentalmente con alguien (...) En el diálogo, las razones están cargadas de emociones y las emociones cargadas de razones”¹⁷. Es así como en las escuelas bíblicas populares los conocimientos están “amarrados” a los sentimientos. El saber y el sentir se articulan en los “ejercicios de sensibilización”, en la rica simbología que acompaña cada encuentro y en los espacios de oración donde se celebra y bendice lo aprendido. El proceso educativo no sólo busca cambiar en los sujetos las representaciones de la realidad sino también la afectividad y la espiritualidad respecto a ella.

4. Claves e interpretaciones

Una vez que el Maestro “sabe las cosas” que llenan de tristeza el corazón de la comunidad discipular, aporta su “lógica de colaboración interpretativa generada en la situación dialógica de la conversación”¹⁸: “Y empezando por Moisés y continuando por todos los profetas, les explicó lo que había sobre él en todas las Escrituras”. Explicación que tuvo una introducción “poco agradable”. Podemos decir que la negociación cultural-religiosa que se está operando pasa indispensablemente -aunque no suficientemente- por un desequilibrio conceptual que posibilita el aprendizaje, “¿No era necesario que el Cristo padeciera eso y entrara así en su gloria?”. La estrategia didáctica “opone” unos “contra argumentos” desequilibrantes, pues “Sólo poniendo en crisis lo que se piensa (no siempre para eliminar, también para complejizar y enriquecerse), es posible crear una actitud receptiva frente a otros puntos de vista”¹⁹. Está dada la oportunidad para introducir la perspectiva hermenéutica por parte del educador (“otro punto de vista”). La comunidad sabe lo acontecido pero “no entiende”, dentro de su esquema sentipensante, el porqué y el para qué de tales cosas; “sin claves nada tiene acceso al sentido: los datos permanecen caóticos y casuales”²⁰. Se echa mano a un criterio interpretativo “extra-conversacional” (la Escritura) pero adoptándolo al contexto situacional específico. La Biblia dice algo al hoy de la comunidad discipular, a partir de lo cual es posible entender lo acontecido. Es la “clave” de acceso al sentido para que la interpretación de la realidad deje de ser “caótica y casual”. Los actores educativos “anticipan e imaginan

las posibilidades de interpretación del otro y cooperan con el interlocutor en la construcción de una racionalidad común que les permite negociar conforme a causalidades y maneras de pensar plausibles para el otro²¹. De aquí en adelante cabe esperar acuerdos de intervención en las prácticas, a partir de esa “racionalidad común” construida intersubjetivamente. ¡Ya están dadas todas las herramientas para hacerlo! Son los proyectos y compromisos concretos de interacción a favor de la vida, que nacen y se desarrollan desde cada escuela bíblica popular.

5. Reconocimientos y narrativas

El relato nos propone un desenlace pedagógico “feliz”. Los sujetos asumen compromisos comunes una vez potenciadas y desarrolladas sus ocultas capacidades y posibilidades... “*Entonces se les abrieron los ojos y le reconocieron, pero él desapareció de su lado*”... La pedagogía dialógica consigue empoderar y visibilizar a la comunidad discipular como sujeto protagónico del nuevo proyecto común. El proceso ha favorecido la construcción pedagógica y teológica del sujeto como es de esperar de todo auténtico proceso educativo. Las nuevas identidades constituida intersubjetivamente se expresan en una particular narrativa pascual como fuente de significación y dignificación... “*contaron lo que había pasado en el camino y cómo le habían conocido en el partir el pan*”... un nuevo relato capaz de “quitar, desestablecer y trastornar las totalizantes narraciones de dominación así como engendrar una infinidad de nuevos contextos para desestabilizar significados²² ... será lo que a la postre va a desatar todas las narrativas pascuales. La “apertura de los ojos” ocurre simultáneamente con la visibilización del nuevo sujeto y la concreción del nuevo proyecto postpascual.

La producción y difusión de relatos teológicos impugnadores y desestabilizadores ya hace parte de la pedagogía narrativa en las escuelas bíblicas. El saber teológico popular da cuenta de la irrupción y consolidación de diversos sujetos eclesiales y sociales emancipatorios. Las narrativas teológicas orales emergen como las únicas formas de teología narrativa que pueden incluir y expresar las experiencias, las memorias y las utopías de tales subjetividades. Quizá por ello la narrativa crítica tenga tanto que ver con la pedagogía dialógica del Resucitado.

Obvio que las escuelas bíblicas populares no planifican linealmente la dinámica dialógica como parece en este texto, entre otras cosas, por la contingencia propia de la construcción interactiva en la que intervienen múltiples factores, muchos de ellos adversos, que escapan a nuestro control y conducción, más aún si este tipo de acción educativa se desarrolla en escenarios tan imprevistos e inciertos como los colombianos; lo que no quiere decir que dejemos todo el proceso a los avatares, muchas veces afortunados, de la intuición y la improvisación. Siempre necesitamos planificar los procesos y diseñar las metodologías, pues al fin y al cabo “El mejor plan no es para seguirlo al pie de la letra, sino para tenerlo como punto de referencia y estar dispuestos a cambiarlo cuando sea necesario²³”.

A lo mejor ya tenemos algunos elementos para sospechar porqué las escolitas bíblicas gustan tanto a los pobres de la ciudad... quizá cuando la Escuela es Vida y la Vida es Escuela emerge, como en Emaús, aquellos aprendizajes de fe comprometidos con “la construcción de lo humano para de allí, tantear el Espíritu de Dios²⁴”.

¹ Ver por ejemplo la antología recogida en “El diálogo en la educación. Perspectivas teóricas y propuestas didácticas” *Aportes* (2000) pp.107

- ² Sergio Martinic “Relación pedagógica y conversaciones en proyectos educativos de intervención social” *La Piragua* 11 (1995) p. 13
- ³ Concilio Vaticano II *Constitución “Dei Verbum”*, Madrid, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1970, p. 127
- ⁴ Martinic. Op. Cit., p. 13
- ⁵ *Ibíd.*, p. 13
- ⁶ *Ibíd.*, p. 14
- ⁷ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia da autonomia: saberes necessários à prática educativa*. São Paulo, Paz e Terra, 1996, p. 127
- ⁸ Freire, op.cit., p. 132
- ⁹ *Ibíd.*, p. 136
- ¹⁰ Juan Jacobo Tancara, *Líneas para atravesar la hermenéutica bíblica. A propósito del IV curso andino sobre hermenéuticas específicas*. La Paz, Rebilac-Andina, 1998.
- ¹¹ Vera Maria Candau “Mudanças culturais e redefinição do escolar: tensões e buscas” *Contemporaneidade e Educação* 3 (1998) p. 19
- ¹² Martinic. Op. Cit., p. 17
- ¹³ *Ibíd.*, p. 17
- ¹⁴ Germán Marino “Una propuesta didáctica para operacionalizar el diálogo cultural” *Aportes* 53 (2000) p. 48
- ¹⁵ Martinic. Op. Cit., p. 17
- ¹⁶ Lola Cendales “El diálogo: recorrido y consideraciones a partir de la experiencia” *Aportes* 53 (2000) p. 98
- ¹⁷ *Ibíd.*, p. 99
- ¹⁸ Martinic. Op. Cit., p. 17
- ¹⁹ Mariño. Op. Cit., p. 44
- ²⁰ Juan Luis Segundo, *La historia perdida y recuperada de Jesús de Nazaret. De los sinópticos a Pablo*. Santander, Sal Terrae, 1990, p. 176
- ²¹ Martinic. Op. Cit., p. 17
- ²² Peter McLaren, *Pedagogía crítica y cultura depredadora. Políticas de oposición en la era posmoderna*. Paidós, Barcelona, 1997, p. 115
- ²³ Cendales. Op. Cit., p. 99
- ²⁴ Francisco Mena Oreamuno “La formación teológica como búsqueda de Dios” *Vida y Pensamiento* 20,2 (2000), p. 121

**THE SCHOOL OF LIFE:
A PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE SCHOOLS***

Fernando Torres Millán

“Jesus himself came near
and went with them”
Lk 24:15

No-one can explain why the city's poor people like the “little Bible schools” so much. It is something of a mystery. The same mystery that has led the people of the slums to create spaces where they can meet regularly for prayer and mutual solidarity around the Word of God. What we do know and find fascinating is that an increasing number of people are seeking to study and interpret the Bible using the questions, protests and challenges posed so profoundly by urban life as a starting point.

There is no doubt that in these inter-subjective processes a grass-roots theological, social and non-academic formation is going on, centred around the hermeneutical circle, Life-Bible-Life. But how does it develop? I will attempt a pedagogical approach that will present some elements for discussion from a dialogical and intercultural perspective, based on my personal accompaniment of Bible schools in the marginalised slums of south Bogota. To help me, I will use the biblical text of Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35) as the thread and inspiration for this reflection.

1. Conversations and journeys

The story starts with a conversation and a journey: “two of them were going to a village called Emmaus...talking with each other about all these things that had happened”. Both these communicative situations are crucial to the current discussion about popular education in Latin America¹ and, we could add, to the discussion about the church and social relations and interpretations of those participating in pastoral or educational projects. They are crucial in the sense that they are pedagogical mediations through which the inter-subjective definition of problems and the action strategies needed to face them take place. Through them, “the protagonists construct reality in a particular way; they interpret and anticipate the intentions and motives of the other; encourage mutual understanding and establish commitments to do something about the problems they define”.² Using a *divine teaching*³, the Risen Christ teaches the Word to his disciples, and in the process a change occurs from the initial situation when “their eyes were kept from recognising him” (v.16) to the desired and sought-after situation when “their eyes were opened” (v.31). The disciples journey from what “is” to the hidden possibilities of what they “can do” and what is “worth doing”. This is precisely the educational metaphor of “Emmaus”. In effect, an educational process takes place that influences “the organisation and distinctions that are operating in the interpretative systems of the subjects”.⁴ The desired change is politico-religious in nature, because “it has an impact on the everyday knowledge and information of the groups, that is to say, on their cognitive system, to produce new information and differentiations that qualify the criteria they use for prioritising and interpreting the problems that affect them”.⁵

The popular Bible schools work on the premise that “subjects act on their reality in accordance with their perception of it”, in such a way that “the changes they promote aspire to produce a real ‘cognitive

* Document translated to English by WCC Language Department.

subversion' that transforms the vision of the world of the individuals and groups with whom the institutions work"⁶ ... they are the "open eyes" of the Emmaus disciples... with the difference that, in Emmaus and in the Bible schools, the "subversion" is emotional and ideological as well as cognitive. If there is no different way of interpreting reality, the subjects will not significantly change it. More than anything else, the inter-subjective process will seek collectively to construct this "different way" of interpreting things that the Gospel proposes; that is why conversations and journeys are indispensable, as we shall see below.

2. Drawing near and listening

The story introduces new pedagogical elements that were typical of Jesus' educational practice: "*Jesus himself came near and went with them*". He drew near to listen, accompany and learn. The Teacher, silent and listening with a critical ear, first joins the community of disciples, before going on to converse and unfold an educational process with the disciples. Paul Freire insisted, in his "Pedagogy of Freedom", that a teacher must know how to listen, "If the dream that attracts us really is democratic and in solidarity with others, it is not by talking down to people, as though we were the standard bearers of truth and responsible for passing it on to everybody else, that we learn how to *listen*; but rather, it is in *listening* that we learn to speak *with them*. Only those who listen patiently and critically to the other, speak *with them*..."⁷ This is an essential lesson to counter any authoritarian, domineering attitudes and discourse on the part of those who claim to teach others. Speaking and listening require the discipline of silence in accompanying any educational dialogue. Whoever has learned to speak by listening "is *interrupted* by the intermittent silence of someone who, while speaking, falls silent so as to listen to someone who speaks, *silently*, but not *silenced*".⁸ The teacher who listens like a disciple is open to what the other has to say, to the other's gestures, to the differences of opinion held by the other; "Without the virtue of accepting and respecting differences, listening cannot take place (...) If I feel superior to the other, whoever that might be, I am refusing to listen to him or her".⁹ The differences in the students' opinions are expressed in their "reading of the world", the product of their culture which they bring with them into the educational process. To agree with this interpretation means accepting it as the starting point in an inter-subjective process that produces knowledge. This is where we meet the ecumenical and inter-cultural dimension of dialogical education, in which, for the same reason, the transfer or transmission of criteria and content cannot happen "from one to the other" if the "interpretation of the world of the other, or their "existing knowledge", as the constructivists call it, are taken to be "mistaken", "lacking" or "incompetent". Just like in "Emmaus", we therefore infer a particular pedagogy of drawing near and listening, as disciples, to be a prerequisite for ecumenical and inter-cultural action.

The legitimacy of specific biblical hermeneutics is based on the legitimacy of the identity of the people who are reading and interpreting the text. The diversity of interpretations and the dialogue between them "permits each interpretation to enrich the other rather than being closed up in ourselves and sending out dull echoes".¹⁰ A mutual willingness to draw near and listen is something which already forms part of the discipleship of the Word in the popular Bible schools; even more so in the cities, which offer such a favourable environment for the development of cultural *hybridisation*. In the urban Bible schools, as in the Bible, "a mixture of different cultures"¹¹ is intensely present, making the democratic practice of discipular listening an even greater challenge, faced as it is with ever-growing cultural globalisation. Cultural-religious specificity is recognised and strengthened, as is its inter-relation and link with other allied identities.

3. Questions and replies

The actors in this educational process have created a favourable pedagogical "environment" in which to ask a question. They have established a certain level of confidence along the way, while they listened,

accompanied each other and learned in the way of disciples. Now the Teacher asks: “*‘What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?’ They stood still looking sad*”. The subjective nature of the matters at issue colours the beginning of the conversation, in which the most important thing is not the information that is apparently “communicated” from one side to the other, nor the so anxiously awaited result, “but what occurs and takes place in the said exchange”¹², given that, in the end, it is on this that the success or failure of the educative process depends. The intervention favours “an inferential process of interpretations through which the participants express, adopt, transform and co-ordinate their ways of prioritising and analysing the problem (...) the new information is absorbed by the subjects into a set of categories that is familiar to them, contrasting and assimilating them through an interpretative cognitive process”.¹³ It is not only a question of exchanging knowledge and categories of interpretation through a sequence of questions and replies. The interlocutors also create an emotional “space” in which they weave the closeness and reciprocity required for them effectively to absorb the new information. According to Vigoski, this is a Near Development Zone (ZDP), in which the participants use cultural negotiation to design “routes” of interaction so they may learn. “The negotiation consists in challenging the individuals to agree to points of view (conceptual and practical) that are different from those they hold themselves; but which are points of view that are accessible and therefore exist within the Near Development Zone”¹⁴. It is all about learning something new on the basis of existing knowledge. That is why when Jesus asks, “*What things?*”, the reply carries a theological learning accumulated through an exceptional experience (verses 19-24). It is what Martinic calls “a set of familiar contents and categories of prioritisation”, which, in turn, “form part of broader schemes of thought and action that result from interaction itself”.¹⁵

But Jesus not only asks for “information and categories of interpretation”, he also asks about the “emotional state” of his interlocutors. In the final analysis, the educative dialogue is something more than a cognitive exchange. It is a place in which there can blossom “emotions, convictions, information, interests, the appearance, sequence and intensity of which we cannot predict”¹⁶; and that makes us think about the insufficiency of mere “dialogue of information”, for dialogue here “is not only about something, but fundamentally, with someone (...). In the dialogue, the motives are charged with emotions and the emotions charged with motives”.¹⁷ It is as if in the popular Bible schools, knowledge is “tied” to the feelings. Knowledge and feelings connect in the “sensitivity exercises”, in the rich symbolism that accompanies each meeting and in the moments of prayer where we celebrate and bless what we have learned. The educative process not only seeks to change the representations of reality held by the subjects, but also their feelings and spirituality.

4. Keys and interpretations

Once the Teacher “knows about the things” that fill the hearts of the disciples with sadness, he brings to bear the “logic of interpretative collaboration generated by the dialogue of conversation”¹⁸: “*Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in the scriptures*”. An explanation which had a “rather disagreeable” introduction. We can say that the cultural-religious negotiation that is operating passes essentially – although not sufficiently – through a conceptual upset that makes learning possible, “*Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?*” The didactic strategy “opposes” destabilising “counter-arguments”, for “Only by provoking a crisis in thinking (not always to eliminate it, also to make it more complex and to enrich it), is it possible to create a receptive attitude to other points of view”.¹⁹ The opportunity is there for the educator to introduce the hermeneutical perspective (“other point of view”). The community knows what happened but “does not understand”, within its feeling-thinking system, the why and wherefore of such

things; “without *keys*, it does not have access to the meaning: the information continues to be chaotic and fortuitous”.²⁰ Use is made of an “extra-conversational” interpretative criterion (the Scriptures) but it is adapted to the specific situation. The Bible *says something* about the *today* of the discipular community, which makes it possible to understand what has happened. It is the “key” that gives access to the meaning so that the interpretation of reality ceases to be “chaotic and fortuitous”. The actors in the educative process “anticipate and imagine the possible interpretations they may make and cooperate with the interlocutor by constructing a common rationale that allows them to negotiate with each other in accordance with plausible causalities and ways of thinking”.²¹ From then on, it is a question of waiting for agreement on practical action based on an inter-subjectively constructed “common rationale”. All the required tools are now present! They are the concrete projects and commitments to life-enhancing interaction that are born and develop in each popular Bible school.

5. Identifications and narratives

The story proposes a pedagogically “happy” ending. The subjects together make commitments, once their hidden capacities and possibilities have been brought out and developed... “*Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him; and he vanished from their sight*”... The dialogical pedagogy succeeds in empowering the community of the disciples and showing them to be the protagonists in a new common project. The process has enabled the pedagogical and theological construction of the subject, as is to be expected from any authentic educative process. The new inter-subjectively constituted identities express themselves in a particular Easter story as a source of meaning and dignity... “*Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread*”... a new story able to “remove, destabilise and overturn the totalising narrations imposed by domination and engender a multitude of new contexts to destabilise meanings”²² ... it is what, in the end, is going to unlock all the Easter stories. The “opening of eyes” occurs at the same time as the new subject emerges and the new post-Easter project takes shape.

The production and diffusion of challenging and destabilising theological stories is part of the narrative pedagogy used in the Bible schools. Popular theological knowledge reflects the diversity of emancipated subjects that are emerging and taking their place in church and society. The oral theological narratives emerge as the only forms of theological narrative that can include and express the experiences, memories and utopias of such subjects. Perhaps that is why critical narrative was so much part of the dialogical pedagogy of the Risen Christ.

Obviously, the popular Bible schools do not plan the dialogical dynamic in the linear way that appears in this text. Among other things, this is because of the contingent nature of interactive construction, which is affected by numerous factors, many of which are adverse and beyond our control and guidance, especially if this type of educative action takes places in such unpredictable and uncertain settings as those in Colombia; this does not mean to say that we leave the whole process to the often fortunate chance of intuition and improvisation. We always need to plan the processes and design the methodologies, but, when all is said and done, “Even the best plan should not be followed to the letter, it should be no more than a reference point that we should be ready to change when necessary”.²³

At best, we now have some elements to suspect why the poor people of the city like the little Bible schools so much... perhaps it is when School is Life and Life is School, as at Emmaus, that those lessons of faith appear - committed to “constructing the human and from there, seeking to know the Spirit of God”.²⁴

¹ See, for example, the anthology in “El diálogo en la educación. Perspectivas teóricas y propuestas didácticas” *Aportes* (2000) pp.107.

² Sergio Martinic “Relación pedagógica y conversaciones en proyectos educativos de intervención”.

³ Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution “*Dei Verbum*”, Documents of Vatican II, ed. Austin P. Flannery, Eerdmanns, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1984, pp. 750 - 765.

⁴ Martinic. Op. Cit., p. 13

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14

⁷ Paulo Freire, “Pedagogia da autonomia:saberes necessários à prática educativa.” São Paulo, Paz e Terra, 1996, p. 127

⁸ Freire, op.cit., p. 132

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 136

¹⁰ Juan Jacobo Tancara, “Líneas para atravesar la hermenéutica bíblica. A propósito del IV curso andino sobre hermenéuticas específicas.” La Paz, Rebilac-Andina, 1998.

¹¹ Vera Maria Candau, “Mudanças culturais e redefinição do escolar: tensões e buscas” *Contemporaneidade e Educação* 3 (1998) p. 19

¹² Martinic. Op. Cit., p. 17

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 17

¹⁴ Germán Marino, “Una propuesta didáctica para operacionalizar el diálogo cultural” *Aportes* 53 (2000) p. 48

¹⁵ Martinic. Op. Cit., p. 17

¹⁶ Lola Cendales, “El diálogo: recorrido y consideraciones a partir de la experiencia” *Aportes* 53 (2000) p. 98

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99

¹⁸ Martinic. Op. Cit., p. 17

¹⁹ Mariño. Op. Cit., p. 44

²⁰ Juan Luis Segundo, “La historia perdida y recuperada de Jesús de Nazaret. De los sinópticos a Pablo.” Santander, Sal Terrae, 1990, p. 176

²¹ Martinic. Op. Cit., p. 17

²² Peter McLaren, *Pedagogía crítica y cultura depredadora. Políticas de oposición en la era posmoderna*. Paidós, Barcelona, 1997, p. 115

²³ Cendales. Op. Cit., p. 99

²⁴ Francisco Mena Oreamuno, “La formación teológica como búsqueda de Dios” *Vida y Pensamiento* 20,2 (2000), p. 121

**PEDAGOGÍA ‘TEOFEMINISTA’:
UNA PEDAGOGÍA-TEOLÓGICA EMERGENTE
CON VOCACIÓN LIBERADORA Y TRANSFORMADORA**

Anaida Pascual Morán

EMERGE UNA PEDAGOGÍA-TEOLÓGICA...

Desde la relacionalidad teología-pedagogía-género... En esta reflexión, exploro algunas de las evoluciones, postulados y prácticas que, desde mi experiencia vivida como educadora percibo han ido surgiendo y configurándose en una *pedagogía-teológica feminista latinoamericana y caribeña de la liberación*. En particular, intento darle cierta coherencia a un diálogo y acompañamiento pedagógico que previamente inicié junto a sus *Artífices*. Me refiero a un grupo de colegas teólogas y educadoras que por años han ido creando en sus sueños y construyendo en su praxis esta pedagogía liberadora. Se trata pues de un intento incipiente de teorización y sistematización de una praxis emergente que va tomando rostro y voz propia.

Propongo el vocablo Artífices – en contraposición a Sujeto – para expresar mis reservas en torno a su significado e inclusividad y para connotar el enorme y dinámico potencial para la construcción histórica y creadora de cada ser humano. Además, porque como tantas otras mujeres, me resisto a que se me denomine Sujeto o, peor aún, Sujeta.

Se trata de una pedagogía amplia e inclusiva que podríamos ubicar en la frontera entre el quehacer teológico-pedagógico, la teología de la liberación, las teorías de género y las pedagogías liberadoras. Pedagogía que intenta *pedagogizar* y *generizar* la teología – a la vez que lucha por *teologizar-se* y *generizar-se* a sí misma. *Pedagogía-teológica de género* que – desde una perspectiva freireana de lo *inedito viable* y de una *vocación para la humanización* y para *ser más* – ante la actual *distorsión de la vocación*, se vislumbra, por su clara vocación transformadora de la *deshumanización*, como una *pedagogía de la esperanza*. Pedagogía que – en aras de que sea amplia e inclusiva en sus alcances y ámbitos, mas precisa en su nombre – podríamos llamar *pedagogía teofeminista*.

Dar cuenta de la experiencia vivida, compartiendo lo aprendido... El fin de nuestra reflexión converge con uno de los propósitos principales de la sistematización – la conceptualización de la práctica educativa. Propósito explicitado con claridad por el educador Roberto Antillón...

Uno de los propósitos principales de la sistematización es la conceptualización de la práctica ..., para poner en orden todos los elementos que interviene en ella; no un orden cualquiera, sino aquel que organice el quehacer, que le dé cuerpo, que lo articule en un todo, en el que cada una de sus partes ubique su razón de ser, sus potencialidades y sus limitaciones... ; una ‘puesta en sistema’ del quehacer, en la búsqueda de coherencia entre lo que se pretende y lo que se hace. (Antillón, 1991. En Jara, 1994)

Podría describir el propósito de esta reflexión sistematizadora, en palabras del educador Oscar Jara, ya que expresan con precisión lo que con modestia aspiro ...

...aproximarnos a la sistematización desde lo que la misma riqueza de las experiencias demanda que se haga: apropiarse de la experiencia vivida y dar cuenta de ella, compartiendo lo aprendido. (Jara, 1994, 19)

Una propuesta sistematizadora de ‘momentos’ en ‘cinco tiempos’ nos guía. Jara nos ofrece en su libro *Para sistematizar experiencias*, una *Propuesta en cinco tiempos*. *Tiempos* configurados por diversos elementos constitutivos que signa como *momentos* – con una misma intención en torno a la praxis: “*teorizar sobre ella para transformarla*”. Parte su propuesta de un marco epistemológico dialéctico. Marco que rechaza el reduccionismo de la orientación positivista y las metodologías que de ella han emanado – y que monopolizan los análisis en gran parte de las disciplinas. Mi reflexión sigue este valioso esquema, adaptado a las circunstancias particulares de la *pedagogía-teológica de género* que en ella privilegamos. (Jara, 1994, 92.)

Momento de amalgamar marcos de interpretación. Amalgamo al esquema de Jara, mi propio marco pedagógico teórico y valorativo. Marco interpretativo que he configurado en mis tres décadas de caminar educativo. Dicha propuesta está centrada en una serie de preguntas-ejes transversales – a las cuales respondo en diversos *momentos*. *Momentos* que surgieron de forma natural en mi proceso de búsqueda al intentar sistematizar la experiencia vivida. Echemos un vistazo a lo sistematizado hasta el momento – conscientes de sus grandes limitaciones. Y conscientes de que mi modesto intento es sólo el inicio de una *reflexión sistematizadora* que deberá ser diversa, continua y conjunta.

PRIMER TIEMPO: EL PUNTO DE PARTIDA

Antes de iniciar cualquier proceso de sistematización de una experiencia vivida, señala Jara que deberemos responder a una pregunta clave – *¿Quién y por qué sistematiza?* Indica además, que esta reflexión, debe estar precedida por dos criterios: que – en alguna medida – hayamos participado de la experiencia y que tengamos *registros* sobre la misma. En un *Primer Tiempo*, intento responder a esta pregunta, dando cuenta sobre mis motivaciones. Como punto de arranque, narro en tres momentos la historia de cómo quedé inmersa en esta reflexión – que, como toda experiencia de vida, amalgama historia y biografía.

Un primer momento: *¿Quién y por qué reflexiona? ¿Quién y por qué sistematiza?* Ciertamente, los caminos de Dios suelen ser misteriosos. Aunque nunca he tomado un curso formal de teología, en los pasados años he transitado con frecuencia por sus senderos. En la década de los 90’s, por ejemplo, participé en Ecuador, Cuba, Costa Rica, Estados Unidos y Nicaragua – en calidad de *asesora pedagógica* – en diversos diálogos, talleres y seminarios con teólogos y teólogas.

Un segundo momento: Profundización y acompañamiento pedagógico. En años recientes, estos inefables caminos me han llevado a incorporarme al diálogo directo con un colectivo de profesoras-teólogas de América Latina y el Caribe. A fines de junio de 1998, participé en el panel *Pedagogía y Género*, durante la celebración del 75 Aniversario de la Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana (UBL) en San José. Del 23 al 27 de enero de 2000, acompañé a un nutrido grupo de educadoras-teólogas – en el Segundo Encuentro-Taller de Profesoras de Teología – *Pedagogía, teología y género* – auspiciado por la UBL y la Comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuménica Latinoamericana y Caribeña (CETELA), en El Crucero, Nicaragua. Y en julio de 2000, acompañé la *Sexta Jornada de CETELA* en Cumbayá, Ecuador – en la cual iniciamos un diálogo transversal, con miras a establecer los vínculos entre la educación teológica y los diversos rostros de las teologías emergentes – incluyendo el de la mujer.

Un tercer momento: ‘Hechizada’ por la teología. En el encuentro en Nicaragua, tuve el privilegio de ser bautizada por algunas de mis amigas profesoras y teólogas como *teóloga afectiva*. Esto de los afectos parece ser, como diríamos en el Caribe – *cosa seria* – pues proviene más del *corazón* que de la *razón*. Afirmaba el gran educador brasileño Paulo Freire, que si bien él no era ni pretendía ser teólogo, había sido “*hechizado por la teología*”. Y que este hechizo hacía que muchas de sus ideas y metáforas

pedagógicas liberadoras convergieran con un quehacer teológico – igualmente liberador. Sospecho que de alguna manera, yo también he sido *hechizada* por las teologías emergentes – en particular por la teología feminista de la liberación. Esto no me sorprende. Pues al igual que sus *Artífices* – profeso una espiritualidad libre y una pedagogía emancipadora. (El término lo acuñó la querida amiga/colega Mireya Baltodano de la UBL.)

SEGUNDO TIEMPO: REFLEXIÓN DE FONDO – ¿POR QUÉ PASÓ LO QUE PASÓ?

Jara nos exhorta a hacer una reflexión crítica de fondo para clarificar *¿Por qué pasó lo que pasó?* En un *Segundo Tiempo*, he variado y particularizado esta pregunta, a partir del contexto de una pedagogía emergente y ahora lee: *¿Por qué urge y surge una pedagogía teofeminista de la liberación?* Deliberadamente, hago esta parte de la reflexión en primera persona plural femenino. Y en dos *momentos ‘de mujer’* – momentos en que hemos sido *marcadas* y posteriormente, *llamadas* ...

Un primer momento ‘de mujer’: Porque hemos sido *marcadas*... Somos las mujeres herederas de un violento legado. Legado que la socialización desigual y forzada y las *masculinidades hegemónicas* nos han dejado a la mitad de la especie. Legado que ha sido denunciado por teólogas feministas de la liberación (y uno que otro teólogo con *conciencia de género*) de todos los continentes. La teóloga brasileña Ivone Gebara, ha descrito dramáticamente las huellas indelebles que nos ha heredado esta *cultura de obediencia y culto a la autoridad*. Cultura violenta que nos ha conducido a creer que el hombre sabe más sobre Dios y la Biblia que las mujeres y que debemos rendirle culto por su sabiduría superior. Es precisamente esta socialización patriarcal diferenciada por oposiciones binarias esencialistas – *femenino/masculino* – la que, según Gebara, nos ha *marcado* por siempre. (Connell, 95 – Gebara, 1998, 70.)

Es también esta oposición ontológica la que, de acuerdo a la teóloga estadounidense Rosemary Radford Ruether, la que impide nuestra humanidad plena y la que *no* nos permite una relación auténtica con *Lo Divino*. Es esta construcción socio-cultural la que, según las teólogas feministas latinoamericanas, nos lleva a una visión mariológica de la *feminidad*. Visión que nos hace creer que la naturaleza femenina se encarna idealmente en los roles de virgen, esposa y madre. Visión distorsionada que clama por un abordaje deconstrutor, mediante la atención explícita de asuntos concretos pertinentes a la vida cotidiana de la mujer – tales como la corporeidad, la sexualidad, los derechos reproductivos y la maternidad. (Ruether, 1983, 18. En Vuola, 1997, 115. Tepedino & Aquino, 1998 – Entrevistadas en Támez, 1989, 104-105.)

Un segundo momento ‘de mujer’: Porque hemos sido *llamadas*... Y precisamente por haber sido *marcadas*, las mujeres también hemos sido *llamadas*. Llamadas a denunciar y a anunciar. A de-construir y a re-construir. Llamadas a aportar a la liberación de la vida desde la re-construcción de nuestra propia subjetividad. En esta denuncia y anuncio, de-construcción y re-construcción, la pedagogía teológica feminista latinoamericana y caribeña de la liberación ha jugado, juega, y jugará, un rol crucial. Será imprescindible pues que comencemos a teorizar su praxis para conocerla, socializarla y multiplicarla. Que comencemos a legitimar sus sueños. Que comencemos a bautizarla. A darle nombre y razón de ser a su quehacer. (Vuola, 1997, 132, 138, 175 & 213.)

TERCER TIEMPO: LAS PREGUNTAS INICIALES: ¿QUÉ Y PARA QUÉ QUEREMOS SISTEMATIZAR?

En este *Tercer Tiempo*, profundizo en las preguntas de rigor que Jara sugiere ... *¿Para qué queremos sistematizar? ¿Qué experiencias queremos sistematizar? ¿Qué aspectos centrales de esas experiencias nos interesa sistematizar?* A partir de estas interrogantes, clarifico mi propósito, delimito las experiencias

a recuperar y preciso los ejes de sistematización, las fuentes para la profundización y el marco metodológico.

Un primer momento: Desde la ‘sabiduría acumulada de la praxis’ – un intento sistematizador. Comparto con muchas educadoras y educadores la convicción de que en la llamada *sabiduría de la práctica* reside la genuina semilla para la vocación educativa transformadora. Y es que en esta *sabiduría acumulada* habitan aprendizajes inéditos. Aprendizajes que, una vez visibilizados, nos permiten teorizarlos y proyectarlos en un ciclo continuo freireano de *acción-reflexión-acción*. Oscar Jara esta igualmente convencido de ello. De aquí, que afirme que “*la fuente de nuestros paradigmas está en la experiencia acumulada*”, y que nos confronte con nuestra responsabilidad de extraer aprendizajes de estas experiencias tan *cargadas de enseñanzas*. Y que nos exhorte a que realicemos profundizaciones teóricas progresivas sobre nuestras experiencias educativas.

Un segundo momento ... De acudir a fuentes para la profundización. Para extraer e inferir los principios y dimensiones teológicas y de género que motivan la *praxis pedagógica teofeminista*, deberíamos contar con innumerables registros y documentos. Sin embargo, como la naturaleza de este esfuerzo es incipiente y limitada, acudo sólo a las fuentes más cercanas para *abrir* este proceso. Acudo a los diálogos en los que he tenido el privilegio de participar junto a teólogas y profesoras – y a los documentos que se produjeron en los mismos. Acudo a un puñado de sus publicaciones, que contienen resonancias pedagógicas significativas. Acudo además en búsqueda de iluminación a la pedagogía de género, a diversas pedagogías liberadoras y a varias iniciativas reales de sistematización de experiencias educativas, como la del *Equipo de Teología Popular* del colectivo *Dimensión Educativa* de Colombia. Paralelamente, articulo ideas e interpretaciones pedagógicas propias – con la licencia que me da la *experiencia vivida*, la *sabiduría acumulada de la práctica* y mi afinidad/compromiso con la labor de mis colegas teólogas. También acudo a algunos de mis escritos – sobretudo a aquellos que he compartido en talleres y encuentros – y que giran alrededor de los entrecruces entre *pedagogía, teología y género*.

Un tercer momento... De seleccionar las preguntas-eje. Para re-construir la historia de la *pedagogía teofeminista*, dar cuenta de sus aspiraciones y evoluciones y extraer algunas enseñanzas que nos proyecten al futuro, he configurado innumerables *preguntas-eje* – que no incluyo por limitaciones de espacio. Las mismas subyacen como guías de mi reflexión en el *Cuarto y Quinto Tiempo*.

CUARTO TIEMPO... DE RESCATE Y ARTICULACIÓN / RECUPERACIÓN DEL PROCESO VIVIDO.

Con miras a rescatar, ordenar y articular esta pedagogía en emergencia, en este *Cuarto Tiempo*, categorizo e interpreto las observaciones y recomendaciones configuradas en los relatorios de los grupos de reflexión en el Segundo Encuentro-Taller de Profesoras de Teología en Nicaragua. Observaciones y recomendaciones que representaron las voces de unas cuarenta-y-tantas profesoras, divididas en los siguientes grupos de trabajo: Educación Cristiana, Biblia, Consejería Pastoral, Teología y Teología Pastoral. Recupero y sistematizo el proceso vivido en siete momentos.

Un primer momento: Articulación de los fines, aspiraciones y vocación de la pedagogía teofeminista. Según las educadoras y teólogas que nos reunimos en Nicaragua, la *pedagogía teofeminista* se propone ser una pedagogía-teológica de vocación liberadora, cambiante y plural que – desde una perspectiva de género – aspira brindar esperanza para todo el género humano. A esos fines, desde la docencia, la investigación, la creación, el desarrollo curricular y la acción comunitaria – se compromete a promover ... (a) la íntima relacionalidad entre teología, pedagogía y género: (b) la articulación sistemática y transversal

de la perspectiva de género; (c) la incorporación constante de los avances teóricos y metodológicos emergentes en la teoría y la pedagogía de género; (d) el surgimiento de una *conciencia de género* que atraviese todo el quehacer teológico-pedagógico institucional y académico; (e) la capacitación constante de las y los docentes en la dimensión pedagógica y en la perspectiva de género; (f) el re-pensarse continuamente a sí misma – a la luz de nuevas experiencias, peregrinajes y desafíos en pedagogía y género; y (g) la socialización de sus avances hacia nuevos sectores comunitarios y eclesiales.

Un segundo momento: Rescate de sus principios, convicciones y valores. Los principios, convicciones y valores que dan razón de ser a la *pedagogía teofeminista* emanan mayormente de sus tres principales dimensiones: la *teología feminista de la liberación*, la *pedagogía liberadora* y la *perspectiva de género*. Estas dimensiones se encuentran atravesadas por innumerables mediaciones pedagógicas y matizadas en tiempo y lugar por cada contexto y coyuntura. Sobresalen en esta pedagogía principios, convicciones y valores con vocación liberadora que aluden a la inclusividad, la emancipatoriedad, la coherencia, la mutualidad, la integralidad, el relacionamiento, el crecimiento holístico, la equidad y el “*devenir de la voz*”. Veamos algunos de estos principios, valores y convicciones... (Tomo prestada la frase de bell hooks – “coming to voice”.)

La teología, la crítica bíblica y la pedagogía teológica convencionales subordinan e invisibilizan a las mujeres y a otros sectores marginados – ya que reflejan la supremacía de una perspectiva masculina, blanca, occidental, de clase media.

No hay interpretación bíblica, teológica, ni pedagógica alguna que sea neutral. Cada quien que lea la Biblia, haga teología o piense la pedagogía debe tener libertad para construir su propia interlocución o versión.

El aprendizaje debe ser un espacio inclusivo, equitativo y emancipatorio que promueva el crecimiento holístico, la conciencia de género y la mutualidad. Dicho espacio requiere que se flexibilicen los roles *docente-discente* en busca de un aprendizaje recíproco y la interpelación del *devenir de la voz*.

El crecimiento holístico puede lograrse mediante una *praxis de la integralidad* que propicie los vínculos y el equilibrio entre lo afectivo, lo imaginativo y lo racional; entre los géneros y las generaciones; entre la teoría, la historia y la biografía personal. Dicha praxis requiere de una búsqueda plural y permanente de la coherencia entre el *saber teológico*, la *teoría de género* y el *quehacer pedagógico*.

Un tercer momento: Recuperación de su origen y evoluciones / Articulación de su validez. Resulta difícil precisar el origen de la *pedagogía teofeminista*, ya que no se registra explícitamente como tal en aquellos documentos que he tenido acceso. Sin embargo, podemos sospechar que emerge paralelamente a la *teología feminista latinoamericana y caribeña de la liberación* y que sus énfasis y acentos deberemos examinarlos a la luz de las etapas principales de su desarrollo. Sospechamos también, que podemos encontrar sus evoluciones principales en las reflexiones hechas en los diversos encuentros de teólogas – particularmente en aquellos encuentros de profesoras de teología orientados a asuntos pedagógicos y de género. En cuanto a su validez, entiendo que esta pedagogía se ha legitimado a sí misma a partir de tres vertientes principales: (a) la *sabiduría acumulada* de su práctica, (b) la investigación que sustenta esta práctica y (c) la realidad *generizada* que la suscita y determina.

Un cuarto momento: Articulación de sus convergencias, continuidades y rupturas. Ciertamente, la *pedagogía teofeminista* converge en muchos aspectos con la teología latinoamericana de la liberación y la pedagogía de que de ella emana. De hecho, en parte de aquí se desprende. No obstante, como madura

y distante discípula, ha cuestionado algunas de sus limitaciones teóricas y prácticas. Y de este cuestionamiento han surgido rupturas. Se señala como la principal y central: la superación de la perspectiva racionalista occidental y de la estructura androcéntrica y patriarcal – y de las prácticas pedagógicas provenientes de ella. Ni la teología de la liberación, ni la pedagogía de la teología de la liberación han abordado de manera inclusiva ni prioritaria los asuntos de género. Será necesario pues, profundizar en estas convergencias, continuidades y rupturas – tanto con la teología de la liberación y su pedagogía – como con respecto a otras pedagogías liberadoras.

Un quinto momento: Articulación de su sintaxis / Rescate de sus herramientas de pensamiento y método. En términos de cómo investigar y cómo hacer teología desde una óptica de género, la *pedagogía teofeminista* propone una *praxis de la integralidad*. Praxis que exige una búsqueda plural y permanente de la coherencia entre el conocimiento teológico, la teoría de género, el quehacer pedagógico y la realidad. Tal pareciera que la mediadora principal para esta *praxis de la coherencia integral* es una *hermeneútica de la sospecha*. Pero una hermeneútica – no tanto circular – sino más bien en espiral ascendente. Esta hermeneútica abierta y dinámica visualiza el poder que es capaz de tener el método en el pensar, y se lo otorga – con miras a crecer indefinidamente.

A esos fines, la *pedagogía teofeminista* propone una praxis de *de-construcción/re-construcción* para la labor de investigación, la interpretación bíblica y el quehacer teológico. Se vale para esta labor de varias herramientas de pensamiento, aunque no especifica una *sintaxis* definida para los mismos. A continuación, comparto mi lectura sistemática en tres etapas de la *sintaxis* de este método. Realizo esta lectura, desde la praxis compartida en el Segundo Encuentro de Profesoras de Teología, donde las compañeras explicitaron las primeras dos etapas – *de-construcción* y *re-construcción*. He incorporado una tercera que infiero presente en su praxis y que he denominado como *apropiación*. Cada etapa la he adjetivado de una manera distinta – *crítica*, *creadora* y *redentora* respectivamente – según percibo la racionalidad de sus intenciones. Los *finés*, *matices* y las *herramientas* o *mediaciones*, las categoricé – tentativamente – según sus énfasis y acentos.

Una primera etapa: De-construcción crítica... En una primera fase, el fin es realizar una *de-construcción crítica de*: textos, traducciones, personajes, discursos, ópticas, prácticas, condiciones socio-históricas. Esta de-construcción se encuentra *matizada por*: la sospecha, la antropología feminista, el análisis de género y la búsqueda de los juegos de poder. Y se efectúa, *mediante herramientas*: del *pensar* – tales como el sospechar, el problematizar, el valorar, el interpelar y el contextualizar.

Una segunda etapa: Re-construcción creadora... Una segunda etapa focaliza en la *re-construcción creadora de*: textos, traducciones, personajes, discursos, ópticas, prácticas, condiciones socio-históricas e interlocuciones propias. Esta re-construcción está *matizada por*: la realidad de las mujeres y otros sectores marginados, y por elementos liberadores. Y se lleva a cabo, *mediante herramientas*: del *pensar* y el *sentir* – como el re-leer, el re-descubrir, el re-valorar, el re-interpretar y el re-dimensionar.

Una tercera etapa: Apropiación redentora... En una tercera fase, se espera que ocurra una especie de *apropiación redentora de*: la voz propia y multivocal. Esta apropiación está *matizada por*: una visibilización de rostros, un devenir en voz, una reivindicación de las y los marginados. Y se realiza *mediante herramientas*: del *pensar*, el *sentir* y el *imaginar* – tales como el re-definir, el re-escribir, el re-crear, el metaforizar, el legitimar, y el expresar con apertura, novedad y originalidad.

Estas tres etapas convergen a su vez en una re-definición de un discurso pedagógico-teológico alternativo desde la perspectiva de género. Discurso con una fundamentación bíblico-teológica-práctica que incluye

entre sus ejes centrales – la corporalidad, la espiritualidad comprometida y la realidad de lo cotidiano. Y cuya *racionalidad redentora* apunta hacia la reivindicación – tanto de las mujeres, como de otras personas y sectores marginados.

Un sexto momento: Articulación de vías para imaginar el currículo, hacerlo realidad y valorarlo. Como pudimos constatar en el Segundo Encuentro de Profesoras de Teología, la *pedagogía teofeminista* se nutre de una riqueza de mediaciones para imaginar el currículo, hacerlo realidad y valorarlo. Veamos algunas de las estrategias o *vías* propuestas por las colegas participantes como modificaciones e innovaciones curriculares *cualitativamente diferenciadas*.

Vías conceptuales, temáticas y valorativas. La *pedagogía teofeminista* promueve – en todas las esferas de las instituciones educativas – la presencia de una *espiritualidad cotidiana* – variada, creativa y plural. Esta centralidad y omnipresencia del espíritu, implica la articulación deliberada y continua de prácticas que acentúan valores que afirman la vida. Prácticas que evocan momentos y acciones – grandes y pequeños – como gestos simbólicos, oraciones, lecturas bíblicas, actos de solidaridad, cultos, cantos, meditaciones y movimientos corporales. En términos de su marco referencial valorativo más específico, resalta – entre otros valores – la inclusividad, la emancipatoriedad, la mutualidad, la integralidad, el relacionamiento, el crecimiento holístico, la equidad, el *devenir de la voz* y la *coherencia*. Destaca este último valor desde diversas perspectivas. Resalta la necesaria *coherencia* por parte de las y los docentes – entre lo que enseñan o predicán y lo que viven. A los estudiantes, también les reclama *coherencia* – entre su aprendizaje teórico y su aptitud para trabajar con la comunidad. En términos generales, esta pedagogía se exige también a sí misma una búsqueda filosófica y curricular permanente de *coherencia* – entre el pensamiento teológico, la teoría de género y el quehacer pedagógico.

Los contenidos de la pedagogía teofeminista tienden a ser los propios de las diversas disciplinas y saberes teológicos. Lo que varía es la manera de organizar estos contenidos, los énfasis y acentos que se ponen en los mismos, y la *infusión* de determinados ejes conceptuales y temáticos de género a través del currículo. De igual manera, se diferencia significativamente de la teología y la pedagogía teológica convencional en su propuesta para modelar el conocimiento – no ya a partir de perspectivas de las civilizaciones dominantes y de estructuras androcéntricas y patriarcales – sino de la visibilización de las mujeres y de otros sectores excluidos.

Vías de organización, articulación e integración curricular. Las dos vías más comunes que señalan las profesoras haber puesto en práctica para abordar la temática de género y organizar los contenidos curriculares son: la creación de cursos interdisciplinarios y multidisciplinarios sobre género y teología feminista; y la inclusión transversal de la temática de género en el currículo regular. No obstante, señalan también entre sus prácticas otras articulaciones e integraciones que ameritan ser reconocidas, tales como: (a) la incorporación – en toda materia – de múltiples versiones históricas y culturales, para cobrar perspectiva del origen y la construcción de nuestros conceptos convencionales sobre la vida o la iglesia; y (b) la articulación balanceada del trabajo académico y las actividades expresivas y espirituales – con miras a provocar la reflexión sobre la conexión entre cada materia y la realidad.

Vías didácticas. Las colegas teólogas identificaron una serie de procesos, técnicas, estrategias y recursos que incorporan en su quehacer docente. En conjunto, estas prácticas apuntan a una enseñanza *de-constructura* y *re-constructora* orientada a un aprendizaje crítico, creador y reivindicador – redentor de la vida y del propio currículo. Entre su prácticas participativas e inductivas más comunes en el aula se encuentran: (a) el poner énfasis en la corporeidad, la vida cotidiana y la escucha de una diversidad de voces – para acceder a la realidad; (b) la valoración de lo lúdico, lo musical, la corporeidad y de una

multiplicidad de inteligencias y lenguajes expresivos – con miras a un aprendizaje diversificado e integrado; y (c) el uso imaginativo, integrador e interactivo de recursos tales como videos, diálogos, socio-dramas, rituales, psicodramas, historias de vida, visualizaciones, mediaciones guiadas, gestos simbólicos, liturgias, devocionales, oraciones, cartas, sermones, literatura, poesía, fotografía, cinematografía, drama, música y estimulación de los sentidos.

Hicieron además dos advertencias, a manera de recomendaciones: (a) que debemos asegurarnos de incluir escritos, testimonios y la presencia de autores hombres en los contenidos. (Esta sugerencia se basó en experiencias previas de cursos que se limitan a bibliografías y recursos exclusivamente de mujeres.); y (b) que debemos evitar de inicio el señalamiento directo de las teorías de género, de manera que la conozcan primeramente como práctica y posteriormente puedan – inductivamente – generalizar sobre la misma.

Vías comunicativas. La *pedagogía teofeminista* exige un clima diferente del ambiente convencional, donde el conocimiento fluye de un docente informado a entes pasivos y des-informados. De aquí la importancia de la comunicación bidireccional y dialógica entre las y los participantes. A partir de sus propias experiencias docentes, las profesoras recomiendan prácticas comunicativas: (a) que validen las distintas experiencias, dando espacio para que sean efectivamente compartidas; y (b) que eviten el imponer los temas de género forzosamente, el provocar diálogos confrontacionales y el reafirmar posturas rígidas.

Vías investigativas – en y desde la docencia. Con respecto a las vías investigativas, las profesoras describieron sus prácticas desde dos vertientes: (a) en términos de cómo realizan la investigación en su campo; (b) y en el sentido de cómo incorporan la investigación a su práctica docente. Es decir, describieron la investigación *en* la docencia y la investigación *desde* la docencia. Entre las metodologías de investigación más comunes, señalaron las siguientes: encuestas, historias de vida, visitas con observación de campo y observación partícipe.

Con respecto a la investigación *en la docencia*, destacaron la de-construcción y re-construcción de textos, teologías y verdades asumidas. Igualmente, destacaron lo cotidiano como eje transversal; recomendaron prácticas que implican un “*accionar contextualizado*”; y sugirieron metodologías que podríamos bautizar como *multivocales*. Entre estas prácticas, se destacan: (a) el abordar los textos bíblicos como fruto de un largo proceso de recolección y transmisión de la memoria de pueblos y minorías silenciadas o subordinadas; (b) el visibilizar y construir la presencia activa de las mujeres como parte del pueblo en cada contexto bíblico y teológico de carácter androcéntrico; y (c) el asignar investigaciones orientadas a que cada participante des-cubra la realidad de su ministerio y pueda responder con acciones concretas.

En términos de cómo realizan la investigación con un acento *teofeminista desde la docencia*, las profesoras destacan la *investigación-en-la-acción*, la teorización de la práctica y la práctica de la teoría – ya que señalan la importancia de realizar trabajo de base para nutrir el trabajo académico y el decir presente en las iglesias – junto a mujeres y hombres, niñas y niños – dialogando, observando, y luego interpretando.

Vías evaluativas. Las vías evaluativas que proponen las profesoras-teólogas, las des-cubrimos en sus planteamientos pedagógicos y prácticas didácticas. A mi juicio, las mismas responden a una visión formativa y cualitativa innovadora de *avalúo (assessment)* – como rechazo a la calificación sumativa cuantitativa convencional. Podríamos inferir entonces que privilegian vías más valorativas, plurales e integrales de avalúo. Vías que contengan una actitud de apertura para la crítica y la autocrítica. Vías de valoración cognitiva y actitudinal, que además de transformar los conceptos, propicien cambios de actitudes – tanto en las y los docentes como en el estudiantado y en las relaciones interpersonales. Vías que no solo

profesen un profundo respeto por la *multivocalidad* de cada aprendiz, sino que además le requieran posturas y compromisos personales hacia los sectores marginados. Vías que se orienten a verificar la tan aspirada *integralidad y transversalidad* – en que cada aprendiz logre articular coherentemente su labor de investigación, creación y acción comunitaria – desde su propio rostro y su auténtica voz.

Vías de divulgación y socialización. La *pedagogía teofeminista* apunta a la socialización de sus avances hacia nuevos sectores comunitarios y eclesiales como uno de sus principales objetivos – con miras a propulsar políticas de cambio de mayor alcance. Podemos mencionar entre sus prácticas más comunes: (a) el intercambio – en encuentros, vía *e-mail* y correo – de sílabos, bibliografías y otros materiales didácticos; (b) la divulgación de escritos y boletines; y (c) la utilización de la liturgia y la espiritualidad para expresar sus posturas y reflejar sus avances en cuanto a perspectiva de género.

Un séptimo momento: Articulación de sus metáforas-guía y paradigma. Como en toda iniciativa humana, en la *pedagogía teofeminista* subyacen imágenes *no-ingenuas* que la orientan. A continuación, algunas metáforas que – mediante las voces de mis colegas educadoras y teólogas – descubrí las guían en su praxis.

Algunas colegas ven a la *educadora teofeminista* como una *partera* – lista para facilitar el dar a luz ideas innovadoras. Alumbramiento que su vez posibilita la toma de decisiones y las transformaciones. Otras la ven como audaz *transgresora* de la ley de la academia – tanto en lo metodológico como en lo teórico. Algunas ven la *educación* como la *suma en equilibrio* del aprendizaje. Otras, como la apropiación de la *lengua materna* – rica en sentimientos, creatividad, intuición, lo metafórico y lo relacional. Y de la *lengua paterna* – caracterizada por el análisis, el pensamiento lógico, abstracto y racional.

Por inferencia, podríamos ver la *pedagogía teofeminista* como un proceso de *alumbramiento* en triple sentido – *gestación, nacimiento e iluminación*. Por inferencia también, podríamos ver a las y los educandos como *aprendices-de-parteras*; como *aprendices-de-transgresoras*; como *aprendices-de-la-lengua materna y paterna*. Como aprendices en búsqueda de un equilibrio transversal y una integralidad auténtica *cuero-intelecto-espíritu*. De estas metáforas, se desprende también que esta pedagogía-teológica de género tiende a seguir un paradigma – no ya científico – sino más bien artístico de la educación. Un paradigma cualitativo donde cada docente es una o un virtuoso, una o un inspirado, una o un *Artífice* de la Historia y de su propia historia. Y cada educando, como una o un *Aprendiz-de-Artífice*.

QUINTO TIEMPO: ALGUNOS PUNTOS DE LLEGADA, DE CONTINUIDAD Y DE COMIENZO

En este último *Tiempo*, intento formular conclusiones y comunicar aprendizajes derivados del proceso de sistematización. En un primer momento, señalo algunos *desafíos reflexivos* que quedan sobre el tapete. En un segundo momento, identifico algunas *acciones institucionales y políticas de cambio*. Y en un tercer momento, recojo algunos *juicios valorativos, sugerencias y lecciones aprendidas*.

Un primer momento: Articulación de desafíos reflexivos. En encuentros y jornadas las compañeras teólogas/educadoras mencionaron carencias y limitaciones – lo que algunas llamaron asertivamente *obstáculos motivadores* – de su propuesta pedagógica-teológica. Entre éstas, destacaron: (a) el divorcio entre los esfuerzos desde el ámbito académico y las realidades de las comunidades e iglesias; (b) la tendencia a reducir la educación cristiana al ámbito exclusivo de la escuela dominical; (c) la responsabilidad exclusiva asignada a las mujeres en el ejercicio de la educación espiritual, especialmente a nivel de párvulos; (d) las limitaciones de bibliografías, recursos didácticos y formación profesional con la perspectiva de género; y (e) la falta de tiempo y recursos técnicos y económicos para hacer investigaciones.

Un segundo momento: Articulación de acciones institucionales y políticas de cambio. Como *estrategias* o *vías* para la socialización de recursos y la transformación de políticas educativas a nivel institucional – y allende las instituciones – recomendaron múltiples acciones, tales como: (a) propiciar que en todas las esferas de las instituciones esté presente una “*espiritualidad cotidiana*” – variada, creativa e inclusiva; (b) promover que toda y todo docente incorpore la perspectiva de género como instrumental didáctico; (c) fortalecer los espacios existentes dentro de las facultades de teología e iglesias – sobre todo aquellos que conforman el curriculum *no formal* u *oculto* – para el trabajo en pedagogía y género; (d) establecer alianzas con colegas – mujeres y varones – que tienen *conciencia de género*, para incidir en el cambio y desarrollo de políticas educativas; (e) “*tener intencionalidad*” en cuanto a la formación del cuerpo docente femenino – mediante la priorización de su formación teológica; (f) crear instancias de capacitación con óptica de género, dirigidas a docentes, maestros y maestras de escuela dominical y líderes comunitarios; (g) promover, como prioridad institucional, la investigación para la renovación de los conocimientos en asuntos de relacionalidad teología-pedagogía-género; (h) rescatar los sentimientos y la espiritualidad como categorías de investigación válidas para el avance teórico; (i) establecer redes y nexos para el intercambio de experiencias, bibliografías y materiales; (j) propiciar la realización de mesas redondas sobre asuntos de género e invitar a hombres a que participen desde su perspectiva de la “*masculinidad*”; (k) actualizar las bibliotecas en asuntos de pedagogía y género; (l) crear en las facultades teológicas “*escuelas de pedagogía*” orientadas a la formación de docentes de facultades de teología, profesores de religión en instituciones eclesiales, y líderes de escuela bíblica y escuela dominical; y (m) darle continuidad a la realización de encuentros y a la articulación de esfuerzos con organismos afines a una *pedagogía-teológica de género*.

Un tercer momento: Articulación de juicios valorativos, sugerencias y algunas lecciones aprendidas. En términos generales, podríamos decir que la pedagogía teofeminista emerge con la fuerza y convicción de una praxis liberadora. Y que se vislumbra una rápida legitimación de sus contenidos y prácticas. No obstante, podríamos hacer algunas sugerencias para su fortalecimiento, entre éstas: (a) trabajar para superar la dicotomía docencia-investigación, de manera que la investigación *en* y *desde* la docencia se articule en una *praxis reflexiva* y una *investigación-en-la-acción* de mayor alcance; (b) establecer proyectos colaborativos *universidad-comunidad-escuela* o *seminario-comunidad-escuela* en los que se aborden temas espirituales y de género desde la escuela primaria en un contexto comunitario; y (c) echarle una mirada a diversas propuestas pedagógico-teológicas ya sistematizadas de grupos afines.

Podríamos extraer innumerables enseñanzas, tanto de la *pedagogía teofeminista* emergente, como del esfuerzo de sistematización hecho hasta aquí. Privilegiaré, sin embargo, tres enseñanzas que la relacionalidad *teología-pedagogía-género* me ha dejado personalmente como educadora – a manera de desafíos. Me refiero a tres lecciones aprendidas – a manera de *avances abiertos* que exigen reflexión, continuidad y cambio por parte de toda pedagogía y teología ...

Primera lección aprendida. Desde nuestra corporeidad y cotidianidad se configuran y disuelven múltiples relaciones de poder. Segunda lección aprendida. El cultivo de la *inteligencia espiritual* – en sus estrechos vínculos con las *inteligencias emocional, moral, intuitiva y existencial* – es central para el crecimiento integral de cada ser humano. Tercera lección aprendida. La urgente y emergente *pedagogía teofeminista* comparte los valores y la mística del *ecofeminismo* y de otros movimientos y pedagogías liberadoras afines.

Sobre éstos – y tantos otros avances – en sus vínculos con la emergente *pedagogía teofeminista* – mediante *pedagogías del cuerpo, pedagogías del espíritu, pedagogías ecofeministas* y otras *pedagogías liberadoras* – será importante que continuemos conversando y reflexionando. Y que lo hagamos, mediante un *dialogo transversal* comprometiendo y transgresor - con miras a la forja de una educación teológica ecuménica, que se inserte críticamente en el complejo marco actual globalizante, con una clara vocación liberadora y transformadora.

Referencias bibliográficas

- Antillón, Roberto (1991). *¿Como entendemos la sistematización desde una concepción metodológica dialéctica?* Guadalajara: IMDEC.
- Connell, Robert W. (1995) *Masculinities*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Dimensión Educativa (1997). *Teología a pie: entre sueños y clamores*. Colombia: Equipo de Teología Popular de Dimensión Educativa.
- Gebara, Ivone (1998) . *Mulheres e espiritualidade: Uma perspectiva latino-americana. Cristianismo y Sociedad 1998. Teología Feminista desde América Latina*. xxxvi/1-xxxvi/2 (135-136), 69-78.
- Hooks, bell (1994). *Teaching to transgress. Education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- Jara H. Oscar (1994) *Para sistemara experiencias*. Costa Rica: Alforja.
- Pascual Morán, Anaida (2001/ en imprenta). *Teología y pedagogía en dialogo: Pasos primeros de un mismo y transversal caminar*. Memorias Sexta Jornada Teologica de la Comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuménica Latinoamericana-Caribena. 2-6 de julio de 2000, Cumbaya, Ecuador: CETELA.
- Pascual Morán, Anaida (2000, diciembre). *Mas allá de género. Xilotl/Revista Nicaragüense de Teología*, numero 26, año 13, 43-66.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford (1983). *Sexisme and God-talk. Towards a feminist theology*. London: SCM Press Ltd.
- Támez, Elsa (1989). *Las mujeres toman la palabra. Entrevistas*. San José, Costa Rica: DEI (Departamento Ecuménico de Investigaciones).
- Tepedino, Ana María & María Pilar Aquino (eds.) (1998). *Entre la indignación y la esperanza. Teología feminista latinoamericana*. Santafé de Bogota, Colombia : ASETT (Asociación Ecuménica de Teólogos y Teólogas del Tercer Mundo).
- Vuola, Elina (1997). *Limits of liberation. Praxis as method in Latin American liberation theology and feminist theology*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia (The Finnish Academy of Science and Letters).

**THEO-FEMINIST PEDAGOGY:
AN EMERGING THEOLOGICAL PEDAGOGY
WITH A LIBERATING AND TRANSFORMING VOCATION ***

Anaida Pascual Morán

A THEOLOGICAL PEDAGOGY EMERGES...

The relationship between theology, pedagogy and gender... In this reflection, I explore some of the developments, hypotheses and practices that I, in my *experience* as an educator, have observed emerging and taking shape as a *Latin American and Caribbean feminist liberation theological pedagogy*. In particular, I try to give a certain coherence to a pedagogical dialogue and accompaniment that I have already begun with its *Inventors*. I am referring to a group of colleagues, theologians and educators, who have, for years, been creating this liberating pedagogy in their dreams and constructing it in their praxis. It is, then, the start of an attempt at systematizing and formulating the theory of an emerging praxis which is gradually acquiring a face and a voice of its own.

I propose to use the term *Inventors* – rather than *Subjects* – to express my reserves about the meaning and inclusivity of this latter term and to register the enormous dynamic potential that each human being has to create and construct history. Also because, like so many other women, I resist being referred to as a *Subject*.

It is a broad and inclusive pedagogy that we could locate on the frontier between the theological-pedagogical, liberation theology, gender theories and liberating pedagogies. It tries to *pedagogise* and *genderise* theology – at the same time as it struggles to *theologise* and *genderise* itself. A *theological pedagogy of gender* that – from the Freirean perspective of the *viable and new* and with a *humanising vocation* and a wish to *be more* - and faced with the current *distortion of vocation*, can be seen as a *pedagogy of hope*, because of its clear vocation to transform *dehumanisation*. A pedagogy that – in the hope that its range and scope becomes broad and inclusive – we could more precisely call *theo-feminist pedagogy*.

Recounting our experience of life, sharing what has been learned... The aim of our reflection coincides with one the main objectives of systematisation – the conceptualising of educational practice. An objective clearly explained by the educator, Roberto Antillón...

One of the main purposes of systematisation is to conceptualise practice... , to put in order all the elements that contribute to it; not any kind of order, but one that organises the task, that gives it body, that connects it up into a whole, in which each one of its parts has its place, potential and limitations...; the ‘making a system’ out of the task, in the search for coherence between what is aimed for and what is done. (Antillón, 1991. In Jara, 1994)

I could use the words of the educator, Oscar Jara to describe the purpose of my *systematising reflection*, as they express precisely what I modestly aspire to...

...we approach systematisation from where the very richness of experience requires us to; appropriating the experience for ourselves and recounting it, sharing what was learned. (Jara, 1994, 19)

* Document translated to English by WCC Language Department.

A proposal for systematising composed of ‘moments’ in ‘five movements’ is our guide. In his book, *Para sistematizar experiencias*, Jara offers us a *Proposal in five movements*. *Movements* composed of various elements that he describes as marking *moments* – the purpose of which in relation to praxis is to: “*theorise about it in order to transform it*”. His proposal is based on a dialectical epistemological framework. A framework that rejects the reductionism of the positivists and the methodologies that it brought forth – and that monopolise the analyses of most disciplines. My reflection follows this useful scheme, adapted to the particular circumstances of the theological pedagogy of gender that we are focusing on. (Jara, 1994, 92)

Moment of blending interpretation frameworks. I blend Jara’s scheme with my own pedagogical, theoretical framework and value system. I have shaped this interpretative framework in the course of my three decades as an educator. The proposal is centred on a series of broad key questions – to which I reply in various *moments*. *Moments* that appeared naturally in my search to systematise my experience. We will take a quick look at what has been systematised so far – conscious of its major limitations. And conscious that my modest attempt is only the start of a *systematising reflection* that will have to be diverse, ongoing and inter-related.

FIRST MOVEMENT: THE STARTING POINT

Before beginning any kind of systematisation of experience, Jara says that we must reply to a key question – *Who is systematising and why?* He also indicates that this reflection should take place with reference to two criteria: first, that we should, to some degree, have participated in the experience and that we have formed *impressions* about it. In the *First Movement*, I try to reply to the question by giving an account of my motives. As a starting point, I tell, in three moments, the history of how I came to be immersed in this reflection, which like all experience of life, blends history with biography.

A first moment: Who is reflecting and why? Who is systematising and why? The ways of God certainly are mysterious. Although I never attended a formal theology course, I have frequently trodden the pathways of theology over the years. In the 1990s, for example, I participated, as a pedagogical adviser, in various dialogues, workshops and seminars with theologians in Ecuador, Cuba, Costa Rica, the United States and Nicaragua.

A second moment: In-depth pedagogical accompaniment. In recent years, these mysterious pathways led me to join a dialogue between a collective of Latin American and Caribbean female teacher-theologians. At the end of June 1998, I participated on the *Pedagogy and Gender* panel during the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Latin American Biblical University (UBL) in San José. Between 23 and 27 January 2000, I accompanied a large group of female educator-theologians at the Second Meeting-Workshop of Women Theology Teachers – *Pedagogy, theology and gender* – held under the auspices of the UBL and the Latin American and Caribbean Community of Theological, Ecumenical Education (*Comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuémica Latinoamericana y Caribeña - CETELA*), in El Crucero, Nicaragua. And in July 2000, I attended *CETELA’s Sixth Meeting* in Cumbayá, Ecuador, where we began a *transversal dialogue*, with a view to establishing links between theological education and the various faces of the emerging theologies – including that of the woman.

A third moment: ‘Bewitched’ by theology. At the meeting in Nicaragua, I had the privilege to be baptised by some of my female teacher and theologian friends as *an affectionate theologian*. This business about the feelings seems to be, as we would say in the Caribbean, *a serious thing*, as it comes more from the heart than the mind. The great Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, said that although he was not, nor intended to be a theologian, he had been “*bewitched by theology*”. And that this fascination made many of his

liberating pedagogical ideas and metaphors converge into an equally liberating theology. I suspect that, in some way, I too have been *bewitched* by the emerging theologies – in particular, by feminist liberation theology. This does not surprise me, because, like the *Inventors*, I profess a free spirituality and an emancipating pedagogy. (The phrase was coined by my dear friend/colleague Mireya Baltodano of the UBL.)

SECOND MOVEMENT: IN-DEPTH REFLECTION – WHY DID WHAT HAPPENED HAPPEN?

Jara exhorts us to make an in-depth critical reflection to clarify *Why did what happened happen?* In this **Second Movement**, I have adjusted this question to make it relate more specifically to the context of an emerging pedagogy. So now the question reads *Why is a theo-feminist liberation pedagogy emerging with such urgency?* I deliberately write this part of the reflection in the first person plural on behalf of myself and other women. In two “women’s” moments – moments in which we women have been *marked* and later, *called* ...

A first “women’s” moment: Why have we been marked... We women have inherited a violent legacy. A legacy that unequal, forced socialisation and *hegemonic masculinities* have bequeathed to half the species. A legacy that has been denounced by feminist liberation theologians (and one or two *gender conscious* male theologians) in all continents. The Brazilian theologian, Ivone Gebara, has dramatically described the indelible imprint of this *culture of obedience and authority* that we have inherited. A violent culture that has led us to believe that men know more about God and the Bible than women and that we must look up to them for their superior wisdom. It is precisely this patriarchal socialisation, differentiated by essentialist binary oppositions – *feminine/masculine* – that Gebara says has *marked* us forever. (Connell, 95 – Gebara, 1998, 70)

According to the United States theologian, Rosemary Radford Ruether, it is also this ontological opposition that prevents our full humanity and that does not permit an authentic relationship with *The Divine*. It is this socio-cultural construction that, according to Latin American female theologians, leads us to a mariological view of *femininity*. A view that makes us believe that *feminine nature* is ideally embodied in the roles of virgin, wife and mother. A distorted view that cries out for a deconstructive approach, through explicit attention to concrete things pertinent to the daily life of women, such as corporeality, sexuality, reproductive rights and maternity. (Ruether, 1983, 18. In Vuola, 1997, 115. Tepedino & Aquino, 1998 – Interviews in Tamez, 1989, 104-105.)

A second “women’s” moment: Because we have been called... It is precisely because we have been *marked* that we women have also been *called*. Called to *denounce* and *proclaim*. To *deconstruct* and *reconstruct*. Called to liberate life through the reconstruction of our own subjectivity. In this denunciation and proclamation, deconstruction and reconstruction, the *Latin American and Caribbean feminist theological pedagogy of liberation* has played, plays and will continue to play, a crucial role. It is essential therefore that we begin to set out the theory of our praxis, so that we know it and are able to share and diffuse it. Let us begin to legitimise its dreams. Let us begin to baptise it. Let us give it a name and a *raison d’être*. (Vuola, 1997, 132, 138, 175 & 213)

THIRD MOVEMENT: THE INITIAL QUESTIONS: WHAT DO WE WANT TO SYSTEMATISE AND WHY?

In this Third Movement, I go deeper into the questions that Jara believes to be fundamentally important... *Why do we want to systematise? What experiences do we want to systematise? What are the central aspects of those experiences that we are interested in systematising?* It is with reference to these questions

that I will clarify my proposition, delimit the experiences I want to recover and detail the pivotal ideas of the systematisation, the sources that need more profound study and the methodological framework.

A first moment: The ‘accumulated wisdom of praxis’ – an attempt at systematisation. I share with many educators the conviction that a genuine seed for education’s transforming vocation lies in so-called *practical wisdom*. And this *accumulated wisdom* contains new things to learn. Things to learn that, once they can be perceived, allow us to theorise about them and project them in a continuous Freirean cycle of *action-reflection-action*. Oscar Jara is equally convinced of this. He affirms that “*the source of our paradigms is our accumulated experience*” and confronts us with our responsibility to *extract* lessons from these experiences that are so *charged with teachings*. He exhorts us to carry out progressive theoretical reflection on our educative experiences.

A second moment ... Recourse to sources that need more profound study. To extract and infer the theological and gender principles and dimensions that motivate *theo-feminist pedagogical praxis*, we must draw on innumerable impressions and documents. However, as the nature of this effort is exploratory, tentative and limited, I have only consulted the sources most easily available to me and that will allow me to get this process *under way*. I had recourse to the dialogues in which I have had the privilege to participate with female theologians and teachers – and documents that emerged from them. I consulted a handful of publications that contain significant pedagogical insights. In search of material to throw light on gender pedagogy, I also consulted various liberating pedagogies and various real initiatives to systematise educative experiences, such as the work done by the *Popular Theology Team* of the *Educative Dimension* team in Colombia. Alongside all this, I have articulated my own pedagogical ideas and interpretations – with the licence that my own *experience* and *accumulated practical wisdom* and my affinity/commitment with/to the work of my female theologian colleagues gives me. I also consulted some of my own writings, especially those that I have shared in workshops and meetings, and that stand at the crossroads between pedagogy, theology and gender.

A third moment... Selecting the key questions. To reconstruct *theo-feminist pedagogy*, to give an account of its aspirations and development and extract some lessons for the future, I have drawn up a long list of key questions – that I do not include here for lack of space. These questions underlie and guide my thoughts in the *Fourth and Fifth Movements*.

FOURTH MOVEMENT... RECOVERING AND ARTICULATING / RECOVERY OF EXPERIENCE

With a view to recovering, putting in order and articulating this emerging pedagogy, in this *Fourth Movement*, I categorise and interpret the observations and recommendations formulated in the working group reports of the Second Meeting-Workshop of Women Theology teachers in Nicaragua. Observations and recommendations that represented the opinions of forty or more teachers, divided into the following working groups: Christian Education, the Bible, Pastoral Counselling, Theology and Pastoral Theology. I recover and systematise this process in seven moments.

First moment: Articulating the aims, aspirations and vocation of *theo-feminist pedagogy*. According to the educators and theologians that met in Nicaragua, *theo-feminist pedagogy* sets out to be a theological pedagogy with a liberating, transforming and pluralist vocation aspiring, from a gender perspective, to give hope to all humanity. To this end, in the fields of education, research, creation, curriculum development and community action it is committed to promoting ... (a) an intimate relationship between theology, pedagogy and gender; (b) the systematic articulation of the gender perspective across a broad range of subjects; (c) the constant incorporation of emerging theoretical and methodological advances in gender

theory and pedagogy; (d) the emergence of a *gender consciousness* that permeates all institutional and academic theological and pedagogic work; (e) continuous training of teachers in the pedagogical dimension and gender perspectives; (f) constant rethinking of itself, in the light of new experiences, pilgrimages and challenges in pedagogy and gender; and (g) the dissemination of its progress among new sectors in the community and the church.

Second moment: Recovering its principles, convictions and values. The principles, convictions and values that give *theo-feminist pedagogy* its *raison d'être* emanate chiefly from its three main dimensions: feminist liberation theology, liberating pedagogy and gender perspective. These dimensions are criss-crossed by innumerable pedagogical mediations coloured in time and place by each context and situation. The outstanding elements of these principles, convictions and values with a liberating vocation are inclusiveness, emancipation, coherence, mutuality, integration, relationship, holistic growth, justice and the “*coming to voice*”. Let us have a look at some of these principles, values and convictions ...
– I borrow bell hooks’ phrase, “coming to voice”.

Conventional theology, Biblical criticism and theological pedagogy give women and other marginalised sectors a subordinate role and make them invisible, because they reflect masculine, white, western, middle class supremacy.

No interpretation of the Bible, theology or pedagogy is neutral. Each person that reads the Bible, does theology or thinks about pedagogy must have the freedom to construct their own speech and vision. Learning has to take place in an inclusive, equitable and emancipating way that promotes holistic growth, gender consciousness and mutuality. This requires greater flexibility in the *teacher-taught* roles in the interest of reciprocal learning and the challenge of *coming to voice*.

Holistic growth can be achieved through an *integrated praxis* that looks for wholeness, making connections and achieving a balance between the emotional, the imaginative and the rational; between the sexes and the generations; between theory, history and personal biography. This praxis requires a constant, many-faceted search for coherence between theological knowledge, gender theory and pedagogical work.

Third moment: Recovering its origin and development / Articulating its validity. It is difficult to be precise about the origin of *theo-feminist pedagogy*, as it is not explicitly recorded as such in the documents to which I have had access. However, we suspect that it emerged at the same time as *Latin American and Caribbean feminist liberation theology* and that we must examine its emphasis and inflections in the light of the main stages of that theology’s development. We also suspect that we can find its main developments by examining the reflections made at the various meetings of women theologians, particularly those meetings of women theology teachers focusing on pedagogy and gender. With regard to its validity, my understanding is that this pedagogy has claimed legitimacy for itself on the basis of three main ideas: (a) the *accumulated wisdom* of its practice, b) the research that sustains this practice and c) the *genderised* reality that triggers and determines it.

Fourth moment: Articulating its convergences, continuities and ruptures. *Theo-feminist pedagogy* certainly converges, in many respects, with Latin American liberation theology and the pedagogy deriving from it. In fact, that is partially where it springs from. However, like a mature and distant disciple, it has questioned some of the theoretical and practical limitations of the former. And this questioning has led to some ruptures. The main and central one is the overcoming of the western rationalist perspective and the androcentric, patriarchal structure – and of the pedagogical practices connected with them. Neither liberation theology, nor the pedagogy of liberation theology has approached gender issues in an inclusive way nor has it prioritised them. It will therefore be necessary to examine these convergences, continuities

and ruptures more profoundly – in relation to both liberation theology and its pedagogy – and other liberating pedagogies.

Fifth moment: Articulating its syntax / Recovering its analytical tools and methods. In terms of how to investigate and do theology from a gender perspective, *theo-feminist pedagogy* proposes an *integrated praxis*. A praxis that demands a pluralist and permanent search for coherence between theological knowledge, gender theory, pedagogical work and reality. It would seem that the mediating principle for this *coherent integrated praxis* is a *hermeneutics of suspicion*. Not so much a circular hermeneutics – but rather an ascending spiral. This open and dynamic hermeneutics shows the potential power of methodical thinking, and claims it for itself - with a view to growing indefinitely.

To this end, *theo-feminist pedagogy* proposes a praxis of *deconstruction/reconstruction* for research work, biblical interpretation and doing theology. It uses various analytical tools for this work, although it does not specify a syntax for the same. In what follows, I share my systematic interpretation of the syntax of this method in three stages. This interpretation is based on the praxis shared at the Second Meeting of Women Theology Teachers, where my colleagues spelled out the first two stages – *deconstruction and reconstruction*. I have incorporated a third that I infer to be present in its praxis and that I have called *appropriation*. I have labelled each stage in a different way – *critical, creative and redemptive*, respectively – according to how I perceive the rationale of each stage. I tentatively categorise their aims, nuances and the tools or mediations according to their emphases and inflections.

First stage: Critical deconstruction ... In the first stage, the aim is to carry out a critical deconstruction of: texts, translations, personalities, discourse, perspectives, practices, socio-historical conditions. This deconstruction is coloured by suspicion, feminist anthropology, gender analysis and the identification of power games. And it uses analytical tools: – such as suspecting, problematising, valuing, asking for explanations and contextualising.

Second stage: Creative reconstruction... The second stage focuses on the creative reconstruction of: texts, translations, personalities, discourses, perspectives, practices, socio-historical conditions and our own interlocutions. This reconstruction is coloured by: the situation in which women and other marginalised sectors exist, and liberating elements. And it uses analytical tools and the senses: such as rereading, rediscovering, revaluing, reinterpreting and redimensioning.

Third stage: Redemptive appropriation... In a third stage, it is hoped that there occurs a kind of redemptive appropriation of: our own voice and multivoice. This appropriation is coloured by: making faces visible, coming to voice, the demands of the marginalised. And it uses analytical tools, the senses and the imagination: – such as redefining, rewriting, recreating, metaphorising, legitimising and expressing things with openness, newness and originality.

These three stages in turn come together to redefine an alternative pedagogical-theological discourse from a gender perspective. A discourse with a biblical-theological-practical foundation that includes corporeality, committed spirituality and daily reality amongs its central axes. And whose redeeming rationality points towards the vindication of women and other marginalised people and sectors.

Sixth moment: Articulating ways to develop the curriculum, make it a reality and demonstrate its value. As we noted at the Second Meeting of Women Theology Teachers, *theo-feminist pedagogy* can draw on a wealth of mediations when it comes to devising the curriculum, making it a reality and demonstrating its value. We will look at some of the strategies or *ways* that colleagues who participated in that meeting felt were *qualitatively different* modifications and innovations to the curriculum.

Conceptual, thematic and value-giving ways. In all spheres of educational institutions, *theo-feminist* pedagogy promotes the presence of an *everyday spirituality* – varied, creative and pluralist. The centrality and omnipresence of the spirit implies the deliberate and continuous articulation of practices that emphasize life-affirming values. Practices that evoke moments and actions – big and small – such as symbolic gestures, prayers, Bible readings, acts of solidarity, worship, singing, meditation and bodily movement. In terms of its specific system of values, it emphasises inclusiveness, emancipation, mutuality, integration, relationship, holistic growth, justice, *coming to voice*, and coherence. This last named value is important for several reasons. It stresses the coherence that is necessary between what the teachers teach or preach and how they live. For the students, it requires coherence between their theoretical learning and their aptitude for work with the community. In general terms, this pedagogy also demands a permanent philosophical and curricular quest for coherence, between theological thinking, gender theory and pedagogical work.

The content of *theo-feminist pedagogy* tends to be the same as that of the various other theologies and disciplines. What is different is the way it organizes its content, emphasizes and inflections, so that the whole curriculum is *infused* with certain central conceptual and thematic gender concerns. It also differs significantly from conventional theology and theological pedagogy in that it proposes a model of knowledge based on making women and other excluded sectors visible, rather than on the perspectives of the dominant civilization and androcentric, patriarchal structures.

Ways of organising, articulating and integrating the curriculum. The two most common ways that teachers say they have used to deal with gender issues and organise curricular content are: the creation of interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary courses on gender and feminist theology; inclusion of gender issues across the board in the regular curriculum. However, they also say they have used other ways to articulate and integrate gender issues that are worth mentioning, such as: incorporating multiple historical and cultural versions in all materials to make us question the perspectives of each version and the construction of our own conventional concepts of life and the church; and (b) achieving a balance between academic work and expressive and spiritual activities – with a view to provoking reflection on the connection between each subject and reality.

Didactic ways. My theologian colleagues identified a series of procedures, techniques, strategies and resources that they incorporate in their teaching work. Taken together, these practices comprise a *deconstructive and reconstructive* education aimed at critical, creative and assertive learning, that is redeeming of life and of the curriculum itself. Among its most common participatory and inductive classroom practices are to: put emphasis on corporeality, daily life and listening to a diversity of voices in order to understand reality; (b) value the aspects of play, music, corporeality and a multiplicity of expressive intelligences and languages, with a view to diversified and integrated learning; and (c) the imaginative, integrative and interactive use of resources such as videos, dialogues, socio-dramas, rituals, psychodramas, life stories, visualisations, guided mediations, symbolic gestures, liturgies, worship, prayer, letters, sermons, literature, poetry, photography, cinema, drama, music and stimulation of the senses.

They also gave two warnings, by way of recommendation: (a) we should ensure we include writings and testimonies by male authors in the curriculum. (This suggestion is based on experience of courses that limited their bibliographies and resources exclusively to women.); and (b) we must avoid, from the start, directly expounding gender theories, so that they can be learned in a practical way first and the students can later generalise about them inductively.

Communication. *Theo-feminist pedagogy* requires a different environment from the conventional one in which knowledge flows from an informed teacher to passive and uninformed students. Hence the importance of two-way communication and real dialogue between the participants. On the basis of their

own teaching experience, the teachers recommend communication practices (a) that affirm different experiences and provide space for them to be shared properly; and (b) that avoid forcibly imposing gender issues, provoking confrontational dialogues and reaffirming rigid positions.

Research – in and from teaching. With regard to research, the teachers divided their practices into two categories; (a) the way they carry out research in their field; and (b) the way they incorporate their research into their teaching. That is to say, they described their research work as teachers and the way they use the results of their research when teaching. They said that the most commonly used research methodologies include: surveys, life histories, field observation and participatory observation.

With regard to research when teaching, they emphasised the deconstruction and reconstruction of texts, theologies and received wisdom. They also emphasised the importance of including everyday reality at all times; they recommended practices that involved “*contextualised action*” and suggested methodologies that we could call *multivocal*. Among these practices, the following stand out: (a) approach biblical texts as the fruit of a long process of recollection and transmission of the memory of peoples and silenced or subordinate minorities; (b) make women visible and mark out their active role as part of the people in each androcentric biblical and theological context; and (c) assign research so that each student discovers the reality of her ministry and is able to respond with concrete actions.

In terms of how they carry out their research in a *theo-feminist* way in their position as teachers, they emphasised the importance of *action research*, the theorisation of practice and the practice of theory – because they flagged up the importance of community work for their academic work and of being present in the churches – together with women, men and children – discussing, observing and then interpreting.

Evaluation. The evaluation methods proposed by the teacher-theologians can be found in their pedagogical approaches and didactic practices. In my opinion, they respond to a formative and qualitatively innovative vision of assessment (*avalúo*) that rejects conventional quantitative accounting assessments. We can therefore infer that they favour more value-based, pluralist and integrated ways of assessment. Ways that are open to criticism and self-criticism. Ways of cognitive and attitudinal valuation that encourage a change in attitudes as well as transforming concepts – among both teachers and students and in interpersonal relations. Ways that not only profess a deep respect for the *multivocality* of each student, but which also require him or her to assume particular personal positions and commitments to marginalised sectors. Ways that seek to verify the *wholeness and transversality* that is so much aspired to – in which each student manages to articulate the content of their research, creation and community action coherently – in their own way and with their own authentic voice.

Dissemination and sharing. One of the main objectives of *theo-feminist* pedagogy is to share its progress by disseminating it in new community and church sectors – with a view to promoting wide ranging policy changes. Some of the most common of these practices are: (a) exchange of syllabuses, bibliographies and other didactic materials at meetings, via email or by post; (b) the circulation of writings and bulletins; and (c) the use of liturgy and spirituality to express positions and reflect their progress in advancing a gender perspective.

Seventh moment: Articulating its guiding metaphors and paradigms. As in all fields of human endeavour, *non-ingenuous* images underlie and guide *theo-feminist pedagogy*. Below are some metaphors that guide the praxis of my educator and theologian colleagues.

Some colleagues see *theo-feminist pedagogy* as a *midwife*, ready to help give birth to innovating ideas. A delivery that at the same time makes decision making and change possible. Others see it as an audacious

transgressor of the laws of academia, both in relation to methodology and theory. Some see *education* as the *sum in equilibrium* of learning. Others, see it as the appropriation of the *mother tongue*, rich in emotions, creativity, intuition, the metaphorical and the relational. And appropriation of the *father tongue*, characterised by analytical, logical, abstract and rational thought.

By inference, we can see *theo-feminist pedagogy* as providing a safe delivery in a triple sense - gestation, birth and enlightenment. Also by inference, we can see the students as *apprentice midwives*, *apprentice transgressors*, *apprentices of the mother and father tongue*. As apprentices in the quest for a broad equilibrium and an authentic integration of *body-intellect-spirit*. From these metaphors, it is also clear that this theological pedagogy of gender tends to follow an artistic – not yet scientific – paradigm of education. A qualitative paradigm in which each teacher is a virtuoso, an inspired person, an *Inventor* of History and their own history. And each student is an *Apprentice Inventor*.

FIFTH MOVEMENT: SOME CONCLUSIONS, CONTINUITY AND BEGINNING

In this last *Movement*, I try to formulate conclusions and communicate lessons derived from the process of systematisation. First, I indicate some reflexive challenges that are still on the table. Second, I identify some institutional initiatives and policies for change. Third, I gather together some value judgements, suggestions and lessons learned.

First moment: Articulating reflexive challenges. In meetings and workshops, my women theologian and educator colleagues mentioned deficiencies and limitations – what some of them assertively called *motivating obstacles* – to their pedagogical-theological proposition. Notable among these are: (a) the divorce between efforts in the academic world and the realities in the communities and churches; (b) the tendency to reduce Christian education exclusively to Sunday school; (c) the exclusive responsibility assigned to women in providing spiritual education, especially for small children; (d) the limitations of existing bibliographies, teaching materials and professional training resources with a gender perspective; and (e) the lack of time and technical and economic resources to conduct research.

Second moment: Articulating institutional initiatives and changes in policies. As *strategies* or *ways* to share resources more widely and change education policies at the institutional level – and further afield – they recommended many initiatives, such as: (a) foster the presence of an “*everyday spirituality*” – varied, creative and inclusive – in all areas of our institutions; (b) encourage each and every teacher to use a gender perspective as a didactic tool; (c) strengthen the existing spaces in theology faculties and churches, especially those that represent an *informal* or *hidden* curriculum for work on pedagogy and gender; (d) establish alliances with *gender-conscious* male and female colleagues to promote change and the development of education policies; (e) “*be intentional*” about training female teaching staff, giving priority to theological training for them; (f) create training opportunities with a gender perspective, directed at educators, Sunday school teachers and community leaders; (g) encourage the establishment of research for the renewal of knowledge in theology-pedagogy-gender matters as an institutional priority; (h) restore “*feeling*” and spirituality as valid research categories for theoretical progress; (I) establish networks and links for the exchange of experiences, bibliographies and materials; (j) promote the organisation of round tables on gender issues and invite men to contribute a “*masculine*” perspective; (k) bring libraries up to date on pedagogy and gender issues; (l) in theology faculties, create “*pedagogy schools*” oriented towards the training of teachers from theology faculties, teachers of religion in church institutions, and leaders of Bible schools and Sunday schools; and (m) continue organising meetings and linking up with other initiatives with organisms interested in a *theological pedagogy of gender*.

Third moment: Articulating value judgements, suggestions and some lessons learned. In general terms, we can say that *theo-feminist theology* is emerging with all the force and conviction of a liberating praxis.

And that it seems likely that its content and practices will be rapidly legitimised. However, we can make some suggestions for strengthening it, including: (a) work to overcome the dichotomy between teaching and research, so that research and the use of research by teaching staff is linked in *reflective praxis* and wide-ranging *action research* (b) set up collaborative *university-community-school* or *seminary-community-school* projects that tackle spiritual and gender issues in a community context, starting from primary school; and (c) take a look at various pedagogical-theological proposals that have already been systematised by like-minded groups.

We can extract innumerable lessons from the emerging *theo-feminist pedagogy* as well as from the effort so far made to systematise it. However, I will highlight three lessons from the *theology-pedagogy-gender* relationship that have affected me personally as an educator – in the sense of posing challenges to me. I am referring to three lessons learned – *progress made* that demands reflection, further development and change in every pedagogy and theology...

First lesson learned. Multiple power relations are formed and dissolved in our physical existence and our daily reality. *Second lesson learned.* The cultivation of *spiritual intelligence* - in its close links with the *emotional, moral, intuitive and existential intelligences* - is central to the integral growth of each human being. *Third lesson learned.* The emerging *theo-feminist pedagogy* shares the values and wholehearted commitment of *ecofeminism* and other related liberating movements and pedagogies.

It will be important to continue talking and reflecting about these – and so much other progress that is being made – and their links with the emerging *theo-feminist pedagogy* – through *pedagogies of the body, pedagogies of the spirit, ecofeminist pedagogies and other liberating pedagogies*. And we should do that through *transversal dialogue* cutting across traditional lines – committed to forging an ecumenical theological education that takes a critical position within the present, complex, globalising framework, with a clear vocation for liberation and transformation.

Bibliography

- Antillón, Roberto (1991). *¿Cómo entendemos la sistematización desde una concepción metodológica dialéctica?* Guadalajara: IMDEC.
- Connell, Robert W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Dimensión Educativa (1997). *Teología a pie: entre sueños y clamores*. Colombia: Equipo de Teología Popular de Dimensión Educativa.
- Gebara, Ivone (1998). *Mulheres e espiritualidade: Uma perspectiva latino-americana. Cristianismo y Sociedad 1998. Teología Feminista desde América Latina*. xxxvi/1-xxxvi/2 (135-136), 69-78.
- hooks, bell (1994). *Teaching to transgress. Education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- Jara H, Oscar (1994). *Para sistematizar experiencias*. Costa Rica: Alforja.
- Pascual Morán Anaida (2001/at printers). *Teología y pedagogía en diálogo: Pasos primeros de un mismo y transversal caminar*. Memorias Sexta Jornada Teológica de la Comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuménica Latinoamericana-Caribeña. 2-6 July 2000, Cumbayá, Ecuador: CETELA.
- Pascual Morán, Anaida (2000, December). *Mas allá de género*. Xilotl / Revista Nicaragüense de Teología, number 26, year 13, 43-66.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford (1983). *Sexism and God-talk. Towards a feminist theology*. London: SCM Press Ltd.
- Tamez, Elsa (1989). *Las mujeres toman la palabra. Entrevistas*. San José, Costa Rica: DEI (Departamento Ecuménico de Investigaciones).
- Tepedino, Ana María & María Pilar Aquino (eds.) (1998). *Entre la indignación y la esperanza. Teología feminista latinoamericana*. Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia: ASETT (Asociación Ecuménica de Teólogos y Teólogas del Tercer Mundo).
- Vuola, Elina (1997). *Limits of liberation. Praxis as method in Latin American liberation theology and feminist theology*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia (The Finnish Academy of Science and Letters).

**LEARNING TO LEARN SLOWLY:
VOCATION, TRANSFORMATION, AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALISATION**

Sturla J. Stålsett

Globalisation: Acceleration and the Terror of the Moment

Whatever else can be said about ‘globalisation’, its defining characteristic has to do with movement – rapid movement. Movement, mobilisation, transportation accelerate beyond all limits and borders. The time it takes to make information, goods, money or people travel from here to there on the globe is reduced to practically no time, to an instant, to the click of a mouse. ‘We are increasingly exposed to an anonymous pressure of acceleration, an obscure mobilization of the world in which we live’ (Metz 1995 (1993), 80). Movement has reached its peak and become a standstill. Every potential place is within reach in a moment, in a ‘now’. Every place can become ‘here’, right now. Thus ‘here’ becomes no particular place, a nowhere. This is why Paul Virilio has suggested that globalisation entails the ‘End of Geography’ (Virilio 1997).

Zygmunt Bauman takes Virilio’s observation as one point of departure for his critical analysis of the human consequences of globalisation (Bauman 1998). Mobilisation has become the most important factor for social stratification or inequality in our time, he states. The world has become more polarised than ever before. It is divided between on the one hand those who are free to travel – to move their goods, their investments, themselves – anywhere, anytime; those who are unrestricted by time and space. To them, in one sense, it is true that geography has come to an end, if geography means the binding power of distances, borders, and territories. On the other hand, millions are not free to travel, but remain even more stuck in their place. They are losing ever more of the little influence they have left on vital political and economic forces that determine life conditions in their place. To be bound to a particular place in the age of globalisation means social deprivation, according to Bauman (op.cit., 88.)

Movement has accelerated to such a speed that it has become a constant. Consequently, practically all power is cumulated in the moment, the instant, the very ‘now’ that digitally takes control over both the future and the past. Sequences, time spans, processes are condensed, and ultimately overcome. There is no time for waiting, longing, maturing. There is no time for hoping. Why hope? What may be possibly hoped for is already here, within reach. Within reach, i.e., for those in control of the almighty moment, the masters of mega- and gigabytes, the lords of the instantaneous and immediate. This seemingly total freedom that human beings have longed for through the ages (consider the soteriology of the Gnostics), is ultimately a ‘freedom’ from being a bodily human being. It is our body that requires a place. It is our bodies that develop, that mature, that long for, and hope. This surrender to the almighty power of the instant(aneous) is thus a surrender of human corporeality. It is surrender to the terror of the moment.

Liberating Pedagogy: Learning to Learn

This situation represents new challenges to theological education. Although there will be moments of seemingly *instant* breakthrough in knowledge, sudden new insight, and unexpected mastery in any activity that goes by the name of education, learning principally has to do with maturing, development, process. And struggle. ‘Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly’ (Freire 1972, 24.) Can these famous words of the great master of liberating pedagogy of the 20th century

be made valid in an age of globalisation? ‘Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man (sic); nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion’ (ibid.). But how can this freedom – indispensable condition for human completion – be conquered? ‘To surmount the situation of oppression, men must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation - one which makes possible the pursuit a fuller humanity.’ Critical awareness-raising, *conscientização*, and transforming action are the key words, the great legacy of this Brazilian educator. Here we particularly note their ‘temporal’, ‘procedural’ aspect: They require and describe a process; they imply planning, realising, gradually proceeding; they represent a road to be travelled. They do not come automatically or instantaneously.

Awareness-raising and transforming action are words that made their way into theology and caused a great renewal also in this field, not just in the way it is taught but also in the way it is understood and practised. The step from liberating pedagogy to liberating theology was in other words a short but significant one. Juan Luis Segundo clearly pointed to the pedagogical core of liberation theology when speaking of divine revelation and its correlative, Christian faith – and, subsequently, theology – as a ‘process of deuterio-learning, of learning to learn’ (Segundo 1976, 179). The crucial point about revelation as the source of theology is not that revelation should be limited to only what it says about God or divine realities, or that it only can be viewed properly at the end of the process. Revelation is not basically a content that is the outcome of an educational process. Rather it is this learning process itself. It is ‘about way’, *meta hodos*, i.e. *method* – a learning to learn: ‘If we learn how to learn in and through the Bible, then we must keep going back to this learning process and entrusting ourselves to it. We must keep in contact with this process which reconstructs the historical experiences of a people and a community. (op.cit.,180).’

This ‘going back’ to a former learning process in order to ‘entrust oneself to it’ is not a simple task. It is something that must be done with a critical awareness, both in terms of its point of departure in the *now*, and in terms of its destination, the story about what happened *then*. This is why faith never can do without ‘ideologies’, according to Segundo. Faith needs to critically unmask the patterns and forces of oppression both then and now in order to be truly involved in the liberating process of learning how to learn. Since these oppressive patterns and forces tend to focus on, and in the end to petrify, a particular content, they become mono-logic and potentially dictatorial. They inform about what is, instead of opening up the educational process of what might *become*. In order to become dynamic and operative, faith thus always needs to make use of ‘ideologies’, but these are but tool, relative to what Segundo views as absolute, the ‘historical experiences of a people and a community’.

Transformation in a hyper-transforming world

Yet under the spell of the all-comprehensive moment, under the terror of the immediate and the instantaneous, there is no time for going back or for planning for the future. The globalised world is a world in which we are told that ideology is dead – as is utopia, as is history, as is revolution, etc. Those who think this qualifies for leaving Freire and Segundo’s insights to historians, would even have an additional argument: What use would there be in ‘transforming action’ in a world in which transformation is omnipresent? Under the euphemism ‘flexibilisation’, transformation is nowadays constant, unpredictable and merciless to workers around the globe (Bauman 1998). Who needs *more* transformation?

Perhaps the real liberating change that would be worth struggling for today must come from the fine art of slowing down, a conscious foot-dragging, an intentional delaying. Yet this is forbidden, as Johann-Baptist Metz rightly points out: ‘Perhaps we are getting used to the prohibitions that no one has put up

publicly, but that stick all the more firmly in our heads: the prohibitions against demobilization, against lingering, against delaying' (Metz 1995 (1993), 80).

Liberation pedagogy (Freire) and liberation theology (Segundo et al.) have both been criticised for not taking seriously enough the existing, albeit hidden, resistance and survival strategies of subordinate groups. Political scientist James C. Scott proposes to call these ambiguous and concealed strategies the 'hidden transcript': 'Every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a "hidden transcript" that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant' (Scott 1990, xxi). The marginalised and oppressed – or excluded ones, in an era of globalisation – are not as acquiescent and submissive, as they may seem. But they know that an open confrontation with those in power is very seldom in their interest. In stead of engaging in this open battle that they are bound to lose, they are clever enough to take advantage of the many opportunities for 'covert operations' that ambiguous communication represent. It would therefore be 'a serious analytical error', according to Scott, 'to conclude that slaves, serfs, peasants, untouchables, and other subordinate groups are ethically submissive merely because their protests and claims conform to the proprieties of the dominant class they are challenging' (op. cit., 92). There is in other words something going on 'behind the official story'.

This is where Scott differs from the early analysis of Freire, when Freire speaks of the 'fear of freedom' that the oppressed have because the oppressor has become internalised in them. 'For them [i.e., the oppressed] the new man is themselves become oppressors. Their vision of the new man is individualistic; because of their identification with the oppressor, they have no consciousness of themselves as persons or as members of an oppressed class.' (Freire 1972, 23). The central problem then, according to Freire, is how the oppressed can participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation, when they are 'divided, inauthentic beings' (op. cit., 25)? They must discover that they have become 'hosts' of their oppressor, before they can engage in the liberative, pedagogical process, Freire believes (ibid.). Scott's analysis sustain the claim that 'it ain't necessarily so:' 'Most acts of power from below, even when they are protests – implicitly or explicitly – will largely observe the "rules" even if their objective is to undermine them' (Scott 1990, 93). Interestingly, one of these 'acts of power from below' is related to the element of speed, of pacing. Conscious foot-dragging conveys a message of silent protest to those in power. Scott quotes from Genet's *The Blacks*:

Archibald: You are to obey *me*. And the text we've prepared.

Village: (banteringly) But I'm still free to speed up or draw out my recital and my performance. I can move in slow motion, can't I? I can sigh more often and more deeply.

Learning to learn slowly

I can move in slow motion, can't I: In an age of globalisation liberating change may come from standing still. Or, rather, from moving in slow motion, yet steadfastly, with an intention and an aim. There is a need for, a call for, a certain kind of refusal: a refusal to acceleration, refusal to (hyper-) transformation. I think Christian theology can be part of and provide resources for this resistance in slow motion. It can do so by insisting to take the necessary time to go back and remember, and to reckon with the time it will take to travel – knowing that arrival is not imminent, and not without much effort, dreaming, and hoping. This is the direction in which I think theological education should move – slowly – in a globalised age.

Christian faith is a journey, a pilgrimage. Christianity is a *religión del caminar* (J. Sobrino). It is rooted in the past, in history, in the dangerous memory of suffering: *memoria passionis Jesu Christi*. And it is – because of this very rootedness in historical remembrance – directed towards the future. 'The Christian

memory of suffering is in its theological implications an anticipatory memory: it intends the anticipation of a particular future of man as a future for the suffering, the hopeless, the oppressed, the injured, and the useless of this earth' (Metz 1980, 117). Such anticipation is not a passive waiting for, but an active working, struggling, and praying for. It is praxis. But this praxis is neither instantaneous nor following a readymade recipe. It is dynamic, open-ended. It calls for creativity, discernment, patience and steadfastness. To foster such virtues is perhaps the main challenge for theological education in an age of globalisation. So how can these qualities be won? How should theological education itself be structured in order to respond better to this immense task?

I will here limit myself to suggest three points that should be explored in responding to these questions. The first one deals with the source(s) and the material for theological learning: Theological education should promote a process of learning to learn from what is already there. The other two are more directly related to how theological education should relate to the hyper-mobility in our globalised age. Firstly I contend that theological education should take advantage of this mobility in order to turn the mobility against itself, so to speak, through learning to learn in networks. Here I will draw from my own experience as the Co-ordinator of the International Network in Advanced Theological Education (INATE). And secondly, theological education should recall and renew the concept of vocation, in order to promote a different kind of travelling in our time, a travelling with a purpose.

Learning to learn from what is already there

Making use of Scott's concept of the hidden transcript, Gerald West and his colleagues at the Institute for the Study of the Bible and School of Theology in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, are exploring the 'incipient theologies' of marginalised people and communities. There are among the poor and marginalised not only hidden survival strategies that we should pay attention to; there are certainly also survival theologies. Or, better: among the most important survival strategies of marginalised and oppressed people, we find survival theologies. These are implicit, 'hidden' theologies, often symbolic, poetic, even ironic. These theologies of the hidden transcript represent an important source for a theological education that wishes to take seriously faith in the God of prophets and the God of Jesus, i.e., faith in a God who is already engaged in history and in the fate of the poor and the victims of this world. In other words, if it is true that God has taken the side of the poor, then what the poor experience of the presence/absence of God can in no way be considered irrelevant to (academic) theology.

Yet the difficulty is obvious and well-known: Hidden transcripts are hidden for a good reason. How can a scholar, a non-poor, a privileged, gain access to this particular experience of the non-educated, poor, non-privileged without destroying it? How can s/he interpret and learn from the incipient theologies without actually silencing it anew through his/her re-presentation of it?

Gerald West takes up this challenge (West 1999, 52ff.) He finds the idea that theologians should 'speak for' for marginalised and silenced groups highly problematic. 'Speaking for', he says, 'quite simply dismisses or minimizes the hidden transcript – the speaking voice of the subaltern – and denies the subject status of the poor and oppressed altogether' (ibid.). Therefore, there should be no interpretation from above, he states; socially engaged scholars must 'mark their positionality as participating subjects.' In this way, it may be possible to take seriously the subjectivity of both the educated theologian and the ordinary poor and marginalised believer. It opens up for the process of becoming *partially constituted by*, as West formulates it, the reality and subjectivity of the other. 'So while particularity and partiality are a constant reminder that the process of "reading with" is contested, they also offer us, in our process of becoming, creative ways of being partially constituted by each other's subjectivity' (op.cit., 54).

In the context of globalisation, I find West's analysis particularly stimulating: How can we become partly constituted by others, by each other, and especially, by the excluded ones in global theology and theological education?

Learning to learn in a Network: The INATE Experience

As already pointed out, 'globalisation' is in some sense a very misleading term. What is globalisation and total freedom from places and borders to a global elite, is rather 'localisation', captivity and social deprivation to a global majority, as Bauman so convincingly has shown. Liberation-, feminist and ecumenical approaches to theology represented in many senses a 'contextual turn' in this discipline. It spurred theologians to take into account what was going on 'locally'; theology and theological education had to become rooted in a particular context, in order to really respond to the needs of the congregations and communities. Contrary to what it may seem, the so-called 'End of Geography' does not change this. Theology still needs to be contextual, in order to respond to the global changes and structures that affect people and persons locally. Theology today needs to pay even closer attention to the hidden transcripts, the incipient theologies that flourish in the globalised age. But theology and theological education must also strive to inter-connect this plurality of contextual theologies, in order to foster a truly global dialogue of theologies and theo-praxises. Only in this direction may we find a way back to some sense of 'universality' in theology – a concept so discredited from the many generations of illegitimate colonialist identification of the Western and the universal.

The good news is that the globalised age offers unique possibilities for such a 'glocal' theological dialogue. There is in our day much to be gained from networking in theological education. This observation was the main impetus behind the formation of the International Network in Advanced Theological Education (INATE) in 1996. INATE consists of member institutions on four continents: Escola Superior de Teologia in São Leopoldo, Brazil; The School of Theology at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa; Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Centre in Chennai, India; Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong, China; the Evangelical-Lutheran Theological University in Budapest, Hungary; and finally, The Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo and its partner institutions in Oslo (The Seminary of Practical Theology, University of Oslo and the Diakonhjemmet College). This outreach gives the Network a broad and varied basis for its purpose, which is to foster contextual theologies that correspond to both local and global challenges. INATE promotes mutual exchange of staff and students between all the member institutions, and stimulates research on contextual theology/ies and the development of proposals for contextualised theological education in a framework of globalisation. At the same time, INATE is a process, a learning experience, and a network under continuous development. We are learning to learn in a network (see: <http://www.tf.uio.no/masternetwork/inate/>).

Such a network may at best, I think, become a tool that different local theologies can make use of in order to become 'partly constituted by' the contexts and subjectivities of 'others' on the world-wide theological scene. This is not least important to theologians and theological students in some way or another belonging to the globalised elite (which does not necessarily mean that they live in the North). The faith experiences of the localised, excluded communities, which are expressed in the incipient theologies of the hidden transcript, are of fundamental importance in the effort to formulate living and liberating theologies in a globalised age.

Travelling with a purpose: Vocation

Yet, the mere existence of networks like the INATE and similar tools for interconnecting with others and paying attention to formerly silenced voices in the theological 'choir', is not enough. There is a need for

something more, if these tools are to be useful. There is a need for a personal commitment, a 'change' in the subjectivity of the theologian or theological educator. West audaciously formulates this in the central biblical terms of 'call' and 'conversion: 'So, it is only the "called" and "converted" biblical scholar who may be of service to the poor and marginalized communities – those who have betrayed the hidden discourse of the dominant and who have chosen to be partially constituted by the hidden discourse of the dominated' (West 1999, 111.)

Vocation, call (*kaleo / klesis, Beruf*) is a dynamic concept in the Scripture as well as in the history of dogma. It is a call to change, to transformation, and to movement. It is closely related to mission and service. Therefore it gains new relevancy when we see it in relation to the restless mobility of our age. We, i.e. particularly the globalised elite, seem to be always on the move, even when we stay put (in front of the computer screen), as Bauman observes. Is there a way of moving in the world, which is neither that of careless sightseeing and casual net surfing, nor that of forced migration out of desperate need and fear?

The gospels portray Jesus too as constantly on the move. He calls his disciples to leave behind all that they have, to free themselves from their hometown with all its ties, and follow him, i.e. wander about with him. The first Christians were called followers of the Way. Obviously then, Christian identity is about travelling. Yet Christian travelling is not an escape. It is not about running from one's human responsibilities. It is certainly not about escaping this world. Rather, it is a travelling *into* the world, with a purpose. It is a mission, in a sense, from God to the world, with the purpose of *diakonia, marturia* and *koinonia* - service, witness, and communion. And only in this sense, by being a travelling into the world with the goal of bringing good news and bringing about good realities, transformation, it is a travelling to God.

The Christian concept of vocation, with its close relationship to seeing Jesus as being a way to follow, and Christian identity as a following of Jesus, a pilgrimage, and a mission, is, I suggest, highly challenging in a globalised world. It offers an alternative kind of mobility, which moves towards an alternative kind of globalisation, that of *koinonia*, or *oikoumene*. We need to invite students of theology to such a travelling. And, as theological educators we need to be invited to such travelling. This is how the classical theological concept of 'vocation' gains new relevance. Christians are *called* to travelling with a purpose, and thereby learning to learn, slowly, but with determination and hope (Eph 1.18).

References:

- Bauman, Zygmunt. 1998. *Globalization. The Human Consequences*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Freire, Paulo. 1972. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by Ramos, Myra Bergman. London: Harmondsworth.
- Metz, Johann-Baptist. 1995 (1993). *Time Without a Finale. The Background to the Debate on 'Resurrection or Reincarnation'*. In *Faith and the Future. Essays on Theology, Solidarity, and Modernity*, Maryknoll: Orbis books.
- Metz, Johann Baptist. 1980. *Faith in History and Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*. London: Burns & Oates.
- Scott, James. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Segundo, Juan Luis. 1976. *Liberation of Theology*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.
- Virilio, Paul. 1997. *Fin de l'histoire, ou fin de la géographie? Un monde surexposé. Le Monde Diplomatique* (August):17.
- West, Gerald. 1999. *The Academy of the Poor. Towards a Dialogical Reading of the Bible*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

***BETWEEN THE SEMINARY, THE SANCTUARY AND THE STREETS:
REFLECTIONS ON ALTERNATIVE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION***

Ched Myers

This brief reflection proceeds from the conviction that the goal of theological education in the North American context today should be to equip everyday disciples to overcome their sense of disempowerment and denial in order to engage in the evangelical works of mercy and service, advocacy and resistance, community building and social reconstruction. As such, theological study represents a form of leadership development, but only secondarily. Its primary purpose should be populist, that is, to nurture widely a more critical and grounded Christian literacy in Word and world in order to build capacity for the community of faith in its mission and witness.

I. Problems. The above clearly does not describe the thrust of contemporary institutional theological education. On the contrary, it tends to be alienating from a populist point of view in terms of how and where theology is studied and what is taught: – How: Three decades after Paulo Friere introduced the perspectives of popular education, the pedagogical practices that prevail in North American seminaries still tend to breed dependence rather than empowerment, privilege content over process and nurture intellectualizing rather than praxis. – Where: The social location of seminaries make them accessible only to educated and middle class persons and remote from the life of the poor and vulnerable. – What: Most seminary curricula fail to address the whole range of practical skills needed for contemporary ministry: one can learn preaching, pastoring and theology, but not community organizing, social analysis, communications skills and nonprofit administration. Most problematic, however, and rarely addressed, is the pervasive ideology of professionalism that characterizes tertiary theological education in the First World.

The goal of most current seminaries is professional credentialing for parish ministry and/or for academic teaching. In a landmark 1977 study entitled *The Rise of Professionalism*, sociologist Magali Sarfatti Larson of Temple University writes:

Because marketable expertise is a crucial element in the structure of modern inequality, professionalization appears also as a collective assertion of special social status and as a collective process of upward mobility... (Its) “backbone” is the occupational hierarchy, that is, a differential system of competences and rewards; the central principle of legitimacy is founded on the achievement of socially recognized expertise, or, more simply, on a system of education and credentialing (pp xvi-xvii).

The production of knowledge has become a “standardized commodity” in the modern university, steadily displacing the older ethos of apprenticeships and guilds with that of credentialing monopolies. And ministers and theology professors are virtual charter members of this elite class of “knowledge professionals.” Larson identifies the three main components of the ideology of professionalism as individualism, elitism and a psychology of entitlement. Thus “education is now the main legitimator of social inequality in industrial capitalism.”

This phenomenon has only intensified over the last decade because of the way North American tertiary educational institutions have been impacted by neoliberal economic and political forces. It is not too

much to speak of “structural adjustment” in the political economy of higher education, seen in such trends as:

- privatization (e.g. increasing university/seminary dependence upon corporate financing for endowments, infrastructure and research grants);
- debt (the skyrocketing costs of undergraduate and graduate school drives students to get through school and into the job market as quickly as possible to begin repaying their debt burden, a pressure that erodes incentive for creative or “non-practical” inquiry, activism, service or other commitments that may not have direct “market” value);
- competition (the meritocratic struggle for resources and/or professional prestige pits students, departments and institutions against each other, undermining collaborative learning, research or writing). University/seminary culture is thus moving further away from traditional liberal notions of a community of critical scholarship and toward an economic rationalism that sees the institution as a degree factory for the managerial, technocratic and academic classes.

These forces take academic culture further from the life of the church that (at least ideally) promotes the communal over the private, the economics of gift and grace over that of debt and merit, and the cooperative and associative over the competitive. Nevertheless, seminaries (typified by the Association of Theological Schools) continue to move away from their traditional accountability to the church and toward the professionalist standards of the secular university. This means that the gulf between seminaries and local congregations, practical ministry or public advocacy is deepening dramatically.

There are exceptions, of course, such as the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education in Chicago, the Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit, Memphis Theological Seminary or the Maryknoll School of Theology. There are also grass roots, non-accredited initiatives such as the Servant Leadership Schools (based in Washington, DC), the Alternative Seminary in Philadelphia and exposure programs such as Borderlinks in Tucson. But these exceptions only prove the rule. The worlds of the seminary, the sanctuary and the streets generally spin in very different orbits, with little engaged conversation between them – much less mutual accountability. Professional theological and biblical scholars tend to ignore the demands of practice, and feel increasingly less obligated to interpret their work to lay Christians. But the problem does not lie only there. Christian activists are notorious for neglecting disciplines of critical reflection – theological and political – on why and how they are trying to change the world. And people in the pews – as well as their clerical and denominational leadership – too often ignore both the insights of academics and the challenges of activists, settling instead for the insular confines of religious entertainment. In order to bridge these gulfs we must re-integrate the competences of these three alienated worlds of Christian witness.

II. Alternatives. Approaches to theological education that focus not on credentialing but on community formation, conscientization and capacity building for a faith based movement of social transformation are being developed. In a consultation on this question recently held in Detroit, participants identified four main streams that have influenced the struggle for alternative theological education in North America over the last half-century:

1. the “freedom School” tradition of the black church, especially as it developed during the civil rights movement;
2. the “underground seminary” experiments of the anti-war and radical discipleship movements, which drew consciously upon the “confessing church” tradition in Nazi Germany;
3. the feminist pedagogies of the womens’ movement and struggles for inclusion among sexual minorities;
4. the base community movements and liberation theology, particularly in the Latin American tradition.

These strands have profoundly influenced all of us who today are trying to form approaches that integrate biblical literacy, social analysis, and organizing.

The problem is that those of us who have chosen populist over seminary-based theological pedagogy have had to figure out how to operate with little or no institutional support (this has prompted my colleague Bill Wylie Kellermann to refer to us wryly as the “lumpen profesoriati”). We are too practical for the seminaries, too political for the churches and too evangelical for most activist organizations. So we itinerate, facilitating workshops, seminars, conferences, and retreats that become excuses to invoke a sort of “floating alternative seminary.” We employ a pedagogy of popular education, in which participants sing and pray; critically reflect on issues from the perspective of their different contexts and traditions and histories; and re-read the scriptures in order to embody them in the world. We collaborate with musicians, performance artists, body workers, and liturgists, and use different media in order to offer a range of voices and approaches. In this work, worship, analysis and practice meet again and embrace.

This style of education is necessarily a form of organizing. Our dream is to help rekindle and “consociate” faith-based movements for social change here and abroad. We try to help groups network, sometimes in the same town, sometimes across the country, forging ongoing relationships with diverse local communities. Not only in our approach fundamentally ecumenical, but also reaches and across race, class and gender lines. We work with local communities and parishes; with faith-based activist groups such as Pax Christi, Witness for Peace, and Jubilee 2000; and with denominational leadership. Like the freedom schools, the sole purpose of this educational work is to build capacity for the “movement,” whether that is expressed in anti-globalization protests, direct action for disarmament, or immigrant’s rights work at the borders. We exhort our colleagues to embrace the central spiritual and political discipline of movement-building: we must become more, not less, than the sum of our parts. To do that we must reach out to one another and find the connections between our work. And we must take care of each other.

It is also a kind of evangelism. The prophets, Jesus and Paul all believed that the Word of God must always first be directed toward the household of faith. Sadly, the task of evangelism has been abandoned by liberals and trivialized by conservatives. Too many Christian institutions (Protestant and Catholic alike) are inhospitable to the gospel’s invitation to the cross, to solidarity with the least, and to Jubilee justice. Instead, they tend to mirror the dominant culture’s captivity to the public pathologies of “affluenza,” white privilege and privatized consciousness. Nevertheless, we have seen repeatedly the power of biblical story to animate the church. Whether studying scripture with lively elderly nuns or confused Congregational youth, with disillusioned Presbyterian parishioners or weary Baptist urban ministers, we work hard to bring the sacred story to life. We examine contemporary cultural discourses critically and the ancient texts contextually, and find resonance through analogy and symbol and a constant analysis of power. And as we encounter the powerful intersection between Word and world, hearts rise to the vision, faith and social imagination are re-ignited, and lives are turned toward the tasks of liberation and peacemaking.

And this kind of theological education is pastoral. If evangelism afflicts the comfortable, the other side of our work is to comfort the afflicted – those already in the struggle for compassion and against marginalization. These are the folk who staff soup kitchens, social service agencies or lobbying groups; who minister in prisons or go to prison for acts of conscience; who serve the homeless, offer hospice or do community organizing. For them these are discouraging times indeed, as our casino economy transfixes public gaze on the elite while rendering the poor increasingly invisible. Christians and others in the trenches are weary; our groups are disconnected; hope is fragile. So we spend an enormous amount of our energy out on the road listening, encouraging, commiserating and extending solidarity to those who

are doing justice and peace work, in season and out. We try to pay special attention to the task of mentoring questing youth, who represent the next generation and who see so much we do not.

The radical democratizing of theological education does not obviate the need for leaders, facilitators and animators. Our work is different, however, from that of elite professional intellectuals whose work is primarily addressed to other specialist colleagues. Our role is instead fourfold:

1. to reflect back to the movement what we are hearing and seeing, helping assess who and where we are in the historical moment.
2. to help interpret current events, trends and signs of hope;
3. to translate some of the crucial concepts and fresh perspectives being generated in different academic disciplines into a more accessible form; and
4. to help forge a creative theological synthesis that weaves together political, socioeconomic, biblical and experiential perspectives.

“The most apostolic duty of all,” my friends at Jonah House taught me, “is to keep one another’s courage up.” Perhaps this best describes the vocation of a theological popular educator. It is hard work, but when I get discouraged I remind myself of the example of the old civil rights organizers in the mid-20th century. They traveled widely and toiled tirelessly in small towns and little churches and freedom schools, naming the sins of racism, training regular folk in the disciplines of nonviolent resistance, and above all, exhorting folk to “keep their eyes on the prize.” None of them could have anticipated that their unheralded efforts at mobilization would build into the most significant social movement our country has ever seen. But like the farmer in Jesus’ seed parable, they faithfully prepared the soil, believed in the mystery of grace, and worked toward the harvest of justice that would surely come (Mk 4:26-29).

**THIRD CONGRESS OF ASIAN THEOLOGIANS
VISIONING NEW LIFE TOGETHER AMONG ASIAN RELIGIONS
AUGUST 6-11, 2001, YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA**

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

1. The Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), born in 1997 in, Suwon, Korea, is an ecumenical venture of Asian Theologians to tread new paths of theologizing in Asia by struggling with the Asian realities and problems. CATS I set the agenda by its theme, “Asian Theology in a Changing Asia: Asian Theological Agenda Towards the 21st Century”. On the eve of the Great Jubilee, CATS II in Bangalore, India, in 1999, was focused on the theme, “Celebrating Life Together”, underlining the Church’s mission of love and service to all, especially in our age of globalization where fullness of life is more and more denied to the vast majority of the people of Asia.
2. Here in Duta Wacana Christian University Yogyakarta, Indonesia, the Third Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS III, assembled about 120 participants from among most of the Asian Countries and from other parts of the world from August 5-11, 2001, to discuss the ways and means of “Visioning New Life Together Among Asian Religions”. Human dignity, freedom, participation and fullness of life are today denied to the vast majority of our people. The process of globalization and market economy is marginalizing more and more people, especially, those who belong to the lower strata of society. The rise of fundamentalistic trends among all religions cause serious conflicts between believers of various religions. The emergence of religious and cultural nationalism in some Asian countries undermines the pluralistic and democratic foundations of Asian societies. At this critical juncture of Asian history, all peoples of Asia who belong to different traditions, religious and secular, have to join hands and walk together to envision a new life for all the people of Asia and for the whole world. The Third Congress of Asian Theologians was called for a common search and exploration to discover the liberative potential of the various religious traditions of Asia and to gather these vital spiritual resources for creating new Asian Societies and envisioning new life for all the people of Asia.
3. The Christian approach to the people of other faiths in Asia, in retrospect, is a live issue with all its inherent problems, ambiguities and conflicts. In the early history of the Church in Asia and its extension of mission to different parts of Asia, the St. Thomas tradition in South and North-west India, and the Nestorian mission in China are significant. Many Christian communities in Asia developed a harmonious and peaceful relationship with the communities of other faiths. In the course of this development many local and cultural elements both good and bad were assimilated and incorporated.
4. The political and colonial impact from the west in the modern period came with the Christian community’s association with the foreign powers, even though attempts were made for indigenization, inculturation and dialogue. The modern missionary era in Asia, in spite of certain success among the deprived classes for regaining their dignity, was to a great extent, a dismal phase with hostile, aggressive, and even arrogant attitude to the other faiths. The local cultures and religious traditions of Asia were often looked upon as inferior that have to be replaced by Christianity and western cultural traditions. The missionary praxis, in general, was one of converting and baptising people of other religions and extending the churches at the cost of the social, cultural and religious values that constituted their inherent sense of dignity and identity.

We do not however question the good intentions and the commitment of the missionaries to the Gospel and the tremendous hardships and heroism they had undertaken. We know that the missionaries were the products of their time. The existential realities of the world and our theological thinking have been radically changed today. We are now witnessing a shift in the traditional paradigm of Christian relationship and mission to the people of other faiths.

5. This Congress aimed at consolidating and advancing the new paradigm of Christian life among the rich variety of religious traditions of Asia. We acknowledge that Christian mission in Asia has been to a great extent a failure if measured by its own aims. This failure emerged from its unhelpful theology of religions and its missiology. Our Christian insight that God lives and works in solidarity with the poor must be shared in Asia. However, the experience of God does not need to be imported, for it is already here. God lives and works in the great religions of Asia and also in the folk religions, which often pose a direct challenge to institutional Christianity. Christians now must humbly acknowledge that in these many ways God has always been savingly present in the continent. In its failure to acknowledge these facts, Christian mission in Asia was arrogant and colonialist. It denied the possibility of pluralism.
6. The emerging mission of Christians is to work with peoples of other faiths to fashion new understandings of community. People need to belong to religious community at two levels: first of the specific religion they profess, and second a wider community both religious and secular which welcomes many faiths and ideologies to enter into dialogue and relationship at the grass-root level. There is as yet no concept of a religious community in place, and as theologians we would wish to develop this understanding in the face of the forced uniformity and exclusion brought by globalization. There is an urgent need for the wider community to uphold diversity, to cry out for justice for all and to practice new forms of inclusion. As Christian theologians we wish to be engaged in such community building, for we know that such a work can really make a difference in our own lives and in the lives of the people of Asia. In our journey together with the people of Asian religions, we recognize the increasing phenomenon of violence in Asia and worldwide, and we commit ourselves to work together to overcome various forms of violence and to promote a culture of peace and justice. We reiterate that affirmation of life is the primary purpose of all religious vocation.
7. In this Congress, we tried to listen humbly to the living religious traditions of Asia and to discover their spiritual resources and liberative potential for new life in Asia. The accumulated wisdom of various religious traditions reminds us that we should not get trapped in the perversions of the present context. Prophetic traditions of all Asian religions provide a nuance to counter all attempts by hierarchical structures to preserve 'present' as eternal. This is manifested in the uncompromising approach of prophetic vision to all forms of oppressions, marginalizations and the forces that threaten life. Moreover these prophetic traditions lifted the concept of freedom to the 'beyond' as an ontological principle that history ever strives for. We have not yet discovered fully the liberative potential of the Christian Gospel. The uniqueness of Christianity is the uniqueness of Jesus' love, compassion and commitment to the poor and the marginalized and his preferential option for them.
8. Creation narratives allude to the notions that the realization of the face of God in the "other" is the essence of religious vocation. Islam reiterates this concept by encouraging everyone to go beyond a legalistic approach to human relationship by demanding strict justice to a God-centered spirituality in which people are invited and urged to treat the "other" as God treats us.

9. Without our conventional language of divine, Buddhist principle of friendship correlates with a religious notion that critical solidarity with the victims to overcome ignorance which include among others poverty, hegemonical power structures, exploitative economic organization, oppressive gender relations, discriminative social and cultural formations is the principle of the divine. Such solidarity transcends all that divided people in history. The principle of *ahimsa* calls for respect for and promotion of all forms of life, and thus to safeguard the integrity of all creation.
10. Solidarity within Hinduism aims at integration of the human with equality within the context of the cosmic community where everyone and everything is intertwined in an interrelated function. This cosmic community (*rta*) is the liberating principle of people and nature. Reconciliation of creator and the creation is the essence of *rta*.
11. At the same time we are aware of patriarchal practices of the traditional religions. The combination of patriarchy and capitalism today intensify the exploitation and destruction of the nature, the women and all the weak and vulnerable as “the other”. The revival of the original “life vision” of the Indigenous/Folk religions accompanied by the resurrection of our dying Mother Earth will lead us to *live together with all differences*. It implies that the promotion of abundant life is the essence of the ultimate divinity of every religion including wisdom of traditions of folk and tribal religions.
12. While affirming the spiritual resources and the liberative potential of Asian religions, we also acknowledge that the institutionalized forms of all religions had certain built-in oppressive structures, and at times, instead of nourishing the fullness of life of individuals and communities, they became instruments of dehumanization, oppression and even destruction of life. Authoritarianism, male-domination and lack of proper democratic process in many Christian Churches, participation of Buddhist monks in the ongoing ethnic wars in Sri Lanka, the failure of many Islamic countries to respect religious pluralism, the role of Hinduism in providing a cultural and theological legitimation to the caste system and in denying the Dalits their rights to be human are some of the issues that need introspection and self-criticism on the part of Asia’s religions.
13. Along with a new theology of religions we call for a new pedagogy of encounter. It is the question of actual human interrelatedness, not abstract ideas, and dogmas, which constitute the loci of encounter. This encounter calls for commitment to our continued struggles to overcome the forces that threaten the fullness of life. Exploring ways and means to ensure an enriched lived experience of harmony, justice, and well-being with our neighbours is imperative. There is an urgent need to develop a different language of dialogue and to cultivate a culture of dialogue and new ways of learning about living religions in community. We reaffirm that life is to be lived at the local level where people of various religious convictions encounter in their day to day life and negotiate with the existential realities. Thus we underline the importance of involvement of local communities in the process of envisioning new life among people of various religions in Asia.
14. We thank God for this grace of having brought us together here in Yogyakarta for the third Congress of Asian theologians and for this very fruitful exchange among us. We have only begun our search in the conflicting and ambiguous existential realities of Asia, while holding fast to our precious heritage of the Gospel. We renew our common commitment to struggle with all the peoples of Asia, believers of all religions as well as non believers, in search of new life and abundance of life for all peoples of Asia and for the whole world.

TRIBUTE TO REV. DR. STANLEY JEDIDIAH SAMARTHA (1920-2001)

Rev. Dr Stanley J. Samartha, first director of the World Council of Churches' (WCC) sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies from 1970-1981, died peacefully in Bangalore, India, after a prolonged illness, on July 22. In a letter of condolence to Dr O.V. Jathanna, principal of the United Theological College in Bangalore, of which Dr Samartha was a member of the faculty, Mr Georges Lemopoulos, deputy general secretary of the WCC, wrote:

“Dr Samartha is remembered with great respect and appreciation for his remarkable contribution to the ecumenical movement and his pioneering efforts in making the concern for dialogue with neighbours of other faiths an enduring commitment in the World Council of Churches...

Those who worked with him speak of his clarity of vision, his excellent leadership and his meticulousness in research and expression. He created space for representatives of other faiths, inviting them in openness and generosity to the table for dialogue. His contributions have set the stage for all subsequent work the WCC has done in inter-faith dialogue. Dr Samartha entered into the discussion with other religions with humility and sensitivity, but also with integrity and hope as one who was faithful to the risen Christ.

The Church of South India and the Indian Church has lost a great leader, particularly in the area of theological education. His many years on the theological faculty of the Karnataka Theological College in Mangalore, Serampore College in Calcutta, and United Theological College in Bangalore have undoubtedly left a lasting impression on theological education in India and beyond because of his commitment to ensure that all students of theology learn about the living faiths in Asia. His own area of specialization in Hindu-Christian dialogue becomes even more relevant in India today with the increasing tensions between these two communities and the struggle of the churches in India to respond in a meaningful and creative way.

Dr Samartha studied at Madras University, United Theological College in Bangalore, Union Theological Seminary in New York and the Hartford Seminary Foundation. He also did post-graduate studies at the University of Basel. In addition to his work as lecturer, professor and principal, he was the author of a number of books, including *The Courage for Dialogue* (WCC, 1981) and *Between Two Cultures: Ecumenical Ministry in a Pluralist World* (WCC, 1996).