



跨越族群的情义
Cross-Cultural Affection

涂恩友院长荣休文集
Festschrift in Honour of Dr Thu En Yu

CROSS-CULTURAL AFFECTION: *FESTSCHRIFT* IN
HONOUR OF DR. THU EN YU

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FOREWORD

Paul Newman

The *Festschrift* that this book represents is a fitting tribute to the person and work of Dr. Stephen Thu En Yu. It is fitting in several ways. The book reflects some of the main values of ecumenicity and contextualisation that Dr. Thu espouses and puts into practice during his career of more than forty years of service in the churches and society of Sabah, Malaysia and South East Asia. The book reflects the missiological faith and commitment that Dr. Thu has consistently demonstrated. This book comprises works and researches of scholars from several countries and cultures who are familiar with Dr. Thu. It presents the wider scope of interests that are consistent with Dr. Thu's values and history and that the relevant scholars deem them to be appropriate to contribute in honour of Dr. Thu.

The contributions in English, Chinese and Malay demonstrate important aspects of theology and ecclesiology appropriate for honouring Dr. Thu.

The Editorial Committee of this book deserves a lot of credit for the concept of the book and for bringing the book successfully into publication.

In this Foreword, I will first refer to some of the highlights of Dr. Thu's career, including some of the responsible positions he has held. I will then cite the titles of some of his writings. These demonstrate the important contributions he has made during his working years. Finally, I will try briefly to show how the varied chapters in this book are consistent with the main values that Dr. Thu embodies in his person and work.

Dr. Thu began his theological education in the ecumenical and scholarly context of the Theology Division (now The Divinity School) of Chung Chi College in the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He excelled in the scholarly context and went on to earn a Master of Theology degree and a Doctor of Theology degree from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He also earned a Doctor of Sacred Theology degree from San Francisco Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California. During a sabbatical leave, he did post-doctoral research in Yale University in the United States.

With this academic record, one might wonder if Thu En Yu would be forever an academician with perhaps secondary commitment to church work and social commitments. It was not the case. After his first degree in Hong Kong, Thu En Yu returned to Sabah and was sent by his Chief Pastor to be a missionary to the indigenous people of Sabah. Nine years later, he was elected to be the Chief Pastor of the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia; the post was later amended to be Bishop.

Dr. Thu's years as a missionary to the indigenous people of Sabah confirmed his commitment to contextualisation, a preoccupation that eventually led to the inclusion of theological education for indigenous people in the Sabah Theological Seminary. Dr. Thu was instrumental in forming the seminary in 1988. Since then, as Principal of the seminary, Dr. Thu has enabled and consolidated this programme of indigenous theological education. Besides providing study programmes for indigenous people, Sabah Theological Seminary has also provided study programmes in both English and Chinese, possibly making Sabah Theological Seminary unique in its ecumenical and contextual character.

Dr. Thu has also led the seminary to be open and ecumenical in a broader sense of having relationships with the prevailing Muslim population of Sabah and the rest of Malaysia which is, officially speaking, a Muslim country.

Dr. Thu's ecumenical commitment was also evident in his holding of ecumenical positions. Among other important positions, he was one of the founders and President of the Sabah Council of Churches, Deputy President of the Council of Churches of Malaysia, Deputy President of the Christian Federation of Malaysia, President of the Malaysia Association of Theological Schools and Chairman of the Lutheran World Federation Mission in the Mekong Region. He is presently the Immediate Past President of the Association of Theological Education in South East Asia.

Dr. Thu's writings reflect his ecumenical and contextualization commitments. Here are some of the titles of his work:

- *The Christian Encounter with Animism: The Christian Mission among the Rungus People of Sabah*, (Hong Kong: Chung Chi College, 1977).
- "Muhibbah": *The Church's Ministry of Reconciliation in the Pluralistic Society of Malaysia*, (Berkeley, California: San Francisco Theological Seminary, 1995).
- *A Quest for a Malaysia-Sabah Racial Identity: A Cultural Hermeneutical Perspective*, (Hong Kong: Association for Theological Education in South East Asia, 2007). (Chinese title)
- *Ethnic Identity and Consciousness in Sabah: A Christian Perspective in the Management of Communal Conflicts in Malaysia*, (Kota Kinabalu: Sabah Theological Seminary, 2010).

If one scans the titles of the chapters in this *Festschrift* one can see that the interests and commitments, which Dr. Thu has maintained throughout his life as a missionary to the indigenous people, the Bishop of the Basel Christian Church, the Principal of Sabah Theological Seminary and a leader in national and international Christian organizations, are reflected.

The chapters in this book constitute very important historical and theological studies that are not readily available elsewhere. For example, see the chapters on the history of churches in Sabah and Hakka Christianity and other Asian contexts by Zhang Delai (in English and Chinese), Karl Rennstich, I-To Loh, Wilfred John, and Chung Siong Mee. For essays on missiology, see David Wu, Sylvia Jeanes, Scott Sunquist and Chen Lip Siong (in Chinese). For chapters on theological education, see Paul Newman, P.K. Shum (in Chinese), Huang Bo He (in Chinese), and Victor Piltzner. For chapters focussing on contextualisation, see Ulf Metzner, Olaf Schumann, Daud Soesilo, and Daniel Gloor (in Malay). The chapter by Yeow Choo Lak on ecological justice broadens the scope of ecumenicity to include the whole world that is facing crises and challenges of ecological disaster.

Finally, this *Festschrift* in honour of Dr. Thu En Yu is a rich and rewarding contribution to the literature coming from South East Asia. As such, it truly honours a person who has himself made many rich and rewarding contributions to Sabah, Malaysia and South East Asia.

The Role of Ecumenical Theological Education in Church Unity and Global Leadership Development

Paul W. Newman

One could say that ecumenical theological education is a matter of faith, hope and love. Christian spirituality is the basis for ecumenical thinking and practice. Faith provides the theology for ecumenism. Hope is the power of ecumenical mission in theological education, and love is the central element in the ecclesiological covenant to seek first the kingdom or realm of God in the whole inhabited world, the *oikumene*. All these parts of Christian spirituality are operative in ecumenical activity.

The term ecumenical as it is understood within the Church basically means having respect for the beliefs of people from other Christian traditions besides one's own. They are respected because those other Christians care passionately about Jesus and God as we do, even if some of their beliefs may differ from some of our own. Ecumenism is based on the belief that God and Christ are "bigger than both of us," and this requires us to be respectful of others who are committed in faith to God and Jesus. This is a belief that God and Christ and the Holy Spirit are present and active all over the world, not only in one's own community of faith.

The Christian Church has used the term ecumenical to refer to internal relationships within the world-wide Christian community, but the term might also be extended in meaning to embrace the whole human race. The Bible and our tradition tell us that the spirit of God is active in all peoples and all places. There is, therefore, a sound theological basis for Christians to be ecumenical in the broader sense, pursuing multicultural and

cross cultural relations as part of their missiological and ecclesiastical activities, including theological education.

Some people are saying now that we are living, as perhaps never before, in a time of the Spirit, a time when there is a growing consensus among human beings that the Spirit is the Creator who works in the whole creation and in all creatures, including all people. This kind of faith inspires and undergirds ecumenical activities including ecumenical theological education.

This kind of faith is surely supported by the Bible that speaks of the Spirit "blowing where it wills" and going out to the ends of the world. This faith acknowledges that the God of the Bible is the One who said via Amos "Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O people of Israel?...Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Capthor and the Arameans from Kir?" (Amos 9: 7) This faith hears the message of Jesus in his first sermon in his home town. "The truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when...Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." (Luke 4: 25-27) This message made Jesus' hearers angry enough to try and kill him. Fortunately, now in our world's "global village," people everywhere are prepared to accept the idea of a global Creator who cares about the whole creation and all its people and creatures. Ecumenicity has become a most reasonable and necessary faith. It concurs with the story of the Good Samaritan who, although from a despised social group, is held up by Jesus as the example for ethical emulation.

Ecumenicity in theological education sometimes extends to reflect the broader ecumenical vision that goes beyond Christian collaboration to include interfaith ecumenicity. In the Toronto

School of Theology there was a course taught jointly by a Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhist professor and a Christian theological professor. Emmanuel College, The United Church of Canada's seminary in the Toronto School of Theology now has a permanent Muslim professor on its faculty offering courses available to both Christian and Muslim students, as well as to other students in the University of Toronto. At the Chinese University of Hong Kong where Thu En Yu and Pang Ken Phin, a former faculty member at Sabah Theological Seminary, received their initial theological education, the former Theology Division, now the Divinity School, exists in very close cooperation with the Department of Philosophy and Religion that offers courses on religions other than Christianity. Their professors include Confucian scholars and persons of other faiths than Christianity.

In Sabah the very existence of Sabah Theological Seminary was enabled when Thu En Yu went to the Muslim Prime Minister of Malaysia and demonstrated the ecumenical respect and good will of the Christian community, thereby earning respect and good will in return from the government of Malaysia. Thu for more than twenty five years has led the Seminary and Church by preaching and teaching and embodying ecumenical faith. Other faculty, students and seminary supporters no doubt contributed to the formation of ecumenical theological education in Sabah Theological Seminary but Thu's role as Principal and former Bishop of the Basel Christian Church was singularly important.

Martin Buber, the great Jewish philosopher and theologian, said that "Love is to step into the presence of the other and listen." Ecumenical thinking, by this definition, is a form of love. In order to know, in Spirit and in truth, one has to have an attitude of open and receptive respect even to those from different traditions than one's own. This attitude is the essence of

ecumenical theological education, as well as a central characteristic of Christian spirituality.

Ecumenicity in theological education is not always reflected so much in institutional organization as it is in the attitudes and educational approaches taken by the faculty and students. Thus you can find Lutheran, Anglican and Baptist seminaries where ecumenical faith prevails despite the singularity of the seminary tradition.

Ecumenicity in theological education can have its challenges. The people outside our own particular tradition may have beliefs that differ quite definitely from some of our cherished beliefs. How could Roman Catholic students, for example, be mixed in with Baptist or Reformed students? Yet in some places Roman Catholic students are allowed to mix with Protestant students. In seminaries located within universities this often happens. In the Toronto School of Theology, for example, more than one Roman Catholic seminary belongs to the cluster of nine seminaries. Somehow the different theological and ecclesiastical traditions cope with the issues of preserving their essential features while allowing ecumenical cooperation as much as possible. Sometimes the wisdom of Jesus needs to be applied in situations of doctrinal or ecclesiastical conflict. "If you remember that your brother or sister has something against you ...first go and be reconciled to your brother or sister..." (Matt 5: 24) Ecumenical dialogue may be a necessary and ongoing part of ecumenical theological education.

Ecumenicity in theological education includes a commitment to promote critical thinking as a basic goal of higher education. Critical thinking does not mean negative or skeptical thinking. It means asking all the questions, for the sake of truth, that should be asked about any given issue. Critical thinking is a constituent

element in loving God with all of one's mind, just as the first great commandment requires.

It is necessary to note that ecumenical theological education is not to be confused with a bland liberal stance that uncritically accepts all ideas as equally valid. Ecumenicity should not be confused with standing on the fence to observe every claim to truth with indecisive indifference. Critical thinking aims to find the truth and must, therefore, hold that some claims to truth do not measure up to the standards of truth. Ethnocentrism, bigotry, destructive biases and willful ignorance cannot be respected as legitimate elements in truth seeking. Ecumenical faith and love are not doctrinally indifferent or neutral. Disagreements in belief are inevitable. Hence, Bishop John A.T. Robinson wrote a book entitled *But That I Can't Believe*. Ecumenicity is as respectful as possible, but it includes keen and critical discernment.

When ecumenical seminaries exist within universities there are sometimes situations in which the seminaries can model a genuine ecumenical, and yet critical, stance for other departments in the university. Some philosophy departments are so dominated by one particular philosophical approach that all others are dismissed as entirely without merit and unworthy of participating in the philosophical endeavour. Similarly, some science departments deny legitimacy to any approaches to truth besides their own. The ecumenical stance of the seminary can provide a useful reminder of the fact that the truth is bigger than any one version of it. Ecumenical seminaries can serve a legitimate missiological function as models of peaceful coexistence for society at large as well as for the churches.

There is a kind of humility involved in ecumenicity. It is like the humility of St. Paul when he says that we have "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ but we

have this treasure in clay jars so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us." (2 Corinthians 4: 6-7) Ecumenical thinking has such humility but it can also have the passion and commitment that is characteristic of the Apostle Paul.

Ecumenical theological education requires hope as well as faith and love. In faculty development, for example, hope is an inescapable part. Before the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology was formed, seminaries in South East Asia, as elsewhere in the developing world, used to send promising young scholars to America, Great Britain or Europe hoping that they would return to their homeland after getting their respectable academic qualifications. For a variety of reasons many such promising professors did not return to their homelands. Some married and then remained in the countries of their northern spouses. Others were recognized as excellent prospects for recruitment to teach where they had shown their promise by academic achievement. The Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia addressed the needs in faculty development by organizing the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology, an ecumenical and cross cultural system of developing promising candidates to be educated in South East Asia and to remain there after graduation.

Thu En Yu participated in the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology as a graduate student earning a master's degree and a doctoral degree in Asia. As the Principal of Sabah Theological Seminary he increased the capacity of the seminary to offer degree programs for the development of promising faculty for other seminaries in South East Asia. The library in Sabah Theological Seminary was enlarged by hundreds of books donated by retiring professors from Canada and elsewhere so that credible resources were available to enable

graduate degree programs in specific areas of study. Visiting professors were invited to teach in the graduate degree programs. Eventually professors who had been educated in the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology were available to teach in Sabah Theological Seminary.

This laudable and effective system of faculty development was possible only on an ecumenical basis. The candidates for faculty development had to have ecumenical faith to go to seminaries of differing theological traditions in South East Asia, and their home institutions had to have ecumenical hope to make the system work.

In founding Sabah Theological Seminary in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, Thu and the other founders of the seminary envisaged and achieved a distinctive ecumenical and cross cultural seminary with programs taught in three languages. This was and is a very remarkable and, perhaps, unique accomplishment. It has become obvious that this cross cultural and ecumenical institution is playing a significant role in strengthening the fabric of Malaysian society in Sabah. It helps develop and support a peaceful and harmonious society. "Blessed are the peacemakers," Jesus said, "for they shall be called the children of God." (Matt 5: 9)

Theological education is certainly a major element in the formation of any church denomination. Its goal, therefore, should be to develop and strengthen what have been called the essential marks of the Church, namely to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. The desire for unity in the Church is based on the prayer of Jesus cited in John 17: 11, "Protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one." This prayer alone should provide sufficient motivation for ecumenicity. But it takes firm commitment, nonetheless, and a lot

of hope for ecumenicity to actually take place. This demonstrates the fact that ecumenicity is a spiritual matter.

Holiness is obviously also a spiritual matter. Holiness is centred on righteousness. It has to do with commitment to making the world right, as the Holy Creator intends. Holiness is not sanctimonious. It is not the intention to make a show of piety. Holiness is what we pray for when we say in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." Holiness, therefore, requires an ecumenical outlook because making the world right cannot conceivably happen without the cooperation of all kinds of people from many different human traditions. It also requires unwavering hope because not all people have the ecumenical commitment needed to work effectively together to make the world what God intends.

Catholicity is also a function of ecumenicity and *vice versa*. Catholicity does not refer to any one church such as the Roman Catholic Church. It means "(u)niversal, of interest or use to all, of wide sympathies, all-embracing" (The Oxford Dictionary). To be catholic in faith is to recognize that all Christians are followers of Jesus and God and deserve, therefore, to be respected. Catholicity is almost identical to the meaning of ecumenicity. It refers more to the attitude or faith stance whereas ecumenicity refers also to the practices of cooperation that are dependent on a catholic or universal outlook. Ecumenicity has broader meaning when it includes respect and cooperation beyond the Christian Church. One does not normally speak of catholicity outside the Christian Church. The fact that being catholic in faith has so universally been recognized as an essential mark of Christianity reinforces the need for theological education to be ecumenical.

To be apostolic means that the Church should be consistent with the faith of the apostles as much as possible. Modern Christians are not called upon to fashion a new religion to meet new circumstances in the world. They should be consonant in basic ways with the scriptural basis of Christianity that was the legacy of the apostles of Jesus and their Hebrew tradition of faith. Ecumenicity serves the intention to be apostolic because the scriptures are read and interpreted differently by different Christian traditions. This can lead to some tension in ecumenical relations if the scriptures are interpreted differently by the different denominations in the seminary. For example, there used to be different positions on divorce held by Anglicans and Methodists or Lutherans and Presbyterians. Sometimes this meant that divorced professors or students would not be welcomed in seminaries where the position on divorce was to strictly forbid it.

Ecumenical seminaries have to work out their positions on scriptural interpretation, especially since it is so central to all ecumenical cooperation. The denominations participating in ecumenical seminaries will have extra reasons for working out their positions on scriptural authority and interpretation. There is usually a widely recognized difference in scriptural interpretation between churches belonging to evangelical or fundamentalist traditions and those widely recognized as "ecumenical" churches. The latter are usually committed to historical, "critical" approaches to scripture whereas the more conservative denominations claim verbal inerrancy for scripture and give it absolute authority. This claim of absolute authority for scripture does not in fact make for more apostolicity in the denomination because various interpretations of scripture are unavoidable and those claiming verbal inerrancy for scripture often have interpretations that differ from those of other fundamentalist churches. Lack of ecumenical humility and respect for differing

traditions and interpretations indicates a version of faith that is not in fact apostolic like the faith of Peter who said "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation everyone who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to God....God is Lord of all." (Acts 10: 34-36).

Historical and "critical" approaches to scripture are as spiritual as fundamentalist claims for scriptural inerrancy. To engage scripture with all the tools of historical investigation is to love God with the whole mind and heart, as the first great commandment requires. It is also to acknowledge the integrity of scholars who seek the truth with the latest tools of research, truth which may require some changes in Christian theology. The knowledge explosion in the modern world has profound implications for theological scholarship. An ecumenical approach to theological education will participate in the turmoil of new historical discoveries out of faithful commitment to the God who says "Behold I make all things new." (Revelation 21: 5)

There is another important issue in considering the validity and necessity of ecumenical theological education, namely, contextuality. This is the necessity of framing the gospel message and the church's outreach to people of a particular culture in terms that resonate with their particular cultural language and heritage. Jesus asked at one time "Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give him a stone?" (Matthew 7: 9) To give the gospel to people in a different culture without making it contextually familiar to them is to cast it like a stone at them. Contextuality in theology and mission is, therefore, a requirement of love as well as good sense. It is also a corollary of broader ecumenical faith. The recipients of the gospel message have their own traditions and insights about God that are worthy of hearing and sharing. Since God is universal and has not been without witnesses in the

whole world, Christian mission must take the form of respectful dialogue that cannot be other than contextual.

Asian Christians have had the experience of non-contextual missionary approaches as well as some dedicated ecumenical, contextual approaches. There have been some great contextual theologians and church leaders in Asia. One remembers Kosuke Koyama with his Water Buffalo Theology and D.T. Niles who will be remembered always for saying "preaching the gospel to those of other cultures is like one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread."

Sabah Theological Seminary is a place where contextuality is honoured in practice as well as theory. The different languages in use and the cultural expressions shown by the different groups in the seminary demonstrate commitment to contextuality. The seminary has been and will continue to be an outstanding example of genuine ecumenical as well as contextual theological education. This will be the legacy of Thu En Yu and his supporting faculty, students and church leaders. It is a fine legacy indeed.

Epilogue

The Basel Christian Church of Malaysia sent Thu En Yu to the newly established Theology Division in Chung Chi College in The Chinese University of Hong Kong for his initial theological education. At the time I was the Head of the Theology Division so I got to know En Yu well before he graduated four years later. There were very few theological students in Chung Chi College at the time so we became a closely knit community. I remember En Yu as a bright, polite, and somewhat shy person with a quick

and ready smile. He was a good student, achieving high standing in examination results.

In his final year, I received a letter from his Chief Pastor in Sabah telling me that En Yu would be placed after graduation in a remote parish in the hinterland of Sabah where he would need to be able to speak the Malay language and he would need to know how to drive a motor vehicle such as a Jeep or Land Rover in the rough countryside. The Chief Pastor asked if we could arrange a tutor to teach En Yu the Malay language and also teach him to drive. We found a suitable language tutor and my wife Edith volunteered to teach En Yu how to drive. For some weeks, she and En Yu could be seen in our car practicing driving up and down the steep hills on which the Chinese University is built. One time they were going up the steepest hill on campus when the car stalled half way up the hill. Edith decided they would have to back down the hill to a level place before going up the hill again. She looked over at En Yu. His face was red. He was gripping the steering wheel tightly and he was perspiring heavily. Edith asked, "Are you all right En Yu?" He smiled and replied, "Yes, I am OK, but isn't it exciting?" En Yu obviously has steel in his character that no doubt has served him well in many crises over the years.

My wife and I retired in 1996 and now live in Canada near Victoria, British Columbia. I had contact with En Yu over the years and followed the progress of Sabah Theological Seminary with much interest and appreciation. He indicated that the seminary could use good theological books in order to build up the library resources in Sabah Theological Seminary for offering advanced degree programs in the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology. Another retiring minister in Victoria had graduated from Yale Divinity School and had a lot of good biblical and theological books. We combined our books and sent

forty apple boxes of books to Sabah Theological Seminary. A mission agency in the United States volunteered to pay the shipping costs.

My wife and I were glad to have En Yu and his wife Brenda visit us once in our home in Sooke, British Columbia. When En Yu invited us to attend the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations of Sabah Theological Seminary in November 2013, Edith could not go but En Yu graciously agreed that my son Greg could accompany me. It was a very special event marking the extraordinary achievements of Thu En Yu's ministry.