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Jerry Shepperd

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GOLD STARS AND THE GOSPEL
By Bill Goff

A New Perspective

Recently I have done a lot of thinking about our educational system and have tried to evaluate our long-accepted practices by the Word of God. I have come to this conclusion: The basic mode of our educational system is antithetical to the Gospel because our educational system is based on coercion and stimulates competition whereas the Gospel proceeds from grace and leads to community.

I want to illustrate this thesis by discussing one area of education with which we are all very familiar: GRADES. The standard rationale for grades is that they motivate us to learn and provide a screening device for prospective employers or higher levels of education. The truth is that they do neither and at the same time they violate the principles of the Gospel. One point at a time.

Grades and Motivation

1. Grades do not motivate us to learn, but rather, make learning difficult. Instead of directing us toward an understanding of the subject matter, grades gear us toward tests and term papers. What we really learn is not systematic theology or church history; we learn how to score on the final. For instance, if we know that the final will be exclusively from the lectures, we don't bother with any text. I know a student who bragged that he got "Bfe" in church history without ever reading a church history text. Grades teach us to con the prof. Instead of learning Greek we memorize the RSV.

Of course we all want to be motivated to learn. The problem with grading is that it imposes a false motivation on us. Motivation should be intrinsic. Imposed motivation is simply coercion, and coercion is anti-Christian. We are not justified by grade, but by grace.

It really seems ironic. We come to seminary to learn to serve Christ better. We want to learn the Bible, history of the church, and how to speak relevantly to contemporary man. Any Christian should be turned on by a chance to do this full time for three years. But we are programmed by our previous educational experience—(we didn't go to school sixteen years for nothing!) to believe that we need grades to motivate us. We've been brainwashed to believe that we need all those A's and C's and gold stars to make us learn theology. We forget the obvious—that learning takes place only when you want to learn.

Take Hebrew for instance: we are forced to take Hebrew to graduate. So you work like mad and become adept at passing exams. But do you really learn? How many alumni who passed Hebrew could translate two sentences of the Old Testament today? (No fair counting Dr. Hubbard!)

A little reflection should remind you that you don't need grades to learn. Remember the first time you preached in church? If you were like me you spent hours in preparation pouring over the text, scrutinizing commentaries, writing, rewriting, and even practicing from the pulpit. Why? Because you were being graded? No, you simply wanted to do a good job of communicating a message from the Word of God.

Several weeks ago I started learning pottery at the Community Adult Training Center in Pasadena. There is no entrance requirement, no tuition, and no grades. You simply go and learn to make pottery. It's really fun even though it's physically tiring. I've spent whole evenings there making pots. I never knew I had such discipline. That's intrinsic motivation.

If you don't want to learn, no amount of coercion can make you learn. If you want to learn coercion can only get in your way.

If students say they need grades to motivate them to work, what will motivate them in the ministry? The pay?

Grades and Screening

2. The second reason given for grades is that they are a necessary screening device. So even if you agree with all that I've said thus far, you still believe we need grades to sort out the good, better, and best prospects for future jobs or schools. This is simply not the case. In his article, "College Grades and Adult Accomplishment," published in Educational Record (Winter, 1966),
GOLD STARS AND THE GOSPEL (Cont.) Donald Hoyt reviews 46 studies dealing with the relationship between college grades and subsequent performance or "success." The studies cover a wide range of fields and use a variety of criteria for success. In general, according to Hoyt, the various studies show either no correlation at all or, in some instances, "no more than a very modest correlation" between college records and adult success. Hoyt also comments, "The practice of basing admission to schools of education, business, engineering or medicine largely or exclusively on undergraduate grades seems indefensible."

There are much better ways to determine a person's qualifications than grades. The Presbyterian church, for example, gives exams in four areas of theology. They don't bother with your GPA. Graduate schools are putting more and more emphasis in criteria other than grades.

Competition and Community

Not only are grades an unreal motivation and an unnecessary evaluation, they are antithetical to the Gospel because they stimulate competition rather than cooperation and community. The prof. gives an assignment to exegete Psalm 1:2 and it's every man for himself! Within fifteen minutes all the commentaries vanish from the library - even the reference books. Is this any way to separate the quick and the dead? Grades teach us to increase one another's burdens rather than to bear them. If Dr. Hubbard is right (and I believe he is) that scholarship is the discovery, sharing, and doing of truth, then our grading system does not produce scholarship, but gainfulness. No wonder we believe that the first believers in Acts 2 were probably naive (if not communist inspired) to hold all things in common.

This quarter I heard a college prof. relate what happened when he told his class (after several weeks of classes) that he had decided to give everyone a B. Students came to him incensed. "Look, we've been working our brains off and now you tell us we're going to get the same thing as those who have been loafing along!" (Of course they were not getting the same thing. They were supposedly learning lots more. But that seemed irrelevant.) Just for fun you might compare this incident to the parable of the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16).

Competition for grades makes it very difficult to be happy when a fellow student does well because his success makes it more difficult for the rest of us to get a good grade. Obviously Paul was not thinking of seminary when he wrote, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." (Romans 12:15)

Alternatives

So what are the alternatives to grades? The ones most often mentioned are the pass-fail and the honors-satisfactory-unsatisfactory. These are better than ABC's but they are still a merit-demerit system. If you get a F or U it looks bad on your record. If the system is really liberal you may get to repeat the course to remove the bad mark. But what kind of motivation to learn is that? Taking hermeneutics to erase a bad grade is just another form of coercion.

I think there is a better way: the credit-no-credit system. Under this simple system you get credit for a course when you meet its requirements. All that goes on your record is the name of the course. If you don't meet the requirements, you don't get any credit and nothing is done to your record. Suppose under this system you took an elective course in, say, "Puritan Eschatology" and several weeks into the quarter you discovered that it was really a drag, so you dropped out. Under the credit-no-credit system you don't get an F or U which you have to erase. (Can you imagine having to take Puritan Eschatology if you really didn't want to?) You just keep a clear record and get a chance to concentrate on meaningful courses. This system could easily fit into our present core curriculum. It would minimize coercion and maximize chances for cooperation. It would go a long way to assure that what we learn at Fuller Seminary is Christian in form as well as content.
The citizens of Joperi were free and Joperi had always been a happy kingdom. They often heard to call each brother; they loved each other very much. They and if you watched them, you could see they acted like that too.

The Kingdom of Joperi was very small, situated in the midst of many larger kingdoms. I say in the midst, but really the people of Joperi, a kingdom that they were all the subjects of one king who lived on the very summit of the highest mountain to the East. This mountain was so high that even on the clearest days its top could not be seen, so high it rose into the deep blue sky.

Some of the kingdoms where the citizens of Joperi lived were situated in a broad valley surrounded on every side by mountains which no man had ever passed. All the people were closed in together and it therefore important that they get along.

But there was trouble in the valley now and even the happy kingdom of Joperi was disturbed. In the western part of the valley two of the major streams from the mountains had suddenly gone dry and people were desperate for water. Kingdoms began to cheat and steal and even kill to get water from other kingdoms.

In the south, winds and freezing rain had ruined the crops and much bitterness arose between those who had food stored and those who didn't. In the North, for no reason at all, people became grouchy, and those who didn't. In the West, for some unknown reason, people began to stir up trouble. And in the East there seemed to be an epidemic of lethargy. Many people quit their jobs, many went to parks, and many sat at home.

One can understand why even the happy Kingdom of Joperi was disturbed. As the situation in the broad valley got worse, a dispute arose among the citizens of Joperi over one of its oldest customs.

A regular feature in the life of Joperi was the observance of the Kerugive. This was a ceremony in which certain men of the kingdom called Kerugs secretly excavated various open lands throughout the valley in order to obtain a rare substance called Jopite. With this a kerug made an elixir called Jopish which he dispensed to all the citizens of Joperi in his area. The belief of these people was that Jopish made them wise and kind and pleasing in the eyes of their king.

The Joperi legend has it that once their king had visited the valley long ago and had buried the Jopite in various places throughout the land. Before leaving he had instituted the Kerugive as the only true way to a happy and honorable life. He had promised that if the Jopish were made properly it would be sure to work.

Now with all the trouble in the valley a curious thing was happening.

When will we realize that the airplane is not an exotic, out-of-this-world machine of the spendthrift, adventure-some missionary pilot? By God's enlightenment, now! Today!

In this age of tremendous changes we cannot seem to understand that there exists the need to advance and activate our outdated transportation methods in missionary work!

Can we continue to ride our burros and at the same time watch the false religious teachers of our day speed over our heads to the untouched frontiers of evangelism and church planting? Why are we always arriving at places late only to find some false cult has been there before? We are in the "burro" days of transportation. In fact, when we tied up our burros in that beautiful green pasture, we discovered that it was an airstrip and had existed for years. Everyone else was using it, why not missions? It makes us wonder just what are our goals and strategy in this fast-moving world!

Brazil and the Burro

Take for example our great land of Brazil. A few years ago this sleeping giant suddenly awoke to the great prospects of prosperity that were potentially here. The explorers and developers of that country realized that the only way their dream of an industrialized and developed country could come true was by using the fastest means of transportation available. To overcome obstacles of distance and time, to commute, to communicate, to transport progress, they wisely chose the airplane. Then they built airstrips all over Brazil.

"Foolish idiot," you say, "they used the airplane and built airstrips all over Brazil!"

You can see the analogy and the pathetic fact that missions seldom make use of this up-dated means of transportation. In Brazil all that missions need to do is get the airplane; the airstrips are there in 75 per cent of the cases!

It is no disgrace to use a burro, nor is it disadvantageous, unspiritual, or spendthrift to use a light aircraft to multiply by six times the efficiency of one worker. Limiting a man to the use of outdated transportation equipment in an updated world is not smart planning or thinking for church growth.

If missions are going to be on the frontiers of opportunity they must find the most efficient way at arriving there and staying there with or ahead of the false religions which are also vying for first place. Is there any reason why we could not be first for the first time? Why do we have to repeatedly discover that we are always second, or even last, to arrive with the true Gospel of how man can have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ? This is (Cont. P. 5)
XI. Since training is part of the ministry, humble dependence in the Spirit in all points here are (1) the role of the word, which is ultimately a testing for fitness to take up the ministry of preaching and teaching. (2) the role of the Spirit, which is not to be diminished by an (Arminian) overstress on human method. The significant phrase, "arbitrary." The significant content is so important, method has a subordination to the ministry of the word itself as God's ministers, free from wrong interference, yet under the constraint of the divine authority.

V. Essentially the task is the faithful handing on of the content of the Gospel as set forth in Scripture, illustrated in Christian history, and applied to current matters of thought and practice.

VI. Since the apostolic tradition is basically fixed, the curriculum of theological instruction is materially controlled (faculty and students alike are under this control); this does not preclude modification and rearrangement in detail, and illustration and application can and will vary.

VII. Intrinsic to the work of training ministers is the teaching and learning of the fundamental Christian data with a view to comprehension and application. Theology is not in the first instance exchange of opinion. Discussion arises on the basis of the data and in their application.

VIII. The primary role of students -- in which teachers also share -- is that of being learners, disciples, scholars in Christ's school, so that they may be (better) qualified teachers of others. Yet while all are learners, not all are equally qualified or accredited teachers. (As a function or gift teaching is specifically not committed to all.)

IX. As a Christian institution a seminary is a fellowship. Let a divine fellowship, as we see from the church, is ordered or structured (like the body in which different members have different functions). In preparing for the ministry the role of some is to teach, that of others to learn, so that they may also teach. Disorderly confusion of roles (the eye trying to be the hand) destroys the proper functioning of the fellowship.

X. Since the faithful handing on of the content is so important, method has a subsidiary role and is indeed, in the old phrase, "arbitrary." The significant points here are (1) the role of the word (spoken and written) in the ministry and (2) the role of the Spirit, which is not to be disturbed by an (Arminian) over stress on human method.

XI. Since training is part of the ministry it demands solemnity (in view of what is at stake) and hence sustaining prayer and a humble dependence on the Spirit in all teaching and learning, and indeed in exercising, which is ultimately a testing for fitness to take up the ministry of preaching and teaching.

XII. As in all ministry the final judgment is the Lord's, whether it be on teachers or learners. Yet especially in relation to the ministry of the word itself there is warning against (Cont. Col. 2)

THE KERUGIVE (Cont.) Many of the citizens of Jopish were being affected by the greed, hate and lethargy stirring in the valley. Some were becoming greedy and hateful and lazy; others were huddling together in fear; others acted as if things were as they always had been; and some were going about trying to do good. The Kerugs were very confused. Was the Jopish no longer working? Was the Jopite bad? Was the King's promise false?

At this time the dispute arose. Two sides emerged with Kerugs and citizens on both sides. One group was sure that the Kerugs should actively show the people how the Jopish should work. "The people," they said, "are not taking the Jopish properly, nor are they doing what is necessary to start it working." Thus, many Kerugs abandoned their function in the Kerugive and went among the people instructing and demonstrating how the Jopish should work.

The other group was sure that the problem would only be solved by a reexamination of their own task of converting Jopite into Jopish. The king had promised Jopish would work. So these Kerugs thought the trouble could be solved if the original true Jopish was dispensed to all the citizens of Joperti. They did not leave their jobs, but worked all the harder to produce the genuine Jopish.

The story of the kingdom of Jopish is an increasingly sad one. The dispute enflamed so that no one could tell there was a kingdom of Jopish any more. The groups became known as the Sevlites and the Cove!ites.

It wasn't long until the Sevlites began to use force against the Cove!ites. They came to depose the Covelite Kerugs who went off to dig in secret places and spent time in isolation cooking up an lixir which did nothing. Soon the Kerugive could no longer be practiced openly. The situation worsened to the point where the Covelites faced extinction.

What made this so tragic for the Cove!ites is that they could see that the Sevlites were mistaken. Wherever the Kerugs abandoned the Kerugive there was an initial burst of enthusiasm as the people rallied round the Kerug and followed him. But the Sevlites noticed that when the novelty of a liberated Kerug wore off, or when he moved away or died the people's spirit broke; they were left with the name Jopish and no more. Some, in fact, had tried to (Cont. P. 5)

SUMMARY RELATIONS (Cont.) for the older in the general sense also applies.)

IV. The converse also applies that their own primary responsibility is to God. They are to discharge their ministry of the word in the first instance as God's ministers, free from wrong interference, yet under the constraint of the divine authority.

V. Essentially the task is the faithful handing on of the content of the Gospel as set forth in Scripture, illustrated in Christian history, and applied to current matters of thought and practice.

VI. Since the apostolic tradition is basically fixed, the curriculum of theological instruction is materially controlled (faculty and students alike are under this control); this does not preclude modification and rearrangement in detail, and illustration and application can and will vary.

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XII. As in all ministry the final judgment is the Lord's, whether it be on teachers or learners. Yet especially in relation to the ministry of the word itself there is warning against (Cont. Col. 2)
The Kerugive (Cont.) seek out the old Kerugive, but it could scarcely be found.

The Sevlite Kerugs increased in number and power, completely dominating the kingdom of Joperi. In the course of time every Covelite Kerug in the valley died. The Kerugive vanished. And Jopish became a faint memory in the minds of the old people.

But coincident with the disappearance of the Covelites was a tumultuous revolution unlike anything before in the broad valley. There was terror in every sector and none of the leaders could put his finger on the causes let alone remove them. There was no safety in the land and every man seemed bitter.

The Sevlite Kerugs had fought valiantly against these trends but the people of Joperi had wearied; they had lost their spirit. Now a new generation of Kerugs was on the scene who had never known the Kerugive. They could not understand the ways of their fathers and saw no reason for many of their efforts. They could find no meaning in their own title and soon dropped it. All the vestiges of the Kingdom of Joperi were vanishing.

The Kerugive, the Jopish, the Kerug, the Covelites was a story of the king in the Eastern mountain vías on the scene who had never known the ways of their fathers and saw no reason vías exempt. The smell of death blew over every town and field.

And a rumbling, deep and distant in the Eastern Mountain was never heard as the mighty King of Joperi turned his face to another valley.

I. Is Fuller’s language program adequate?

One of the unique aspects of Fuller Theological Seminary is its commitment to the study of the biblical languages, and rightly so. The ultimate goal of Fuller’s language requirement as we understand it is to teach a method of sound biblical/theological exegesis. Yet it seems that the ability to sight translate does not necessarily determine one’s ability to produce sound biblical/theological exegesis. To be sure, it is an aid, but for many students the annual process of learning and remembering lists of vocabulary words and verb conjugations defeats his motivation for using the language. On the other hand, language study (with the goal of sight reading) is a desire and/or necessity for some students due to their interest in pursuing careers in academic scholarship. We must recognize this diversity of interests, goals, and motivation in the students at Fuller.

III. Proposals for ways of teaching the biblical languages:

A. The first would strive toward the goal of sight translation, geared especially for those who desire to pursue academic careers. Thus, the language courses would be aimed at teaching exegetical methodology in their attempt to integrate the biblical languages into the content of the course. If testing of the students’ use of language is desired, it should be done with the goal of exegesis rather than mere sight translation. Furthermore, it is suggested that the students should be permitted to use tools such as lexicons, commentaries, etc. Thus, an exegetical paper would be one means of testing. In not this the way graduates will use the biblical languages.

B. The second would aim at teaching students the tools for using the languages. It is little more than a punitive measure. As Christian stewards, we can better use the time we spend in seminars!

C. The ten-year planning committee should devise new ways of teaching languages.
I have been asked to respond to Mr. Burkhalter's "Proposal for Language Study at Fuller." I would like to interact with him at two points: (1) the need for more instruction in exegetical methodology and (2) the need for a revised language program.

I think it is generally known that there is a serious lack of exegesis as a student discipline. There is next to none in the Old Testament core. In New Testament, part of the Hermeneutics course is devoted to exegesis but there is little else, apart from occasional electives, until Dr. Ladd's Biblical Theology class in the senior year. The history of the biblical core courses seems to indicate that either the professor is unwilling, which I doubt, or there is insufficient time to teach exegesis in any serious manner in the biblical core courses (which are already overladen with history and biblical content and theology and large numbers of people). I do not expect there to be any less history, content or theology in the future and so I do not envision the core courses ever incorporating into themselves the teaching of exegesis as a student performance task. This fact, coupled with the fact that Dr. Ladd's course comes so late in the seminarian's career, suggests the need for some renovation.

To facilitate the learning of exegetical methodology I would suggest not continued futile attempts to burden the biblical core even more unbearably, in which direction Mr. Burkhalter's proposal seems to point, but the following:

I. Reform in the teaching of biblical languages.

A. A revised vocabulary program to teach words which occur with high frequency in the Old and New Testaments at large rather than so many which have high frequency only in Acts and Esther.

B. During the last third of each language course primary emphasis should be upon the learning of syntax. Simultaneously the student should be introduced to exegetical tools.

II. The institution of two courses in exegesis. This could probably be done within the total number of course units presently required for graduation but with some modification in unit allocation.

A. Dr. Daane's course in Homiletics could be taught in five weeks, or two quarter hours, thus leaving five weeks for someone to teach New Testament exegesis.

B. Change each Church History course from four to three units, thus gaining three quarter units allowing for a second exegesis course (Old Testament) to be offered in the fall term. (i.e. four hour total gain from A and B, thus two two-hour exegesis courses.)

C. Course outline.

1. Professor set forth and illustrate a number of exegetical canons.

2. In short papers, student apply said canons to a number (at least five) of passages, chosen so as to expose the student to most types of biblical literature.

3. Professor evaluation of student work by means of extensive written or taped comments.

I have already indicated some areas for revision in the language program. There is yet another modification which could tailor the program more to student aptitudes. The distinction Mr. Burkhalter makes between the scholar whose goal is sight translation and the pastor whose goal is exegesis is a false one. To remodel the language program on that basis would be badly misconceived. The goal of both scholar and pastor is to become a worthy exegete. Therefore there is, with regard to the languages themselves, an amount of material basic to both professions' needs which can be learned in concert. Therefore the pragmatic division in language teaching should come not at the point of career objective, but at the point of language learning facility.

If it is practicable students should be divided into two groups: (1) those who learn readily by the inductive method and (2) those who do not. An alternative program of language teaching, more deductive if necessary, should be devised for group two. If such a division cannot be made prior to class enrollment, then it should be run parallel with the existing language program to provide the extra help needed by the student who does not learn readily in the inductive situation. What I mean by "rigorous" is a one-to-one tutorial program where a student tutor, accomplished in the language, would spend as much as half the required outside study time in tutoring the student needing help. At this writing the funding of such a program is an unsolved but I think not insurmountable problem.

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BURRO (Cont.) what man needs more than anything else; he therefore deserves to receive it the fastest, most economical and efficient way possible.

Airborne Evangelism

Can we not put airplanes in the sky with Bibles, New Testaments, and Gospels of John and get the message out to the constantly growing frontiers of Christian missions? Can we not put national Bible teachers in airplanes and speed them from village to village as they bring the Bible school to the local lay students and future pastors? Why can we not put the evangelist in the sky and speed him to the different villages as he proclaims the true news of salvation by grace to lost, hell-bound men and women? In fact, the pilot of that plane can be the colporteur, Bible teacher, evangelist and church planter. In many cases he could have three other colporteurs, Bible teachers, evangelists and church planters with him in his four-place aircraft. They can be dropped off at different towns and villages along the way.

We are so prone to complain that laborers are few and yet we are hesitant to use a common airplane to multiply the capacity and usefulness of one missionary by six times. Is it not more economical to use one missionary and one airplane to do the work of six missionaries and their six jeeps?

Take the missionary in Bolivia that discovered to his surprise that operating a Maule Rocket (this is an airplane) at 159.00 per hour was cheaper than trying to use a Volkswagen Beetle in the same area. Is not this common sense efficient use of the Lord's money?

Think of the Central Brazil missionary who had over twenty-five churches and preaching points to visit regularly. We would say, "Impossible!" But he did it! All of them he reached with his earthly vehicle and the other half with his plane. Could this not encourage such similar efficiency in other areas of mission strategy in our vast frontiers?

God's money must be spent wisely. So much of the Lord's money, given very sacrificially, is not invested in such a manner as to bring good returns. Instead it is used in outdated missionary methods, and in this case I have been referring to transportation on the fields.

As Churchill said, "Give us the tools and we will do the job," so does the awakening missionary enterprise say today, "Give us the tools, and we will do the job." May be soon hear the clarion of praise, "You gave us the tools and we are doing the job, and how much more efficiently!"

God is going about the business of building His Church. May we not lag behind His program by insisting on using outdated methods!

By the way, tie up the old burro. Words have just been received that a Cessna has been purchased and will be on the field in a couple of weeks.

EXPERIENCES IN CURRICULUM

By Philip Hart

(These proposed or model curriculums, now being undertaken at various seminaries, may help pioneer the way to some truly extensive educational reform. For the sake of discussion they are presented here.)

The Problem-Centered Curriculum (Union Theological Seminary, New York) is proposed as a means of: (1) relating contemporary concerns directly to traditional disciplines, (2) providing a guide to "discovering" issues of concern as they are handled theologically rather than working through a "package" and "covering the field" and (3) taking the pressing personal concerns of students' "identity crisis" seriously as a highly motivating starting-point for getting into theological studies rather than fighting them and discouraging students who are unsure of their reasons for being in seminary.

Some syllabi could be developed as models by students in cooperation with members of the faculty. These syllabi could be made available to core groups and individuals in courses next year who choose to experiment with the method. Syllabi might be in such fields as Political Revolution, Alienation, Third World Culture, Problems in Urban Mission, Christianity and Contemporary Media, and Perspectives in the Ecological Crisis. Each syllabus would provide the following material: (1) an initial bibliography to help the student identify the problem (as Dr. Munger has done in his Evangelism course), (2) a set of questions pointing to related issues in each field, biblical, theological, historical, and practical, (3) specific references to readings for each question, and (4) case studies*.

*For example, the syllabus on Alienation might begin by identifying the problem with the readings from Marx, the book of Job, Dostoyevsky, Fromm, Kierkegaard, Baldwin, etc. -----

The "Trial Year" - Oriented Curriculum (e.g. Garrett Theological Seminary, Evanston, Ill.) The first year is foundational for the B.D., M.R.E., and M.A. degree programs. Students exploring the possibility of actual seminary training leading to full time ministerial work will be encouraged to participate in this first-year program as special students and receive a certificate of training for the ministry of the laity. (Cont. P. 8)
This program is oriented towards the gathered church and ministerial responsibility to it. From this base, it moves into the community, focusing particularly on those points where the life of the church touches the life of the community. Discussion-reaction groups are an important part of this curriculum structure. Throughout the year there are visitations (periodic) to different kinds of ongoing ministries in the inner city, the suburb, the open country, on the university campus, and in chaplaincies of various types. A weekly forum of students and faculty permits confrontation and discussion of questions and issues across the separate disciplines.

The Experimental Curriculum at New York Theological Seminary, New York City (From the Preface of the 1969-70 Catalogue Supplement) "A ministry concerned basically with persons can be stimulated deeply through training in an urban situation which becomes a classroom for developing sensitivity and meaning. Such encounter not only stimulates discovery, but informs search. Participating in a community of learning in such an environment, a student is challenged to competence in mission as a servant of Jesus Christ. Using the best of traditional theological education in a broad ecumenical interchange along with reality orientation through urban exposure, New York Theological Seminary (has) launched an experimental curriculum."

The new curriculum structure reveals its experimental nature at once in that a model program of studies is not required. Each student, in determining the structure of his study, must take into account his previous study, developing purpose, and needs for personal growth. Moreover, each student will be a member of a 'Basic Group' a core group of approximately ten students and one faculty member committed to the task of investigating directly some aspect of contemporary human history. (Some areas of investigation might be education, labor, political systems, arts and culture, and racism; or the group may have no one area but be free to investigate several areas). Thus the 'Basic Group' will initiate as well as integrate learning in many directions and varying depth.

A student, with the help of an advisor, will also select courses or areas of study in the fields of bible, church history, theology, and ministry. These specific studies he may pursue with a class or at his own speed and realization of competence.

Consequently, in a real sense, a student will develop his own program of studies.

Dr. George Bach (Institute of Group Therapy, 450 North Bedford Drive, Beverly Hills) recently appeared at Fuller in the January Clinical Colloquium entitled "Fight Training." He made use of this speaking opportunity to give vent to the profane side of his nature and to express certain opinions concerning the church.

As these opinions were made publicly, it seems fitting that they be answered publicly. The following letter was sent to Dr. Bach.

Dr. Bach,

This letter is in regard to your January appearance at the Clinical Colloquium at Fuller Theological Seminary. During your visit you took the opportunity to express egotism, profanity, and certain statements of which I'll now answer.

You claimed the church is dead. This blanket statement is incorrect. The true church has never been dead. It is made up of all those who truly trust in (Cont. P.9)
Letter (Cont.) and rely on Christ. Although some groups of believers are essentially inoperative, others are quite alive. If you would care to research the matter I would advise you to check in at La Crescenta First Baptist Church where I am a mem­ber. Among others are Bel Air Presbyterian, Van Nuys Baptist, and Hollywood Pres­byterian churches. You might also find the December 26, 1969 issue of TIME illumina­ting.

You said something to the effect, "I never forgave the church for collaborating with the Nazis. Therefore "G*d!!! the church," For a man of science this is a highly illogical statement. Little doubt certain segments of psychology have had dark moments in the past. However that doesn't mean a person would be right in reject­ing the whole of present-day psychology because of it.

Give yourself a break. Don't be sidetracked by the aberrations of part of the pro­fessing church. Seek the truth and the promise is that you'll find it. Enclosed is a paper which can help you. Consider it carefully. Sincerely,

Wallace Tops

To define the term "alive" as it appears in the above letter, I would use it in re­ferring to groups of believers where there is some real evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit, such as a determined outreach program, etc. There are degrees of "aliveness" of course.