

Christian Theology for Ministry and the Quality Assurance Agency Criteria: An Epistemological Critique

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Introduction

In the last fifteen years there has been an explosion in the provision of Masters level programmes for those engaged in or preparing for Christian ministry ¹. Many theological colleges have developed such programmes in order to compete with other colleges for precious ordinands. The rising educational standard of the clergy has meant that more and more clergy are using their continuing ministerial education budgets to embark on higher degrees. This has support from churches of different denominations and thus reflects the recent societal expectation that people progress further than before in terms of Higher Education (hereafter: HE) qualifications. However, the development of such programmes has been influenced by a number of factors and I intend to explore the interface of two in this essay.

The first factor is the expansion of HE and the way in which the sector is now driven by the market economy ². At the end of the day the chief goal of such education is understood by the Government to be economic and social. That is,

education is for the purpose of providing society with competently trained individuals who are able to contribute to the workforce and the economy³. The HE sector is now instrumental to national economic success, which is, of course, measured in a variety of ways. Therefore, the educational product is measured using simple measurements (levels and credit units) and financial tags are easily attached to such measures. In a fast moving economic reality it is also the case that many people will change jobs frequently, so programmes are to take account of such transference and such flexibility needs to be measured in ways that are observable, such as 'transferable skills'⁴. In this economic and social climate, with an ever expanding HE sector, it is important to control the quality of the various programmes via the Quality Assurance Agency (hereafter: QAA)⁵, so that employers understand the value of what it is that they get when they employ someone with a Masters degree in sociology or philosophy or indeed theology. It is not the subject specific information that is most important but the competence and skill development that it represents in the job marketplace. Of course, there are social and cultural spin-offs and these are, no doubt, valued but they are inevitably secondary to the perceived economic benefits.

The second factor is the development of ministerial education itself. The development of the discipline of practical theology in this period has been significant for ministerial education⁶. It used to be the case that the applied model of theological education was the norm, and it can still be seen in the more conservative traditions. In this model, philosophy, doctrine and biblical studies mark the first phase, and this is supplemented by historical study. After one has discerned sufficient knowledge from such disciplines, then that knowledge can be applied in a rather linear fashion to the contemporary context such as church leadership today⁷. Alongside this theoretical knowledge base, students can be expected to pick up 'tips' on how to do certain things, such as 'not dropping the baby' at baptism⁸, and this is often called 'pastoralia'. However, with the influence of liberation theology and praxis orientated theology there has been greater attention to the contemporary context and its influence on theology more generally. There is a move to understand theological knowledge not just as cognitive and theoretical, which one can simply apply, but as complex and holistic; and including interdisciplinary theory, action, affections and integrated within Christian spirituality informed and shaped by theological tradition. Thus the older tradition of theology as a form of habitus, a way of life, is gaining greater attention and this, in turn, is influencing the expectations of academics and students associated with programmes intending to resource Christian ministry⁹.

The aim of this essay is to consider these two factors and (1) to suggest ways in which the epistemology associated with Christian theology for ministry can critique the epistemology embedded in the QAA documentation; (2) to suggest how the QAA criteria might be interpreted by those seeking to provide M level programmes in Christian theology for ministry; and (3) to raise some questions for academics and QAA to consider.

2. QAA Masters Level Criteria

The QAA provide generic criteria to enable universities and HE institutions to understand the levels required for a successful student to achieve certain objectives. Undergraduate levels are 1-3 and correspond to the first three years of a degree (except for Scotland where degree programmes are usually four years). Postgraduate levels are 4 and 5, corresponding to Masters and Doctoral levels respectively. They are very similar in their philosophical bases and therefore the comments regarding level 4, that is, Masters level, can easily be applied to the other levels. In order to appreciate the criteria, the Masters level ones are cited below in full.

Masters degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;

- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline;
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level; and will have:
- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

These criteria can be analysed in relation to two basic epistemological categories, theory or body of knowledge (*theoria*) and practical skills (*techne*). Thus criterion (i) is about the acquisition of a theoretical body of knowledge appropriate to the subject such that the student appreciates the boundaries of such knowledge. It can be driven by problems arising from the world of work, or by issues in professional practice, but it is fundamentally about acquiring a body of knowledge. Criterion (ii) relates to understanding of research skills and techniques. This criterion concerns both theory and skills. The comprehensive understanding reflects a need for an engagement with *a body of methodological theory*, but it is expected that such knowledge will be translated into skills. Criterion (iii) specifies the level of originality that is required at M level and it is in relation to the *application of the body of knowledge*. M level work is not expected to demonstrate theoretical innovation, but only *applied* originality, as well as practical insight in the use of such techniques and the interpretative role that they have in the production of knowledge. Criterion (iv) refers to *thinking* skills that the student working at this level is expected to display. Thus there is the ability to evaluate advanced scholarship, that is, work at the forefront of the body of knowledge (*theoria*); and the ability to evaluate methodologies (*techne*) and propose suggestions for new approaches (hypotheses). In this analysis it can be seen that the twin categories of *theoria* and *techne* dominate the discourse. There are two essential domains of knowledge: theory and technique or practical skill; and these define and delimit the nature of knowledge across *all* disciplines. As such these controlling categories have a hegemonic quality, functioning as universal epistemological norms. This paradigm is a modernist and post-Enlightenment construct that is based on a fundamentally dualist and task-oriented epistemology.

The professional and personal qualities that a 'typical' M level graduate is expected to display are largely for the employment market¹⁰. They include the ability to deal with complexity, make 'sound' judgements based on limited evidence, communication skills, independent direction and problem solving capacities and the willingness to continue to learn new bodies of knowledge and new skills as required. This employment drive is explicit in criterion (d) and reiterates some of the earlier qualities in different language. So we read that employable persons are to display initiative, responsibility, decision-making qualities, independence and continuing professional development. This list of qualities looks like a person specification for a job! This is the kind of person we would like to employ if we had the choice because they would be able to contribute to the efficiency and competitiveness of our company. We want someone who is able to deal with global

capitalism in a postmodern world. Such a person would not be tied to one job for life, nor would they be intimidated by new technological developments. She or he would be flexible and able to meet the challenges that lie before the fast-moving world of post-industrialised societies in the Western world. If ever there were an 'ideal type', this is it, and with them lies the future economic salvation of the UK!

This analysis suggests that these two sets of criteria promote both a modernist and a postmodern epistemological interface. On the one hand, the rationalistic first set of criteria display the dichotomy between theory and practice and the movement is from theory *applied* to technical skill/practice. Although professional practice is mentioned, the dominant sense is that the body of knowledge is in the service of research and research is in the service of the economy or the work of work (hence problem-solving). This characterises the modernist paradigm still dominant within many HE sectors, especially the sciences ¹¹. On the other hand, the kind of workforce that is required is essentially flexible and mobile. This is driven by the values of mass consumption and the need to respond to the complexity of multi-cultural contexts in a global and unpredictable economy, i.e. postmodernity ¹². Both sets of values are economically driven, but they display different contexts. The first arises from an historical context that is modernist in its epistemological assumptions and the second arises from a future and unpredictable context, from out of which persons will need to compete in the future global market place. This QAA document seems to embody the sociological theory that Western contemporary societies are in the process of moving from modernity to postmodernity. Modernity still holds sway but postmodernity is beginning to arrive and its appearance seems inevitable. It could just be a matter of time ¹³. It also displays the tension between older notions of academic discipline-specific knowledge and skills and newer demands for generic transferable skills, apparently devoid of disciplinary related content ¹⁴, which can be applied flexibly to this unpredictable, global market economy in which each nation state will compete.

3. Christian Theology for Ministry

In recent years there have been many new programmes designed to meet the needs of churches educating professional ministers of religion. In most cases these are programmes that have to pass two sets of criteria. The first is the validating or accrediting criteria of the university and the second is the professional accreditation of the church denomination. At the end of the day the churches require clergy who are trained to deal with the complexities of a fast-changing contemporary society and at the same time are grounded in the tradition of a faith community ¹⁵. They are required to be guardians of the tradition as well as those who engage creatively with the challenges presented to their faith community by the world in which they live. In this context theological education has developed new understandings of its mission and rediscovered older insights.¹⁶

The study of Scripture will continue to be the focus of a considerable amount of theological education for ministry. This is because it is regarded as the sacred text, however defined, and its reading and preaching is crucial to the ordained ministry in most traditions. How the text is to be interpreted will, of course, vary but the fact that it is interpreted through a theological tradition and in a cultural context is now rarely disputed. Attention is being paid to the tradition and to the contemporary culture that influences its use today in a number of ways. These include the ways in which Scripture has been interpreted throughout history in order to understand how reading traditions change over time, as well as the ways in which contemporary biblical scholarship now uses a range of tools from literary theory to the social sciences and in some cases replacing historical-critical methods. However, there has been a truly significant turn to the contemporary end of the hermeneutical process in theology that is significant for epistemology and for ministerial education. All roads lead to the 'here and now'!

The impact of liberation theology with its emphasis on contemporary praxis as the judge of truth, hence orthopraxis, cannot be ignored ¹⁸. From this perspective, truth is not merely abstract theory but something

that is lived and has currency in the contemporary action of the church. Attention is now being given to the actual practices of the faith communities as providing a form of knowledge for authentic action. The level of authority that is given to such communal practices is very much disputed, but that these practices are now researched is a significant difference¹⁹. Theology is not simply about the application of an abstract theoretical perspective to a concrete situation, but can start with a concrete situation and, after engagement with the theological beliefs, attitudes and actions, can be revised. This means that 'lived communal practice' is an important epistemological category for ministerial theology and a key skill for a clergyperson is the ability to reflect with one's community upon its practice of the faith. This is illustrated in the growth of the use of the phrase 'theological reflection' as a tag for the ability to reflect theologically upon one's own practice of ministry and to lead one's congregation in corporate reflection.²⁰

The insight of recent theology combines not only right belief (orthodoxy) with right action (orthopraxis) but also right affections (orthopathy) before God. This is not a return to nineteenth century liberalism or eighteenth century romanticism but a genuine attempt to recognise that the Christian tradition contains ways of knowing that are affective not simply cognitive or action based²². The Christian faith cannot be reduced to a set of true propositions or religious rituals or experiences, nor can it be encapsulated in a sense of the transcendent, rather it combines a number of features. At its centre lies a cluster of important epistemological categories that function socially and individually. One of these important categories is what might be metaphorically called the 'heart'. In biblical anthropology the 'heart' is the seat of human emotion and will (although other parts of the body function symbolically in this way, e.g. the kidneys) and provides a clue to understanding²³. It points to a way of knowing that recognises emotions, virtues and passions as significant for knowledge of God, self and others²⁴. Therefore in the Christian tradition the greatest commandment is: to love the Lord your God with all you heart, mind, soul and strength, and the second is to love one's neighbour as one's self (Mark 21.28-34). Love can be described as an emotion but can also be a virtue and even a passion through which knowledge is gained. It may not be knowledge that can easily be communicated via rational means, nor displayed in a clearly articulated set of practical skills, although it may be displayed in the wisdom of a proverb or enacted in an instinctive yet appropriate manner²⁵. It is a form of knowledge that forms character, which is also at the centre of Christianity: to make disciples of character after the person of Jesus Christ (theologically called sanctification: being renewed in the image of God in Christ). This formation is recognised by many churches to be essential to theological education, as it is appreciated that church leaders need to embody certain Christ-like qualities in their ministry and upon which the church depends for the authenticity of its witness²⁶.

There is increasing recognition that spirituality is also located at the centre of Christian theology for ministry²⁷. If there ever was a split between academic theology and confessional theology then it is now significantly questioned. It is perfectly possible to demonstrate profoundly scholarly virtues and at the same time be committed to a particular Christian tradition as truth. Aligned with this dual commitment, and indeed as a means of integrating the two, is the life of prayer and worship (hence *lex orandi, lex credendi*: 'the law of prayer is the law of faith'). In the institutions where the programmes of Christian theology for ministry are offered, the life of prayer and worship is not tagged on the end of the academic curriculum but it is conceived as belonging to the essence of the educational process. This is because Christian discipleship is a way of life that is served by theology and includes all aspects²⁸. Therefore, it is expected that certain knowledge and understanding can be gained through prayer and meditation that could not possibly be gained in any other way²⁹. It is the knowledge of the intimate embrace and the knowing smile rather than the theoretical proposition or the analytical skill. Unfortunately, it falls outside the remit of an academic discipline to measure such knowledge in terms of *theoria* or *techné*. However, it does connect different forms of intelligence as thought, affections, practices and spiritual dimensions combine. Indeed, the rather limited categories of QAA simply do not take into account the notion of understanding in relation to intelligence. With the diversity of human understanding is also associated multiple forms of intelligence, including emotional and moral

capacities and this has implications for understanding human nature (see below) 31.

The impact of these concerns for Christian theology for ministry mean that as well as engaging with the classical sub-theological disciplines of biblical studies, systematic theology and church history, it will engage in rigorous study of contemporary theology expressed through the beliefs and practices of ordinary believers 32. Instead of privileging philosophy as the main dialogue partner, its inter-disciplinary partners will be the social sciences, the arts and literature, as well as the natural sciences. All these dialogue partners have a contemporary focus in addition to historical interests. However, where Christian theology for ministry differs from these dialogue partners is in the positive role it gives to the additional epistemological categories mentioned above. Therefore all engagement with these partner disciplines will necessarily involve a critique of their rationality, especially where it is perceived to be reductionist.

4. Implications and Challenges

There are important implications arising from these concerns in relation to the QAA criteria and Christian theology for ministry.

The relationship between professional practice and dichotomous thinking leads to certain assumptions. Although professional practice is referred to in the criteria, it is unclear what kinds of professional practices are in view. It could be suspected that health care, legal and social welfare professions are intended; however, professions vary considerably in their ethos and the issue is made much more complex with the addition of faith motivated vocations 33. Whatever the professional model for such secular thinking, practised based programmes need to be prepared to fit into the 'one size fits all' epistemology displayed in the criteria. This means that a certain uniformity is expected at the level of transferable skills, and that this demonstration is subsequent to the acquisition of certain theoretical knowledge prior to practice. Again, practice follows theory and practice essentially means 'skills', although the complexity of the relationship between professional and personal skills should be noted. Practice is again primarily *techné* and, despite the apparent acknowledgement of knowledge-through-action paradigm, it is always a secondary dimension in the criteria. As a consequence, there is an emphasis on the end product rather than on the process to be gone through. The educational process is viewed as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. There is a focus on the tasks to be accomplished and techniques acquired rather than on the people who are 'formed' by an engagement with the process. Therefore, the holistic and all-embracing nature of education and the way in which knowledge extends holistically in individual and social ways is ignored 34.

Professionalism and the Christian vocation do not fit neatly into this paradigm. The churches, while to some extent accepting this modernist dichotomy, also wish to affirm lay participation as ministry and expand the category of the ordained. Increasingly the boundaries between the professional, i.e. clergy, and the laity is being blurred and constraining notions of professionalism, when applied to the ordained ministry, are being rejected as unhelpful and inauthentic to its nature. This can be seen in the development of lay offices, such as Readers in the Church of England, and newer ordained roles, such as Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry and general Non-Stipendiary Ministry. In these church offices the persons so authorised earn their living within the world of work and pursue ministry in their own time. It can also be seen in the greater role for lay participation in the wider church with increasing participation in the decision-making processes of the church. Ministry is no longer something that the professional elite do on behalf of or to the laity. Christian Theology for Ministry programmes have needed to recognise this adjustment and to be flexible for the demands of training a variety of ministry roles (e.g. minister, youth and community worker and counsellor).

There is an impoverished understanding of human nature lying behind these criteria that is imprisoned in a post-Enlightenment rationality. It displays a form of thinking that is extremely limited. Why consider human beings from within a slender base of knowledge and skills? Surely intelligence cannot be reduced to such

things. The theory of multiple intelligences could have better informed such an epistemology by affirming the diversity of human ability and the value of different kinds of knowledge within the whole spectrum of human understanding³⁵. Knowledge is inevitably informed by one's anthropology and if the basis of one's anthropology is essentially materialistic and rationalistic then the dimension of the spiritual will be excluded or reduced to those categories³⁶. This is exactly what such criteria do to the detriment of human flourishing. Furthermore, an anthropology that is interested in virtue and character will inevitably understand human persons in less functionalist ways³⁷. Therefore, a Christian theological perspective raises these issues and by so doing inevitably suggests a critique.

For those programme directors designing or redesigning Master's curriculum for ministry purposes, this analysis exposes some challenges. It can be suggested that the challenges be met in a number of ways. These include: compliance to that which can readily be affirmed, resistance to the ideologically dissonant and creative interpretation as a strategy at the interface.

The first is to work within the framework because there is no other choice if one wishes to obtain accreditation or validation. As I have made clear, the criteria embody an ideology linked to economic interests and promoted by the Government. As an instrument of the Government, the power is with the controlling body of QAA and everyone must comply if academic legitimacy is to be retained or acquired. Therefore theologians in the field must develop strategies for complying with the expectations of these criteria in ways that are positive for the discipline. In many respects this is not hard. Christian Theology for ministry within the Western context has for a long time affirmed the necessity for the systematic acquisition of a body of knowledge at the forefront of the discipline and the inculcation of both thinking and writing skills. Therefore, the basic strengths of the criteria can be affirmed, as such knowledge is essential to academic work. However, it is possible to come to theory from professional practice rather than from a literature base and ministry programmes need to be creative in their design for this to occur³⁸.

It is possible that a programme can expect certain kinds of knowledge, wisdom and insight to be displayed among the students but that these are un-assessed academically. They do not count towards the academic mark because they fall outside the framework. They are a consequence of having engaged whole-heartedly in a process and represent the formation of character and spiritual virtue. In other words, alongside the academic criteria, programmes develop indicators of ministerial health and suitability that are monitored by a peer group or a mentor rather than assessed by an academic. The formational process is affirmed just as much as the academic product⁴⁰. Therefore the programme has added value because it is embedded in a holistic Christian worldview and tradition. It does not mean that academic standards suffer, but that they are set within an alternative framework of thought. From that alterity, theology offers a critical reflection on a set of criteria embodied in the QAA ideology, which is economically framed and reductionist in a number of ways. That ideology is evaluated critically, even if we are forced to work with the criteria for the purposes of the programme. In other words, there is a certain resistance to the ideology, even if an engagement with it within the routine of academic life cannot be escaped. This is because it has become part and parcel of our academic culture and it is now a 'given' within the system.

As a way of using the set criteria, it is important to consider in what ways these categories can be translated theologically for the purpose of ministerial education. The translation is two-way: interpreting QAA categories via theological and ministerial categories and *vice-versa*. It may be that some ministry categories can be readily changed into the QAA categories without too much loss. For example, oral communication skills and interpersonal skills can quite easily translate the skills of preaching and counselling, although other features associated with these skills may not be. Some forms of intuitive spiritual discernment in certain ministerial contexts would be difficult to translate into the dichotomised structure of QAA epistemology and it may be that additional if not alternative criteria are advanced as well. Nevertheless, this is a challenge before theological educators and academics. My experience of working with a number of programmes is that some

academics are wrestling with this challenge and arriving at creative interpretive solutions. The irony is that the creativity required might in fact demonstrate the kinds of transferable skill that the Government desires but used in ways that could (unintentionally) undermine its project!

5. Conclusion

This essay concludes by taking some of the issues that I have addressed and asking how the wider debate needs to hear a distinctly different academic voice. If the kind of analysis and critique I have offered has validity, then a number of questions are raised by what has been articulated. These include:

- What might be the long-term problems associated with academic curricula driven by the dominant economic values and predicted workforce needs?
- In what ways might the HE sector address the issues surrounding the marginalization of academic voices with different ideological agendas?
- How can QAA criteria be adjusted to take account of different forms of non-Western and non-Enlightenment rationality?
- Would it be possible to listen to the concerns of Churches and theologians preparing ordinands for a ministry and working with clergy in ministry and therefore having different aims and outcomes?
- To what extent might the categories of theory and skills be supplemented by assessment in relation to attitude?
- In what ways might the policy-makers consider the most basic of presuppositions, such as anthropology, and how they inform academic criteria?
- Criteria are inevitably interpreted by a community broadly agreeing the parameters of legitimate interpretation. Are there places where this reading tradition can be debated openly and contested if necessary?

It is hoped that these reflections are both interesting and useful in the provision of Christian theological education for ministry and in the service of HE in the UK today.

Endnotes

- See the 1999-2001 research conducted by Paul Ballard, *Practical Theology? Proliferation and Performance* (Cardiff: Department of Religious and Theological Studies, University of Cardiff, 2001); Paul Ballard and Stephen Pattison, 'Ambiguity and opportunity: appraising practical theology', Contact: *The Interdisciplinary Journal of Pastoral Studies* 139 (2002) pp. 15-23; and Paul Ballard, 'Reflections on Professional Theological Education', *Theology* 107.839 (2004) pp. 333-342.
- Ronald Barnett, *The Limits of Competence: Knowledge, Higher Education and Society* (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 1994) p.5, who observes that the new vocabulary of HE (competence, outcomes, skills and transferability) serves 'a closed conception of higher education with the economy'.
- See Elisabeth Lillie, 'The Humanities: From Ivory Tower to Marketplace?' in R. Barnett (ed.), *Learning to Effect* (Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 1992) pp. 121-134, who discusses this issue.
- Barnett, *The Limits of Competence* p.15 calls this requirement 'operationalism', that is, the requirement that students have the capacities to operate effectively within contemporary society.
- Full information on the work of QAA can be found at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>

- See the suggestion by Don S. Browning, ***A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals*** (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996) pp. 58-59.
- Friedrich Schleiermacher, ***Brief Outline of the Study of Theology*** Trans T.N. Tice (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1996); Nigel Cameron, ***Method Without Madness? An Evangelical Approach to 'Doing' Theology*** (Leicester: UCCF, 1983) articulates the classic encyclopaedia approach as proceeding from biblical languages and exegesis, biblical theology, systematic theology, ecclesiastical history and historical theology to practical theology, pp. 22-25.
- Paul Ballard, 'The Emergence of Pastoral and Practical Theology in Britain', in James Woodward and Stephen Pattison (eds.), ***The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*** (Oxford, Blackwell, 2000) pp. 59-70 (p.62).
- This has been expressed by Edward Farley, ***Theologia: Fragmentation and Unity in Theological Education*** (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).
- Barnett, ***The Limits of Competence***, p.6, refers to the state's agenda for 'orientating higher education to the claims of the world of work', and the key concepts are the usual suspects: competence, capability, transferable skills and enterprise.
- Modernity has been analysed in a variety of ways from Marx (world of commodities ruled by the pursuit of profit) to Durkheim (subdividing of tasks and responsibilities) and Weber (functional rationality: the calculating attitude to more and more aspects of life), see: David Lyon, ***Postmodernity*** (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999, 2nd edn.) p. 30.
- Lyon, ***Postmodernity***, pp. 71-76.
- For an excellent discussion of these themes in relation to Christianity in the Western world, see: Andrew Walker, ***Telling the Story: Gospel, Mission and Culture*** (London: SPCK, 1996), who describes the cultural transition as either a paradigm shift or an implosion, pp. 184-187.
- See George Brown, Joanna Bull and Malcolm Pendlebury, ***Assessing Student Learning in Higher Education*** (London: Routledge, 1997) pp. 35-39.
- The Church of England Report, ***Mission and Ministry: The Churches' Validation Framework for Theological Education*** (London: Advisory Board of Ministry, approved by the House of Bishops 1999) offers reflections on an earlier framework document, ***Education for the Church's Ministry*** (ACCM 22, 1987), and suggests that ordinands should be expected to have covered three main areas of study: the Interpretation of Christian Tradition for Today (including Scripture, theology and history), the Formation of Church life (including personal commitment to Christ and spirituality), and Addressing Situations in the World (including reflective capacities in relation to pluralism and ethics), pp. 22, 41-42.
- For an overview of the debate in the USA dealing with issues of vocation and formation in the context of seminary education, see: Robert Banks, ***Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models*** (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).
- See Joel B. Green and Max Turner (eds.), ***Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology*** (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000).
- The classic text is by Gustavo Gutierrez, ***A Theology of Liberation*** (London: SCM, 1974) p.10.
- Elaine L. Graham, ***Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty*** (London: Mowbray, 1996) advocates that norms should be located in the faith communities themselves.
- Ballard, 'Reflections on Professional Theological Education Today', p.340; cf. John Witcombe, 'The Emperor's New Clothes of Theological Education', ***Anglicans for Renewal? Skepsis*** 80 (2000) pp. 29-35.
- Mark J. Cartledge, ***Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives*** (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003) pp. 17-20.

- W. Jay Wood, *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous* (Leicester: Apollos, 1998) argues for the role of the emotions in proper cognitive functioning, pp. 175-196.
- T. Sorg, 'Heart' in Colin Brown (ed.), *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology Vol.2* (Carlisle: Paternoster, rev ed. 1986) pp. 180-184.
- I have addressed the role of the affections in relation to theological beliefs and practices in: Mark J. Cartledge, 'Affective Theological Praxis: Understanding the Direct Object of Practical Theology', *International Journal of Practical Theology 8.1* (2004) pp. 34-52; cf. Johannes van der Ven, *Education for Reflective Ministry* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998) who talks about attitudes as 'affective-evaluative orientations' at the disposal of the pastor in relation to competent reflection on ministry, pp. 152-168.
- Barnett, *The Limits of Competence*, p.45, highlights how the capabilities and virtues of friendship, altruism, ethical concern, carefulness, generosity, etc. are neglected as transferable skills.
- The Church of England Report, *Mission and Ministry*, again reflecting on the ACCM 22 document, makes this precise point in relation to Church's mission: 'the statement that the fundamental aim of theological education is to enable the student to grow in those personal qualities by which, with and through the corporate ministry of the Church, the creative and redemptive activity of God may be proclaimed and realized in the world', p. 9.
- Steven Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions: Ordination and Leadership in the Local Church* (London: DLT, 1999) argues for spirituality in the three orders of deacon (listening to God and integrity), priest (intercession and holiness) and bishop (discernment), p.191.
- Miroslav Volf, 'Theology for a Way of Life', in M. Volf and D.C. Bass (eds.) *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) pp. 245-263.
- See the discussion of meditation and contemplation as the epistemology of spiritual gaze in Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (London: SCM, 1992) pp. 202-208.
- Barnett, *The Limits of Competence*, p.75, makes a similar point with respect to 'understanding', it can be demonstrated but it may not be demonstrated and still be present. By contrast, competences require demonstration since they obtain meaning from some form of public performance.
- I am impressed by the breadth of goals for universities suggested by Michael Allen, *The Goals of Universities* (Milton Keynes: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 1988) pp. 98-102, who distinguishes between cognitive learning (verbal skills, quantitative skills, substantive knowledge, rationality, intellectual perspective, aesthetic sensibility, creativity, intellectual integrity and lifelong learning), emotional and moral development (self-awareness, psychological well-being, human understanding, values and morals and religion) and practical competence (traits of value in practical affairs generally, leadership, citizenship, work and careers, family life, leisure and health).
- Jeff Astley, *Ordinary Theology: Looking, Listening and Learning in Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).
- See my discussion of the interface of theology and community and youth work studies in: Mark J. Cartledge, 'Practical Theology in the Public Sphere: Reflections on Church Community and Youth Work Education', *Journal of Adult Theological Education 1.1* (2004) pp. 91-104.
- The Church of England Report, *Mission and Ministry*, notes that assessment expectations includes that the student should be able to know, do or be by the end of the programme, and that these criteria (knowing, doing, being) should be integrated and coordinated within the overall programme aim and design. This is because students are being assessed fundamentally as 'persons' for accredited ministry 'independently of methods of assessing academic ability and ability to perform ministerial tasks', p. 27.
- Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice* (New York: Basic Books, 1993) argues for seven kinds of intelligence (musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal) which are distributed differently within individuals. He allows that moral or

spiritual intelligence serves as a candidate for an eighth intelligence but that it could be seen as an amalgam of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence with a value component added that is heavily influenced by culture (p. 46).

- As Alistair I. McFadyen, ***The Call to Personhood: A Christian Theory of the Individual in Social Relationships*** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) observes: 'Talk of human being in our society has been so completely secularised that we find it increasingly difficult to talk of humanity with reference to God in a way which is meaningful in our contemporary human situation' (p. 10).
- Wood, ***Epistemology***, passim.
- See Banks, ***Reenvisioning Theological Education***, pp. 223-245, for some suggestions.
- In effect, this is what the Church of England Report, Mission and Ministry, does by referring to 'Agreed Expectations for Ordinands' in conjunction with its Selection Criteria, pp. 40-42.
- Barnett, ***The Limits of Competence***, p.13 observes how in the 'modern' era the university has move from a place where knowledge was conceived as a broad educational development (process) to a place where knowledge is viewed as a commodity (product) acquired by those with competence. He also notes that the notion of product implies the meeting of some pre-specified end and uniformity of outcome, that is, capacities pre-identified by a labour market (p.43).

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