

## College Theology in Historical Perspective

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The discipline of college theology is badly in need of historical examination and analysis. What I present here is a brief and tentative historical overview of the aims of college theology.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the idea of a theology course designed specifically for college students was entirely new—having no historical precedents either in European or American Catholic higher education. And, there were only a few American Catholic pioneers, as far as I know, who saw that undergraduate theology must be different from catechesis as well as from seminary or university theology.

College theology emerged very slowly in the twentieth century; in fact, more slowly than any other college discipline. At the beginning of the twentieth century there were no departments of religion or theology, no full-time teachers who were specifically and exclusively assigned to teach religion, no budgets, no credit-hour courses, and no definition of how theology or religion fit into the academic curriculum. College theology, moreover, was the last of the college disciplines to develop its own national professional organization (the Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine which was established in 1954, predecessor of the College Theology Society).

By the 1920s most Catholic colleges had separated high school students from the collegiate program, adopted the American departmental system of college education, and instituted the credit-hour system as a means of measuring qualifications for graduation. By the 1930s some colleges began to organize departments of religion or theology, but still there were no full-time teachers of religion in most places and there were no university or college programs devoted to the education of college teachers of religion. Between the late 1930s and the late 1950s the discipline emerged in most colleges with orga-

nized departments, credit-hour courses required for graduation, some full-time teachers, and one or two graduate programs for the explicit teaching of theology for college teachers. The teachers, too, until the 1940s, were almost always seminary-trained priests, and after the 1940s a number of women religious. The emergence of non-religious laity as teachers was primarily, although not exclusively, a post-1960s phenomenon. It was a hard-won battle to define the discipline, to relate it to other disciplines, to get it accredited, to obtain full-time teachers, and to establish the infrastructure (i.e., graduate schools) that would train future teachers.

Defining the discipline became a major problem during the twentieth century. National leaders disagreed among themselves on its nature and function. In defining the aims of the discipline they generally tried to solve specific problems and in responding to one problem they tended to create others.

In what follows I outline the struggles to define the aims of the discipline as it emerged into its present forms and I argue that the conflicting definitions of the aims must be brought into some kind of historical synthesis in the present if we are to develop an adequate approach to the discipline. Some of the defined aims of the discipline, just as some of the problems the aims were intended to solve, were time conditioned, but others are perennially significant and need in some cases to be retrieved to make the discipline true to its own integrity and to the needs of the students.

### **Emergence of College Theology as a Discipline, 1900-1939: Shields, Cooper, and Russell at the Catholic University**

College theology first emerged as a self-conscious discipline at the Catholic University of America. By a self-conscious discipline I mean an explicit attempt to separate religious instruction at the college level from religious instruction in catechetical and seminary programs—in other words, the realization that college students had specific needs that neither the catechism nor the seminary theological manuals could address appropriately. The father of the discipline in this regard was John Montgomery Cooper (1881-1949), a priest of the diocese of Washington, D.C., a faculty member at the Catholic University of America, and the founder of the department of religion for undergraduates at the Catholic University.<sup>2</sup> To understand Cooper's perspective on college theology it is necessary to examine something of the intel-



lectual context at the Catholic University, the innovative leader in Catholic higher education for the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup>

To understand Cooper's definitions of the aims of college theology one needs to understand what Edward Aloysius Pace (1861-1938) and especially Thomas Edward Shields (1862-1921) were trying to do at the Catholic University during the progressive era of American history. Cooper was a direct intellectual descendant of these two priest-professors. Both men were progressives; both were influenced by the inductive scientific method; both had studied the new science of empirical psychology after their seminary and theological education—Pace under Wilhelm Wundt at Leipzig, and Shields at the new graduate school of Johns Hopkins University (where John Dewey and numerous other leaders of progressive education had studied in the late nineteenth century).

From 1902 until 1921, Shields and Pace established a School of Education at the Catholic University, a College for Sisters teaching in the Catholic schools, and, more important for our purposes, developed a rationale for religious education at the primary and secondary levels of education that had implications for college theology as well. Shields's view of religious education is particularly important because Cooper considered Shields's philosophy to be a creative and justified alternative to the current forms of religious education (i.e., those based upon the *Baltimore Catechism*).<sup>4</sup>

Shields represents a continuing influence of Americanist and quasi-modernist ideas in the post-*Pascendi* period—demonstrating, to some extent, that *Testem Benevolentiae* and *Pascendi* did not universally stamp out the Americanist and modernist tendencies as many historians have argued. Shields and some of his successors at the Catholic University had a progressive-era confidence in empirical science and scientific method and he was very much in dialogue with modern psychology and progressive education.

Hired to teach biology at the Catholic University, Shields's interest soon turned to the problems of education and the philosophy of education. Like some other progressive-era representatives (such as John Dewey), Shields tried to create a synthesis between the findings of empirical psychology and a philosophy of education. Unlike the secular progressives, however, he brought the methods of the progressive education movement into communion with his Catholic understanding of human nature and destiny.

According to Shields, the discoveries of modern science, particu-

larly in biology and psychology, brought to light the pedagogical principles of Jesus as revealed in the Gospels and as applied by the church in her liturgical and educational activities for 2000 years. The new discoveries in psychology and biology brought to light the laws that governed the mind and its development, laws that would help Catholics recover their own tradition in teaching.

Modern psychologists, he argued, had uncovered what the church had known instinctively but had failed to put into practice in the classrooms and in the teaching of the catechism since the Protestant Reformation. Psychology had pointed out that

a conscious content strictly confined to the intellect lacks vitality and power of achievement. Every impression tends by its very nature to flow out in expression, and the intellectual content that is isolated from effective consciousness will be found lacking in dynamo-genetic content because it has failed to become structural in the mind and remains external thereto. From the evidence in this field, we may safely formulate as a fundamental educative principle: the presence in consciousness of appropriate feeling is indispensable to mental assimilation.<sup>5</sup>

Modern biology and the doctrine of evolution, Shields held, had also given the method of correlation in teaching a new meaning. Correlation demanded that "each new thought element be related to the previous content of the mind not along structural lines alone, but in a relationship of reciprocal activity." According to empirical evidence, the mind was developed "by each new truth that functions in it, whereas those truths that are not functional, however valuable they may be to the adult, impede development and menace the health of the child's mind."<sup>6</sup> Correlation meant that the teachers should try to accomplish three things in religious education: (1) integrate what was taught with the pupil's need, capacity, and stage of development; (2) do so in such a way that what was taught interlocked with what the pupil already knew, felt, and sensed; like Jesus, the teacher must use the concrete (e.g., parables, stories, action lessons) to communicate to the whole person; (3) couple what the pupil was learning in other subjects with what the pupil was learning in religion. To be taught effectively, religion "must be interwoven with every item of knowledge presented to the child and it must be the animating principle of every precept which he is taught to obey."<sup>7</sup>



Modern psychology also emphasized that learning was an organic communal activity, one not confined to the classroom. In practice, the church, too, had accentuated the same organic approach to learning, but it had not done so self-consciously in the past. Shields was trying to make Catholics self-consciously aware of the multiple avenues to learning that were an inherent part of the church's past practices—practices, he believed, that had been forgotten in the church's present educational arrangements. The church's teaching had been organic, teaching formally through her councils and dogmatic definitions, but also through the lives and example of the saints, art and music, liturgical forms and sacraments, and through her schools.<sup>8</sup>

For modern psychology as for the church, moreover, learning was a holistic experience. The church appealed to the

whole man: his intellect, his will, his emotions, his senses, his imagination, his aesthetic sensibilities, his memory, his muscles, and his powers of expression. She neglects nothing in him: she lifts up his whole being and strengthens and cultivates all his faculties in their interdependence.<sup>9</sup>

And this approach was also democratic; it appealed to all, the young and the old, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. The church, too, knew instinctively that human beings learn not just by listening but also by doing. The whole person, mind and body, became involved in the learning process. This was particularly evident in the liturgical drama when one became a living, moving part of it by song and prayer, by genuflection and posture, entering into the liturgical action, which "in its totality, shows forth the divine constitution of human society by which man is made to cooperate with his fellow-man in fulfilling the destiny of the individual and of society."<sup>10</sup>

Shields's approach to the teaching of religion was functional and practical. Religious educators had to make "the saving truths of religion functional in the minds and hearts of the pupils." The "only legitimate criteria of the truths" to be presented to the mind were the "need and capacity of the developing mind." Even Christ did not present his followers with the mysteries of his kingdom in abstract formulations that could be committed to memory.<sup>11</sup> For Christ, according to Shields, truth was of its very nature functional and practical.<sup>12</sup> The aim in teaching religion, therefore, must be to affect the whole person and to move the person, according to the person's capacity, to Chris-

tian living and virtue. This moral and functional aim of education would be the hallmark of undergraduate education at the Catholic University for almost fifty years.

Shields faced two major problems in advocating and implementing his new methods and approaches to religious education. One problem was opposition from some Catholics like the San Francisco priest and educator Peter Yorke who found Shields's departure from the method of recitation and memory, used in so much public and Catholic education, to be "nothing less than revolutionary."<sup>13</sup> Shields did indeed reject the exclusive use of memory because he believed that that method of education could lead to "mental parasitism," which was unfavorable to initiative and self-reliance. He believed the opposition his approach generated in Catholics was due to the fact that many Catholics were unfamiliar with the laws of biology and with the recent discoveries in developmental psychology—an ignorance that translated itself into a suspicion of the unknown, the unfamiliar, and the modern. Changing current Catholic practices, moreover, threatened the Catholic educators' routines.

The second problem stemmed from the contemporary secular progressive educators (people like G. Stanley Hall and John Dewey) who used the new scientific discoveries to develop naturalistic or materialistic philosophies of education. Differing radically from the modern educators in his view of human nature and destiny, he could not accept, for example, Dewey's view that "apart from participation in social life, the school has no moral end nor aim."<sup>14</sup> The ultimate aim of education, democratic as it had to be, could not be simply training for good citizenship or for the betterment of a democratic society. Beyond these aims, which were good in themselves, the ultimate value and aim of education was the development of moral virtue and Christian character, and the salvation of the human being's soul.

Shields set the stage for the development of college theology during the first fifty years of the twentieth century at the Catholic University. His principles and methods of religious education, geared toward primary education in particular, were part of the background for the development of a philosophy of undergraduate theological education. Like many progressives, he believed that religious education or theological education had to be organic, holistic, functional, and ultimately aimed at the development of Christian character. To some extent his views of education were non-scholastic and anti-intellectualistic (and anti-scientific).



John Montgomery Cooper followed in Shields's progressive path by developing a philosophy of undergraduate theology at the Catholic University from 1909 until his death in 1949. At the beginning of his career as a part-time teacher at the Catholic University, Cooper tried to use watered-down seminary manuals to teach theology to undergraduates. This approach, he soon discovered, did not work because it was dry, intellectualistic, and did not meet the students' questions, their needs, or their capacities.

His experience in the classroom led him to create a new, self-conscious alternative to the scholastic form of theological education.<sup>15</sup> The new undergraduate discipline he called religion, rather than theology, in order to distinguish clearly what he was doing at the college level from what was done in the seminaries and in contemporary catechesis. Theology for him meant the post-Vatican I manual theology that was taught in the seminaries and that had become institutionalized in the *Baltimore Catechism*. The theology of the Latin manuals was individualistic, intellectualistic, and separated from the devotional and liturgical life of the church. Manual theology, moreover, was intended for priests. Written in Latin, the manuals themselves were meant for general situations in the universal church; they were not applicable (particularly in moral theology) for the specific conditions in the United States and thus were irrelevant to students' lives. Theology, furthermore, had become so compartmentalized (into dogmatic, moral, ascetical, and mystical) since the scholastic era that it no longer functioned as the life-giving discipline it had been during the age of the fathers. Scholastic moral and dogmatic theology in particular had become strictly a technical intellectual discipline. Its "dominant spirit is not parenetic or devotional, but didactic, dialectic, apologetic, speculative."<sup>16</sup> The discipline he called religion was "a revival of theology's better, pre-manual days."<sup>17</sup>

College religion was an academic discipline, in other words, "the science or discipline whose subject matter is drawn from the entire range of Catholic teaching." It tried to integrate, in a way the manuals did not, the church's devotional and liturgical life with doctrinal teachings in such a way that the student could see the implications for loving God and neighbor, the ultimate aim of all Christian education according to Augustine and many of the other church fathers. In a word, religion was a "life-oriented theology."<sup>18</sup> The goal of a religion course was not predominantly intellectualistic. Its purpose was indeed to inform, but also to appeal to the senses, stir the imagination, warm the

heart, and educate by focusing upon the students' emotional and psychological needs and capacities.

Cooper was more Augustinian than neo-scholastic in his approach to college theology. For him the "attainment of truth is preliminary to and preparatory for the attainment of love."<sup>19</sup> Love should be the supreme and crowning achievement of Catholic education. In aiming to achieve this goal religion should appeal to the students' individual needs and capacities but it must also prepare students for the social dimensions of their life in the world. For him love of God and neighbor was social.

The religion course was student-oriented—focused upon character development and correlated with students' experiences—but he noted that it should also be integrally related with other subjects in the college curriculum. Most college religion courses, he asserted, were divorced from other disciplines. He pleaded that they be integrated in particular with the social sciences (especially psychology and sociology). The problem (still with us I might add) was that very little was being done to correlate what students were learning in one discipline with what they were learning in another. The task of correlation and integration, however, was difficult, arduous, and indeed baffling especially under the departmentalized system of college education. Students, however, needed to correlate what they learned in religion with what they learned in the social sciences in order to understand themselves and their society. The new social sciences, he asserted, could indeed help students to understand what it meant concretely to love God, self, and neighbor in the modern world.<sup>20</sup>

The religion course could not do everything that a seminary or graduate course in theology might attempt to do. There was only so much time in the curriculum for religion.<sup>21</sup> A college religion course, therefore, had to be an integrated program that focused on essentials.

Cooper organized the religion course content around what he considered the essentials of religion: code, creed, and cult—in that order. An integrated college curriculum in religion should be organized in such a way that students are first presented with the ideal moral life, then the motives for accepting it, and finally the means for living it. Thus, the college courses should deal with morality, Christian dogmas (i.e., motives), and the sacraments and liturgy (i.e., means) as the essentials of the Christian and Catholic tradition. The final year of college religion then should be given over to what Cooper called life-problems (i.e., the religious and moral dimensions, for example, of marriage, poverty, a living wage, leisure and play,



international justice, and racism in American society).

Religion for him was primarily moral and, therefore, most of the college curriculum should be focused on the moral issues of the day. The study of Christian dogmas supplied students with the motivation they needed to live morally. In order to become meaningful and motivating forces for undergraduates the Christian dogmas needed to be studied in their dynamic and functional aspects. For Cooper "we may have a functional theology as we have a functional psychology." It was more important to know what dogmas do than what they are. Divine revelation "utilizes and builds upon human instinctive driving forces" and so should the teacher in using the church's dogmas. "Dogmas furnish a motive power, a driving force, a dynamic motivation, which impels us to live up faithfully to our Catholic ideal of life." For Cooper "it is not always the intellectual precision of thought so much as the vivid and vital effective grasp of the nuclear and peri-nuclear truths that gives the real dogmatic motive for conduct."<sup>22</sup> By 1939 Cooper was calling for a new field of theological research that he called "dynamic theology." This new field would examine the "motivating function of dogmas." "We have," he asserted, "libraries of books on what dogmas are, practically nothing theologically thorough and scientific on what they do."<sup>23</sup> This functional and pragmatic approach to doctrine (and truth), which reflected a continuity with earlier modernist themes and with the progressive education movement, clearly separated Cooper from the neo-scholastic approach to doctrine.

Cooper's approach to religion at the college level was in emphasis moral, pragmatic (action-oriented), functional, integrative, student-oriented, and focused upon the pre-scholastic forms of theological reflection. By the end of his teaching career he had become a forceful advocate for a return to the theology of the fathers, which for him was more spiritually and intellectually organic than what had developed since the scholastic era; and it was much more life-oriented than scholastic theology. He saw his own movement as a recovery and a restoration of theology in a new mode, but, given the reigning neo-scholastic view of theology, he called what he was doing religion and not theology.

William H. Russell (1895-1952), a priest of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, joined Cooper at the Catholic University in 1931 and until his death in 1952 he fostered the Cooper approach to theological education at the college level. Russell, however, modified Cooper's approach and changed Cooper's order of presentation. Rather than code,

creed, cult, he preferred creed, cult, code. What this meant was that students were introduced first to the person of Christ (creed, he called his approach "Christocentric") and to the whole Christ (*totus Christus*) in the Mystical Body and in liturgical worship (cult) before they were introduced to the moral activity that should flow from such an understanding. And, the way to introduce students to the person of Christ was to introduce them to the gospels and the gospel stories, which would lead them to an identification with and appreciation of Christ's humanity and through his humanity to the divinity of Christ. What students needed to know was a person, not an abstract truth or dogma.

Much more than Cooper, Russell emphasized the centrality of the Bible (especially the New Testament) in the formation of Christian character, the aim of all Christian education—an aim that was congruent with the aims of progressive education. Russell, too, saw this emphasis as a recovery of the Catholic tradition that had become increasingly obscured since the rise of scholastic theology.

Russell's dissertation, published in 1934 as *The Bible and Character*,<sup>24</sup> was an historical overview of the use of the Bible in Christian education from the early church to the 1930s. He argued there for a recovery of "Bible reading" as an essential part of Christian education. Since the rise of scholasticism, and particularly since the Protestant Reformation, he argued, the use of Bible reading for Christian formation and theology had receded into the background. In the scholastic era the Bible became one of the elements in the disputed questions, and since the sixteenth century Catholics had used the Bible primarily as proof texts to resolve religious controversies with Protestants. "Actually, during this period the Bible was used by Catholics in a formative manner less than in any other period of history."<sup>25</sup> Russell wanted to revive Bible reading as the fathers and the monks read it—as a means of forming the Christian mind and heart. He called for an approach that would appeal to the ordinary reader who did not need "specialist equipment" in order to appreciate the moral and religious values in the Bible. For him the ultimate test for an authentic reading of the Bible was the Augustinian test: the increase of love of God and neighbor.

The Scriptures, he argued, "are a narrative record of God's revelation to man and of a plan for man. The Scriptures are story, drama, life, poetry, warning, heart-rending appeal, tales of sin and of spiritual heroism. Scripture is a personal, human-interest document. It is religion seen in the concrete."<sup>26</sup> A narrative approach to Bible reading



similar to the method the fathers used, Russell maintained, should produce "a spiritual delight that pervades the whole personality of the reader." The object sought in Bible reading is the person of Christ, and the appeal of the person of Christ produces "a coordinate development of all the faculties of the individual—the intellect, the will and the emotions."<sup>27</sup> Such an approach to Bible reading, moreover, was democratic; all were capable of reading it in this way.

The English term Bible "reading," according to Russell, could not translate what the monks meant by *lectio divina*. The Latin *lectio* meant an earnest and deep study, but more importantly an affective and devotional reading that aroused the reader to a love of God.<sup>28</sup> *Lectio* implied study and resolution, but it was an intellectual grasp that was intended to generate love. It was formational more than merely informational. For the monks, the Bible was a *speculum*, a mirror. "The Bible was considered to be a book that would reveal the individual to himself and bring him to an understanding of his own problems." Gregory the Great clearly articulated this perspective when he wrote: "Sacred Scripture is put before the eyes of our mind as a sort of mirror that our internal face may be seen in it."<sup>29</sup>

The average Catholic (at least those who could read) in the Middle Ages "did not read Scripture to learn what to believe; he did read it to learn what to do." This spiritual and moral reading of the Scripture, however, need not condemn nor deny the value of contemporary scientific biblical scholarship. The prayerful reading of the Bible is not an "emotionalized religious experience," but a holistic spiritual orientation that is open to the scientific study of the Bible and that seeks such learning ultimately for the sake of love. Such an approach to Bible reading is more synthetic than analytic, but it uses the analytic to reach a synthetic understanding of the Christ to whom the Bible points.<sup>30</sup>

Russell's approach to college-level religious instruction was an American-style *ressourcement* tradition, precipitated to some extent by the experience of teaching, the progressive education movement, and the insights of functional or affective psychology. He wanted to return education to the earlier tradition of the fathers and the monks because such an education, he believed, was psychologically and pedagogically sounder than the scholastic and manual approach to abstract truth. And, the Bible was concrete, not abstract. Christ himself taught "virtue from life-situations; He went from the concrete to abstract."<sup>31</sup>

This American-style return to the sources was clearly voluntaristic

in intention and orientation. College religion, Russell repeatedly asserted, should focus on the "desirability of God" and not just on the knowledge of God. The emphasis was placed upon the affective not the cognitive psychology of the student. For Russell, such an emphasis was rightly placed because, in his experience, most students were not intellectual and he believed that it was his aim as a teacher to reach all students. Even those 20 percent or so who had intellectual interests would be reached by this approach.<sup>32</sup>

The return to the Bible in college education was not for Russell simply an attempt to retrieve the past. It was clearly oriented to the needs of his American students. Like Christ, the teacher must correlate religion with real life situations. The teacher cannot live in the past. "The teacher must tie up religion with the familiar things of American background. . . . Sympathy with, and understanding of, all that is good in American life must needs be a trait of the teacher of religion if he is effectually to correlate modern life with God's plan of life." This meant that the religion teacher must indeed be familiar not only with American athletics, music, and culture, but also with contemporary science and other disciplines in the college.<sup>33</sup> Like Archbishop Ireland, whom he invoked favorably, Russell believed that it was better to know the twentieth century than the thirteenth if the teacher was to prepare students to live and struggle with present modes of thought that affect American students. Christo-Centrism was an effort to meet conditions peculiar to American circumstances.<sup>34</sup>

By 1952, the time of Russell's death, the religion program for undergraduates at the Catholic University had developed into a unique discipline that was self-consciously innovative, non-scholastic, voluntaristic, pragmatic and moral, student-centered, life-oriented, and Americanist. It was also an American-style *ressourcement* tradition that had some influence upon the development of college theology. How extensively the Catholic University program was used in American colleges, however, needs much further study.

### The Manual-Catechetical Tradition in College Theology

It is clear that the religion program at the Catholic University in the early twentieth century was unique. A brief comparison to the religion program at Marquette University, which I believe was probably much more typical of what was happening in other Catholic colleges, points out just how innovative the Catholic University program was.



Marquette was established in 1881 and Jesuits taught religion to all Catholic students from the beginning. But, unlike the Catholic University, there was no specific department of religion until 1930, no full-time professors until the 1940s, no secretaries, no office, and no budget until the 1950s. Religion was taught part-time by Jesuits who were primarily assigned to other teaching responsibilities in the college. The college curriculum in religion consisted of courses called "Christian Doctrine" or "Evidences of Religion." The texts used were post-Vatican I abridged seminary manuals or adult level catechisms (such as Wilhelm Wilmer's *Handbook of the Christian Religion* or Joseph Deharbe's *A Complete Catechism of the Catholic Religion*) that focused on apologetics, dogma, and Christian morality. From 1881 to 1952 (when the department changed its name from Religion to Theology) there appears to have been little systematic reflection on the religion program and few signs that the Jesuits teaching in the program were even aware of the discussions on undergraduate religion that were going on at the Catholic University and other places prior to 1952. Religion at Marquette was languid as a specific college discipline, and Marquette was perhaps representative of the discipline in much of the United States. What had developed at the Catholic University was creative in comparison.

#### Battles over College Theology: 1939 to 1957

Marquette and most other Catholic colleges and universities in the nation were awakened to systematic reflection upon the undergraduate discipline by a 1939 National Catholic Alumni Federation symposium on "Man and Modern Secularism." That convention touched off a national debate on the nature of college theology that lasted for the next twenty years. It was clear from a number of papers delivered at the conference that there was great dissatisfaction with the discipline. Some asserted that it was not respectable in most places, that it was not given a place of prominence in the curriculum, and that many who taught were not qualified to teach. Fathers Gerald B. Phelan of the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies in Toronto, Francis J. Connell, CSSR, of Mount Saint Alphonsus, Esopus, New York (later of the Catholic University Theology Department), and John Courtney Murray, S.J., of Woodstock College agreed that current religion courses, whose sole aim apparently was to encourage students to fulfill their religious exercises, did not meet the academic aims of college education nor the

needs of the modern Christian who lived in a secular world. These three speakers agreed that college theology should be scientific and should introduce students to the lay apostolate, which their incorporation into the Mystical Body of Christ postulated—in other words, theology at the college level should be a theology for the laity.<sup>35</sup> They differed, however, on what a scientific theology for the laity meant.

By "scientific" Phelan had in mind a Thomistic-Aristotelian notion of science and theology. It was clear that for him theology was not religion. Religion appealed to the will primarily; theology appealed to the intellect, and it was knowledge not desire that was the proper aim of education. Connell agreed with Phelan's general approach but added that college theology ought to be primarily apologetic, preparing students "to discuss religious problems intelligently with others."<sup>36</sup> Murray agreed that theology needed to be scientific and that it should be oriented toward the lay apostolate and Catholic action in the world. Catholic action, however, was not a polemic against modern errors or a defense of the faith; it was the result of reflection upon the social dimension of the Christian message. Influenced to some extent by Joseph A. Jungmann, S.J., Murray held that the formal object of college theology was "the livability of the Word of God as kept and given us by the Church; in other words, that our courses in theology must be wholly orientated towards life."<sup>37</sup> Such an object, of course, was consistent with the Cooper-Russell approach, and they indeed saw Murray's view as compatible with their own kerygmatic approach even though they continued to call what they did religion and not theology.

The conference's emphasis upon scientific theology would eventually carry the day. Increasingly, as at Marquette, undergraduate departments (except at the Catholic University) changed their names from religion to theology. Those who advocated scientific theology disapproved using diluted seminary manuals in college courses and using college courses exclusively to maintain or promote religious practices.

Although all at the conference called for a movement to scientific theology for undergraduates, all did not understand the aims of the theology in the same way. Between about 1939 and 1957, there were at least three different conceptions of the primary aim of the college discipline: (1) the Thomistic approach, stressing the intellectual grasp of the faith, dominated in the Dominican schools, in some Midwestern Jesuit schools, at St. Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana (where a new graduate program in theology for women was organized in 1944),<sup>38</sup> and at a few other places where the undergraduate program



focused on the theology of Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*; (2) the Murray emphasis on the livability of the Word would be taken over by some Jesuit institutions in the East; and (3) the Cooper-Russell approach (or a modification of that approach) would continue at the Catholic University and a few other places.

For the Dominicans in particular, college theology aimed to communicate the intelligibility of the faith, and the *Summa* or some rendition of it was the most useful text for giving students an intellectual grasp of the faith. Walter Farrell's four volume *Companion to the Summa*, although not intended for college use, became a popular text for some undergraduate courses in theology. Farrell and others emphasized that the goal of undergraduate theology was the inculcation of divine wisdom, an acquired virtue that enabled students to see and interpret all things in light of the knowledge of God. Farrell and others also defended this approach to theology, particularly against the Cooper-Russell religion approach.<sup>39</sup>

The Murray approach was most fully developed in 1944 in two articles he entitled "Towards a Theology for the Layman."<sup>40</sup> These two articles, which were frequently quoted in subsequent years by his ardent followers and even by those who opposed some of his positions, focused on the finality of college theology, which he saw as the livability of the Word of God. Thus, the college course should prepare students to reflect upon Christ and the Mystical Body in ways that demonstrated the social dimensions of Christianity and the Christian responsibility to transform the world in accord with the Word.

After 1944, Murray no longer focused his work on the aims of college theology, but some East-coast Jesuits at Georgetown, Loyola of Baltimore, Fordham, and Le Moyne College created an integrated theological program that implemented his notion of the finality of a college course. The most famous of the Jesuit plans that emerged was the so-called Le Moyne Plan organized primarily by John J. Fernan, S.J., of Le Moyne College.

The fundamental purpose of the four-year Le Moyne Plan was to introduce students to their place in the divine plan of salvation. The course was thus organized around the master idea of the *totus Christus*. Fernan explained to an international audience that the program self-consciously carried the "Mystical Body from year to year" and tried to keep "a consciousness of the whole while studying the significance of the parts."<sup>41</sup> The focus of the course was upon the Bible, and primarily the New Testament, introducing students to the plan of salvation

and the doctrinal implications of that plan. The courses followed an historical and literary approach rather than a logical or ontological one. Fernan argued that theologians at Le Moyne preferred the historical and literary approach rather than the philosophical because it was better adapted to the mentality of the students who had yet to study philosophy and because speculative theology itself depended for its validity and usefulness upon the revealed historical realities. Fernan had no difficulty with using Aquinas's theology but that theology needed to be placed in an historical rather than in a purely logical setting.<sup>42</sup>

The Le Moyne Plan was followed by a number of Jesuits because they believed it fit in more with the humanistic aims of college education than with the speculative or scientific aims of the Thomistic approach to theology. Gustave Weigel and others asserted that "humanistic contemplation" was the proper approach to college theology.<sup>43</sup> College theology as humanistic contemplation sought to impart a penetrating, unified, and "abiding [Christian] vision of the meaning of life and work" in such a way that "it will make one react to all of life in a Christian fashion." Such an approach looked to action not to static truth, and reflected the Jesuit ideal of contemplative action.<sup>44</sup>

John L. McKenzie also advocated the new approach, but he believed more strongly than others in the mid-1950s that the Thomistic synthesis could not be taught at the college level. The Thomistic approach, he asserted, did not correspond to the intellectual methods of the modern world. What he found lacking in the Thomistic synthesis and in speculative theology as a whole, he wrote in 1956, "are historical and critical methods and approach. In modern education and in the modern intellectual world these have a place in the training of the educated man which they did not have in the thirteenth century; our students will meet them in their humanistic disciplines." St. Thomas's historical and critical attitude "does not meet the standards of modern historians and critics."<sup>45</sup>

The Le Moyne Plan and method certainly had its supporters, primarily among the Jesuits, but it did not achieve the goal that Murray himself had set for college theology. Murray's focus on Catholic action, although indirectly present in the biblical-historical approach at Le Moyne, was not as central as Murray himself conceived it to be. In fact, the absence of the moral dimension in the Le Moyne Plan came in for some criticism.

The Cooper-Russell approach continued at the Catholic University from 1939 into the early 1950s, but this approach was clearly



defensive, particularly after World War II when it came under mounting criticism, especially from the Thomistic school of college theology. Cooper and Russell had intended to correct weaknesses in the seminary manual approach, but in the process of doing so, some thought, they had developed a program that was without intellectual challenge or content.

Like Phelan, many criticized the Cooper-Russell approach because it tried to do what college education, by its very nature, was incapable of doing: that is, moving the will to the good. The Cooper-Russell approach was persuasion; it was, some critics charged, homiletic and catechetical more than it was academic. Theology was an intellectual discipline, an acquired virtue, and religious formation was only indirectly related to it. Roy Deferrari, graduate dean at the Catholic University of America in the 1930s and 1940s, was a constant critic of the Cooper-Russell approach because he believed they emphasized method over content and they appealed to the will, not to the intellect. Students, he asserted, complained about the lack of content in the courses. Almost every student, moreover, received a grade of "A" and was required to do little work or research outside of class—reinforcing the view that the religion approach was devotional and not rigorously academic and challenging intellectually.<sup>46</sup>

Even Gerard Sloyan, a member of the Catholic University's Cooper-Russell Department of Religion, who understood and was sympathetic with the "kerygmatic spirit" and aims of the Cooper-Russell approach criticized that approach. The Cooper-Russell approach, Sloyan argued in 1955, was "not emotion-prone or non-theological," as some unsympathetic critics charged, but its texts were outdated and its approach was geared toward a student body that was less sophisticated and less well-educated than those of the 1950s. Without subordinating truth to action, Sloyan claimed, the Cooper-Russell program used dogma "as a motivating force to virtue," but that approach tended to minimize the students' needs for solid theological education.<sup>47</sup> As we shall see, Sloyan gradually revised the Catholic University undergraduate theology program during the mid and late 1950s to include something of the old Cooper-Russell approach, the benefits of the Le Moyne Plan, and the doctrinal orientation of the Thomistic Plan (without following the ontological order so characteristic of the Thomistic approach).

The religion approach came under more severe criticisms from a few who saw in it Americanist and modernist tendencies. Joseph

Fenton, a member of the Catholic University's Theology Department, implied that the Cooper-Russell approach had leaned in the direction of Americanism by its emphasis upon the active over the passive virtues in Christ's life.<sup>48</sup> Bishop Aloisius J. Muench of Fargo saw undercurrents of modernism in the religion approach:

In discussing texts and books useful for religious instruction one hears these days again and again the phrase, "religion is something that must be lived." The meaning of it, upon further explanation, is that religion has remained too doctrinal and that dogma has sterilized human conduct. Religion has been too much a thing of the head and too little a thing of the heart. It must become a religion of personal experience. The student of modernism detects an undercurrent of modernistic theology in this conception of religion. The modernism of three decades ago clothed its subjective conception of religion in theological language; today it speaks a popular language and seeks to make religion purely a matter of personal experience.<sup>49</sup>

#### Transition to a New Era: 1957 to 1964

From the late 1950s to the end of the Second Vatican Council the discipline of college theology was in a period of transition. Although the diversity of approaches to the discipline during the previous two decades continued, a new historical-critical approach emerged. The change and transition is most clearly evident at the Catholic University under Gerard Sloyan and at Marquette University under Bernard Cooke, S.J., both of whom became heads of their departments in 1957 and 1958 respectively.

Sloyan, a product to some extent of the Cooper-Russell approach, began to push the Catholic University Department of Religious Education in a slightly new direction that combined a life-centered approach to theology and a descriptive, historical, and doctrinal approach. The new element in the transition from the Cooper-Russell approach was emphasis upon historical-critical methods and some movement toward specialization in theology. He did not criticize the formational aims of college theology, but such aims were not foremost. For him, undergraduate theology was an academic reflection upon the Christian message, starting with an historical-critical examination of the biblical record—significantly missing from this approach was Russell's



"Bible reading" Christocentrism. Although for Sloyan the Bible was the primary focus of theological education at the undergraduate level, it was not studied, as with Russell, for its explicit potential to form Christian character. It was studied phenomenologically to acquaint students with its message in its historical context. In 1960, Sloyan justified the movement toward specialization in the discipline on the grounds that students had specialized courses in their secular subjects but only generalized courses in their study of religion. He asserted that the undergraduate curriculum should continue to serve the generalized needs of young adult Christians, but it should also respond to "the needs of those who by disposition and training think critically, historically, theologically."<sup>50</sup> Specialization was necessary in theology as in the secular disciplines and the courses should reflect the increasing specialization in theology.

The emerging historical consciousness was also evident at Marquette, where Bernard Cooke began to articulate a new approach to theology in 1957. Returning from the Institut Catholique in Paris, where he was one of the first Midwestern Jesuits to be explicitly trained for college theology, he brought with him the new non-scholastic, non-manual, historical, and kerygmatic theology to which he had been introduced in Europe. He began to change both the undergraduate and graduate curriculum to reflect an historical, not an ontological or scholastic or manual-tract, approach to theological education. He wanted undergraduate as well as graduate students to become acquainted with the historical development of revelation and Christian doctrine. He arranged the curriculum so that students started with an examination of Old Testament literature and traced out the historical evolution of the religious tradition, situating the student within the historical context of a developing tradition. This was a self-conscious break with the traditional seminary division of theological courses (which ordinarily would begin with a course "De Revelatione" and another "De Ecclesia"), as he told the dean of Marquette's graduate school.<sup>51</sup> By 1964, Cooke was looking forward to the development of a new kind of theology that would be worked out according to the precise needs of college students, a theology that would be scientific, integrated, contemporary, and vital to the life of the laity.<sup>52</sup>

Before the Second Vatican Council had ended, serious questions were being raised about all past approaches to the theological education of undergraduates. The undergraduate population itself had changed significantly since the mid-1950s and students themselves

were raising new questions about the entire tradition. Brother Luke Salm, a theology professor at Manhattan College, reflected the revolutionary changes in a 1964 address to the Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine. He questioned whether any of the past approaches to theological education at the college level could be effective with the new generation of students. Neither courses in scriptural, historical, scholastic, or kerygmatic theology, he argued, would meet the needs of contemporary students. College teachers, he asserted, needed to re-do theology in terms of a balance between a theology of questions and a theology of answers—a self-conscious attempt to see theology itself as a discipline that sought and questioned, more than one that simply provided answers. Students must be opened up to ways of thinking about the reality of their own experience, to the experience of non-Catholics, and to the genuine religious experience in literature outside of theology. College theology, like the Vatican Council itself, must abandon the "authoritarian and arbitrary forms that have driven away or kept away men of piety, intelligence and integrity."<sup>53</sup> The times were changing very rapidly by 1964 and Salm was only indicating something of the torrent of change that was about to overtake college theology in the mid-1960s.

#### Academic Study of Religion: 1965 to 1970s

In the midst of revolutionary changes in society and in the church following the Second Vatican Council, from 1965 to the early 1970s, a host of new issues arose that significantly altered the understanding of the undergraduate discipline. One of the major new developments was an extensive national advocacy of what was called the academic study of religion. Precisely what "academic" meant varied from person to person, as did the standards by which one judged what was academic. By the early 1970s the academic approach to the discipline had moved in two different directions: one in the direction of religious studies and the other in the direction of theological studies. But both approaches considered themselves rigorously academic. Religious studies saw the academic study of religious phenomena as neutral, objective, and descriptive. Theological studies saw the academic study of religion from the perspective of faith seeking understanding.

The theological as well as the religious studies approaches gradually moved away from what some were now considering the outdated pastoral functions of the college discipline. In 1966, Cooke argued



that the goals of deepening students' faith, promoting Christian behavior, and encouraging apostolic activities were not "proper academic objectives of theology," yet he did not want to abandon these goals entirely. These "pastoral or fringe objectives," he told an audience at the National Catholic Education Association convention, can indeed enter into "the strict academic endeavor, because of the fact that they introduce into the psychological receptivity of the student the all important elements of the practical experience of Christianity."<sup>54</sup> Experience, he maintained, is as necessary to academic theology as it is to other sciences. "Is not," he asked, "the experience of liturgy and the experience of the Church in apostolic action as essential an experimental foundation for theologizing as laboratory work is for the speculation of the physical sciences?"<sup>55</sup> These statements, however, occurred in the context of his argument for a strictly academic role for theology. Although Cooke could clearly distinguish the pastoral and academic roles, he could not yet fully separate them. But, that separation would come very shortly.

By 1967, the Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine changed its name to the College Theology Society, indicating by the name change two desires the society hoped to accomplish. First, it wanted to be recognized as an ecumenical, not simply a Catholic confessional organization. Second, it wanted to demonstrate its own academic, not confessional, allegiances. That same year, moreover, the society endorsed "Religion as an Academic Discipline," a statement of the Commission in Higher Education of the Association of American Colleges. The statement clearly indicated that theology or religious studies departments were "designed to promote understanding of an important human concern rather than confessional commitment."<sup>56</sup> Religious studies or theology programs were concerned with a universal human experience, not with a particular confessional orientation. Pastoral concerns, or concerns for the religious lives of the students, became an obsolete relic of a now defunct system.

One of the chief characteristics of the academic approach was its separation from spiritual formation. The complete separation of teaching (conceived of as an exclusively intellectual enterprise) from religious or spiritual guidance in the Catholic college became institutionalized in the late 1960s and early 1970s in a large number of Catholic schools when campus ministry departments were established as the proper place for fostering religious life. The theology or religious studies departments became the domain of intellectual development—one

separated from spiritual development. Theology became a phenomenological or humanistic or descriptive discipline that yearned for and sought academic respectability—a respectability that was built upon an understanding of academic theology as an exclusively rational enterprise.

To some, like Robert A. McDermott, to be rigorously academic meant to be exclusively neutral in examining religious phenomena. In 1968 he argued that religion as an academic discipline should be taught in the church-related schools as well as in the secular universities, and that this approach should replace the catechetical approach that was so much a part of college religion courses. And, for him, academic meant an empirical and comparative approach to the study of religion. Empirical meant disallowing any *a priori* judgment on what should be counted as religious, and comparative meant a critical study of religious experiences, ideas, and institutions in different traditions.<sup>57</sup> The attempt to gain academic respectability was clearly a movement away from concerns for the students' Catholic or even religious identity.

Not everyone went as far as McDermott, but even those who supported the theological approach had moved away from the strictly confessional and spiritual concerns of the previous generation in their attempts to justify the academic approach of theological studies. The justification of theology as a strictly academic discipline took place within the context of an attempt to make the theology course a universal requirement for graduation—that is, a graduation requirement for non-Catholic as well as Catholic students.

In the late 1960s, some Catholic colleges, like Webster College in St. Louis, completely abandoned theology courses as a requirement for graduation. Required courses were dropped and made electives in the curriculum because of the student movement toward freedom and elective choice and because these courses were conceived to be confessional in nature and therefore had been required only for Catholic students. Non-Catholic students had no theology requirements for graduation. So, the argument at Webster went, equity demanded that the theology requirement for graduation be dropped for all students, Catholic as well as non-Catholic.

Prior to the mid 1960s only Catholic students in most Catholic colleges and universities had to take theology courses as a requirement for graduation. Those who articulated the aims of college theology presupposed that what they were talking about was theology courses for Catholic students alone. Theology departments were clearly func-



tioning within the context of the church's overall mission. There was no thought, for example, in speaking about a theology for the laity, as John Courtney Murray did in the 1940s, that he was imposing his aim upon non-Catholic students. He was talking, as almost everyone else was prior to the late 1960s, about college theology for Catholic students.

There were always, of course, large numbers of non-Catholics in Catholic colleges and universities. They were not required to take courses in theology because those courses were explicitly Catholic in orientation and it was generally felt that to impose such a requirement on non-Catholic students would be a violation of their religious freedom. By the 1930s, when many Catholic colleges began to require Catholic students to take credit-hour courses in theology for graduation, they also began to develop course requirements in "Foundations of Morality" or "Philosophy of Conduct" for non-Catholic students. Usually these required courses were offered as credits in philosophy rather than in theology, even though many times they were taught by professors who taught theology. Such courses were attempts to provide non-Catholic students with some rational grounds for an understanding of God, human nature and destiny, the spirituality of the soul, relations of science and religion, and foundations of morality—without specific reference to the Catholic theological tradition. College administrators and members of theology departments were never fully satisfied with this solution to a graduation requirement, but they saw themselves clearly in a dilemma. Either they require theology courses for all students, in which case they would be violating the non-Catholics' religious liberty, or they require it only for Catholics, in which case they would be sending the wrong message about the college's view of the importance of religion and morality in human life.<sup>58</sup> Thus, many colleges decided to require non-sectarian or philosophical courses on religion or morals for non-Catholics—courses parallel to those required courses offered in the theology department for Catholic students.

In the late 1960s some theological educators—those who opposed both the new movement to make theology courses purely electives and the older system of two separate graduate requirements, one for Catholics and another for non-Catholics—argued for a universal graduation requirement in theology, one for non-Catholic as well as Catholic students, on the basis that neither religious studies nor theology was inherently sectarian. They were academic disciplines and should be required of all students. The universal requirement was also justi-

fied by the fact that religious experience, being an experience of all cultures and all peoples, was a phenomenon worth studying in and of itself. A liberally educated person, so the argument went, could not be truly educated without considering the impact of religion on history, culture, and the personal lives of so many human beings. If theology courses were academic and not sectarian, if they did not promote Catholic identity and Catholic religious practices, if they were separated from religious or apostolic motivations, why should they not be required universally?

Those schools, like Marquette, that moved in the late 1960s and early 1970s to make theology courses a universal requirement for graduation did so on the basis of the above arguments. Yet, the arguments left two questions significantly unanswered. How could one call what was being done in the academic study of religion theology, and how was this approach Catholic?

Christopher Mooney, S.J., responded to these questions by suggesting a new configuration of the entire undergraduate discipline. He argued that theology courses be organized in such a way that all students would be required to take an introductory course that would examine universal religious experience, and all subsequent required courses would be electives that offered students the widest possible choice and professors the opportunity to teach courses in their own academic specialties. Such an approach created a link between religious studies, which examined "the ultimate religious values of mankind phenomenologically, as these have appeared and continue to appear in human life and history" and theology, which "is the study of ultimate religious values insofar as they have been embodied in a given tradition, whether Christian or non-Christian, and involve a commitment of faith." Such an approach was also Catholic in the sense that "To be Catholic [meaning, after Vatican II] means to be open."

This elective approach to the undergraduate discipline, it could be argued, destroyed any sense of theology as an integrated organic discipline. Mooney asserted, however, that the whole question of the unity of the discipline or of the integration of the discipline ought to be abandoned as a remnant of a medieval hope for some kind of organic unity in theology. "In fact," he opined, "there has been a fragmentation in the theological thinking which should naturally reflect itself in a certain fragmentation of the theological curriculum. . . . They [Catholic theologians] now think less in terms of synthesis than in terms of hypothesis, less about the possession of truth than about its quest."



Other than a general introductory course on universal religious experience, he believed that no other single course in theology should be required for graduation and that "no course in Catholic theology should be required of any Catholic student."<sup>59</sup>

Like Mooney, William Sullivan, S.J., a member of Marquette's Theology Department, argued that the requirement should be universal because the understanding of theology itself had been broadened to include an essentially descriptive, historical, or phenomenological approach as well as an approach that sought understanding on the basis of faith. Departments could offer two kinds of courses: those that were academically neutral, i.e., purely historical and descriptive, and those that were academically theological (or in his terminology "confessional"), where the dynamic of faith seeking understanding was operative. To be academic did not necessarily mean neutrality. Confessional truth claims could be rationally examined and explored from the perspective of faith especially in the Catholic tradition where reason and faith were not perceived in opposition to one another.<sup>60</sup>

### Conclusions

The movement toward the academic study of religion, whether in its religious studies or theological incarnations, was an attempt to solve some real problems: for example, the needs of a new generation of students of the 1960s and 1970s, the need to justify a universal course requirement, and the desire for respectability within the academy. But, in the process of developing the academic approach, new problems were created—and we have inherited them.

Let me identify a few of the new problems that the academic approach has unwittingly created. First, in an attempt to be rigorously academic, the new approach divorced itself from the older formational approach and in effect separated theology from spirituality.

Second, the academic approach—in its attempt to be more objective, more neutral, more descriptive, and phenomenological than past approaches—overestimated, in my view, the possibilities of such objectivity. The academic approach, as some have understood it, made the intellect alone the object of education and the role of desire and will and emotions in the total educational process (as Cooper and Russell clearly perceived) has been sorely neglected. Can the educational process be more holistic without making it less academic? The educational relationship between the intellect, the will, and emotions

needs to be re-addressed in the discipline at the college level. The academic approach has tended to become identified with an intellectualism that is devoid of voluntarism—and theology itself must examine and teach in such a way that the whole of the religious dimension is included in the examination and in the process of teaching.

Third, the academic study wanted to emphasize and support elective freedom in the curriculum in order to provide students with an opportunity to maximize their interests in the study of religion. But, the creation of a consumer variety of electives created a lack of integration in the discipline. Some in other college disciplines look at the incoherent theological curriculum and ask: what does the discipline do? What are the steps of its development in the curriculum? What is the discipline's content, method, and aim? What is it trying to accomplish in the college curriculum? The problem of the definition of the discipline is evident in the elective fragmentation that has arisen in the past twenty-five years.

Fourth, the academic approach claimed to be non-confessional, or ecumenical, or universal in its approach to the human phenomenon of religion in the world. For college theology or religious studies departments in the Catholic tradition such an approach created problems of identity. In the pre-conciliar era, undergraduate theology was almost exclusively a study of the concreteness of the Catholic tradition. In the post-conciliar period Catholicism was either studied phenomenologically as one of the manifestations of the universal religious phenomenon, or theologically in terms of its universal claims (e.g., the universal salvific will), or as an elective in a smorgasbord of courses. Such an approach made theological courses more inclusive, but it also created the anomalous situation of Catholic institutions providing elective courses in Catholic theology and to some extent ignoring (or in some cases rejecting) the publicly acknowledged concrete Catholic identity of the institution in which the theology or religious studies programs participate. Have we created a situation at Catholic institutions in which there is today little room for anything specifically and concretely Catholic in the curriculum because of the need to introduce students to the universality of the religious experience? How can we balance in the curriculum the need to be universal and the need to be concretely Catholic? This is a real problem for those of us who are striving to re-think what we are doing in college theology.

Fifth, the academic approach tried to meet the needs of rebellious and non-establishmentarian students of the 1960s. Those students were



tired of the familiar and cramping Catholic culture in which they believed they had been raised. The students' needs are very different today. One does not have to be a Jeremiah to lament the general religious illiteracy among contemporary college students. Many teachers are aware that large numbers of students are innocent of the intelligibility and of the sources of fundamental Christian and Catholic doctrines. Most of our students today need to know the basic story line of the biblical and historical tradition of Christianity in some of its wholeness and concreteness before they can proceed to electives in the discipline. The new situation demands more emphasis upon fundamental issues.

It has been my own view for a long time now that we are in new circumstances today and that those new circumstances call for a re-examination of the aims of college theology. We need not agree on the national level about those aims (universal agreement was not a characteristic of the past). Why could we not have, as in the past, schools where specific Catholic emphases were followed: a Catholic University with one approach to college theology, a Le Moyne College with another, a Providence College with still another? Unity is not needed at the national level, but at the departmental and college level a great deal of consensus is needed to construct a theological curriculum that has intelligibility as a discipline within the college curriculum.

The history of the discipline indicates that it has experienced conceptual diversity and development as it tried to meet the changing needs of undergraduate students. What we need today is a new approach that will appropriate the values of the past while it meets the new circumstances of today. We need to re-think our discipline for the sake of all our students (Catholic as well as non-Catholic), for the sake of defining the discipline, for the sake of parents who send their students to Catholic institutions, and for the sake of administrators and colleagues in other disciplines who want some reasons to justify our prominence or place in the curriculum.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> In what follows I am dependent upon the historical studies of Rosemary Rodgers, "The Changing Concept of College Theology: A Case Study" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1973), Pamela C. Young, "Theological Education in American Catholic Higher Education, 1939-1973" (Ph.D. dissertation, Marquette University, 1995), and Susan M. Mountin, "A Study of Undergraduate Roman Catholic Theology Education, 1952-1976" (Ph.D. dis-

sertation, Marquette University, 1994). Outside of these three dissertations there are, as far as I know, only a few other explicit historical studies of the discipline. Philip Gleason's *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) has some analysis of the discipline, but his focus is not explicitly on the development of the discipline.

<sup>2</sup> On Cooper, see William H. Russell, "John Montgomery Cooper: Pioneer," *Catholic Educational Review* 47 (1949):435-41. Cooper needs a biographer and much more analytical historical study than he has hitherto received in the history of American Catholicism.

<sup>3</sup> On Catholic University's leading role and on the general history of Catholic higher education in the twentieth century, see Philip Gleason's brilliant analysis in *Contending with Modernity*.

<sup>4</sup> On Cooper's appreciation of Shields, see Justine Ward, *Thomas Edward Shields: Biologist, Psychologist, Educator* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 173.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>6</sup> Shields, "Correlation in the Teaching of Religion," *Catholic Educational Review* 1 (January-May, 1911):420.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 425.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Edward Shields, *Philosophy of Education* (Washington: The Catholic Educational Press, 1921), pp. 305-6.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 309.

<sup>11</sup> Shields, "The Method of Teaching Religion," *The Catholic Education Association Bulletin* 5 (November 1908):202-3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>13</sup> Yorke's response to Shield's "The Method of Teaching Religion," *The Catholic Education Association Bulletin* 5 (November 1908): 235.

<sup>14</sup> John Dewey, *Moral Principles in Education* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1909), p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> He also established in 1920 a specific department within the college for undergraduate religion, wrote a series of college textbooks from 1922 to 1938, and in 1930 created a graduate department at the Catholic University for the scientific training of religious educators at all levels from primary to college.

<sup>16</sup> Cooper, "Catholic Education and Theology," in *Vital Problems of Catholic Education*, ed. Roy Deferrari (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1939), p. 130.

<sup>17</sup> Cooper, "Religion in the College Curriculum," in *College Organization and Administration*, ed. Roy J. Deferrari (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947), p. 149.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> "Catholic Education and Theology," p. 135.

<sup>20</sup> "Catholic Education and Theology," pp. 140-42.

<sup>21</sup> After 1926 the Catholic University required students to take religion courses two hours a week for four semesters.

<sup>22</sup> Cooper, "The Dogmatic Content of the Advanced Religion Course," *Catho-*



lic *Educational Review* 21 (1923): 80-93.

<sup>23</sup> "Catholic Education and Theology," p. 132.

<sup>24</sup> (Philadelphia: The Dolphin Press, 1934).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>26</sup> "The Use of the Scriptures in the Teaching of Catechism," *Journal of Religious Instruction* 12 (1941-42): 521.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 46, quoting *Lib. Mor.* II, Cap. I, PL 75, 753-54.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 243, 244, 248.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>32</sup> "Nature and Function of Christo-Centrism in the Teaching of Religion," *Journal of Religious Instruction* 12 (1941-42):847-48.

<sup>33</sup> "Religion and Correlation in Education," *Catholic Educational Review* 34 (1936):77.

<sup>34</sup> "Nature and Function of Christo-Centrism," p. 838.

<sup>35</sup> For Phelan, theology was "an intellectual discipline, and can be taught. Religion is a moral discipline, a virtue of will, and therefore cannot be, properly speaking, a subject in the curriculum although it can and must be fostered and developed by instruction as well as training." "Theology in the Curriculum of Catholic Colleges and Universities," *Man and Modern Secularism* (New York: American Catholic Alumni Federation, 1941), p. 129.

<sup>36</sup> "Theology in the Catholic Colleges as an Aid to the Lay Apostolate," *Man and Modern Secularism*, p. 145.

<sup>37</sup> "Necessary Adjustments to Overcome Practical Difficulties," *Man and Modern Secularism*, p. 152.

<sup>38</sup> Sandra Yocum Mize of the University of Dayton is working on a history of St. Mary's graduate program in theology.

<sup>39</sup> Farrell, "Argument for Teaching Theology in Catholic Colleges," *National Catholic Education Association Bulletin* 42-43 (August 1945-May 1947):239-44. See also, Joseph Fenton, "Theology and Religion," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 112 (1945):447-63; and Thomas C. Donlan, O.P., *Theology and Education* (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1952). These critics saw the Cooper-Russell approach as homiletic or catechetical. Cooper's approach was rhetorical, not scientific and theological, according to Fenton.

<sup>40</sup> "The Problem of Its Finality," *Theological Studies* 5 (March 1944):43-75; "The Pedagogical Problem," *idem* (September 1944):340-76.

<sup>41</sup> John J. Fernan, "College Religion Course," *Lumen Vitae* 7 (1952):83.

<sup>42</sup> John J. Fernan, "The Historical, Scriptural Approach in College Theology," *Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine Proceedings* (1955): 36, 39. See also Francis M. Keating, S.J., "The Finality of the College Course in Sacred Doctrine in the Light of the Finality of the Layman," *Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine Proceedings* (1956):25-39.

<sup>43</sup> Gustave Weigel, "The Meaning of Sacred Doctrine in the College," Address delivered before the Fall Meeting of the Baltimore-Washington Section of the Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine, November 1, 1955.

Paper in the Archives of the Woodstock College Library, Georgetown University.

<sup>44</sup> Weigel, "The Meaning of Sacred Doctrine in the College," in Gerard Sloyan, ed., *Shaping of the Christian Message: Essays in Religious Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), pp. 175, 179. See also Christopher F. Mooney, "College Theology and Liberal Education," *Thought* 34 (Autumn 1959): 325-46.

<sup>45</sup> John L. McKenzie, S.J., "Training Teachers of College Theology," *Jesuit Educational Quarterly* 19 (1956):101. See also *idem.*, "Theology in Jesuit Education," *Thought* 34 (Autumn 1959):347-57.

<sup>46</sup> For Deferrari's criticisms, see Rodgers, "Changing Concepts," pp. 206-08, 213, 219-20.

<sup>47</sup> Gerard Sloyan, "From Christ in the Gospel to Christ in the Church," *Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine Proceedings* (1955):10-24.

<sup>48</sup> "Theology and Religion," p. 452.

<sup>49</sup> Foreword to James J. Graham, *Faith for Life* (Rev. ed., Milwaukee, 1944), v.

<sup>50</sup> "Undergraduate Studies in Sacred Doctrine at One U. S. University," *Lumen Vitae* 15 (1960):714-15.

<sup>51</sup> Cooke to John Riedl, October 12, 1958. Letter in Marquette University Archives, Academic Affairs, B63.

<sup>52</sup> "The Problem of Sacred Doctrine in the College," *Modern Catechetics*, ed. Gerard Sloyan (New York: Macmillan, 1964), pp. 267-90.

<sup>53</sup> C. Luke Salm, FSC, "The Status of Theology in the College," *Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine Proceedings* (1964):45-46, 49.

<sup>54</sup> "The Place of Theology in the Curriculum of the Catholic College," *National Catholic Education Association Bulletin* 63 (August 1966):210-13.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>56</sup> Rodgers, "Changing Concepts," p. 254.

<sup>57</sup> "Religion as an Academic Discipline," *Cross Currents* 18 (Winter 1968): 12.

<sup>58</sup> On the dilemmas faced by St. Louis and Marquette Universities, see Stephen J. Rueve, "Religion for Non-Catholics," *Journal of Religious Instruction* 6 (October 1935): 138-42; *idem.*, "Non-Catholics in Catholic Colleges," *Journal of Religious Instruction* 8 (1937-38):417-20; Patrick W. Carey, "Theology at Marquette University: A History," (unpublished, privately printed, second draft, 1996), p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> "The Role of Theology in the Education of Undergraduates," a privately distributed unpublished paper that Mooney delivered at the Jesuit Education Association workshop at Regis College, Denver, August 6-14, 1969.

<sup>60</sup> Sullivan argued his case in three articles: "Theology for Undergraduates," *America* (November 15, 1969):463-66; "Theology Should Be Required of All," *New Dimensions in Religious Experience*, ed. George Devine (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1971):301-13; "The Catholic University and the Academic Study of Religion," *Council on the Study of Religion Bulletin* 2 (December 1971):2-9.



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