

Delivered at TEASA Workshop

Practical Ways to Promote the Piety of Our Students.

Introduction

Many theological academies do well on the vocational and academic side of the development of theological student but don't do as well on the spiritual formation side of the matter.

John Ochola underlined the need for balance when he wrote:

“Theological education by its very nature must be spiritual, internal, practical and vocational”

I agree with Ochola. In this workshop the focus is promotion of Piety. We will therefore focus on three things about it:

Exposition

1. Piety is the ultimate goal of Theological Education

Piety is defined as:

In the Old Testament(Ex 14:31)-piety is often referred to as ‘fear of the Lord’ The primary meaning of the fear of God is **veneration and honor, reverence and awe**. Murray says this fear is the soul of godliness. It is the attitude that elicits from our hearts adoration and love, **reverence and honor**.

In the New Testament (Matt 6:1-18) - a result of a relationship with Jesus Christ

In some theological schools the development of piety in students is called “Spiritual Formation” Those sent out to be preachers, teachers and church leaders should not only know about the eternal God but should know first hand the One to whom the scriptures bear witness

2. The promoters of Piety-

- a. Specialist? Pastoral Theology department?
- b. Faculty, staff and students(Mature)? Yes

We can take our cue from Timothy and Titus who were sent out to be Paul's deputies to build Churches and leaders.

i. They themselves needed to qualify for leadership on the same basis as the leaders they appointed-they had godly speech and conduct (1Tim 4:12). where to train themselves in godliness(1Tim 4:7), seek to nourish themselves in the truth of the faith and in good teaching(1Tim 4:6); set a good example for the flock(1Tim 4:12; Tit 2:7f), everyone could see their progress(1Tim 4:15) and where to pass on sound teaching (2Tim 1:13f and 2:2; 3:14; Tit 2:1).

Similarly

ii. In the selection of faculty godliness and the mentoring of their spiritual development must take precedence over any kind of academic criteria if they are to be helpful to students

Tim Dearborn's prioritized list of ten qualities of a faculty member for theological institutions:

What is needed, then, is a steady stream of new faculty members who combine academic excellence with personal godliness

3.The promotion of Piety.

- a. Encourage students to engage in private devotions
- b. Encouraging students to be part of a local church
- c. Organise a Chapel
- d. Teach students to balancing academic pressure and faith life
- e. Offer a course on spiritual formation
- f. Encouraging the teacher student relationship
- g. Encourage the development of community life

Conclusion

1. We may graduate students who are intellectually elite, highly motivated academically, prepared for the best graduate schools and successful once there. But if their hearts are not inclined to God, we have failed to realize our vision.
2. Let us therefore labor to promote piety in ourselves and our students under God.