

**Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, and Joshva Raja, eds., *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity: Theological Perspectives, Ecumenical Trends, Regional Surveys, Regnum Studies in Global Christianity* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2010), 800 pages, ISBN 9781870345804.**

Parochialism is passé. The importance of understanding Christianity in global perspective is becoming crystal clear. A spate of excellent books such as *Global Dictionary of Theology: A Resource for the Worldwide Church*, edited by William Dryness and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (IVP, 2008), and, specifically on Pentecostalism, *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, edited by Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers, and Cornelius van de Laan (University of California Press, 2010), are dedicated to navigating implications for identity and mission of shifting and/or expanding centers of Christianity. In a word, World Christianity is on the rise. Obviously, with a movement as broad and diverse as Pentecostalism, scholars are pressed to address its global makeup. For a few examples, see Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: The Possibility of a Global Theology* (Baker, 2005), Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Zondervan, 2006), and Don Miller and Ted Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (University of California Press, 2007). Pentecostalism is a major player in a massive reshaping of contemporary global spirituality. However, it isn't the only one. In fact, the ecumenical implications of the global qualities of contemporary Christianity are monumental. And that's where *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity (HTEWC)* comes into the picture.

The *Regnum Studies in Global Christianity* series is edited by Ruth Padilla DeBorst President, Latin American Theological Fraternity, Santiago, Chile; Hwa Yung Bishop, The Methodist Church in Malaysia, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia; Wonsuk Ma, Executive Director, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, UK; Damon So Research Tutor, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, UK; and, Miroslav Volf Director, Yale Center for Faith and Culture, New Haven, MA, USA. It explores issues that the global Church struggles with, particularly in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. It publishes studies intended to help the global Church learn not only from past and present, but also from provocative and prophetic voices for the future. *HTEWC* arises out of this series and has its mindset.

Some one hundred years after the famous Edinburgh, Scotland mission conference in 1910, *HTEWC* attempts to map and analyze subsequent developments in theological education on a global scale. With contributions from 98 leaders in theological education from around the world, it provides a comprehensive introduction to major themes and contexts in the international discourse on theological education, surveys of the issues and challenges faced in different regions, and introductory essays on the developments in theological education in major denominational families in World Christianity. The breadth and depth of this work is noted in that many of its entries contain six, eight, or even ten or more pages on a given discussion topic.

The idea for *HTEWC* developed during a meeting of an international study group on theological education brought together under the leadership of the program on Ecumenical Theological Education of the World Council of Churches in November 2008 at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey in Switzerland. *HTEWC* editors Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, and Joshva Raja were among original participants in this process. Its specific objectives are to provide introductory surveys on selected issues and themes in global theological education; regional surveys on key developments, achievements, and challenges in theological education; an overview of theological education for each of the major denominational/confessional traditions; and, a reference section with an up-to-date list of the regional associations of theological institutions and other resources.

The guiding—and undergirding—philosophy of *HTEWC* is clear. It argues that theological education is vital for the future of World Christianity. On the one hand, it contends that theological education has the potential to be the seedbed for the renewal of churches, their ministries, mission, and commitment to Christian unity. On the other hand, is a concern that if theological education is neglected by church leaders or in funding, the consequences will be far reaching. Although perhaps not visible immediately, these will certainly become manifest over time in the theological competence of church leadership, the holistic nature of mission, and the capacities for ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and the interaction between church and society. Investment in theological education is investment of hope in the future and mission of World Christianity. The transmission of Christian memory, the education for God's peace and justice, and the formation for church and community leadership therefore should be priorities in all churches; however, in many places theological education is far from secure or even in crisis at the present time. Accordingly, there is an enormous need for a volume such as *HTEWC*.

The subtitle of *HTEWC*, "Theological Perspectives – Regional Surveys – Ecumenical Trends," signals its threefold concentration. Impressive Forewords by Ofelia Ortega, President of the World Council of Churches, Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, and Robert Schreiter, Vatican II Professor of Theology, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, prepare readers for the weighty worth of the volume. Its organization and analysis are well planned and executed. The bulk of the book is divided into three major sections with several subcategories under each one.

First is “Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes.” Second is “Regional Surveys of Developments in Theological Education since 1910.” And third is “Theological Education from Denominational and Confessional Perspectives.” There are a total of 35 different categories under these three headings with specific articles (ranging from one or two up to five or six) under each of these. There is some proportional disparity, with some topics (e.g., “Theological Education in Asia,” “Theological Education in Western Europe”) just getting more attention, others (e.g., “People with Disabilities and Theological Education,” “HIV and AIDS and Theological Education”) less. Sometimes apparent sparseness seems due to very specific subject matter (e.g., “Theological Education in Anglican Churches,” “Theological Education in Methodist Churches,” “Theological Education in Baptist Churches”). When the scope is broader (e.g., “Theological Education in Evangelical Schools”), then usually several articles address relevant factors in various regions. There is no effort at uniformity of style so diverse readers will doubtless appreciate some approaches more or less than others. Neither are the contents encyclopedic but rather selective samplings—though rigorous and wide-ranging.

The editors express particular regret for inability to thoroughly cover all topics equally well. For instance, *HTEWC* does not contain articles on the environment and theological education, or the whole range of issues related to the debate on human sexuality and different sexual orientations in Christianity and their impact on theological education. They are also apologetic for not including an account of Pentecostal theological education in North America (yet without offering an explanation). Although on-line theological education and other aspects of information technology are touched on in a number of articles, they were unable to provide a comprehensive report on these topics. Nevertheless, even with these omissions, along with many others, this work will surely generate new dialogue in all areas of theological education.

In spite of the above caveat about its lacuna on Pentecostal theological education in North America, happily *HTEWC* does address Pentecostal concerns and conditions regarding theological education. In a section on “Theological Education in Pentecostal Churches,” Wonsuk Ma addresses “Theological Education in Asia,” Daniel Chiquete, “Pentecostalism, Ecumenism and Theological Education in Latin American Perspective,” and Cephas N. Omenyo, “African Pentecostalism and Theological Education.” These specifically Pentecostal-oriented articles are solid and substantive contributions. Significantly, scattered throughout this 800 page volume are numerous references to Classical Pentecostals, Neo-Pentecostals, Charismatic Renewal groups, and various Pentecostal-type churches. This suggests a serious and sustained (though not systematic) attempt to engage contemporary Spirit movements and glean from their experience and expertise, though, of course, not entirely uncritically, in understanding and advancing theological education in World Christianity.

A rather interesting example of the essays in *HTEWC* is Miroslav Volf’s “Dancing for God: Evangelical Theological Education in Global Perspective”. Volf’s topic is “challenges facing theological education today.” However, he admits that he does not directly address many challenges – financial, institutional, contextual, and pedagogical – and many more that are the stuff of the daily lives of educators, and that no responsible theological education can afford to disregard. But he identifies a challenge that comes even closer to the core of what theological educators are about. He calls it “a theological challenge”, by which he means the place of God in theological education and, more broadly, in doing theology. What follows is a passionate, and profoundly spiritual, personal appeal, staunchly supported by cogent argumentation and dramatic illustration (testimony!), for authentic love and trust that places God at the center of our lives and theology.

Among other things, Volf’s essay startles us into sharply discriminating between economic globalization and global Christianity. “Globalization” commonly describes the process by which regional economies, societies, and cultures have become integrated into a global network of political ideas through communication, transportation, and trade. It is closely associated with the integration of national economies into the international economy. But theological education in global/World Christianity is not about money or power; it’s about God. Specifically, it is about placing God at the center of our lives in authentic love and trust.

This volume will undoubtedly be of great benefit to theological educators, especially those interested in global partnerships and networking; associations and individual theological institutions needing current information on global trends and issues as well as reliable contact data; church leaders and denominational boards planning for theological and higher Christian education; and missiologists, theologians, biblical scholars, church historians, and other scholars interested in global developments in theological education. In my opinion, the £49.95 (approx. \$77.50) will prove a worthwhile investment.

*Reviewed by Tony Richie*

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