

***If there is a pressing need for fundamental re-engineering in our inherited schooling patterns, we had better look into it.***

Ralph D. Winter



Dear Friend,

Of all the things missionaries are engaged in, aren't schools of any sort the least questionable?

Wrong, whether you are talking about schools in general or about ministerial training schools in particular.

My article on page 10 advances the thought that ministerial schools both at home and abroad go wrong in three ways. They 1) attract the wrong students, 2) offer the wrong curriculum, and 3) present their course work and diplomas in the wrong package. You can read why I say this.

But even the other schools, the non-ministerial schools, which missionaries have established directly or indirectly (by the hundreds of thousands) are seriously in the wrong, and the same is true for both private and public schools in the USA.

You might wonder if I am exaggerating in order to compete with the angry tensions in the USA today—the problems of Iraq and North Korea, the current tragedy of the burning up of the Columbia.

Briefly on just those two things.

Iraq: the 300,000 Christians in Iraq and the thousands of Christians among the Palestinians are in a heaven on earth compared to the million starved and tortured slave laborers in North Korea, or even the rest of North Korea's grass- and root-eating population.



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Columbia: Nice for the whole nation to respect the passing of seven valiant astronauts in one day. But it is strange that 2,000 people die every day of heart disease and the amount of money probing the real reasons for that tragedy is less per year than a single voyage of the space shuttle.

Back to our theme: if there is a pressing need for fundamental re-engineering in our inherited schooling patterns, we had better look into it. That is the main issue of the bulletin you have in your hands. It is a blockbuster topic.

In summary:

Last issue I hinted broadly (in my editorial and in my review of Philip Jenkins' *The Next Christendom*) at the crisis of global but superficial Christianity, which tends to spring up and then wilt down.

This enormous crisis relates directly to what believers at home and abroad are or are not getting from their schools.

In this country and abroad every church movement which has come to depend solely upon residential school products for its ministry is dying. Plus, the other schools are either conveying a drastically faith-destroying secularization or they are "counter-cultural" Bible schools which may try to ignore the secular stream of society altogether.

In this issue my article, which deals specifically with pastoral training, presents the already mentioned "the Three Wrongs."

The first "wrong" we have often written about—that of the wrong students. The second wrong, curriculum, is spelled out in some detail in that article on page 10. The third one, the wrong packaging, is highlighted not only in my article but in the Scotchmer and Carpenter articles as well.

However, the latter two problems also exist flagrantly in the case of the non-ministerial schools, the public and private schools both at home and abroad. The students who attend these schools include the vast bulk of ordinary believers not yet aiming at full-time ministry. Most will never be more than laymen. It is just as important, in a way, for them to get the right curriculum and the right packaging as those going into full-time ministry.

Scotchmer *urges* the university pattern (packaging). Carpenter *describes* an amazing new trend toward that specific pattern on the part of Evangelicals in the mission lands. There is a somewhat comparable trend in this country.

Scotchmer and Carpenter are not primarily focusing upon the content of the curricula although they are confronting boldly the need for "more than Bible." (The content rationale is given greater

detail in my article, under point 2, wrong curriculum.)

We have never given as much space before to the issue of "packaging," by which we mean the form in which the education is channeled.

For example, Wheaton College (in Wheaton, Illinois) may be one of the few older outstanding Evangelical schools today which from its earliest beginnings (Holiness origin) avoided the Bible Institute pattern for the simple reason that it was founded before

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**The most extensive, pervasive strategic error in the Christian tradition lies squarely in our coveted and generously supported, but unquestioned, concept of years of "schooling" as the way for leaders to develop and be trained.**

the rush to Bible Institutes occurred. More recently Oral Roberts and Liberty universities were begun directly as universities.

Historically, once the immense impact of D. L. Moody had set in motion the Bible Institute pattern, only certain groups like the Campbellite and Holiness traditions continued to found colleges which followed standard patterns as well as taught the Bible.

This may explain why a Wheaton graduate (Dennis Hastert) is the current Speaker of the House, and the current Mayor of Los Angeles (Richard Hahn) is from the Campbellite tradition. Bible Institute grads for well over a half century rarely made it into professional circles or public prominence, simply because they had obtained a non-recognized package for their education.

Most all Bible Institutes in the USA have by now shifted gears into standard packaging. Overseas it is only beginning to happen. Most USA seminaries have recently sought secular accreditation but have not yet given up their non-standard degree names. Some seminaries like Talbot at Biola, Trinity (Deerfield, IL) and Columbia (South Carolina) have become part of a university yet still cling to some non-standard degree names. Few take science seriously as a source of God's glory.

Thus, the overall picture is still fairly bleak in regard to forms of education with Evangelical roots.

This issue explores especially the packaging aspect of a global problem. You will be interested to know that two of the main articles, by Scotchmer and Carpenter are only small sections from longer

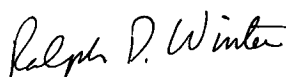
articles which will appear in their entirety in the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*. (I urge you to subscribe to this periodical, which is a more ponderous "brother" of *Mission Frontiers*, by sending \$15 to IJFM, c/o Rory Clark, 1539 E. Howard Street, Pasadena, CA 91104. Ask for the 2003 year and you will find both of these articles and a lot of other in-depth materials).

The issue of how our new generation is being educated is an issue that is not going away. Don't discard either this bulletin or its corresponding issue of the *International Journal of Frontier Missions* ([www.ijfm.org](http://www.ijfm.org))! 🌐

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Ralph D. Winter

P.S. Please see the end of my editorial above for subscription details and web site information.

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