



Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Theological Field Educators' Abstracts*. TFEA's purpose is to serve as a resource provided by Theological Field Educators for Theological Field Educators. As a professional quarterly TFEA especially seeks to serve the membership of the Association of Theological Field Educators or ATFE.

Come to each issue expecting,

- To be introduced to resources found useful by persons in Theological Field Education (and in some cases how the reviewers use them and in what courses).
- To find resources that reflect the wide range of disciplines from which Theological Field Educators are compelled to draw.
- To be enriched from the ecumenical perspective offered in the diversity of books and journal articles that are abstracted.
- To find a place to contribute professionally by submitting abstracts of works that you have found especially helpful in your context.

In regard to that final note, your contribution would be particularly welcome. We propose that the majority of abstracts in the next two years be devoted to *mapping* the present terrain of theological field education by publishing abstracts of print resources used by theological field educators. A number of examples are given among the abstracts in this issue. Contributions should be approximately 200 words in length and sent to matt.floding@westernsem.org. The editorial board reserves the right to select and edit contributions to be published.

We would also like to see standard and historically significant works included during this time period so that new colleagues may quickly find themselves up to speed by virtue of being introduced to proven resources and gaining a sense of the larger conversation as it has evolved in theological field education. An annual index will be published and printable copies of past issues of TFEA will be archived at www.westernsem.org

Thank you for participating in this web of online information sharing. Please encourage others in our field to join us.

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Supervision of Ministry Students by Regina Coll, C.S.J., Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992. 128 pages. ISBN 0-8146-2040-X

Coll's book is a resource for new field supervisors of students preparing for vocational ministry in parish and non-parish settings. The author contends that theological reflection is at the heart of field education and is a discipline through which the supervisor helps the student to learn to do theology. The specific roles of the supervisor are explained as helping to develop ministerial skills, formulation of a ministerial identity and integrating academic theory with pastoral practice. Coll argues that while seven distinct modes of supervision exist, all supervisor-mentor relationships must move towards a resource or consultative mode. As a resource, the supervisor assists in reflection and identification of resources. In the latter, the student identifies issues and concerns while the supervisor confronts and challenges the student in order to facilitate further insight. Supervision is not a footnote to ministry; supervisors are encouraged to view their role as directly contributing to the coming reign of God. A supervisor, as one working toward their own obsolescence, must also understand the he or she is an educator among equals who helps students move themselves towards greater independence, intentionality and responsibility. Following Paulo Freire, Coll advocates "problem-posing education," an approach that understands crises as opportunities for transformation. Transformation becomes possible as supervisor and students engage in critical thinking. Three methods of critical reflection, Shared Christian Praxis, the Pastoral Circle, and the Tripolar Model are discussed and promoted as means of involving the student in this dialogical-relational dynamic. Contracts, journals, case studies and evaluations ("supervisory artifacts") are explained in light of their potential to benefit the student. These provide the substance of the supervisory session and help surface themes for theological reflection. Coll advocates several models of reflection and insists upon the fact that "theological reflection constitutes supervision, it is not an extra added attraction that may be ignored. It is the very heart of the supervisory relationship" (109).

Kent A. Eaton

Let Ministry Teach, A Guide to Theological Reflection by Robert L. Kinast, Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996. 200 pages. ISBN: 0-8146-2374-3

Based on the process thought of A. N. Whitehead, Kinast defines theological reflection as "learning from one's experience." The goal of this reflection is to facilitate and participate in the creative purpose of God as he "lures creation toward qualitatively new experiences" (92). Reflection is *theological* in that it seeks a "word from God," "a word about God", or a "word to God." The one reflecting thinks broadly with God in order to discern and participate alongside God in future events. The source of the reflection should be events that are specific, current and personal, and substantive. Following the event

selection, the next step is the description of the significant event, preferably in a group context. The description, which centers on the where, when and how, can be presented in the form of a verbatim, case study, critical incident, role play, interview, or journal. The theologian proceeds to relive the event with the goal of relating it to other experiences and reflections. The process allows harmony and truth to emerge. As one formulates the theological meaning of an experience, the process is complete when the learning is incorporated into one's life on at least three levels—personal, ministerial and theological. The result is that the practitioner will be guided by praxis (enacted reflection) rather than by impulse or habit. This application results in the realignment of one's theology as "dogmatic formulations are in a constant state of development" (121). Theological growth occurs in tandem with empirical experience. As experience is understood, it can lead to a novel interpretation of theological reality.

Kent A. Eaton

The Soul of Ministry: Forming Leaders for God's People by Ray S. Anderson. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997. 269 pages. ISBN 0-664257-44-5

A considerable number of resources for the discipline of Theological Field Education focus on the formation of ministry skills. An accompanying and growing body of literature is devoted to theological reflection upon the practice of those skills. Ray S. Anderson's *The Soul of Ministry: Forming Leaders for God's People* offers a theological foundation for both the formation of ministry skills and the work of theological reflection upon those skills. *The Soul of Ministry* takes the Exodus as the theological beginning point for both the knowledge of God and the practice of ministry. God's name, God's saving purposes, and God's compassionate, active nature are all revealed through the mighty events of the Exodus. Just as God's nature and purpose are made known through God's ministry, so are they revealed through the ministry of God's people. Trinitarian in nature, *The Soul of Ministry* gives equal attention to the ministry of God in covenant and creation, the ministry of Jesus on behalf of the world, the ministry of the Spirit through Jesus, and the church's ministry to the world. The pastoral implications are always explicit: every act of ministry reveals something about God. Rooted in Scriptural case studies, permeated with classroom conversations, *The Soul of Ministry* is a rich resource for the development of a working theology of ministry.

Barbara Mutch

What are They Saying About Theological Reflection? by Robert L. Kinast, New York: Paulist Press, 2000. 94 pages. ISBN 0-8091396-85

Theological reflection is a distinct form of theologizing. Its primary method is to focus upon lived experiences as much as classic texts. Furthermore, it aims toward practical action rather than theoretical ideas. A threefold movement marks theological reflection: beginning with the lived experience of the reflectors, and correlating this experience with classical Christian sources; it draws out practical implications for Christian living. Five unique styles well illustrate the diversity within theological reflection. 1) A ministerial model is based upon the work of James and Evelyn Whitehead. This method employs three stages: listening, engaging material and pastoral responding. 2) A spiritual wisdom model is based upon the work of Thomas Groome, Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer. This method is rooted in the life experience of believing people. This method is particularly cognizant of the mutual influence of experience and belief upon one another. 3) A feminist model is founded in the work of Feminist theologians such as Mary Daly, Rosemary Radford Ruether and Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza. This method recognizes the marginalization of women, the necessary critique of traditions and a new retrieval and reinterpretation. 4) An inculturation model is based upon the work of Robert Schreiter. This method has been associated with the tasks of mission and evangelism. It emphasizes the differences between cultures and insists upon the importance of local theologies. 5) Finally, a practical model is based upon the work of Don Browning. This method reflects upon current praxis and concentrates upon faith communities and their relationship to the larger society.

Philip Jamieson

From Brokenness to Community by Jean Vanier, New York and Mahwah, NY.: Paulist Press, 1992. 52 pages. ISBN 0-8091-3341-5

"In some ways it seems very strange, even absurd that I should be with you all here today in Harvard. I've come to you from L'Arche, where I have been living for the last twenty-six years with men and women who have mental disabilities." With these words Jean Vanier begins his Wit lectures at Harvard Divinity School. Speaking as a Christian, Vanier identifies three calls. First, [Jesus] calls each one he meets into a personal, intimate relationship with himself" (10). Second, "Jesus calls his friends into community with others who have been chosen for the same path. This is where the problems begin" (10)! Third, "Jesus says to his followers: 'Now go! Go out to the world and bring the good news to others; do not keep it for yourselves" (11).

Vanier organizes his lectures largely around the second call—community. "Community is a place of conflict: conflict inside each one of us" (30). He weaves together experiences of L'Arche community members, his own

autobiography and the lessons he learns about pain, brokenness, forgiveness and beauty to urge readers toward true community. "Communion means accepting people just as they are, with all their limits and inner pain, but also with their gifts and their beauty and their capacity to grow: to see the beauty inside all of the pain" (16).

I use this book in a first year course that introduces the discipline of spiritual autobiography. Vanier's "calls" provide a framework which give students permission to begin to share their own stories—the true and the false, the noble and the ignoble, the beautiful and the less so.

Matthew Floding

Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the voice of vocation by Palmer, Parker J., San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000. 117 pages. ISBN 0-7879475-50

"Vocation is not a goal to be achieved but a gift to be received." So opens Parker Palmer's collection of essays entitled *Let Your Life Speak*. These essays have all been previously and separately published, but they have been reworked and gathered together into this one volume for the purpose of consideration of the topic of vocation. I can see this book being a helpful tool for theological students and others in the process of vocational discernment. Palmer shares out of his own experience as well as his deep reflection on that experience, writing with both humility and authority.

Because so much of the work of discernment takes place internally, it comes as no surprise that an important theme is the development of the skills needed for interior work. "Those of us who readily embrace leadership, especially public leadership, tend toward extroversion, which often means ignoring what is happening inside ourselves...Leaders need not only technical skills to manage the external world but also the spiritual skills to journey inward toward the source of both shadow and light" (79). This book would be a valuable companion on that inward journey that provides the easily overlooked foundation for the outward journey of leadership and service.

Barbara Mutch

The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis by Ray S. Anderson, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001. 342 pages. ISBN 0-8308-1559-7

Intended as a primer in practical theology, this book makes a clear distinction between dogmatic theology which is grounded primarily in theory and practical theology which is grounded in praxis. One of the underlying

premises of this book is that practical theology is both an ecclesial and missiological discipline in that its focus is on the praxis of the church as it interacts with the praxis of the world. The christological and trinitarian basis for ministry links the church and the theological seminary in a mutual commitment to learning and healing. This book is divided into three sections. Part I defines the shape of practical theology as an authentic theological enterprise. The practice of ministry is intrinsically a theological activity, which is both exegetical and experiential. Part II demonstrates the praxis of practical theology as critical engagement with the interface between word of God and work of God. Part III offers some essays on practical pastoral theology from the perspective of those who are in ministry. The last chapter of the book is addressed to theological educators. Anderson calls into question the traditional theological curriculum of systematic, biblical and historical theology in favour of a multiplex theological curriculum with mission theology as its integrating force.

Lorraine Ste.-Marie

Shared Wisdom: A Guide to Case Study Reflection in Ministry by Jeffrey H. Mahan, Barbara B. Troxell and Carol J. Allen, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993. 142 pages. ISBN 0-687-38335-8

The purpose of this book is to offer “an invitation to those involved in ministry--whether in congregations or in specialized settings--to engage in a process of reflection on their practice of ministry” (12). That ‘process’ is a case study approach, which facilitates the sharing of wisdom. One Biblical example of the sharing of wisdom is the story of David and Nathan (II Samuel 12). This illustrates how the sharing of cases allows others to recognize the truth of their actions. Such a case study method allows us “to see clearly our behavior and its implications” (22).

The remainder of the book describes the seven-step process for the sharing of case studies. The seven steps are:

1. Sharing the Case Aloud
2. Clarifying the Information--No analysis is yet present, only fact-finding questions.
3. Sharing Personal Wisdom--While the presenter remains silent, the listeners speak of how the case relates to their own experience.
4. Pooling Professional and Educational Wisdom--Pooled wisdom is focused in order that it be most helpful.
5. Claiming the Wisdom of the People of God--The wider community is invoked through bringing to bear Biblical and traditional points of reference.
6. Reflecting on the Presenter’s Ministry--Here the reflection turns to the performance of the presenter. What has been done well? What needs further attention?

7. Evaluating the Process--Here the presenter returns to the conversation in order to comment upon what has been learned.

Finally, four appendices are included. These are the writing and facilitating of cases, examples of alternative settings for case studies, and a list of resources for further study.

Philip Jamieson

Spiritual Assessment in Pastoral Care: A Guide to Selected Resources by George Fitchett, JPCP Monograph No. 4. Decatur, GA: Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, Inc., 1993. 38 pages. ISBN 0-929670-07-8

In this slim monograph of 38 pages, Fitchett introduces readers to the wide and deep conversation of spiritual assessment in pastoral care. Beginning with Anton Boisen's historical model, Fitchett "review[s] twenty eight models for spiritual assessment, describing the major features of each and assessing its strengths and weaknesses" (2). He helpfully defines terms and describes his guidelines for evaluating models of spiritual assessment. Fitchett identifies the important models of Paul Prusyer (*Minister as Diagnostician*), Edgar Draper (*Psychiatry and Pastoral Care*), Richard Fowler (*Faith Development and Pastoral Care*) and others derived from their models. One gains a sense of the "conversation" that has taken place between these assessment models as they have been adapted in a variety of settings over the past few decades. Therein lies an additional helpful benefit of this bibliographical work. Fitchett also provides reviews of models applied in specialized ministries like Hospice and in Nursing. The purpose of spiritual assessment is underscored throughout, namely, to inform empathic pastoral practice.

Matthew Floding

Bobos in Paradise by David Brooks, New York, NY, Touchstone Publishers, 2000. 288 pages. ISBN 0-6848537-87

This isn't a book about the eschatological vision of clowns. In David Brook's shorthand, "Bobos" are "Bourgeois Bohemians." The intellectuals who, in the 1960s were the hippie radicals who fought the "Establishment," and the intellectuals who, in the 1980s were the rising entrepreneurs of a new economic age, have, in the present, been melded into a new group who has tried to maintain the values of each age. These are the Bourgeois Bohemians. In many cases, they are us. David Brooks calls this book a work of "comic sociology." I call it a helpful window into our post-modern world. It's an insightful, engaging analysis of our culture and an entertaining explanation of how the hippie can drive a BMW. *Bobos in Paradise* helps us get a handle on

the values of our dot com culture and helps us to reflect theologically on the Kingdom and our present culture. Says Brooks:

Marx once wrote that the bourgeois takes all that is sacred and makes it profane. The Bobos take everything that is profane and make it sacred. We take the quintessential bourgeois activity, shopping, and turn it into quintessential bohemian activities: art, philosophy, social action. Bobos possess the Midas touch in reverse. Everything we handle turns into soul (102).

I use *Bobos in Paradise* in our Ministerium, the small group class that hopes to help students integrate the classroom with the church and academics with experience.

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