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OF GLOBALIZATION AND PILOT PROJECTS: Background, Goals and Assumptions

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.... And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native tongue of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes. Cretans and Arabs--in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

Acts 2: 1-3; 6-12 (NRSV)

For the Christian Church "globalization" is, in many respects, a late 20th Century equivalent of Pentecost. To be self conscious about globalization is to be amazed and perplexed by the growing interdependence of the world's diversity and disparity. To open oneself to globalization is to be confronted with a new reality and to ask, What does this mean? Twelve seminaries accepted the invitation from the PIP/GTE to become immersed in this reality and this question for five years.

A. The Emergence of Globalization as a Concern

"Globalization" is not a word found in most dictionaries, indicative of its emergent (if not trendy) status. Relatedly, the term lacks crisp, consensual definition. Suffice it for present purposes to note that the PIP/GTE interpreted *globalization* in the most general sense, as the escalating reality of global interdependence. So defined, globalization is not about theological education per se, but rather about the new context within which theological education takes place. Accordingly, *the globalization of theological education*--as the phrase is used in this report and was used in the PIP/GTE--is the church's response in the training and nurture of its leadership to the challenges and opportunities of globalization.

How "new" globalization is and when it "began" are undoubtedly questions scholars will debate for years. Nevertheless, there is a general consensus in the literature that the new technologies that began to come on line in the early 1970s, particularly in the area of instantaneous worldwide communication, provide a helpful point of demarkation. People, cultures, societies, and civilizations previously more or less isolated from one another were now in regular and almost unavoidable contact. Beyer notes a twofold result:

On the one hand, we see the conflicts that arise as quite diverse and often contradictory cultures clash within the same social unit. On the other hand, globalizing socio-structural and cultural forces furnish a common context that attenuates the differences among these ways of life Juxtaposition of particular cultures or identities not only brings differences into sharper profile, it makes it much more visible that the diverse ways of living are largely human constructions. In the context of comparison, no single one of them is self-evidently "correct."¹

Related to Beyer's observations, the response of theological education in North America to globalization has tended to focus on two aspects of the increasing consciousness that the world is becoming "a single place." The predominant focus has been on heightened awareness of cultural differences--including religious differences. This heightened awareness is a natural consequence of globalization's transcendence of previous geographic and communication barriers. Multi-culturalism and contextualization are typical conceptual lenses for such a focus within theological education. Evangelism,

¹Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), p 2.

ecumenism, and interfaith dialogue are typical functional ends. The second focus, and one foundational for the PIP/GTE, is on global political and economic interdependencies. Social analysis is the typical conceptual lens of this focus within theological education; justice and reconciliation are its functional ends. Both foci include a critique of nearly 2,000 years of accelerating ethnocentrism within the dominant (and dominating) ecclesiastical, intellectual, and educational perspectives and structures of Christendom. This ethnocentrism is fueled by an uncritical alliance with the hegemonic proclivities of Western culture.

Voices and movements of protest against the captivity of Christendom's dominant ecclesiastical structures by Western culture are not, of course, new phenomena. However, the new global realities of the late 20th century have made the protest unavoidably urgent. The call for a biblically-based global vision was clearly evident by the mid 1970s in declarations from such diverse, yet broadly representative Christian assemblies, as Geneva, Lausanne, and Rome. From Lausanne, for example, we heard:

We are deeply stirred by what God is doing in our day, moved to penitence by our failures.... We believe the gospel is God's good news for the whole world....

The message of the Bible is addressed to all [The Holy Spirit] illuminates the minds of God's people in every culture to perceive its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole church ever more of the many-colored wisdom of God.

We need to break out of our ecclesiastical ghettos... World evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.... The church is the community of the God's people rather than an institution, and must not be identified with any particular culture, social or political system or human ideology.

*Lausanne Covenant
International Congress on World Evangelization
Lausanne, Switzerland, 1974*

It would be nearly a decade before theological education in North America was to bring globalization into its collective, organizational consciousness. In the meantime, the early 1970s ushered forth within North American colleges and universities a multitude of overseas exchange programs and international technical assistance programs, as well as innumerable "task forces" to further explore the need for global--or "international," as it was often called at the time--education. These developments were stimulated by a convergence of business and governmental interests, by a few educators genuinely committed

to the notion that in a "shrinking world" an educated citizenry needed to comprehend and appreciate the cultures of different countries, and by substantial private foundation and federal funding. Developments were accelerated by reports of professionals and scholars who, upon returning to North America from participation in overseas programs, stressed the importance for North American world leadership of learning more about other countries.

By the late 1970s, however, there was a substantial drop in both private and public funding for college programs that sought to help North Americans learn more about other cultures and foster international understanding. Relatedly, a decided tilt developed toward the support of programs which dealt with transnational economic, social, and political issues focusing on technical and economic interdependencies. From the perspective of at least one federal agency executive, federal agencies would have been more willing to extend grants to colleges and universities if these institutions had shown more ability and interest in integrating global concerns throughout their curricula, rather than just trying to fund separate "foreign" study and exchange programs or rather isolated experimental on-campus programs that had little connection with other departments.² That the integration of global concerns throughout a school's curriculum has continued to be a persistent and resisted challenge within American higher education is evident in the following conclusion from a 1992 report by the Association for the Study of Higher Education:

Americans agree that students need to know more about other countries, but no consensus exists regarding the form such education should take at postsecondary institutions....

It is no easy task to change a curriculum at an American college or university to enhance its international aspects. Besides the inevitable internecine wars among disciplines and a frequent lack of faculty with sufficient expertise on international topics, the administration often lacks the strength or will to guarantee the faculty a hiring, tenure, and promotion system that rewards work in international activities.³

²Alice Stone Ilchman, "Some Federal Perspectives." *Change* 12 (May-June 1980), pp 37-39.

³Sarah M. Pickert, *Preparing for a Global Community: Achieving an International Perspective in Higher Education* (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 2. Washington D.C.: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development, 1992), p 11.

Within the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in North America, awareness of the new global context crystallized under the banner of "globalization" during the early 1980s. The Association's Committee on Global Theological Education responded with appropriate boldness:

The leadership of the Association is convinced that globalization represents a highly significant issue that must be seriously addressed. Globalization is a complex concept involving content and structure, "a prismatic combination of human relationships, ways of thinking, ways of learning, and ways of Christian living." Minimally it involves escaping from ignorance and provincialism; in its most serious consideration it involves us in questions regarding the church's mission to the entire inhabited world.⁴

Through a series of discussions and votes at biennial meetings in the late 1980s, the entire Association endorsed the Committee's urging by designating the 1990s as a priority decade for the globalization of theological education, and by adopting a globalization standard for the accreditation of all member institutions. Neither the accreditation standard nor the designation of priority, however, specified in any detail what globalization was or what a globalized theological education would entail.⁵ Rather, in respect for the emergent nature of responses to globalization the priority and standard were set forth as mandates to the Association's member schools to engage in a process of individual and mutual discovery: *How can a seminary change the way it teaches in light of the ultimate goal of enabling the Church to be more faithful in an increasingly interdependent world?*

To assist in this discovery both the ATS Committee and the Task Force successor to the Committee sponsored an impressive and extensive collection of conferences and publications, which: (1) significantly expanded the theological and conceptual literature related to the globalization of theological education; and (2) highlighted through published case studies a variety of emergent "globalization" programs at North American seminaries.⁶ The

⁴David S. Schuller, "Editorial Introduction." *Theological Education* XXII (Spring 1986), pp 5-6.

⁵In comparison, the revised accreditation standards currently pending approval by ATS members--a subject we return to in Chapter Five--identify globalization as a foundational value within theological education and provide considerably more specific definitions and institutional implications.

⁶An index to this work is presented in a Spring, 1994 supplement to *Theological Education*.

conferences and publications also brought to public attention several small research, training, and consulting organizations which had extensive experience in global theological education. The Plowshares Institute is one of these organizations.

Plowshares was founded in 1982 when Robert Evans left his faculty position in theology at Hartford Seminary to pursue full time, with his wife Alice, their interests in global understanding and dialogue in service of a biblically inspired vision for a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world community. The new organization gave special emphasis to the relationship between "first" and "third" worlds, social justice, and short-term, international immersion experiences.

Participants in the immersion experiences offered by the Evans both prior to the founding of Plowshares and during the Institute's first several years were primarily collections of disparate individuals. Most had a strong church and justice connection, with a near equal mix of laity and clergy and an occasional seminary professor. These early immersions provided the opportunity for refining Plowshares' immersion pedagogy.⁷ In addition, building on many years of teaching and consulting in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific, the early immersions helped Plowshares' staff further develop an extensive network of third world contacts and expertise. Evaluation of the early immersions confirmed that they significantly heighten:

- (1) participants' knowledge about third world issues;
- (2) the emotional intensity with which participants respond to third world issues and concerns;
- (3) a deepened spirituality--including a spiritual freedom to act on one's faith; and,
- (4) sustained, pro-active involvement with third world issues upon completion of the seminar experience.⁸

While there was little doubt that immersions could have a transformative effect on individuals, the disparate nature of participants in any given immersion group diffused the possibility of creating the critical mass necessary for noticeably impacting any given organization or locale. In response, Plowshares began searching for opportunities for sustained involvement with more tightly circumscribed groups. A project launched by Plowshares in 1985 called "Citizens of the World" represented the Institute's first major effort to

⁷The most extensive discussion of the Plowshares' pedagogy can be found in Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans and William Bean Kennedy (eds.), *Pedagogies for the Non-Poor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987).

⁸David A. Roozen, *Evaluative Summary of the Impact of Plowshares International Traveling Seminars* (Hartford, CT: Center for Social and Religious Research, Research Report, 1984), p 9.

focus the impact of immersion experiences. The project brought together twenty-one upper-level decision makers from business, government, higher education, and religion in the Hartford, Connecticut, area for a three-year period.⁹ The program provided three immersion experiences, one a year over the three year period. In addition, participants met four times a year to discuss common readings, dialogue with invited speakers, debrief immersion experiences, and discuss how participants could apply learnings in their professions and the Hartford area. The project had both individual and group goals. Individually, the project sought to increase the priority given to "third" world issues in the thinking and behavior of participants. Collectively, the project sought to form or strengthen networks among participants for jointly addressing issues of poverty and racism in Connecticut--that is, in the banner language of Plowshares, for "thinking globally and acting locally."

It was during the Citizens for the World Project--which was taking place at the same time that the ATS Committee was formulating its recommendation for a globalization standard and decade of globalization--that the idea for the PIP/GTE emerged in conversations among the Evans and several of Plowshares' International Advisory Board--the latter including theological educators from both the U.S. and abroad.

B. The Purpose and Goals of the PIP/GTE

The ultimate purpose of the PIP/GTE was to prepare church leaders for building up a church able and willing to respond to the challenge of global witness and service. Toward this end the immediate purpose of the project was to test a specific model for making the changes necessary for the global context to become integral to the program and ethos of participating seminaries. The model to be tested, as hinted above and elaborated in Chapter III, used a series of external catalysts to stimulate each participating institution's reflection and action, out of its own distinctive history. Each institution was expected to articulate its own understanding of an appropriate response to globalization and begin to implement internal strategies for institutional change that would embody this understanding as a primary perspective within its total educational ethos.

Two points in this statement warrant emphasis. First, the goal of the project was to make a global perspective *integral* to the program and ethos of

⁹An extended description of the project can be found in Adair Lummis and David A. Roozen, *The Citizens of the World Program: Its First Trimester* (Hartford, CT: Center for Social and Religious Research, Research Report, 1986).

a school's formative enterprise. As the 1983 ATS Survey of Globalization had shown, many seminaries already had courses, special lectureships and exchange programs that incorporated or were specifically oriented to global themes and experiences.¹⁰ But as the survey also suggested, and as most seminary leaders readily acknowledged, as important as these may have been in their own right, they were seen by most students, faculty, and trustees as supplemental enrichment of the curriculum rather than part of the core of professional theological education.

The challenge of the PIP/GTE was to bring the global dimension from the periphery into the center, not only to make the global dimension a primary and inescapable perspective of a school's curriculum, but also to integrate the global dimension into the broader ethos of both "everyday" encounter and formal seminary policy. Without being overly specific, the original proposal for the PIP/GTE suggested several examples of what might constitute evidence of such an integration of a global perspective, including:

- Regular presence in the everyday pattern of the school's worship and spirituality;
- Modifications in teaching styles and curriculum--especially those related to degree requirements;
- Incorporation into criteria for faculty selection and advancement;
- Incorporation into policies of student admission and placement;
- Increased sensitivity to and appreciation of the intrinsic contribution that international students bring to campus life;
- Increased support for faculty research on global issues; and,
- Increased focus on community concerns and organizations--i.e., "thinking globally and acting locally."

Second, although the justice orientation of the Plowshares Institute was used as a point of entry for the participating schools' immersion into global realities, and although there was little doubt that the Plowshares staff would have been extremely pleased if participating schools adopted or intensified a justice orientation as a result of the project, this was not the formal intent of the project. Rather, as stated above, the intent was for each school to articulate its own understanding of an appropriate response to globalization, out of its own distinctive history. As we shall see, while there was initial resistance among some participating faculty to Plowshare's justice orientation, it quickly became evident that the issue was not justice per se. Every participating school could--

¹⁰David S. Schuller, "Globalization in Theological Education: Summary and Analysis of Survey Data." *Theological Education XXII* (Spring 1986), pp 19-56.

and did--claim a justice dimension within their historical identities (dormant as it might have been in some cases). Rather, an issue for some faculty was the "liberal" lean which Plowshares brought to its justice perspectives. But even this was not the major point of substantive tension between faculty and Plowshares, or among faculties. Rather, the primary substantive tensions that emerged were (1) between experiential and transmissional pedagogies, and (2) at a deeper level, between revealed, essentialist, and Christological understandings of theological authority and more relativistic, pluralistic, and subjective understandings.

C. Informing Assumptions

Many of the key assumptions that designers of the PIP/GTE brought to the project have already been touched upon and will only be briefly noted here for emphasis. Other assumptions, however, especially several regarding bridges and barriers to institutional change remain to be surfaced.

Most fundamentally, the designers of the PIP/GTE believed that (1) the globalization of theological education was absolutely essential to the faithful witness of the church, and that (2) against this standard theological education in North America was notably lacking because of its *isolation* from the resources of the "third world" church, and relatedly, because of its *provincialism*. A North American seminary's dominant, privileged, "first world" perspective could be easily insulated by relegating what global resources it did acknowledge to the margins of its formal and informal curriculum.

The latter point is important to remember for two reasons. First, the project designers assumed that most, if not all, of the seminaries which would participate in the PIP/GTE had at least fragments of global perspectives, programs, and experience upon which to build. Second, this perspective provides the grounding for the project's primary goal, which was the stretching and deepening, and then moving of such global resources from the periphery to the core of a seminary's formative ethos.

It is also important to underscore that the project was explicitly focused on North American theological education's isolation and insulation from the "third world" church. In this regard it must be remembered that (1) the project began prior to the disintegration of the former Soviet block, and (2) given the project's concern with the captivity of North American ecclesiastical structures by the hegemony of Western culture, Western Europe provided little, if any, alternative. It is also important to note that the challenge to isolation from the resources of third world partners was not only an affirmation of the integrity and credibility of the third world's indigenous resources of faith, it was also a

strategic affirmation that the qualities of third world spirituality, whether in the brazen hopefulness of prayer and corporate worship or in its transforming witness and sacrificial care for those in need, would inspire North American institutions of theological education.

Both for its own sake and to mitigate against temptations toward (and many would argue, the extended history of) North American patronage and exploitation within first-third world exchanges, the designers of the PIP/GTE held *mutuality* as an intrinsic value within a biblically informed global perspective. Not only was mutuality a critical component of the Plowshares immersion pedagogy--with debts to Paulo Freire--but, as we shall see, participating schools were expected to engage in acts of mutuality with their international immersion hosts following the immersions.¹¹

There is already substantial literature on the assumptions which undergird an immersion pedagogy such as employed by the PIP/GTE as a means of transforming the commitment, perspective, and behavior of individuals.¹² We need not elaborate those assumptions here. However, since the use of such a pedagogy toward the immediate end of institutional change was a relatively unique feature of the PIP/GTE, assumptions about the link between individual change and institutional change are important to note. The overriding assumption--really the key hypothesis to be tested in the pilot project--was that a series of project immersions could build a critical mass of individuals within each institution who shared a common experience of "transformation." Out of their transformations, commonality, and strategic mass, these individuals would lead their institution to change. In unpacking this assumption two terms are particularly critical: commonality and critical mass.

To begin with the negative to be surmounted, the project assumed that most theological faculties: (1) are substantively diverse--certainly so in terms of their disciplinary fragmentation, and typically also theologically/ideologically and/or pedagogically;¹³ and (2) spend relatively little "quality" time with each other. Both assumptions tend to express and reinforce the

¹¹For an extended discussion of mutuality in global education see Mortimer Arias, "Mutuality in Global Education." Pp 338-350 in Evans, Evans and Roozen (eds.), *The Globalization of Theological Education*.

¹²See, for example, Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans and William Bean Kennedy (eds.), *Pedagogies for the Non-Poor*.

¹³Carroll and Marler provide a wonderfully rich examination of such theological/ideological diversity within each of two seminaries, one "conservative" and the other "liberal." Jackson W. Carroll and Penny Long Marler, "Culture Wars? Insights from Ethnographies of Two Protestant Seminaries." *Sociology of Religion* 56 (Spring 1995), pp 1-20.

pervasively individualistic ethos of higher education in North America. The project further assumed, based on some research and a good bit of practical wisdom, that the power and decision-making structures of most seminaries were diffuse. Typically faculty, administrators, trustees, students, staff, and in many cases, denominational personnel are all major stakeholders, albeit with varying and ambiguous degrees of power and responsibility. How many committees, persons, and boards, for example, does a curriculum revision have to pass in most seminaries? In sum, the designers of the PIP/GTE assumed that the project would confront substantive diversity within an individualistic ethos and a diffuse decision-making structure, and that these would be barriers to fundamental institutional change.

Against these streams of anticipated resistance to building commonality, the project design incorporated substantive, sociological and structural counter-measures. Substantively, the project anticipated that the common experience of immersion would minimally lead those who participated to a common sense of dissatisfaction with the status quo in their schools and to a shared motivation for change through the development of a greater appreciation for experiential immersion pedagogies and "third world" resources. Sociologically, the project anticipated that the intensive, sustained time together on immersions would provide participant members from the same institution a unique opportunity for social bonding, and would provide all persons who participated in one of the immersions from any give institution the opportunity to develop a collective identity or consciousness. Structurally, the project anticipated developing this collective consciousness across the typically diffuse segments of a seminary's decision making.

The notion of "critical mass" carried multiple implications for the project--one structural and one political. Structurally, and as noted above, the project designers felt it imperative to involve important (i.e., "critical") change agents within many, if not all, of the segments of a seminary's diffuse decision-making process. Politically, the project designers sought to develop a significant enough "mass" for coalitional clout (e.g., influence, if not "votes") within any given institution.

The PIP/GTE was a five-year effort, and while such an extended time frame provided several points of practical convenience, the more fundamental reasons for it were directly related to underlying assumptions about institutional change. Most importantly, the project began with the assumption that the typical structures and processes of theological education are designed to, and in reality serve to, elongate any movement toward fundamental change. As is typical of educational institutions, for example, seminaries tend to (1) value reflection and analysis over action in their praxis, (2) have cumbersome and "untimely" accountability processes, and (3) have diffuse power and decision-making structures. But the "conserving" nature of religion tends to exacerbate

seminaries' resistance to change, as does the extraordinarily high demands on seminary faculty time, and the strained financial situation of much of theological education today.

From such a perspective the five-year duration of the PIP/GTE, including stretching each school's three international immersions and one local immersion over a four-year period, was felt to provide several strategic advantages. Most importantly, this duration seemed to provide a natural means of sustaining the intensity and visibility of the project over the extended time that it takes seminaries to initiate change. The project's time line also allowed for reinforcing cycles of experience, reflection, and action and provided a relatively practical mechanism for building a "critical mass" without totally overwhelming an institution's financial or time resources at any given time.

Finally, the project assumed that whatever change emerged needed to come from within the participating institutions. Using the language of the project, national level interventions were "mere" catalysts for altering the interaction of resources already present within the institutions. Although almost a taken-for-granted truism within the therapeutic ethos of North American culture, this assumption had several specific implications for the project. First, the project assumed that the participating seminaries would be committed to change. Not only did acceptance into the program require faculty and trustee approval of participation, it also required the commitment of substantial resources of time and money. Second, the transformative rhetoric of the national project staff notwithstanding (and sometimes perceived to be "to the contrary"), the assumption acknowledged that different seminaries would bring different programmatic resources and historical theological identities to the project. These resources would form the base of integrity out of which any given seminary's change proceeded. Finally, the primary national level interventions (i.e., the international immersions) focused on the experiential/emotional/cognitive dimensions of globalization. Although the project did mandate an institutional planning process, the implicit assumption of the project was that seminaries could do the latter largely on their own. That is, the project tended to assume that once a seminary knew what it wanted to do and was motivated to do it, it could change itself.