
From the Ivory Tower to the Public Square: The Integration of Biblical Theology to Everyday Life

Nokāpt no zilonkaula torņa pasaulē: bibliiskās teoloģijas integrācija ikdienas dzīvē

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Article is dedicated to the important question of Christian ethics and pedagogy – to the relationships between dogmatic formulations of faith and realities of modern life that are faced by every Christian in everyday situations. That is the question of the differences of secular and spiritual world as well the seeking for possible common connections. Author considers that in a perplexed and needy world – also in Latvia – responsibility of a Christian is to reflect love of Christ not only in the ecclesia but also in the “marketplace”, namely – in the practice of social behavior. That, in author’s mind, is the biblical view of spiritual formation. For the support of this idea author uses comprehensive material, – first of all, by focusing on the contextual interpretation of Holy Scriptures, analyzing in such methodological manner Mathew 5:13-14, 2 Peter 3:18, Galatians 5:22, 23 a.o., and secondly, by using wide range of modern theological literature giving references to the latest research. Article deals with following questions in detail: Revisiting historical models of the past and present that are used in connection to the understanding of social responsibility in the theological and educational concepts; Spiritual formation from a biblical perspective; *Paideia* as a viable model for theological education, etc. Looking from the perspective of development of spiritual life in Latvia, article has innovative character. It improves views about social responsibility of Christianity in the modern-day context.

Key words: everyday life, theology for living, perplexed society, Christian witness, theological education, spiritual formation, *paideia*

Oswald Chambers said in a sermon entitled *Can You Come Down*, that the test of spiritual life is the power to descend. The truth of this statement also tests our theological belief. Can our theology come down into everyday life? Can we come down from the ivory tower of academic theology to a world that is hurting and needs healing? If not, then our theology is nothing more than a “sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal”.¹

Academic theology, for most people, is an abstract, irrelevant, and boring discipline. Theology is seen as being theoretical, not practical – a discipline that has little connection with what we do every day. Life, on the other hand, involves getting up every morning for work, raising a family, paying the bills, watching a hockey game, and performing a host of other responsibilities. Theology and life do not seem to connect; the two ideas do not usually belong together.

Yet, we need to bring these two ideas together as we live in a confused, restless, and sinful world. We must live theologically. Jesus combined theology and life when said: “You shall love your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with your entire mind.” He went beyond theology, *loving God*, and said to *live theology*, that is, “love your neighbor as yourself.”² We must define theology in a way that embraces the practical side of living. Theology is important and needed, but what we believe must be reflected in life. Creed must be **fulfilled** in conduct. We need to not only think theologically but also live theologically. Paul R. Stevens, speaks to this:

*(..) a theology of the whole people of God must encompass not only the life of God's people gathered, the ecclesia, but the church dispersed in the world, the diaspora, in marketplace, government, professional offices, schools and homes (..) It must be a theology that encompasses earthly realities and expounds the menial, the trivial and the necessary: washing, cleaning, maintaining the fabric of this world, play, games, art, leisure, vocation, work, ministry, mission and grappling with principalities and powers. It must help us understand and experience sexuality, family and friendship. It must show us the place of sabbath and sleep. It should help us live blessedly with the automobile, travel, the telephone, computer and e-mail.*³

Latvian students need a biblical theology that will integrate with all aspects of their lives. A theology for living must give theological answers and solutions to the major problems facing the world today. Why do marriages fall apart? Why is there so much alcoholism? Why is human behavior the way it is? What can be done about corruption in society? Is there a way out of the inner restlessness and emptiness that exists in so many lives? Is there meaning to life? We must find the answers to these crucial life questions in Biblical truth. And there must be a clear understanding of the theological portrayal of mankind as being alienated from God. What is needed, in Latvia as well as the rest of the world, is a comprehensive “biblical foundation for the Christian life in the world as well as the church, a theology for homemakers, nurses and doctors, plumbers, stockbrokers, politicians and farmers.”⁴

*Everyday life positively bristles with the need for theological reflection. Existential questions faced by most people positively cry out for an earthy theology: Who am I? Where am I? What is the purpose of my life? To whom do I belong? Does my daily work have any meaning? What happens when I die? Does the planet have a future? The theological task is not only to exegete the Scripture but also to exegete life, and to do these together.*⁵

Robert Banks defines a theology of life in a more practical way⁶. He speaks of a theology that touches the routine activities of life, such as commuting, shopping, sleeping, and all other regular aspects of daily life. The routine situations, pressures, and features of life need to be seen from a viewpoint of the glory of God. Henri Nouwen, on the other hand, expressed it this way, “*theologia* is not primarily a way of thinking, but a way of living.”⁷

An important question to ask then is: “What should be the end result of a theological education?” The goal must be to take the students beyond just the intellectual understanding of theology and the interpretation of the Bible. Simply put, the theological education, given in academia and the Church, must impact all aspects and activity of human life. It must challenge the mind, but it must also challenge students to take what is learned in academia and bring healing and reconciliation to a confused and unbelieving world. Theological education must bring awareness that the presence of the risen Christ can touch human hearts.

Being Significant in a Perplexed Society

The Christian Church in Latvia cannot continue to be an isolated, inferior, and insignificant *holy huddle* if it expects to impact society in the twenty-first century. Its members must be visible as a Christian witness in politics, arts, media, business, and the professions. To reach these positions in the public square and to make a difference, Christians must go beyond their profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Such a profession is only the beginning; each must continue on to spiritual maturity. Perhaps this is why Jesus used the term 'new birth' when talking to Nicodemus. The Christian life begins with a spiritual birth, but it must grow to spiritual maturity in order to have a significant influence in society. We do not remain infants physically, nor should we remain spiritual infants. Peter, in his second epistle exhorts us to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."⁸

Jesus made two most astounding and significant statements in the Sermon on the Mount when he stated that Christians are "salt of the earth and light of the world."⁹ Earlier in the chapter he described¹⁰ what Christians are. We are blessed because we are poor in spirit, we recognize our spiritual poverty; we mourn over our spiritual poverty, our own and others; we hunger and thirst after righteousness; we are peacemakers. But in verse 13 and 14 Jesus tells what impact believers are to have on society and culture. He makes it very clear we are not to live in isolation. Our theology must be a theology for living. We are in the world but we are not of the world. We bear a relationship to society, but we are not to be shaped by our society. Jesus is saying that Christians are not insignificant in the world but in fact have a tremendous role to play in influencing it for good.

George MacLeod of the Iona Community speaks of the believer invading secular space in a much more poignant and unique way:

I simply argue that the cross be raised again at the center of the marketplace as well as on the steeple of the church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves; on the town garbage heap; at a crossroad so cosmopolitan that they had to write his title in Hebrew and in Latin and in Greek (..) at the kind of place where cynics talk smut, and thieves curse, and soldiers gamble, because that is where he died. And that is what he died about. And that is where churchmen should be and what churchmen should be about.¹¹

To be what God wants us to be in relationship to society requires that believers be properly equipped for this purpose. In Ephesians 4 Paul addresses the gifts given to the church. The gifts he speaks of are the offices of ministry – apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers – but he goes on to say that these gifts are to "prepare God's people for works of service." The implication is that the gifts are given to develop, build up, and nurture all believers so that they will be salt and light in a perplexed society. It appears that Paul is saying that *all* believers are to be active in sharing the faith, and being an active witness of the faith through the influence of Christian character.

This bringing together of the sacred and the secular is aptly described by Parker Palmer in his remarkable book. He states that all education is a spiritual journey and the end result is "to know as we are known."¹² The Christian tradition is that God broke into the stream of human history to reveal his eternal purpose. This entry of God is described by John in his Gospel, "And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory (..) full of grace and truth."¹³ Palmer states

that in this movement, “Spirit and matter were fused and made whole; the distinction we make between sacred and secular was overcome; self and world were permeated with transcendent possibility, the possibility of love.” Palmer goes on to state that conventional education deals with personal facts and theories, but an education shaped by Christian spirituality draws us toward incarnate and personal truth. This spiritual education draws us into personal responsiveness, responsibility, and accountability, to each other and the world in which we live. Thus education that is Christian will invade secular space as these educated and spiritually formed students take their place in the public square.

The Latvian Christian College is not a theological seminary, but a fully accredited Christian institution of higher learning. Since it is a Christian academy, a primary concern is the development of the spiritual lives of the students so that when they graduate and take their place in the public square, they do so with spiritual and moral fiber. This is vital given the fifty years of atheistic ideology that has shaped current Latvian culture. A theology for living requires us to live out the great doctrines of the faith as we go about our vocations, private lives, and family issues. The Academy must graduate students with more than intellectual knowledge; it must graduate students whose characters have been shaped by biblical truth and through the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus spiritual formation must be part of the Christian theological education process. As Parker Palmer said, “The shape of our knowledge becomes the shape of our living; the relation of the knower to the known becomes the relation of the living self to the larger world (...) that images of self and the world that are found at the heart of our knowledge will also be found in the values by which we live our lives.”¹⁴

The quest for the spiritual knowledge that Palmer refers to will not take us away from society but will bring us face to face with those with whom we interact day by day. This face-to-face relationship not only heals but also creates an unconscious influence for good to the community. Intellectual knowledge without spiritual formation cannot and will not function as salt in a deteriorating world.

In essence the Latvian Christian College is, in a sense, attempting to develop a new Christian intellectual and professional class in Latvia, one that takes the Christian witness to all levels of society by demonstrating, through personal example, what a Christian is. In the last fifty years Christians in Latvia were isolated and often considered themselves inferior. They must break out of this mental and spiritual mind – set by replacing past ideology with biblical theological truth.

Revisiting Models of the Past and Present

Theological education has gone through a process of evolution and change throughout the centuries. The Protestant Reformers had as their fundamental task the study of the Bible; theology was to be rooted in and identical with biblical exegesis. The source and standard of Christian faith and life was centered on the biblical witness. The Reformers also eventually came to the conclusion that there was a need to arrange biblical teaching into a coherent presentation of Christian doctrine.¹⁵ This became known as “dogmatic” or “systematic theology.” Furthermore, other areas of study were added, such as the study of the pastoral office itself and Church history. This four-fold pattern of theological study – biblical, systematic theology, history and practical, which most theological universities follow today, had its origins in the Reformation. This four-fold pattern has raised questions, as early as the 18th century, as to its effectiveness

in developing Christian leaders. The primary question was, “What do Church leaders really need?”

The adequacy of a system designed for the 16th century is incompatible with the needs of the contemporary Church, as it exists today. While scholars may be right as far as theological training for ministry is concerned, biblical study should always have a vital place in all basic theological education especially in societies such as Latvia and other post-communist countries. This has always been true from the earliest times to the present. However, it appears that much of the curricula in the fourfold pattern developed into “doing” rather than “being.”

This is not surprising since education, as it is taught in seminaries, prepares men and women to be academic theologians and leaders for the church, and for the most part has little to do in preparing people to integrate their theology in the public square. This is, perhaps, the biggest failure of theological education today; it is designed to produce professional clergy into the world of the Church, whereas what is needed in Latvia, and other places, is for Christian graduates to integrate and invade the culture in which they live. It seems clear that a theological focus must focus on developing Christian character, which theologians call *spiritual formation*, in order that graduates live theology in an evil world.

Spiritual Formation from a Biblical Perspective

Spiritual formation seems to be the current buzzword in theological education in theological education. One seminary offers twenty-five core courses on spiritual formation, each one from a different perspective. In reviewing the catalogs of theological schools, however, few of them really define what is meant by spiritual formation. So we need to ask, “What is spiritual formation?” If we look at this topic from a biblical worldview we get a much clearer picture of what is meant by spiritual formation.

Paul in his second Epistle to the Corinthians said, “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”¹⁶ In Romans 8:29 we read, “and those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.” Perhaps the best definition of spiritual formation is found in Galatians. After listing the acts of the sinful nature, Paul says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal. 5:22,23). All of these verses speak of what we *are* in character and do not relate to what we are to *do* in the world. In fact, they all speak of the need for Christians to reflect the character of Jesus Christ in all that they do. This reflection of Jesus Christ is not to be done in the ecclesia but in the marketplace where we work and live. This is the biblical view of spiritual formation. Only as the fruit of the Spirit, or spiritual formation develops, can we be an influence in a perplexed society as Jesus intended.

Carnegie Calian gives a similar view with a different slant. “We must get back to the basic teaching of Christianity,” which he defines as forgiveness and reconciliation.

*Instituting a creatively integrated curriculum based on forgiveness, I submit, is a significant way to restore theological coherence within our historic fourfold seminary disciplines – Bible, theology, church history, and practical theology. With such a focus, tomorrow’s curriculum would strengthen and nurture us to become better disciples of forgiveness for a fragmented world.*¹⁷

Calian states that we must integrate biblically informed faith to human experience. He defines the task of educators to get back to the basics through the biblical message of forgiveness and reconciliation because of a needy society where emptiness and brokenness exist. The focus must be on exegeting and communicating, without apology, what is basic to Christianity. He says, “The power of forgiveness is a missing ingredient in humanizing a world torn by individual and collective self-interest with the capacity for self-destruction.” Calian further states that today’s latest fad is spirituality that promises peace, but overlooks the need for forgiveness. The focus of his book centers on developing a durable spirituality, one that brings unity and strength in theological education.

The authors of the book, *An Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* address spiritual formation in the Christian life by stating that personal spiritual formation must rest on correct and valid interpretations of the Bible.

*It is almost axiomatic to Christians that the Bible stands at the core of spiritual growth; to grow in the Christian faith mandates some regimen of Bible study. In their earnest grappling with biblical teachings and their implications, Christians have a prime resource for becoming spiritual men and women of God.*¹⁸

The authors of this book go on to state that spiritual formation is not relegated to the private inner life because the complement to spiritual formation is spiritual living. The Bible provides positive guidance as to how we are to live in the world.

Some may claim that this is too much of an internal approach, too self-centered, too focused on personal experiences. Lesslie Newbigin addresses this issue and rightly speaks of balance between the private and secular life.¹⁹

In this view, the Bible, taken as a whole, fitly renders God, who is not merely the correlate or referent of universal natural religious experience, but is the author and sustainer of all things. But this fitness can only be understood as we ourselves are engaged in the same struggle that we see in Scripture, the struggle to understand and deal with the events of our time in the faith that the God revealed in Scripture is in fact the agent whose purpose created and sustained all that is, and will bring it to its proper end. To use the current jargon, the understanding in question simply does not exist apart from praxis. And praxis means involvement in the public world as much as in the private since the God who is “rendered” in the Bible is the God of nature and of history as he is of the human soul.

Newbigin further states that our personal religious experiences in life are not to be separated from our secular experience of life in the world. He states that a missionary encounter encroaches not only on the ideas and beliefs of a people, but also on its ways of behavior²⁰. He states there is no separation of the inward and spiritual from the outward, visible, and social, and he cites that the Yahweh in the Torah shows his loving guidance to his people for the whole of their lives as persons. We must learn how to embody in the life of the Church a witness to the kingship of Christ over all life, politically and economically.

What Newbigin says may be true, that we cannot separate what we are from what we do, but our *doing* in the experience of living must be the outward expression of our inner spiritual life. Students can be encouraged to go into the community to be witnesses and heralds of the gospel, but what they are in character will give credence to what is being said. Without this spiritual character, our efforts and activity may not be effective, or as Jesus said, “if the salt has lost its saltiness, it is useless.” Jesus is not

referring to losing one's salvation, but to the futility of a witness that is not backed up with spiritual maturity. In fact, if a Christian loses his or her distinctiveness and identity he or she also loses his effectiveness in society.

Robert Banks explores a missional alternative to current models of spiritual formation by showing the characteristics of Jewish education before Christ. "The home was the place where religious nurture, transmission of tradition, and participation in worship – even vocational preparation, took place (...) It was essentially the passing on a whole way of life – spiritual, moral, and civil."²¹ Parents told stories, gave explanations, and answered children's questions, in informal settings. Moses gave the principles of education when he said it was to be done, "when you sit at home and when you walk along the way, when you lie down and when you get up."²² In all of this the main teacher was God.

Alister McGrath, however, advises caution here, "there is a tendency to regard spirituality in terms of understanding the biblical text – that is, to reading it, making sense of its words and ideas, and understanding its historical background and its meaning for today."²³ He claims that this emphasis continues to be based on reason and we need to go behind the Enlightenment and recover older and more authentic evangelical approaches to spirituality where there was an emotional involvement with the Scripture, and the use of the human faculty of imagination.

McGrath claims that Protestantism, in all its forms, was influenced by the rationalism of the Enlightenment far more than Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. He states,

*Yet the Enlightenment is over. We need to purge rationalism from within evangelicalism. And that means recovering the relational, emotional and imaginative aspects of biblical spirituality, which the Enlightenment declared to be improper. As Martin Luther constantly insisted, Christianity is concerned with totus homo, the "entire human person," not just the human mind. In this, Luther was doing nothing more than stressing the importance of maintaining a biblical understanding of human nature in every aspect of Christian living.*²⁴

Paul would certainly agree with McGrath. He told the Christians at Thessalonica, "our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction."²⁵ True spirituality, or spiritual formation, concerns not only our minds, but also our spirits, wills, imaginations, feelings, and bodies. Spiritual formation is all about the character and quality of our relationship with God, with other Christians, and those we meet and deal with in society. The goal of the Latvian Christian Academy is to reclaim this evangelical heritage, which was suppressed not only by the Enlightenment but also by the atheistic ideology of communism.

***Paideia* as a Viable Model for Theological Education**

Theologians speak of a theological encyclopedia. The English word for encyclopedia today is defined as a reference book, such as the *World Book Encyclopedia*, or the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. However, the word had a much broader meaning in the past. It contains three Greek components: en-cyclo-**paideia**. *Paideia* means teaching or nurturing, thus the word *encyclopedia* came to mean a complete circuit of teaching, not an alphabetical list of topics. A theological encyclopedia covers all areas of theology.²⁶ According to Charles M. Wood, Lehman Professor of Christian Doctrine at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, "theological encyclopedia"

disappeared from most seminaries by early in the twentieth century and the study and teaching of the Bible, Church history, ethics, and the functions of ministry, all went their own way, often making little difference to one another”.²⁷

The model of *paideia*, which has its roots in the ancient Greco-Roman world, has a long history within the Christian Church and was unquestioned until the eighteenth century. This model of theological training, in fact, goes back to four centuries before the first Christian Church was formed. David Kelsey gives a brief history of *paideia* in his book and states that *paideia* was the model used in the Hellenistic culture by the first churches outside of Palestine.²⁸ The Greek word *paideia* meant “schooling,” “culturing,” and “character formation.” It had to do with cultivating a person’s spirit, character, and mind so that his faith was deepened and he was better prepared for living in relation to society. In Greek culture its goal was to form in the young, “the virtue of *arête* they needed to function as responsible citizens.”²⁹ *Paideia* went through important changes from the fourth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. This was the way in which educated Greek-speaking Christians were taught. Early Christians were given both a practice of *paideia* and a body of literature about *paideia*. Kelsey shows the explicit use of the traditional concept of *paideia* by referring to a letter written by Clement of Rome to the church in Corinth in A.D. 90. Clement explicitly praises *paideia* in a way that he implies his entire letter is an act of Christian education. Clement also refers to the “*paideia* of God” and the “*paideia* of Christ.” David Kelsey concludes his thoughts on *paideia* by saying,

*It cannot be stressed too much that paideia as a model of excellence in theological training continues to be powerfully influential in theological schooling today. There is a historical reason for that. From the second century on, the Christian thing has been understood as a kind of “forming” of persons lives on the model of education as paideia. Every construal of the subject matter of theological inquiry and to what it is to ‘understand’ God simply assumes the validity of this model. The idea that Christianity is some type of paideia is so deeply built into all construals of the Christian thing that the two are inseparable. It would be sheer self-deception to suppose that one could re-conceive theological schooling by abandoning paideia as a model of excellent theological schooling.*³⁰

In reviewing the various opinions and theories regarding theological education it is interesting to note how little attention is given to what the Bible might contribute to the development of Christian character and theological education. Robert Banks takes a different view and speaks of the Bible as a relevant starting place for developing Christians. He refers to an article published in *Theological Education* (1992) by R. H. Cram and S. P Saunders, which seek a return to the Bible as the source:

*When the streams of tradition have become stagnant, we must return to the fountainhead (..) to Scripture for models (..) for images that might help us re-envision the contexts and categories for theological education. The scriptures provide us with ideal constructs for cultures not our own, and it is necessary to translate these ideals carefully; nevertheless, the most significant movements for reform and revitalization in the history of the Church have always been rooted in fresh, contextual readings of Scripture.*³¹

Banks states that modern day authors and theologians read and study historical writings of the Christian tradition, those written in late Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and post-Reformation period, and says the lack of biblical relevance in their writings

is disappointing. He asks, if these eras have something worthwhile to offer, why not Scripture itself?

Martin Luther, writing in 1523, on the Councils and Churches made a similar point by quoting St. Bernard of Clairvaux. According to Luther:

*St. Bernard declares that he learned his wisdom from the trees, such as oaks and pines, which were his teachers; that is, he conceived his ideas from Scripture and pondered them under the trees. He adds that he regards the Holy Fathers highly, but does not heed all their sayings, explaining (...) why he would rather drink from the spring itself than from the brook, as do all men, who once they have a chance to drink from the spring forget about the brook, unless they use the brook to lead them to the spring. Thus Scripture, too, must remain master and judge, for when we follow the brooks too far, they lead us too far from away from the spring and lose both their taste and nourishment.*³²

In our quest for knowledge Parker maintains that we must see with a single focus. He likens much of today's education as seeing with only one eye, meaning that all knowledge is seen from a world of fact and reason, and he claims that this view is a "cold and mechanical place; a view that is flawed and dangerous." We must also see from the other eye, the eye of the heart, and see another world, one that is warmed and transformed by the power of love. He asks, "How shall we bring together these two lines of sight? How shall we use both eyes to create, a not a blurry double image, but an image that is healed and made whole?"³³ Palmer introduces us to a far broader and far reaching definition of knowledge. If knowledge eliminates or neglects the spiritual aspect, all this knowledge, which distinguishes us from the animals, will create a world far less human than the natural world itself. He suggests another kind of knowledge, a knowledge that is based on compassion and love.

Christians in Latvia and in any other part of the world, for that matter, have the awesome responsibility of bringing a positive Christian influence to a perplexed and needy world. In order to fulfill this responsibility, however, Latvian Christians must have an understanding of the word of God. All believers must reflect their spiritual growth and the love of God to others in the marketplace of life. The Apostle Paul spoke of this responsibility when he wrote to the church in Philippi: "Continue to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose (...) **so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold the word of life.**"

Can we come down? The answer is not only yes, but also we *must* come down in order to fulfill the command of Jesus when he told us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

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Nokāpt no ziloņkaula torņa pasaulē: bibliskās teoloģijas integrācija ikdienas dzīvē

Kopsavilkums

Raksts runā par nepieciešamību savienot savā starpā divas jomas – biblisko

teoloģiju un ikdienas dzīvi. Dzīves teoloģijai jāsniedz teoloģiski uzlādēti risinājumi un atbildes uz galvenajām problēmām, ar ko saskaras pasaule šodien. Studentiem Latvijā ir nepieciešama tāda bibliskā teoloģija, kas integrē sevī visus viņu dzīves aspektus. Parādās nepieciešamība pēc visaptveroša bibliska pamata kristīgai dzīvei gan pasaulē, gan baznīcā. Kristus mācība, tāpat kā arī autoru izteikumi, kuri minēti raksta ievaddaļā, norāda uz teoloģiskas refleksijas nepieciešamību ikdienas dzīvē. Teoloģiskajai izglītībai, ko sniedz Latvijas Kristīgā akadēmija un Baznīca, ir jāvirza studentus tālāk par teoloģijas intelektuālu izpratni un pašmērķīgu Bībeles interpretāciju, tai ir jāiesniedz visas cilvēka aktivitātēs.

Pirmā nodaļa sniedz kristīgas dzīves kā garīgas izaugsmes raksturojumu. Kristīga dzīve sākas ar garīgu piedzimšanu, bet tai ir jāsniedz arī garīgs briedums, lai tā spētu atstāt nozīmīgu iespaidu uz sabiedrību, nepaliekot “garīga zīdaīņa” kārtā. Tikai tad kristieši varēs būt “šīs zemes sāls un pasaules gaišums” (Mat. 5:13-14). Jēzus Kalna sprediķī māca, ka ticīgajiem ir jāpazīst sava un citu garīgā nabadzība un jāskumst par to, tāpat aicinot ticīgos būt izsalkušiem un izslāpušiem pēc taisnības. Viņš arī skaidri parāda, ka ticīgie nedrīkst dzīvot izolētībā, tiem ir jāpastāv attiecībās ar sabiedrību, taču sabiedrība nav tā, kas tos rada: tie ir šajā pasaulē, bet nav no šīs pasaules. Būt par tādiem, kādus Dievs vēlas mūs redzēt attiecībās ar sabiedrību, – tas ticīgajiem prasa pienācīgu sagatavošanos šādam mērķim: apustulis Pāvils norāda tieši uz dāvanām, kuras ir dotas Baznīcai, lai pilnveidotu, celtu un audzinātu visus ticīgos. Pārķers Palmers (*Parker Palmer*) šajā sakarā apgalvo, ka caur Kristus ienākšanu pasaulē Gars un matērija tika savienoti un tapa par vienu veselumu, sakrālā un sekulārā nošķīrums tika pārvarēts. Viņš apgalvo, ka visa izglītība ir garīgs ceļojums, jo izglītība, ko ir caurstrāvojis kristīgais garīgums, ved pie inkarnētas un personiskas patiesības. Šāda garīgā izglītība ievēd mūs personīgā atbildīgumā un atsaucībā vienam pret otru un pret pasauli, kurā mēs dzīvojam. Ņemot vērā ateistisko ideoloģiju, kas piecdesmit gadus ir ietekmējusi Latvijas kultūru, vajadzība pēc garīgi izglītotiem speciālistiem ir vitāli nepieciešama. Dzīves teoloģija pieprasa izdzīvot lielās ticības doktrīnas tāpat, kā mēs pavadām atvaļinājumus, dzīvojam privāto dzīvi un risinām ģimenes jautājumus. Latvijas Kristīgajai akadēmijai ir jāgatavo beidzēji, ekipējot tos ne tikai ar intelektuālo bagāžu, bet jāveido tādas personības, kuru raksturs ir veidojies ciešā saskarē ar bibliskām patiesībām, pateicoties Svētā Gara darbībai. Tādējādi garīgā izaugsme kļūst par kristīgās teoloģiskās izglītības procesa sastāvdaļu, un uz tās bāzes akadēmija cenšas veidot jaunu kristīgo intelektuāļu un profesionāļu slāni Latvijā, kas kristīgo vēsti ienes visās sabiedrības jomās, demonstrējot to ar savu personīgo piemēru.

Otrā nodaļa runā par teoloģiskās izglītības modeļiem pagātnē un tagadnē. Teoloģisko studiju četru līmeņu sistēma, kura ietvēra biblisko, sistemātiskās teoloģijas, vēstures un praktiskās teoloģijas līmeni un kurai mūsdienās seko lielākā daļa teoloģisko augstskolu, tika iedibināta Reformācijas laikos. Taču ir jāatzīst, ka šī teoloģiskās izglītības sistēma, kas ir radīta 16. gadsimtā, neatbilst šodienas Baznīcas vajadzībām, jo neapmāca integrēt teoloģiju mūsdienu sabiedrības dzīvē, kas, iespējams, ir lielākais teoloģiskās izglītības trūkums mūsdienās.

Trešajā nodaļā tiek izskaidrota nepieciešamā alternatīva teoloģijā vērst uzmanību uz kristīgas personības izveidi un attīstību, ko teoloģijā sauc par *garīgo tapšanu*, lai augstskolu beidzēji spētu dzīvot saskaņā ar savu teoloģiju ļaunuma skartajā pasaulē. Tiek sniegts bibliskais garīgās tapšanas jeb formācijas pamats, kā arī dažādu teologu apgalvojumi šajā sakarā. Kārneģijs Kalians (*Carnegie Calian*), piemēram, redz kristietības pamatmācības, ko viņš definē kā piedošanu un atkalizlīdzināšanos (rekonsiliāciju)

skata kā iespēju atjaunot teoloģisku vienotību, audzinot mācekļus šajā sadrumstalotajā pasaulē. Kalians vērš uzmanību uz tāda noturīga garīguma veidošanu, kas teoloģiskajā izglītībā ienestu vienotību un spēku. Citi autori, kā, piem., Leslijs Nūbigins (*Lesslie Newbigin*), garīgo tapšanu attiecina uz garīgu dzīvi, vadoties no Bībeles mācības. Garīgums nav reducējams tikai uz personīgo iekšējo dzīvi, jo tas vienkārši neeksistē ārpus *praxis*, kas nozīmē cilvēka garīguma iesaistītību pasaules procesos tikpat lielā mērā, kā privātajos procesos, ņemot vērā, ka Bībelē “atklātais” Dievs ir ne tikai radības un vēstures Dievs, bet arī cilvēka dvēseles Dievs. Misionārā vēsts skar ne tikai cilvēku domas un ticību, bet arī to uzvedību. Jahve Torā parāda savu mīlestības pilno vadību saviem ļaudīm visā viņu dzīves garumā. Autors apgalvo, ka studenti jāiedrošina kļūt par evaņģēlija nesējiem un vēstnešiem sabiedrībā, un tas, kādi viņi ir pēc savas dabas, rakstura, piešķirs ticamību tam, ko viņi saka. Savukārt Alisters Makgrāts (*Alister McGrath*) apgalvo, ka protestantisms visās tā formās ir daudz vairāk ietekmējies no Apgaismības racionālisma nekā Romas katolicisms un Austrumu pareizticība. Un tas nozīmē, ka bibliskās paradigmas ietvaros ir jāatjauno vienots skatījums uz cilvēka garīguma un cilvēka attiecību, emociju un iztēles aspektiem, kurus Apgaismība savā laikā pasludināja par neatkarīgiem no bibliskās garīgo procesu izpratnes. Kristietība pēc būtības ir saistīta ar *totus homo*, tātad ar “visu cilvēka personu”, ne tikai ar tā saprātu. Te parādās nepieciešamība saglabāt biblisku izpratni par cilvēka dabu visās kristīgās un arī profesionālās dzīves izpausmēs. Latvijas Kristīgās akadēmijas mērķis līdz ar to ir atjaunot šo evaņģēlisko mantojumu, ko aplāpēja ne tikai Apgaismība, bet arī komunisma ateistiskā ideoloģija.

Pēdējā raksta nodaļā ir aprakstīts termins *paideia*, kurš parādās kā trešais komponents grieķu terminā en-ciklo-*paideia*, kas savukārt apzīmē pilnu apmācības ciklu, nevis tikai alfabētiskā kārtībā sakārtotus šķirklus un tēmas, jo termins *paideia* nozīmē *skološanu*, *kultūras apguvi* un *rakstura veidošanu*. Antīkajā pasaulē tas bija saistīts ar cilvēka gara, rakstura un prāta veidošanu un attīstīšanu, padziļinot cilvēka ticību, lai viņš būtu labāk sagatavots dzīvot un pastāvēt attiecībās ar sabiedrību. Deivids Kelsijs (*David Kelsey*) iezīmē īsu *paideia* vēsturi un apgalvo, ka *paideia* bija modelis, kuru hellēniskajā kultūrā lietoja pirmās draudzes ārpus Palestīnas. Agrīnie kristieši apguva gan *paideia* praksi, gan literatūru par *paideia*. Sākot jau no 2. gadsimta, kristietība ir izprasta kā cilvēka dzīves “veidošana”, par pamatu ņemot *paideia* izglītības modeli, un ideja par to, ka kristietība ir sava veida *paideia*, ir tik dziļi iesakņojusies visās kristietības pamatnostādnēs, ka abi jēdzieni ir kļuvuši nesaraujami.

Raksta noslēgumā tiek citēti autori, kuri runā par Bībeli kā pirmavotu, meklējot principus, kuri palīdzētu pārskatīt teoloģiskās izglītības kontekstus un kategorijas, veidojot pamatu kristīga rakstura izveidei. Tiek vēlreiz uzsvērtā P. Palmera izpratne par daudz plašāku un tālejošāku zināšanu definīciju, proti, ja zināšanas izslēdz vai noliedz garīgo aspektu, tad šīs zināšanas, kuras atšķir mūs no dzīvniekiem, radīs pasauli, kas būs daudz mazāk cilvēcīga nekā dabiskā pasaule. Viņš proponē cita veida zināšanas, – tādas, kuras ir balstītas līdzjūtībā, žēlsirdībā un mīlestībā. Raksta autors iedrošina Latvijas Kristīgo akadēmiju piepildīt šo atbildības pilno mērķi – nest pozitīvu kristīgu ietekmi un vēsti apjukuma un nabadzības pārņemtajā pasaulē. Visiem ticīgajiem ir jāparāda sava garīgā izaugsme un Dieva mīlestība pret citiem dzīves tirgus laukumā. Autors atgādina, ka ap. Pāvils, rakstot draudzei Filipos, runāja tieši par šo atbildību, proti: “Gādājiet ar bailēm un drebēšanu, ka topat svēti, jo Dievs ir tas, kas jums dod gribu un veiksmi pēc Sava labā prāta. (...) lai jūs būtu nevainojami un šķīsti, nepejami Dieva bērni sabojātas un samaitātas paaudzes vidū, un tanī mirdzētu kā spīdekļi pasaulē” (Fil.

2:12-14). Visbeidzot autors atbild uz raksta sākumā uzdoto jautājumu – vai mēs varam nolaisties no saviem ticības “ziloņkaula torņa” augstumiem? Atbilde nav tikai – jā; autoraprāt, mums *ir* jānolaižas uz zemes, lai papildītu Kristus doto bausli, kurā Viņš pavēlēja praktiski mīlēt savu tuvāko kā sevi pašu.



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