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"LIVE SO CAN USE ME ANYTIME, LORD, ANYWHERE": THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, 1970 TO 1997[1]

David D. Daniels, III

1. Introduction

This paper will be a case study assessing the status of and challenges facing theological education in a predominately African American United States branch of a global Pentecostal denomination, the Church of God in Christ.

Three questions will frame the study. What is the Christian identity that the theological education program seeks to foster? What is the COGIC message and experience that the theological education program will transmit? What is the kind of ministry to which the theological education program will orient itself? My thesis is that theological education in the Church of God in Christ reflects its identification with two ecclesial poles: Evangelicalism and the Black Church. While the COGIC has yet to develop a theological education curriculum specifically design to transmit the message and experience of the church, the current theological education models do address some of the issues confronting the ministry of the denomination and advance the theological agenda of various constituencies in the church.

The paper consists of two primary sections. A historical and theological section offers a portrait of the COGIC. Included in the theological sketch is a discussion of the theological re-ordering taking place within the denomination. The theological education program of the two flagship institutions, the Charles Harrison Mason Theological Seminary and the C. H. Mason System of Bible Colleges, will be described and analyzed. Then, the paper will examine the scholarship of

[1] This is a revised and expanded version of the paper presented during the First Annual Meeting of Asian Pentecostal Society, Daejon, Korea in May 1999.

a leading COGIC theologian as a potential source to address the challenges facing theological education for the denomination.

Formal theological education in the COGIC entered a new phase in 1970 with the establishment of the Charles Harrison Mason Theological Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center, a consortium of seven seminaries at that time located in Atlanta, Georgia. To strengthen cooperatively the theological education of African American Protestants, the ecumenical group of denominations sponsored the consortium, representing the National Baptist Convention, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church, United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church, and the Church of God in Christ. The seminary consortium offered the Master of Divinity degree as well as other master's degrees.

In 1972 another landmark occurred with the establishment of the Charles Harrison Mason System of Bible Colleges. Within a year, the system of forty-six colleges opened throughout the United States and one in Haiti. These local institutions were commuter schools with evening divisions and staffed by volunteers with the requisite academic degrees. The System of Bible Colleges provided a valuable theological education for clergy and laity unable to attend Mason Seminary. Together the Seminary and the Bible College System ushered in a new era within the COGIC.

2. Historical and Theological Sketch

As an international Pentecostal denomination of 5 to 6 million members worldwide, the COGIC consists of different nationalities globally with congregations in six continents. Although the majority of the COGIC membership resides in the United States, COGIC is a major presence in various countries. COGIC celebrates 1897 as its founding as a holiness fellowship in the United States that embraced Pentecostalism in 1907 after its founder, Charles Harrison Mason, attended the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, California. During the early years of the denomination, COGIC include a multi-racial membership even though the leadership of the denomination was African American.

By the 1960s, COGIC had sponsored a two-year college, Saints Junior College, to prepare theologically the leadership of the

denomination. By 1970, the college became a four-year institution. However, by 1980 the college was closed for financial reasons.[2]

The transmittal of COGIC theology and practices for the next decade faces many challenges because the COGIC experience and message is undergoing a transition. Mason Seminary and the Bible Colleges are one way to respond to the transition by offering a new perspective.

The first century of COGIC, 1897-1997, could be divided into two periods: the Mason era and the post-Mason era. Bishop Charles Harrison Mason served as the presiding bishop of the denomination from 1907 to 1961. His leadership defined the first era for more than fifty years. During the post-Mason era of COGIC's first century, 1961-1997, Bishop J. O. Patterson, Sr., who served as presiding bishop from 1968-1990, ushered in the changes that redefined COGIC, setting the denomination in the fore-front of African American and Pentecostal ecclesial life. Bishop Patterson campaigned vigorously during his administration to re-organize and re-conceptualize COGIC ministry, instituting new structural and symbolic changes that supported his vision of COGIC as a major African American and Pentecostal denomination in the United States. These changes have produced significant shifts in COGIC worship practices, theological orientation, and spirituality.

The symbolic and institutional restructuring of COGIC in the post-Mason era is profound. While the denomination has experienced phenomenal growth in membership in the United States and globally, it has also experienced a rapid growth in the variety of theological perspectives and practices within the denomination. Related to these changes is the weakening of denominational conformity and loyalty. The loosening of denominational conformity within COGIC parallels similar changes recognized within the mainline denominations of the United States, although COGIC's denominational pride remains solid. Whereas growth is applauded in myriad sectors of the denomination, the diversity of theological perspectives and practices has attracted controversy. What currently defines the COGIC experience and message of the gospel is a pressing question? The reply to this query shapes the content of the "living tradition" of Christian faith that COGIC would seek to transmit in its programs of theological education.

A major challenge that confronts the designing of a theological education program suited to COGIC evolves around the shifting Christian identity of COGIC in the post-Mason era. What is the Christian

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[2] Ithiel Clemmons, *Bishop C. H. Mason and the Roots of the Church of God in Christ* (Bakersfield, CA: Pneuma Life Publishing, 1996).

identity that the theological education seeks to foster? During the Patterson administration of the post-Mason era, COGIC advanced two different Christian identities to supplant its half-century identification as a "sanctified" or "holiness church." There were progressive COGIC leaders who sought a dual identification with the Black Church and American Pentecostalism. Some contended that these two branches of American Protestantism were the most relevant ecclesial contexts for COGIC. The implications of the dual identification was to break COGIC of its parochialism due to its marginalization and isolation from the major and secondary centers of American Protestantism. While the "sanctified church" had little public visibility or recognized significance outside poor black neighborhoods, Pentecostalism, specifically suburban white variety, was gaining visibility through national figures such as Oral Roberts and Katherine Kuhlman and movements such as the Charismatic renewal and the Jesus People. The Black Church had gain prominence and earned moral capital through its pivotal role in the civil rights movement and projected a unity among African American Christians that crossed denominational and theological lines.[3]

The impact was more than the symbolic relocation from the religious periphery of the "sanctified church" to the limelight of the Black Church and American Pentecostalism. By locating itself within the Black Church, it stressed its commonalities and downplayed its key differences. Previously the rhetoric of COGIC preaching distinguished COGIC from the other denominations in the black community, contrasting the differences regarding Christian initiation, lifestyle, spirituality, entertainment, worship, and ministry. Many of these differences were often clustered under the rubric of holy versus unholy practices. Interestingly, even the Pentecostal identification re-enforced the resolve of sectors within COGIC similarly to downplay the key differences with the Black Church as the point of reference. By relocating itself within American Pentecostalism, it stressed its commonalities and joined some white Pentecostals in their identification with American Evangelicalism. As some white Pentecostals began to identify themselves as Evangelical with Pentecostal distinctives, some COGIC leaders developed their own version and found critical support within the subculture of black Evangelicalism.

However, some COGIC leaders contested the joining with whites Pentecostals in their embrace of Evangelicalism. These leaders argued

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[3] Cheryl J. Sanders, *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

that African American Protestantism with its theological and social agenda was more capability with the COGIC ministry than Evangelicalism; these leaders proposed by re-defining COGIC as a Black Church with a Pentecostal experience. These two ecclesial options offered COGIC theological freedom to enter a new religious terrain and lodge COGIC within a larger ecclesial context in which COGIC could create the Christian identity to be nurtured by the theological education programs.

The embrace of the Evangelical and Black Church identities led to the re-ordering of the COGIC message and experience. While competition emerged over which the two major identities would become dominant, agreement did exist about the necessity of re-ordering as well as the role theological education would play in promoting the new Christian identity. The key religious practice to be challenged was tarrying. In the post-Mason era a vigorous campaign was mounted to de-emphasize tarrying and advance the evangelical "acceptance of Jesus approach" as the means of conversion. The dislodging of tarrying from the core of the COGIC religious universe created a crisis within the COGIC religious ecology.

Tarrying was COGIC's key symbol or root metaphor, undergirding the COGIC experience of conversion, sanctification, and baptism in the Holy Spirit as well as being reclaimed. The COGIC ecology evolved around tarrying, joined with testimony, shouting (holy dancing), congregational songs, and consecrations with its fasting and prayer practices. In a sense, all COGIC practices were dependent on tarrying. Tarrying also served as a metaphor of the COGIC experience itself. In God tarrying God was acknowledged as sovereign, deciding who to save as well as when and where. COGIC believed God should be acknowledged as sovereign in all of life. God decides who should receive callings as ministers, missionaries, teachers, and prayer leaders. God sends dreams, visions, prophecies, an inner witness, and other forms of guidance to communicate God's will to congregations and individuals. In tarrying people are instructed to let God have God's way in them. They are taught how to yield to the Holy Spirit, how to let God take charge. They are encouraged to transfer this disposition to other areas of their Christian life. Congregations are also expected to learn to yield to the Holy Spirit through special calls by the Holy Spirit to prayer vigils, consecrations, and public confessions. As a practice, tarrying embodied the COGIC message and experience.

As a metaphor tarrying expressed the yoking of divine and human agency with the primacy of the divine initiative being recognized.

Tarrying as a metaphor was also informed by a spirituality modeled on denial, submission, and scarcity rather than the contemporary western preoccupation with fulfillment, mastery, and abundance. Moreover, tarrying served as a vehicle for the ecstatic. In the Mason era ecstatic worship was fostered by the praise format which incorporated call and response or a responsorial element as well as the tarrying structure throughout worship. Especially during the praise moment, the worship leader would be led by the Holy Spirit in instructing the congregation in their responses, ranging from key tarrying phases such as "Yes, Lord" to "Thank you, Jesus" to "Hallelujah" to "Glory." When God's presence was most evident, the congregation was informed that God was present and that they should reach out to God through praise and thanksgiving to encounter God more fully. In ecstatic worship the moment was highly charged with spiritual intensity. The music was intense whether they were expressive, soul-wrenching chants or a poly-rhythmic, fast-paced, up-beat songs. During the fast-paced songs the congregation could sing a song or a medley at the same rhythm for an hour or more, intermingling the song with jubilant dance, and exuberant praise. The singing and testifying along with demonstrative dialogical preaching created an ecstatic worship event. Periodically, the ecstasy that erupted would lead to a spontaneous tarrying service.

The theological themes of tarrying were set in the nineteenth century in which through tarrying God offered the seeker salvation, deliverance, purging, cleansing, the baptism. Through a dramatic experience with God, the seeker's life was transformed. Through these religious experience shaped by tarrying the seeker crossed spiritual thresholds. These thresholds ranged from dreams and visions to overwhelming sensations to glossolalia. In tarrying the seeker underwent a profound religious encounter. COGIC in the Mason era affirmed the value of profound religious encounters with God. Tarrying is a prayer form where the pray-er seeks God through the repetition specific words or phrases. A segment of worship would be devoted to tarrying or a tarrying service might follow the regular worship. Tarrying became a unifying experience because nearly all COGIC members testified to having tarried at some time, whether to receive salvation or the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Through tarrying God bestowed the dramatic religious experiences that often accompanied salvation. The Evangelical Protestant emphasis on accepting Christ and the confessional Protestant emphasis on baptism as means of grace were bracketed for the dramatic conversion. The dramatic religious experiences that tarrying facilitated defined the COGIC message and practice.

The dislodging of tarrying from the center of the COGIC ecology facilitated the COGIC shift in Christian identity away from the "sanctified church" and exacerbated the search for a new core symbol and practice to re-order the COGIC ecology. The two theological education programs provided options for core symbols and practices as well as a new theological orientation to re-situate the COGIC message and experience and offered a new integrative element in the COGIC ecology. However, during the transitional phase, it remained unclear how to define the Christian identity that theological education programs would promote.

The formal theological education institutions of COGIC inaugurated during the 1970s were established during this time of a shift in Christian identity and theological flux. These institutions sided with the two leading agendas in the debate over the new COGIC identity. Unfortunately, little attention was given to the constructive project of designing a theological education program tailored to COGIC specific theological challenges. This omission left COGIC vulnerable to the uncritical adoption of the theological education programs of the Black Church and American Evangelicalism.

The Charles Harrison Mason Theological Seminary is the first accredited U.S. Pentecostal theological seminary and the only Pentecostal member-seminary of the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), the largest seminary operated by African Americans. Currently, the seminary is an ecumenical venture with six seminaries affiliated with the original denominations from 1970, save the Episcopal Church. The faculty of the seminary consortium includes members of the sponsoring denominations in addition to others. The faculty also includes different races and nationalities, although the majority is African American. Currently, the president of seminary consortium is Robert Franklin, a social ethicist and a COGIC clergyperson. The theological spectrum of the faculty ranges from liberationist to liberal to moderate, including two Pentecostals. Among the faculty at ITC are internationally recognized architectures of new theological perspectives such as black theology, womanist theology, and Afrocentricity who are publishing new scholarly works in the scripture, history, theology, ethics, and ministry. ITC is a major center for theological discussions related to the Black Church, American society, and the pan-African world.

Mason Seminary's location at ITC and the presidency of Robert Franklin clearly demonstrates COGIC's identification with the Black Church and commitment to race-based ecumenism. The theological diversity of ITC creates fresh challenges for COGIC, especially during its

own time of theological reordering and shifting Christian identities. The theological education at ITC assumes the common grounding in the Black Church allows for the common preparation for ministry with particular courses in polity and denominational distinctives tailored to meet denominational needs. The curriculum presupposes that ministry in COGIC is similar enough to ministry in other African American denominations to justify the use of a common curriculum. Thus the theological education program at ITC affirms COGIC as a Black Church, but the Pentecostal dimension to COGIC is relegated to courses in COGIC history, doctrine and polity. How COGIC's Pentecostalism shapes its engagement of the scripture, the Christian tradition, ethics, and ministry is muted. To transmit the COGIC message and experience Mason Seminary at this point possesses some curricular challenges.

Since 1972, the C. H. Mason System of Bible Colleges has continued to grow numerically. The Bible colleges are conveniently located in the major cities across the United States as well as other locations. Within the first year, the System of Bible Colleges included forty-six schools in United States and one in Haiti. Most enrollments were under fifty students. In 1974 there were 250 faculty and administrators who volunteered their services to schools throughout the system. The faculty included a cross-section of professionals, ranging from educators to lawyers to businesspeople. The minimum requirement was at least two years of post-high school college education from an accredited institution.[4]

The Bible colleges are an outgrowth of the need to "train Pentecostals in the ministry 'explaining' the message of holiness, entire sanctification and perfection in love." The Bible colleges are attempting to raise the theological skills of the COGIC leadership and laity. And through a structured program, everyone who wants to learn will be given the basics of Christianity. The System of Bible College's objectives are the following:

1) To assist persons at each stage of development to realize the highest potentialities of self, as divinely created, to commit themselves toward maturity as a Christian person;
2) To help persons establish and maintain Christian relationship with their families, their churches and with other individuals and groups;
3) To aid persons in gaining better understanding and awareness of

[4] Interview with A. J. Hines, Executive Director of the C. H. Mason System of Bible Colleges, March 30, 1974 in Springfield, MA.

the natural world as God's creation and accepting the responsibility for conserving its values, and using them in the service of God and of [hu]mankind;

4) To lead persons to an increasing understanding and appreciation of the Bible whereby they may hear and obey the word of God to help them appreciate and use effectively other elements in the history of Christian heritage;
5) To enable persons to discover and fulfill responsible roles in the Christian fellowship through faith participation in the local and world mission of the church.

The Bible colleges seek to prepare ministers and missionaries to deal with the whole person---mind, body, and soul---through a curriculum that would increase uniformity in COGIC teaching.[5] The colleges offer course in Bible, theology, history, ministry and the liberal arts. African American history as well as political science are key courses in the liberal arts offerings. Yet the core of the curriculum is adapted from the program of the Evangelical Teacher's Training Association. The mission of the System of Bible Colleges is admirable, although the uncritical appropriation of the Evangelical curriculum is problematic. It should be noted that the inclusion of African American history and political science in theological education illustrates a willingness to supplement the Evangelical material.[6]

What is the best pedagogy to transmit the COGIC message and experience? Does an implicit COGIC pedagogy exist that could be employed? The System of Bible Colleges promoted a pedagogy that was alien to the COGIC context. The pedagogy of the System of Bible Colleges mitigates against COGIC's informal education processes of Bible discussion and mentoring. In the Bible discussions of various denominational auxiliaries the students and teachers are co-learners. The teacher functions as a facilitator of the discussions that the students enter as full participants offering their life experience, biblical knowledge, and theological perspective. There is a give-and-take in these discussions. It is a tria-logue: conversations engaging the participants, the Bible, and their context. The discussion usually follows a format in which Bible verses are read and commented on sequentially. Each participant has the liberty to approach the verse from any angle. The discussions incorporate perspectival readings, historical analyses, theological reflection, and life

[5] "C. H. Mason System of Bible Colleges," *Whole Truth* (October, 1973), pp. 6-7.

[6] Hines Interview.

application. The students concentrate on words, phrases, sentences, and passages. Texts are interpreted literally, allegorically, theologically, and personally. Each interpretation is often prefaced by the phase: "The way that I understand or read the verse is…." Questions are raised concerning the practical application of the lesson to life that deals with the challenges of living out the lesson's message.[7]

The limitation of COGIC's implicit pedagogy is that usually the discussion never moves beyond the parochial interpretation espoused by a particular congregation. New insights are rarely explored. The best insights emerge from the application of the text's message to life. The pedagogy of the Bible colleges is antithetical to the teaching methodology of COGIC Bible discussions. The academic focus has stressed the mastery of a particular body of knowledge and interpretation rather than learning how to interpret texts, think theologically, and contextualize the biblical message. Unfortunately, the COGIC experience and message has not been adequately framed theologically in order to educate people in it through COGIC texts. For the most part, however, the Bible college education has not been alienating. Although it restricts biblical interpretations and limits theological language, reifies particular God-talk, it makes an easy transition to new theological terrain.[8]

The theological programs of ITC and the System of Bible Colleges interject new theological perspectives and an alien pedagogy into the COGIC context. They both widen the break with COGIC's formative Christian identity and pull COGIC into different directions. While the intended consequences of these two theological education programs are questioned, these two programs succeed in achieving the goals of the COGIC leadership during the post-Mason era of placing COGIC in the forefront of African American Protestantism and American Evangelicalism. The question remains: "In light of the competing Christian identities of COGIC, what is the COGIC message and experience that the theological education programs will transmit?"

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[7] See the discussion of orality in Pentecostalism in Walter J. Hollenweger, "Pentecostalism and Black Power," *Theology Today* 30 (October, 1973), pp. 228-38.

[8] See Clemmons, *Bishop C. H. Mason*.

3. The Future of COGIC Theological Education

During its second century, COGIC could design a theological education program that utilizes more adequately the writings of COGIC scholars into its curriculum to assist the denomination in finding a theological direction in the next decade. Of particular interest is the scholarly writing of Ithiel Clemmons along with Bennie Goodwin, Leonard Lovett, Robert Franklin, Adrienne Israel, and Alonzo Johnson. The key to theological framework of almost all these COGIC theologians is piety or spirituality. Ithiel Clemmons locates Mason's spirituality in slave religion. Leonard Lovett locates COGIC spirituality in African religion. Alonzo Johnson detects correspondences between the mystical spirituality of Howard Thurman and COGIC spirituality because of their common heritage of slave religion. Adrienne Israel notes resonates of the holiness piety of Amanda Berry Smith in COGIC spiritual practices. Each scholar assumes that spirituality is the core practice within COGIC and key item to transmit. What are the other options? Could worship, official or vernacular doctrine, charismatic ministries, or social witness compete for primacy?

What is the kind of ministry to which the curriculum should orient itself? Robert Franklin highlights the following six kinds of spirituality traditions which I contend could be options: Evangelical, holiness, Charismatic, social justice, Afrocentric, and contemplative. Currently, the C. H. System of Bible Colleges promotes the Evangelical option and C. H. Mason Theological Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center advances a social justice and Afrocentric position. However, as noted above the current employments of these traditions are insufficient to deal with COGIC's particular theological crisis. Possibly the kind of ministry the curriculum should be oriented could be a bricolage of these traditions.[9]

Robert Franklin offers an engaging approach that is a bricolage of sanctified, the Evangelical and the liberal tradition. (ITC reflects the liberal, but church-oriented, theological tradition.) In his monograph, *Another Day's Journey*, Franklin offers a theological program for the Black Church that is presented as a product of the Black Theology movement in the United States and possesses relevance for the Black Church, in general, as well as the COGIC. I believe Franklin's

[9] Robert M. Franklin, *Another Day's Journey* (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 1997); the discussion of Franklin's proposal throughout the paper is drawn from this book.

theological proposal has import for COGIC and provide the rudiments of a COGIC theological education program. I contend that Franklin's explicit identification with COGIC and Pentecostalism in the book makes public the COGIC background to his proposal. Clearly Franklin's audience is definitely broader than COGIC or even the Black Church. However, the book could be examined as a rudimentary outline shaped by an initial conversation between black theology and the COGIC message and experience, providing elements of theological education program relevant to the COGIC message and experience as well as strategies to ensure the relevancy of the COGIC message and experience in ministry.

Franklin's reflections and analysis is part of a larger theological conversation with in the COGIC. During the mid-1970s, Bennie Goodwin and Leonard Lovett engaged in a dialogue with black theology as COGIC theologians. Goodwin asked how the structures of the church could be changed in order to make "the power [of the Holy Spirit] effectual in solving" the problems within the African American community. He asked how can the "tremendous power which is released and transferred in Pentecostal worship" be brought to bear on the social problems of the African American society. Leonard Lovett argued that since Pentecostalism is trans-cultural, trans-denominational, and trans-social it possesses the capacity and moral dynamic to address the issues that face contemporary society. Lovett calls for a theology of "conditional liberation" to engage societal issues. His term is in response to the kind of liberation advanced by black theologians and Latin American liberationists during the 1970s. He proposes a theology of conditional liberation to highlight the fact that for him the root cause of the societal problems tended to be spiritual. Consequently, a spiritual solution is required as well as social and political ones. For Lovett a consequence of the Pentecostal experience is the awakening of a political consciousness that motivates agents of liberation to engage in social transformation. The Pentecostal experience frees Christians to respond authentically to the dehumanizing forces in the world. Thus, a personal liberation precedes the social and political liberation. Franklin can be seen building in the history of dialogue between COGIC and black theology.[10]

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[10] Bennie Goodwin, "Social Implications of Pentecostal Power," *Spirit: A Journal of Issues Incident to Black Pentecostalism* 1:1 (1977), pp. 31-35 (31-32); Leonard Lovett, "Conditional Liberation: An Emergent Pentecostal Perspective," *Spirit: A Journal of Issues Incident to Black Pentecostalism* 1:2 (1977), pp. 24-30 (26).

Franklin introduces a religious ecology model to analyze the Black Church. The model he employs is applicable to COGIC. Like an ecological system a religious ecology is interdependent. In Franklin's religious ecology model worship, prayer, catharsis, singing, educational ministry, and preaching are all interrelated. Franklin contends that in the ecology of the Black Church multi-sensory worship, intimate communal prayer, cathartic expressivisim, triumphant singing, politically empowering religious education, and prophetic, imaginative preaching are nourished by each other. Franklin connects his religious ecology model with his theology of God's mission in the world to shape his vision of ministry. In his vision of ministry, the public theological task is pivotal, growing out of his theology of God's mission.

As noted above, worship is at the heart to Franklin's religious ecology, but it is also integral to his theology of ministry. First, worship possesses "the capacity to provide a window into the reign and commonwealth of God." In worship we glimpse God's reign. Thus worship is more than an arena of ecstatic or cathartic experiences. Worship becomes a space where Christians encounter God's future. Theological education, then, should privilege the linking of worship and the commonwealth (or kingdom) of God to preclude worship being merely an experiential occasion.

Second, Franklin contends that "worship seeks to facilitate a palpable sense of God's existence and love." In worship the Holy Spirit provides Christians "access to God." Franklin's pneumatology undergirds his theology of worship. Worship becomes a place for individuals to reconcile the various facets of their being: the multi-dimensionality of personhood. Encounters with God through the Holy Spirit such as the baptism of the Holy Spirit as well as reason and revelation are gifts, according to Franklin, that God bestows on humans, revealing their multi-dimensionality. Included within human multi-dimensionality is the capacity for ecstasy. Franklin argues that the isolation of ecstasy must be avoided. Instead, ecstasy initiated by the Holy Spirit must be "translated into ongoing personal moral renewal" as well as "faith development and social responsibility." Following the philosopher William James, Franklin values the tension within the moral life with its "ascetic striving for justice and moral perfection" and its "mystical, playful disengagement from the stress of the moral life," producing personal and social transformation. The encounters with God in worship must be integrated with the myriad dimensions constituting the personhood of Christians. Theological education should highlight the multi-dimensionality of worship in order to engage the multi-

dimensionality of personhood and offer contexts for the reconciliation of human multi-dimensionality and formation of people as Christians engaged in personal and social transformation.

Third, in worship Christians hear God's invitation to "participate in the accomplishment of God's purposes." Also included is God's invitation to Christians "to become partners in overcoming the damage to creation caused by the many forms of sin." To orient congregations and individual Christians to God's purposes in creation, the church, and personal lives Franklin focuses on the scripture and preaching, prayer, and public witness. While he unites personal and social transformation, his accent is social arena when discussing God's purposes to encourage the churches to address the social challenges confronting the society. A backdrop to Franklin's discussion is black theology. Specifically its accent on the centrality of justice in the nature of God which is reflected in justice being constitutive to the commonwealth (or kingdom) of God and integral to the ministry of the church. Theological education, consequently, should demonstrate the connections between worship and the Holy Spirit's work for justice in the world.

Fourth, in worship Christians as "finite and frail people" are empowered by the Holy Spirit to participate in the accomplishment of God's purposes. In addition to the presupposed ministries of the preacher, teacher, evangelist, and community activist, Franklin invents a new list: anointed spiritual guide, grassroots intellectual, civic enabler, stewards of community development, cultural celebrants, family facilitators, and technologically literate visionaries. Franklin's list defines roles for clergy (and I would all Christians) that are designed to assist congregations in entering the public arena with theological integrity and humility as participants with God in the transformation of individuals and societies. Theological education, therefore, must juxtapose divine sufficiency and human finitude in the work of ministry, demonstrating the necessity of the Holy Spirit for human participation in the accomplishment of God's purposes.

Fifth, in worship the sacred and human realms intersect partially through the moral, prophetic, and rhetorical dimensions of the proclamation of the gospel. While Franklin focuses on preaching because of the clerical orientation of his monograph, the proclamation can be heard in testimonies, songs, prayers, teaching as well as preaching. These verbal practices "provide a narrative framework within which hearers can interpret public life in a compelling way" through "biblical categories and themes such as exodus, crucifixion, resurrection, sin, and redemption." In addition to the powerful role the presence of the Holy

Spirit plays in these practices, the capacity of words themselves to construct as well as reflect reality makes these verbal practices powerful tools in social and personal transformation. Thus theological education should demonstrate the myriad ways that the rhetorical dimension of the proclamation as well as the moral and prophetic dimensions participate in various forms of transformation.

Finally, Christians must translate into action their encounters in worship with God, the scripture, and the community of faith by rethinking their understanding in light of their actions as they participate in social and personal transformation. Franklin indicates that in the public arena there are various roles that congregations currently play. Franklin identifies the "political ministry" of COGIC as pragmatic accommodationism with the moral end being the securing of "a peaceable, predictable social order." Keystones to this approach are "cooperation and compromise with the political and corporate status quo." COGIC prefers this role to prophetic radicalism or redemptive nationalism. However, most COGIC congregations would chose grassroots revivalism, according to Franklin. Grassroots revivalism tends to shun direct engagement of the political process and focuses on personal transformation at minimum or the creation of alternative vision of society. Interestingly the "word of faith" churches in the United States promote, in Franklin's estimation, an "opportunistic engagement" in that they secure benefits from the political system for their personal interests without full participation. Franklin argues that clergy, including COGIC clergy, should reconceive of their task in terms of public theology. As public theologians they should "seek to address people" across social lines from the particularity of their faith tradition, interacting with others with deep respect and tolerance. As public theologians COGIC clergy, then, should confront the issue facing their societies. Theological education, then, would demonstrate the connection between worship and public ministry.

Implicit and, in some places, explicit within Franklin's proposal is a transmittable COGIC experience and message for the next decade to advance in a theological education program. Instead of reviving the "sanctified church" experience and message, Franklin's bricolage would embrace the post-Mason era Pentecostal and Black Church location of COGIC. The tensions of new identity become challenges that Franklin creatively taps. The variegated character of COGIC finds appreciation in Franklin's construal of the multi-dimensionality as integral to life and faith. Therefore, to transmit the COGIC experience and message the multi-dimensional character of the faith must be highlighted. Theological

attention must be given to COGIC as a spiritual, psychological, moral, social, and cultural reality.

4. Conclusion

The challenge facing COGIC regarding theological education is to design a theological education program that will transmit the COGIC message and experience effectively, critically, and with biblical and theological integrity. COGIC's Christian identity could embrace its dual identification with the Black Church and American Pentecostalism, holding both in a creative tension in order to engage in a critical stance towards each segment and providing COGIC with the spiritual space to benefit from the challenge of each segment. Accepting the eclipse of tarrying as the key symbol, the COGIC message and experience could find integrity in Franklin's proposal for worship as the new defining experience and structural frame would create space for COGIC ministry to find integration within the COGIC ecology. Worship could be the replacement as the key symbol because it retains the mystical, communal, and transformative aspects of tarrying. Albeit a new conceptual context, the COGIC emphasis on justification, sanctification, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and power of the Holy Spirit would still have integrity as elements of the multi-dimensional nature of the Christian life. Franklin's public ministry that grows out of Pentecostal worship could serve as the kind of holistic ministry to which a new theological education program could orient itself.