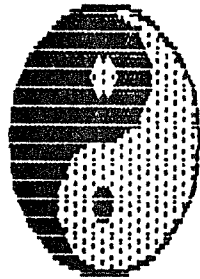


Kirschke, Gary
Historical theology in Southeast Asia
1981

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY



IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Gary A. Kirschke



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HISTORICAL THEOLOGY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
(PAST--PRESENT--FUTURE)

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY...

"What are all histories," said Oliver Cromwell, "but God manifesting himself, shaking down and trampling underfoot whatsoever he hath not planted".

A study of any history, then, is a study of God's activity on planet earth. In the study of "Historical Theology", however, God's activity among his own people is highlighted.

A definition

Historical Theology, as a theological discipline, is a study of the historical implementation of God's eternal plans on planet earth from creation to the present, with emphasis on God's special activity among his people (i.e., the Church).

Its scope

Historical Theology, then, encompasses virtually all of human history. The record of God's activities among his people from creation to the formation of the Christian church is based on the divinely inspired account and often classified as "Biblical History". The record of God's activities among his people since the formation of the Christian church is based on human--often uninspired--accounts and classified as "Church History". In addition, Historical Theology also includes the theological statements, i.e., confessional writings, produced during the historical implementation of God's plans on earth. This segment of Historical Theology is termed "Symbolics".

Its value

What is the value of Historical Theology in a Bible Institute or Seminary curriculum? For the national evangelist or pastor, a study of Biblical and Church History--as well as Symbolics--enables him to catch a glimpse of the grandeur of the Church and its ministry. For the individual who often works with small groups of people in virtual isolation, such a study allows him to realize that he, too, belongs to "the holy Church throughout the world"--a Church with a long and colourful history. For the individual who--because of his profession--often experiences the ridicule of his compatriots, such a study allows him to appreciate that he indeed does the very same work as that of "the glorious company of the apostles".

...IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

THE PAST

A brief history

The chronicle of theological institutions on WELS mission fields in southeast Asia is very brief. The Bible Institute in Hong Kong accepted its first students in the fall of 1980. The school's two year program of study is based on the concept of "training with service", and classes are conducted in the evenings as well as on weekends to accommodate working students. Indonesia and Taiwan established their Bible Institutes, whose curricula--in general--are based on the Hong Kong model, in 1984/5. A seminary--at present, the only one on WELS mission fields in southeast Asia--was opened in Hong Kong in the fall of 1984. The seminary's six year program is based on the concept of "training in service", with classes conducted at times suitable for the students, each of whom is an evangelist called and supported by a local congregation.

The historical record--albeit brief--of theological schools on WELS mission fields in southeast Asia, then, includes the design, initial implementation, and subsequent redesign of curricula for Bible institutes and seminaries. All of the curricula for the various schools included the discipline of "Historical Theology".

For the purpose of this review, however, the Bible Institute and Seminary in Hong Kong will serve as the basic model. The other schools, though, are somewhat similar to those in Hong Kong.

Identifying problems

During the design of the curricula, potential problems were identified by the missionary, either alone or in consultation with other missionaries engaged in similar work throughout southeast Asia. After initial implementation, real problems were identified both by the instructor, either alone or in consultation with other instructors, and by the students themselves. To date, it has been the students--who, upon completion of each course, are asked to evaluate it (cf. Appendix A)--that have supplied the most critical information.

In the design and implementation of the curricula for "Historical Theology", three basic problems became apparent. The first two problems were identified both by the instructors (missionaries) and the students. The third problem was identified solely by the students.

Stating the problems

1) Lack of suitable textbooks/resource books:

In Church History, both teachers and students suffer from a lack of books written in proper Chinese. As yet, no Chinese Christian has produced an original, comprehensive account which records either the history of the church in the world or the history of the church in China. The few books available are literal translations of older, limited works in English (e.g., "A History of the Christian Church" by L. Qualben and "History of the Christian Church" by W. Walker).

2) Difficulty/inaccuracy of translation from English to Chinese:

In Church History, it is very difficult and time-consuming for the expatriate instructor to transliterate--from English to Chinese--the many names of people and places. In Symbolics, the only existing translation of "The Book of Concord" employs a type of Chinese which is antiquated and often vague.

foreign, wooden or stilted

3) Perceived irrelevance of subject matter:

In Church History, the students, whose "world view" as Chinese prompts them to envision themselves at the centre of the universe, find little relevance in--and, sometimes, even take offense at--a religion which is depicted as developing "away from" China, i.e., from the Middle East westward (not eastward) through Europe to the Americas. In Symbolics, the students, who--as Chinese--have an aversion to specific detail and who--as Christians--have come to revere the Bible as the source of doctrine, have little interest in the Lutheran Confessions which they perceive as verbose and a secondary (unnecessary?) source.

THE PRESENT

The present curricula of the Bible Institute and Seminary in Hong Kong (cf. Appendix B) reflect a studied attempt to provide a course of study which "shall follow in general the theological disciplines which the WELS prescribes for its seminary in Mequon (Wisconsin, USA), adapted where necessary to fit the specific needs of the ... field (i.e., Chinese context), especially as these needs relate to the language and culture of the field". In addition, the present curricula also attempt to incorporate solutions to those problems which were identified in the past.

Identifying solutions

Potential solutions for problems in the curricula were determined by the missionary in consultation with other missionaries, local church leaders, and students. After solutions had been identified, they were incorporated into the curricula on a trial basis. After trial implementation, i.e., at the end of the course, both instructor and students were asked to evaluate the revised course (cf. Appendix A). If necessary, further adjustments then were made.

In actual practice to date in Hong Kong, each course has been revised every time it has been offered.

Stating the solutions

1) Lack of suitable textbooks/resource books:

In Church History, this problem has been resolved partially by enlisting the help of two church members, university graduates who are fluent in English. These members studied the general courses (tracing the historical development of the church in the world) at SALEM's Bible Institute and Seminary with English as the medium of instruction. They studied the specific course (tracing the historical development of the church in China) at another local seminary, regularly meeting with the missionary to discuss what they had learned. After these members completed the study of Church History, they worked with the missionary in revising the courses, which they (i.e., the members) themselves now teach in Chinese, utilizing existing textbooks as well as auxiliary notes which they have prepared.

2) Difficulty/inaccuracy of translation from English to Chinese:

In Church History, the problem has been resolved by enlisting the help of two church members who now teach the courses (cf. above). In Symbolics, the need for an accurate translation of "The Book of Concord" still exists. At present, the students --after hearing the missionary's explanation--suggest possible revisions in the translation.

3) Perceived irrelevance of subject matter:

In Church History, the problem has been resolved by correlating major events in each period of church history with contemporary events in Chinese history. In addition, the study of church history is presented as an exercise in tracing the development of the church from its beginnings in the Middle East to its present expression among the Chinese people. In Symbolics, the problem has been resolved by demonstrating the similarity between the teachings of Scripture and the Confessions. In the introductory course, selected passages from the confessional writings enable the student to discover that the basic doctrines of Scripture (learned from the Bible directly in another course) are expressed in the Lutheran Confessions. In other words, a specific doctrine of the Bible is the subject of each class. During the class, the student is introduced to readings from various confessional writings which demonstrate that the doctrine, already accepted by the student, is expressed in the Confessions. In subsequent courses, the Scriptural basis of the Confessions is emphasized, while their relevance to the present Chinese church is discussed regularly.

THE FUTURE

Past experience, albeit brief, in designing--and re-designing--the curricula for the Bible Institute and Seminary in Hong Kong suggests the probability of further revisions in the future. On the one hand, there is the on-going need to "follow ... the theological disciplines which the WELS prescribes for its seminary in Mequon (Wisconsin, USA)". On the other hand, there seems to be the need--also on-going--to make adaptations in the search for a thoroughly contextualized model of theological education.

Determining future direction

In determining further revisions in the curricula itself, especially those "necessary to fit the specific (language and culture) needs of the field", the expatriate missionary's ability is limited. For this reason, additional changes only are made either at the suggestion of or after consultation with--and approval from--local church leaders and students. From this process of "consultation and concensus", then, come the directions for future adaptations in the curricula.

To facilitate this process, a simple plan for "designing a contextualized model for theological education" has been developed (cf. Appendix C). According to this plan--but without going into detail--the "finished product", i.e., the pastor (who he is, what he does, and how he does it) is defined before the "finishing process", i.e., content and method of a program for theological education, is designed...or re-designed.

In the present Hong Kong context, it has been difficult to define precisely the "finished product". It has been especially difficult to define the form of ministry, i.e., how the pastor will function in the future. On the other hand, it has been relatively simple to define the standards for the ministry--standards which are applicable irregardless of the forms of ministry. Pastors in Hong Kong--again, without going into detail--are expected to perform their ministry 1) in conformity with the teachings revealed in the Bible and expressed in the Lutheran Confessions and 2) in a manner appropriate to the Chinese/Hong Kong context.

The curricula for the Bible Institute and Seminary in Hong Kong has been designed--and will be re-designed--to assist pastors to perform their ministry according to the defined standards. By following "in general the theological disciplines which the WELS prescribes for its seminary in Mequon", the schools equip individuals who can perform their ministry in conformity with the teachings revealed in the Bible and expressed in the Lutheran Confessions. By making--after a process of "consultation and concensus"--revisions "necessary to fit the specific

needs of the ... field", the school equips individuals who can perform their ministry in a manner appropriate to the Chinese/Hong Kong context.

To date, the revisions--suggested by local church leaders as well as students--have been proposed for only two disciplines: Historical Theology and Practical Theology.

Stating possible directions

On the basis of proposals submitted, a revision in the curricula for Historical Theology at the seminary level is being considered (cf. Appendix D).

In Church History, the proposed revision envisions a greater emphasis on the history of the Christian church in China. This change is being considered, not only to accommodate the Chinese "world view", but also to satisfy the need to understand the past development as well as the present condition and future direction of the church in the Peoples' Republic of China.

In Symbolics, a course in which confessional writings of the Christian church in the Orient are examined is included in the curricula. This course--basically a seminar--is being considered in an attempt to assist students in preparing a contextualized confessional statement.

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
(PAST--PRESENT--FUTURE)

AN OBSERVATION

In southeast Asia, Historical Theology and Practical Theology have been the theological disciplines most suited to adaptations "necessary to fit the specific needs of the ... field". By making changes primarily in these two disciplines, the schools in Hong Kong--as well as in Indonesia and Taiwan--can contribute to the development of "workmen who need not be ashamed" either before God...or in their own culture.

東南亞路德會聖經學院
SOUTHEAST ASIA LUTHERAN BIBLE INSTITUTE

COURSE EVALUATION 課程評核

COURSE
課程 _____

To help the Bible Institute continue to improve its curriculum and thereby to serve God's people better, please complete the statements below.

為協助聖經學院不斷改善其開辦之課程而藉以更佳地服事神的子民，請完成下列句子。

When I enrolled in this course, I expected...

當我註冊就讀此課程時，我期望....

Now that I have completed this course, I feel...

我現已修畢這課程，我感到....

The most enjoyable/meaningful aspect of the course was...

這課程最令人回味/有意義的一面是....

One suggestion for improving the course is...

改善這課程的一個建議是....

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

BIBLE INSTITUTE

Similar courses

Church History...

Early Christian church (Hong Kong, Taiwan)

Content:

A brief study of the formative years of the Christian church, using the Acts of the Apostles as the basis. The actual development of the church as well as factors influencing its development are examined.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to define the characteristics of an "ideal" church.

Basic church history (Hong Kong, Indonesia, Taiwan)

Content:

A general history of the Christian church from its humble beginnings in Jerusalem to its present activity in China/Indonesia. The formation of the church, its doctrinal divisions, and its missionary activity are studied.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to trace the expansion of the church from Jerusalem in the 1st century to China/Indonesia in the 20th century.

Symbolics...

Lutheran Confessions (Hong Kong, Indonesia)

Content:

A general introduction to the confessional writings of the Lutheran church. The historical setting and basis of each confessional statement is examined. The similarity between basic Biblical doctrines and the Lutheran confessions is demonstrated.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to identify the unique features of each confessional statement and to demonstrate that the Lutheran confessions express the basic teachings of the Bible.

BIBLE INSTITUTE

Distinctive courses

Church History...

Old Testament History (Taiwan)

Content:

A brief study of major Old Testament events in their historical setting, from Genesis to the intertestamental period.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to outline God's dealings with his chosen people until the time of Christ.

Symbolics... (Indonesia)

Content:

A thorough study of the background and contents of the Augsburg Confession with correlated readings in the Apology.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to state and defend the teachings of the Augsburg Confession.

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

SEMINARY

Provisional syllabus (Hong Kong)

Church History (required)...

Church History 1

Content:

A study of the historical development of the Christian church from A.D. 30 to 500. Major events (which are correlated with contemporary events in Chinese history), figures, and factors of the period are identified.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to trace the development of the Christian church from A.D. 30 to 500, identifying major events, figures, and factors as well as their influence on the Chinese church in the 20th century.

Church History 2

Content:

A study of the historical development of the Christian church from A.D. 500 to 1500. Major events (which are correlated with contemporary events in Chinese history), figures, and factors of the period are identified. The advent of Nestorian Christianity into China is examined.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to trace the development of the Christian church from A.D. 500 to 1500, identifying major events, figures, and factors as well as their influence on the Chinese church in the 20th century.

Church History 3

Content:

A study of the historical development of the Christian church from A.D. 1500 to the present. Major events (which are correlated with contemporary events in Chinese history), figures, and factors of the period are identified. The advent of Roman Catholic and Protestant Christianity into China is examined.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to trace the development of the Christian church from A.D. 1500 to the present, identifying major events, figures, and factors as well as their influence on the Chinese church in the 20th century.

Church History 4

Content:

A study of the historical development of the Christian church in China. Major events, figures, and factors in the process are identified.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to trace the development of the Christian church in China, identifying major events, figures, and factors as well as their influence on the Chinese church in the 20th century.

Church History (elective)...

History of Lutheranism

Content:

A study of the historical development of the Lutheran Church from the Reformation to its present expression in China. Major events (which are correlated with contemporary events in Chinese history), figures, and factors are identified.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to trace the development of the Lutheran Church from the Reformation to its present expression in China, identifying major events, figures, and factors as well as their influence on the Lutheran church among the Chinese in the 20th century.

Symbolics (required)...

Lutheran Confessions 1

Content:

A study of the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church. The historical background, Scriptural basis, and content of the 3 ecumenical creeds, Augsburg Confession, and the Apology are examined.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to define the historical background of each confessional writing, as well as identifying its Scriptural basis and determining its relevance for the Chinese church in the 20th century.

Lutheran Confessions 2

Content:

A study of the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church. The historical background, Scriptural basis, and content of the Smalcaid Articles and Formula of Concord are examined.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to define the historical background of each confessional writing, as well as identifying its Scriptural basis, and determining its relevance for the Chinese church in the 20th century.

DESIGNING A CONTEXTUALIZED MODEL FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION.....

To design a program (content & method) for theological education, the "end-product", i.e., the minister (who he is, what he does), needs to be defined first.

To define the "end-product", i.e., the minister (who he is, what he does), the type of ministry to be performed needs to be determined first.

In other words...

Step 1: determine the ministry to be performed

Step 2: define the minister (who he is, what he does)

Step 3: design the content and method of training

Note: Steps 1 & 2 'performed' by field staff and identified in field's strategy statement. Step 3 performed by individual(s) responsible for training the ministerium.

	SCRIPTURE	CULTURE	INTEGRATION
<p><u>WHAT</u> is ministry?</p>	<p>In broad sense:</p> <p>In narrow sense:</p>	<p>As practiced by existing churches in culture:</p>	<p>What could/should it be?</p>
<p><u>HOW</u> is ministry performed (times, places, methods)?</p>		<p>As practiced by existing churches in culture?</p>	<p>How could/should ministry be performed (times, places, methods)?</p>
<p><u>WHO</u> participates in ministry?</p>	<p>-----</p> <p>how are 'ministers' to be selected?</p> <p>how are 'ministers' to be trained?</p>	<p>As practiced by existing churches in culture?</p> <p>-----</p> <p>who leaders in culture?</p> <p>how are leaders selected?</p> <p>how are leaders trained?</p>	<p>Who could/should participate in ministry?</p> <p>To what extent are 'ministers' representative of people whom they serve?</p> <p>How could/should 'ministers' be selected?</p> <p>How could/should 'ministers' be trained?</p>

I. Determine the nature of the ministry

The ministry involves...

The ministry is performed...

(when?)

(where?)

(how?)

***For this type of ministry, we need-----

II. Define the minister

The minister is...(being)

The minister is able to...(doing)

In other words, upon completion of training,
the graduate ("end-product") is...
the graduate ("end-product") is able to...

***To produce this type of minister, we need to-----

III. Design the program (content & method) for training ministers

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

SEMINARY

Proposed syllabus (Hong Kong)

Church History (required)...

Church History 1

Content:

A study of the historical development of the Christian church from A.D. 30 to 1500. Major events (which are correlated with contemporary events in Chinese history), figures, and factors of the period are identified. The advent of Nestorian Christianity into China is examined.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to trace the development of the Christian church from A.D. 30 to 1500, identifying major events, figures, and factors as well as their influence on the Chinese church in the 20th century.

Church History 2

Content:

A study of the historical development of the Christian church from A.D. 1500 to the present. Major events (which are correlated with contemporary events in Chinese history), figures, and factors of the period are identified. The advent of Roman Catholic and Protestant Christianity into China is examined.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to trace the development of the Christian church from A.D. 1500 to the present, identifying major events, figures, and factors as well as their influence on the Chinese church in the 20th century.

Church History 3

Content:

A study of the historical development of the Christian church in China from its beginning to 1949. Major events, figures, and factors in the process are identified.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to trace the development of the Christian church in China from its beginning to 1949, identifying major events, figures, and factors as well as their influence on the present expression of the church in China.

Church History 4

Content:

A study of the historical development of the Christian church in China since 1949. Major events, figures, and factors in the process are identified.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to trace the development of the Christian church in China since 1949, identifying major events, figures, and factors as well as their influence of the present expression of the church in China.

Church History (elective)...

History of Lutheranism

Content:

A study of the historical development of the Lutheran Church from the Reformation to its present expression in China. Major events (which are correlated with contemporary events in Chinese history), figures, and factors are identified.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to trace the development of the Lutheran Church from the Reformation to its present expression in China, identifying major events, figures, and factors as well as their influence on the Lutheran church among the Chinese in the 20th century.

Christianity and Chinese culture

Content:

A study of the impact of Christianity in Chinese culture as well as the effect of Chinese culture on Christianity. Chinese culture is analyzed, and factors which have helped and hindered the spread of Christianity among the Chinese are identified.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to design a model for church growth in the Chinese context.

Symbolics (required)...

Lutheran Confessions 1

Content:

A study of the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church. The historical background, Scriptural basis, and content of the 3 ecumenical creeds, Augsburg Confession, and the Apology are examined.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to define the historical background of each confessional writing, as well as identifying its Scriptural basis and determining its relevance for the Chinese church in the 20th century.

Lutheran Confessions 2

Content:

A study of the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church. The historical background, Scriptural basis, and content of the Smalcald Articles and Formula of Concord are examined.

Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to define the historical background of each confessional writing, as well as identifying its Scriptural basis, and determining its relevance for the Chinese church in the 20th century.

Symbolics (elective)...

Oriental Confessional Writings

Content:

A study of existing confessional statements produced by churches in China and surrounding countries. The historical setting and content of each writing is analyzed. Similarities to and differences from Lutheran confessional writings are identified.

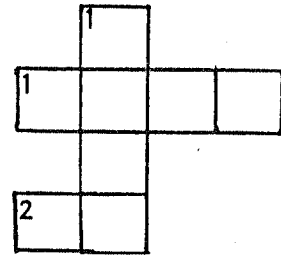
Objective:

At the end of the course, each student is able to produce a confessional statement, conforming with the teachings of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions as well as being suitable in the Chinese context.

How well do you know southeast Asia?

ACROSS

- 1 - The year in which the Republic of China established its base on Taiwan
- 2 - The number of major cultural groups in Indonesia



DOWN

- 1 - The year in which Hong Kong again becomes a part of the Peoples' Republic of China

...and WELS theological schools in southeast Asia?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- 1) The number of instructors at the Bible Institute in Taiwan:
2 - 3 - 4
- 2) The number of students currently enroled in the Bible Institute in Indonesia:
5 - 9 - 13
- 3) The number of people who have studied at the Bible Institute in Hong Kong since its opening in 1980:
46 - 67 - 88