

Lutheran Mission Matters



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Theological Education and Mission¹

Douglas L. Rutt

Abstract: Mission and theological education go hand-in-hand, like two sides of the same coin. This is made clear by the teachings of Scripture and has been demonstrated by the mission history. Since the time of the Christ, not only the proclamation of forgiveness, but theological teaching has been part and parcel of what the church is called to do. Many treatments of mission history do not adequately address the educational side of the endeavor. Conversely, many discussions of theological education do not fully make the connection between theological education and missionary expansion. The rapid growth of Christianity in the Majority World has created challenges for the younger churches, especially in the area of ministerial training. Yet it also presents an immense opportunity for partnership with churches in the West, who, while not growing rapidly, are comparatively rich in theological education resources. To the extent that the balance can be restored in both parts of the world, each informing and motivating the other, the true mission that Jesus commended to His people, to make disciples by teaching all things and by baptizing in the name of the triune God, will be realized in a healthier and more faithful way.

Theological education is mission in a very real sense. Mission is theological education in a very real sense. The two go together as two sides of the same coin. As Steve de Gruchy affirmed, “The practice of mission engages with theological education in a dialogical manner.”² That is the thesis of this reflection. This conviction was formed during thirty-five years of experience in both camps, that which we commonly label as *missions*, on the one hand, and the realm of theological education, on the other.



Rev. Dr. Douglas L. Rutt has served in international missions for over thirty-five years, first going to Guatemala with his family in 1983. He taught missiology at Concordia Theological Seminary for over fifteen years, as well as several years as a guest professor for Concordia Seminary. He was the Executive Director of the International Division of Lutheran Hour Ministries before assuming his current role as Provost and Professor of Practical Theology at Concordia Seminary in 2018. He holds an MDiv and PhD from Concordia Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Deborah, have five children and fifteen grandchildren.
rutt@csel.edu

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Although the connection between theological education and the mission is rarely made explicit in articles and books on theological education,³ that they are intimately interrelated is demonstrated by history and by theology. By history because the church has flourished the most, even up to the modern missionary movement, where a strategy for the preparation for the holy ministry, such as evangelists, pastors, and teachers, was embarked upon almost simultaneously with evangelistic endeavors.

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It can be demonstrated by theology because if Christ instructed the disciples to teach all nations “*to observe* (τηρεῖν)⁴ *all things* (πάντα), whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mt 28:20), it follows that for this comprehensive and holistic way of life to be passed on, careful instruction and discipleship must take place. Mission cannot be mission if what is passed on is deficient or incompatible with the teachings of the Master. To neglect the observance of *all things* is to neglect the commission that was given to the disciples. One cannot exist without the other.

The Nature of Theology is Missional

Likewise, it is important to understand the nature and end of theology. Biblical theology is not pursued for curiosity’s sake or as fanciful speculation. It certainly is not an academic discipline in the sense that it is pure theory. This is not to say there should not be scholarship in theological education. Indeed, scholarship is affirmed and required; however, it never can be simply scholarship for scholarship’s sake. The end, or *telos*, of theology is to put people on the path of righteousness. This fact has significant implications for how we understand the theological education endeavor. David Bosch put it this way in his monumental work, *Transforming Mission*:

Just as the church ceases to be church if it is not missionary, theology ceases to be theology if it loses its missionary character. . . . The crucial question, then, is not simply or only or largely what the church is or what mission is; it is also what theology is and is about . . . , for theology, rightly understood, has no reason to exist other than critically to accompany the *missio Dei*. So mission should be “the theme of all theology.”⁵

This understanding of the missional character of all biblical theology is not incongruent with the understanding of the Lutheran dogmatists. As argued in an earlier article by this writer,⁶ the Lutheran fathers affirmed that the work of theology, or a theologian, can never be merely the acquisition of knowledge, nor even preoccupation with one’s own salvation. A theologian must understand his calling as,

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and be skilled at, bringing the word of salvation to others. Robert Preus wrote, quoting seventeenth-century Lutheran theologian from the age of orthodoxy, Abraham Calov:

“Teachers and ministers in the church carry on their activity, or at least they ought to do so, in order to bring men to everlasting salvation. Thus, their work centers in saving men, and for this reason they are called saviors in the sense that they are ministers of salvation (Acts 11:14; 1 Cor 9:22; 1 Tm 4:16).” Not everyone who believes and perseveres to the end is to be called a theologian, but only those who lead others to salvation. . . . Therefore *theology has to do not with attaining salvation but with leading others to salvation*. Theology acts not as a medicine (*habitus patientis*) but as a physician. “Hence theology is not the art or activity of being saved and healed spiritually, except *per accedens*; but it is the business of the theologian and teacher to bring spiritual healing to others.” (emphasis added)⁷

A theologian is someone who brings salvation to others, and the concern for his own salvation is only secondary to the primary, missional task. The Apostle Paul understood this fact very well, and was ready to sacrifice his own salvation for the sake of his countrymen, the Hebrews: “For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Rom 9:3). For Saint Paul, as a true theologian, bringing salvation to others was more urgent and imperative than his own salvation, which he would have given up if necessary, so that his kinsmen would embrace the one true faith and come to the spring of living water.

Theological Education as Part of the Missional Plan of Jesus

Jesus’ own example shows the intrinsic relationship between mission and theological education. He was not content to establish Himself as a wise, learned, and renowned religious teacher for His own sake. He was not building His own celebrity cult as if counting Facebook likes, nor was He building His own personal little kingdom; rather, He was interested in building the kingdom of God, a kingdom that would spread to the ends of the earth and endure through time. From the very beginning of His public ministry, He made it a priority to embark upon a three-year, intensive, apprenticeship program to form others to carry on His teachings. Bishop Stephen Neill, in his comprehensive work, *A History of Christian Missions*, reflected on Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem by

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commenting on how the Savior, at that event, surely was mindful of the prophecy of Zechariah:

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (9:9)

Neill speculated, however, that scarcely one out of a hundred readers troubles him or herself with reading the next verse, even though it is highly pertinent and expands the scope of the ultimate significance of Zechariah's prophecy:

and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. (9:10)

Neill commented:

This verse, no less than the other, must have been in the mind of Jesus on this solemn occasion. And he cannot have been unaware that these phrases occur also in Psalm 72, the clearest picture in the Old Testament of the kingdom as God intended it to be. The vision of Jesus reaches out far beyond Jerusalem and his immediate problems; he is thinking in terms of a kingdom that has become coextensive with the inhabited world.

This does not, however, solve the question of method and strategy. How is this kingdom to be proclaimed and made a reality? The natural method would seem to be to enlist in its service the people of God which has been prepared through the long apprenticeship of the Old Testament, and to make of it the messianic people through which all others shall be brought to the knowledge of God.⁸

The initial plan of Christ was to enlist those who had been steeped in the purpose of God through the Hebrew Scriptures, who, while they were by and large simple and unlearned folk, had undergone an extensive period of apprenticeship to the end that they would be equipped and empowered to carry forward the message. The Jewish leadership became exceedingly annoyed because these men, whom they categorized as “uneducated, common men” (Acts 4:13), were now both teaching (διδάσκειν) and preaching (καταγγέλλειν) to the people (Acts 4:2). The miracles they performed certainly played a part in the authentication of their ministry, but their aptness to teach was also evident to the people and the Jewish authorities. The disciples were not only *witnessing* to the resurrection of Jesus, but they were *teaching* what we might call sound doctrine, explaining that central event in light of the biblical narrative and prophecy.

The theological education that they underwent at the feet of the Master was comprehensive and experiential.

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They were also formed to be bold in their teaching and witness (Acts 4:13). The theological education that they underwent at the feet of the Master was comprehensive and experiential. David Csinos states, quoting Dean Wenthe, “The role of the rabbi was not solely to impart factual knowledge into the minds of his disciples. Rather, he was to induct them into a new way of life: ‘The disciple did not simply learn things; he was converted from one way of living to another.’”⁹ Csinos maintains that the method of Jesus’ educational practice was holistic and formational, with the hoped-for result of making disciples who were capable, like the Master, of observing, guarding, protecting, and teaching “all things.” Before dissemination takes place, the cognitive and affective assimilation must occur.

Instead of consisting of individual internalizations of data, learning is a situated process through which learners come to understand and participate in a community of practice. Information, therefore, is not so much the desired outcome of learning as it is the ability to experience full participation in a community by engaging in its practices.¹⁰

Yet the theological educational approach was for more than mere protection of data. It had as its goal the continuation and expansion of the community Jesus had started:

Jesus wanted these disciples to remember his life, ministry, and teachings in order to continue his community and further the reign of God. . . . Thus, [he] passed the torch to his closest followers, recognizing that they have moved from being peripheral members *to being full members who are responsible for continuing the community that he began.* (italics added)¹¹

For Jesus, His theological education plan was a missional plan. His teaching and the formation He provided was not based on speculation, curiosities or intellectual gymnastics, but was directed to the implications of the Way for life in the face of the harsh realities of human existence, but with the aim of carrying forward the message and its meaning to the “ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Growing Pains and Theological Education

After Christ’s resurrection and ascension, the need for additional workers to meet the demands of the growing church was soon apparent. Acts 6 is an early example of how the preparation and consecration of capable ministers was essential at the start of the primitive church. As the church grew, and many were being added to the numbers of the followers of the Way of Jesus, growing pains were felt among the believers. Soon a cultural clash of sorts broke out between the Hellenistic Jews and the Aramaic-speaking Jews. Acts reports that a complaint arose concerning the treatment of the widows of the Hellenistic Jews: “Now in these days when the disciples were

increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because (ὅτι) their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution” (6:1).

Any time there is dynamic growth within a social entity, tensions can and will inevitably arise. As more and more people are added, the needs of the group grow exponentially in proportion to the numeric increase. Adding in other factors, such as linguistic and/or cultural differences can exacerbate the situation. In the case of the selection of what have been called “the seven deacons” (Acts 6:1–7), a closer examination of Luke’s description of the “complaint” and how it was dealt with indicates that this situation was more likely a question of disenfranchisement and the need for more, well-prepared leadership than whether the Hellenistic widows were being neglected during the daily distribution.

Part of the problem hinges on how we understand the little word ὅτι, which can be translated into English as either “that” or “because.” Virtually every English translation takes the matter at face value and assumes that the complaint was legitimately the neglect of the Hellenistic widows, and thus ὅτι is translated “because,” signaling that the stated problem is a fact. However, if ὅτι is translated as “that,” merely the stated complaint is established and not necessarily its factuality or validity. The meaning of the passage can be taken differently if one translates it: “Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews *that* (ὅτι) their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.” Looking at this from the perspective of human relational dynamics, and something that is a basic premise of family systems theory, in such situations the “problem” is not always the problem; rather, it is simply the designated problem, almost like a placeholder, or even a red herring, to show that there is an issue, but that one will have to think more profoundly about the dynamics involved to discover the real problem behind the designated problem.¹²

When one examines how discerningly the twelve responded to the “problem,” other possibilities present themselves. They could have responded, “It is not true! Here are the records of the distribution.” Or, they could have countered by saying, “We will look into it and be more careful so that it doesn’t happen again.” However, the twelve said to the Hellenists, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables” (6:2). In other words, they did not enter into a debate over something that probably wasn’t the fundamental issue anyway. Rather, they responded, “Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty” (6:3). Those chosen should be of “good repute”; they are to be “full of the Spirit,” in other words, they should demonstrate spiritual maturity; and they should be full of “wisdom” (σοφία). It is notable that they all had Greek names, and thus came from among the Hellenists themselves.

It seems quite probable that these were highly qualified, well-formed men, steeped in the doctrine of the Way, who would now begin to take on ministerial and missionary roles within the church. The real issue here, based on how the twelve managed the situation was a feeling of disenfranchisement on the part of the Hellenistic believers.¹³ The response of the twelve immediately diffused the situation, but even more importantly, it resulted in the growth and expansion of the Christian movement for Luke concludes his description of the episode: “And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).

Moreover, although we do not have much detail, the seven were certainly well prepared for the task of teaching and preaching. The very next occurrence reported in Acts is the powerful teaching and preaching of Stephen. Some rose to dispute with him, “but they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking” (Acts 6:10). Stephen’s speech of Acts 7 demonstrates that he knew his theology and how to apply it. Shortly thereafter the missionary exploits of Philip are described, again, showing his theological acumen (Acts 8:4–8 and 8:26–40). The thorough preparation and commissioning of these men was directly related to the mission of expanding the kingdom of Christ.

Paul’s “Seminary” in Ephesus

Another early example of the relationship between theological education and mission is described later in the Book of Acts, when Paul found himself in Ephesus (Acts 19). As was his custom, he first went to the synagogue where he spoke boldly concerning the kingdom of God. His teaching at the synagogue is described as “dialoguing (*διαλεγόμενος*) and persuading about the kingdom of God,” which he did for three months, until opposition increased to the point where he took his followers and, evidently, rented space for his little seminary at “the school of Tyrannus” (19:9, my translation). Paul continued to teach daily at his new location, Luke reports, *for two years*. As a result of this program of theological education, “all who lived in Asia (today a large area in western Turkey) heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.” How did this word spread to such a wide audience? Luke ascribes it directly to Paul’s seminary at the school of Tyrannus: “This continued for two years, so that (*ὥστε*) all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:10). Thus, Luke makes explicit that a result of Paul’s daily instruction at the school of Tyrannus was that the gospel was spread throughout Asia. Dr. Mark Seifrid concludes that it must have been Paul’s seminary students who were responsible for reaching and teaching people throughout Asia regarding Jesus Christ.¹⁴

Later, after Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia and Greece, he decided to head for Jerusalem, but he stopped at Miletus, some forty to fifty kilometers to the south of Ephesus, and called the Ephesian elders to him. His purpose was to exhort them to

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remain firm in the faith, and to bid them farewell since he knew he would not again see them face-to-face. In his instructions, there are clues as to his training program:

You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; how *I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house*, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:18–21, italics added)

Toward the conclusion of his exhortation to the elders, Paul reminds them:

Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for *I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God*. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, *remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears*. (Acts 20:26–31, italics added)

An examination of these details reveals that teaching and consecration of church workers was very much a significant aspect of the mission as the early disciples saw it. The activity of the public, evangelistic proclamation of the gospel is exceedingly significant, to be sure, but teaching and continual warnings to avoid false doctrine are hallmarks of the documents of the early church. Paul's admonition to Titus was oft repeated in various forms: "You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Ti 2:1a).¹⁵

Christianity versus Popular Religiosity

Most of the world's population follows a religious pattern that is described as "folk religion." The specifics of doctrine are not as important as are devotion and loyalty to one's system of beliefs. Right teaching is not emphasized as much as obedience to the traditions and rituals. In this writer's experience, many people in the world are devoted to *la costumbre*, that is, the custom or pattern of devotion. Folk religion, sometimes called "popular religiosity," places emphasis on loyalty to certain identity-producing commitments that have little to do with any rational or thought-through philosophy. One is reminded of the uproar caused in Ephesus over the fervor and blind loyalty to the pagan god Artemis (Acts 19). The issue, besides relating to the income of the silversmiths, had to do with the pride and identity of the Ephesian people:

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So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater. Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the crowd. But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (Acts 19:29–34)

Popular religiosity can lead to extreme expressions of fanatical devotion. Biblical Christianity, on the other hand, lays great importance on the correctness and exactness of the teaching. This is often overlooked. N. T. Wright makes the assertion that Christianity, from the beginning, was a "bookish culture." Wright affirms:

Devotion matters, but it needs direction; energy matters, but it needs information. That is why in the early church, one of the most important tasks was *teaching*. Indeed, the Christian church has led the way for two thousand years in making education in general, and Biblical education in particular, available to people of all sorts.

In contrast with most of the ancient world, early Christianity was very much a *bookish* culture. We sometimes think of the movement as basically a "religion"; but a first century observer, blundering in on a meeting of Christians, would almost certainly have seen them initially as belonging to some kind of educational institution.¹⁶

Professor Luther and the Mission

The missionary nature of theological education can be found also in the example of the University of Wittenberg and the activity of Martin Luther during the time of the Protestant Reformation. In his article, "Was Luther a Missionary?," Eugene Bunkowske articulates his belief that Luther, who spent most of his career as a university professor, legitimately could be considered a missionary. First and foremost were his theological convictions and understanding that the gospel was to go out to all the world. Luther's translation of the Bible into the German language had a tremendous impact on the expansion of the gospel, and it was used as a model for other vernacular translations throughout Europe. Luther was a prolific writer, with over 350 of his published works appearing in his lifetime, along with over "3000 letters to people all over the globe."¹⁷ His many hymns and the catechisms have been cited as important contributions to the cause of missions.

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However, one must note especially the impact Luther had on world mission as a theological educator. The University of Wittenberg, founded by Frederick the Wise in 1502, was becoming a world-renowned center of learning during the time of Luther.¹⁸ Students from around Europe studied at Luther's feet and carried the teachings of Scripture, as taught to them by Luther, with them as they returned to their home countries or moved on to other regions. Bunkowske describes the far-reaching influence of the theological education provided by Luther:

His sermons and speeches also had a great missionary impact. For his sermons were echoed by numerous preachers who sat at the feet of his pulpit and attended his classes. No fewer than 16,000 theological students enrolled at the University of Wittenberg between 1520 and 1560. Like no other university, this one trained missionaries for home and overseas services. The enrollment list at Wittenberg shows that one-third of the students came from other lands. This means that no fewer than 5,000 students who had learned from Luther's sermons and lectures and from Luther's successors went out to spread Luther's deep desire that all should be brought to a saving knowledge of Christ even to the very ends of the earth.¹⁹

Theological Education Is Mission

Theological education is intrinsically tied to the mission. For the mission to be mission, it must be grounded on teaching that is faithful to the message of the gospel in all its truth and purity. St. John, echoing Deuteronomy 4:2, emphasizes the importance of this fact at the end of his prophetic vision:

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. (Rv 22:18–19)

Certainly, this passage is referring to the Book of Revelation, however the meaning could be safely applied profitably to the whole of the biblical record. Moreover, to neglect the careful preparation of those specifically charged with taking the gospel to all peoples, so that the word is not perverted or distorted, would be a failure of the mission in its fullest sense. The need for theological education was seen, too, by the fathers of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, who founded both seminaries, Concordia Seminary in 1839 and Concordia Theological Seminary in 1846, prior to the organization of the Missouri Synod in 1847. The same is true of the largest sister church of the Missouri Synod, the Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brasil. The LCMS missionaries first established the seminary in 1903, a year before the church body was organized. The preparation of pastors to serve the growing church went hand in hand with the mission.

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The interrelationship between theological education and the missionary expansion of the gospel is demonstrated both theologically and historically. The two should not be seen in isolation, one from the other. When there is a divide between the two— theological education without missionary commitments, and mission without theological education—the results will undoubtedly be disastrous. Either theology will degenerate into a speculative theology, something that Luther loathed, or the mission and resultant communities of faith will be easily deceived by “every wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14).

For this reason, theological education is critically important for the rapidly growing churches in the majority world, such as in Africa, where Christianity has exploded from less than 10 percent of the continent’s population to over 50 percent in the past 120 years. This translates to fewer than ten million Christians in Africa in 1900 to over five hundred million in 2020.²⁰ The need for well-prepared teachers and preachers will continue to grow. While it may seem that in the Western world theological education is in oversupply and in a sense living in luxury while mission impetus is dwindling, in Africa and other places where the gospel is rapidly expanding, it seems the mission is outrunning the capacity of the growing churches to keep up with adequate training for pastors, teachers, and missionaries. To the extent that the balance can be restored in both parts of the world, each informing and motivating the other, the true mission that Jesus commended to His people, to make disciples by teaching all things and by baptizing in the name of the triune God, will be realized in a healthier and more faithful way. Just as mission and sound doctrine must not be played off each other, so also theological education and mission are partners in the gospel.

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Endnotes

¹ This article is an adaptation of an article that first appeared in *Let the Gospel Lead: Essays & Sermons in Honor of Dale A. Meyer*, ed. Travis J. Scholl (Saint Louis: Concordia Seminary Press, 2020), 69–82.

² Steve de Gruchy, “Theological Education and Missional Practice,” in *Handbook of Theological Education: Theological Perspectives, Ecumenical Trends, Regional Survey*, eds. Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, Joshva Raja (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 42.

³ For example, Daniel Aleshire wrote an insightful and thought-provoking survey of the shifts in the vision for theological education and the role of the theological educator through the years titled, “2030: A Theological Odyssey of the Work of the Theological Educator.” This study was presented at the ATS New Faculty Conference of October 2013. There was nary a

mention of mission or the missionary nature of theological education, except a critique that during the early nineteenth century, when theological schools and specialized studies emerged, “they did not receive the funding that the missionary movement did” (Association of Theological Schools, October 2015: <https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/publications-presentations/colloquy-online/a-theological-odyssey.pdf> [accessed February 12, 2020]). On the other hand, Eckhard Schnabel’s masterful and monumental work, *Early Christian Mission: Jesus and the Twelve* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2004), explores an exhaustive array of factors and details relevant to the evangelistic expansion of the church from the time of Christ through that of the early disciples, yet it appears to this reader that little attention is paid to the significance of the continual activity of daily teaching that accompanied evangelistic expansion as evidenced in the biblical accounts.

⁴ While some versions translate τηρεῖν as “obey,” more accurate renderings in English would be “keep,” “guard,” or “protect.” The mandate is not merely to obey what He has commanded, but includes to protect and guard the teaching, i.e., maintain sound doctrine and practice (cf. 2 Tm 1:13; Ti 1:9; Prv 4:2).

⁵ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Twentieth Anniversary Edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011), 505–506.

⁶ See Douglas L. Rutt, “The Missiological Endeavor is Essentially Theological,” *Missio Apostolica* 17, no. 2 (Nov. 2009): 78–82.

⁷ Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 192–193.

⁸ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (New York: Penguin Books, 1964), 20.

⁹ David M. Csinos, “‘Come, Follow Me’: Apprenticeship in Jesus’ Approach to Education,” *Religious Education* 105, no. 1 (2010): 51.

¹⁰ Csinos, 46.

¹¹ Csinos, 59.

¹² I am indebted to Edwin Friedman for insight into how the field of systemic family therapy applies also to the church and synagogue. Family process therapy sees the development of a problem or conflict in terms of the whole rather than focusing on the designated “problem.” He points out that the way to resolving conflict involves things like (1) Focusing “on (emotional) process rather than symptomatic content;” (2) Seeing effects “as integral parts of structures rather than as an end point in linear chains of cause;” and (3) “eliminating symptoms by modifying structure rather than by trying to change the dysfunctional part directly.” Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1985), 18.

¹³ That this was a case of the disenfranchisement of the Hellenistic Jews was identified by my international and ethnic minority students, who drew that conclusion almost immediately when working through this text together in class. No doubt they were more attuned to such nuances based on their own personal experience.

¹⁴ Personal notes from Bible study at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Des Peres, MO, February 2, 2020.

¹⁵ Thabiti Anyabwile has identified several references demonstrating the deep concern that the Apostle Paul had for the preservation of sound teaching, especially in his warnings to Timothy and Titus, e.g., 1 Tm 1:3–7, 19b–20; 1 Tm 3:9; 1 Tm 4:1–2, 15–16; 1 Tm 6:3–5, 10b; 2 Tm 1:13–14, 2 Tm 2:16–18, 23–26; 2 Tm 3:1–8, 12–14, 2 Tm 4:2–5; Ti 1:11, 13–14; Ti 2:1a. Thabiti Anyabwile, “A Sampling of Paul’s Instruction Re: False Teachers and Sound Doctrine.” *The Gospel Coalition*. July 21, 2010, accessed February 16, 2020,

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/thabiti-anyabwile/a-sampling-of-pauls-instruction-re-false-teachers-and-sound-doctrine>.

¹⁶ N. T. Wright and Michael F. Bird, *The New Testament in Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019), 40.

¹⁷ Eugene Bunkowske, “Was Luther a Missionary?,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 49, no. 2 and 3 (1985): 168.

¹⁸ William Shakespeare seems to have been well-acquainted with the reputation of the University of Wittenberg, where Prince Hamlet is said to have studied and to where he desires to return (1.2.112–17).

¹⁹ Bunkowske, “Was Luther a Missionary?,” 170.

²⁰ Douglas Rutt, “Martin Luther’s *Platzregen* in Action: The Changing Face of Global Christianity,” *Concordia Journal* 40, no. 3 (2014): 225–238. Available at <https://scholar.csl.edu/cj/vol40/iss3/6>.