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A View of my Theological Pedagogical Vocation in light of the Mission Statement of Saint Paul School of Theology, which is rooted in “Wesleyan” Spiritual Heritage and committed to “inspiring Passion for Ministry” of Jesus Christ, (1) to educate theologically formed leaders of the Church of the Christ Jesus, (2) to make faithful disciples of Jesus Christ who “shows and tells” of God, who, otherwise absconded in deep mystery, (3) to renew the church as the true ‘Body of Christ’ , and (4) to transform the world with an alternative vision which was originally intended in Creation, is this:

- 1) “Passion” for Ministry of Jesus Christ reminds of what once Martin Luther shared with his table guests his response to a question “Quae faciant theologum” (what makes a theologian?): He mentions six factors and three of these are pertinent in the present connection. They are (a) gratia Spiritus [the grace that works through the Holy Spirit, namely the grace of the Spirit creator makes a theologian, not self-empowerment nor self-confidence.] Formation of a theologian comes only through the Spirit. Secondly (b) tentatio: a theologian is one who, driven by agonizing struggle, enters with prayer into the Holy Scripture and strives to be *addressed* by God. Luther understood the human being is thus human in that he/she is *addressed* by God. Thirdly sedula lectio: constant, concentrated textual study of the Holy Scripture. These activities are human **counter-intuitive**. They go against our modern human mind’s disposition. If we want to enter the “Passion” of Jesus’ Ministry, we must change our current mental formatting. It involves discomfort and even “pain” and suffering. This is what I intend to communicate in my teaching. Without an active effort to change this modernist mold which makes us “a subject” that puts all things into “things-at-hand”, we will not be able to approach to God that allows God be God, but rather helplessly fall victim to an idolatrous approach. My theological pedagogy intentionally emulates a role of an icon, which allows itself to be seen by God in the light of God, namely theology should strive to subject itself to God’s gaze and be saturated by God’s light. This is what John and Charles Wesley strove to be and to do through their poetic theological aesthetics. They subjected themselves to the above mentioned three theological ‘virtues to attain personal and social holiness. All my course offerings are tinged with this perspective: ***Introduction to Systematic Theology; Theology of Prayer and Christian Spirituality; Different Theological Doctrinal Foci (Christology; Soteriology; Ecclesiology; Christian Anthropology, etc.) and Different theological figures/thinkers.*** My writings by and large fall under this understanding of a Christian Dogmatics. I am currently engaged in writing *an Ecumenical Dogmatics* which

is reflective of the Christian *ecumenical* interdenominational theological relationships and of the ecumenic relationship with other religious spiritual traditions. My book, Tillich and Religion: Toward a Theology of World Religions (1998) was a prolegomena of this perspective. See also “The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Reformation Traditions,” in the forthcoming “Cambridge Companion to the Trinity” edited by Peter Phan (Wm. Eerdmans)>

- 2) “Educating Christian leaders” takes a whole theological “village” and community consisting of church congregations and a theological school faculty, staff and student body. It takes more than training in, and obtaining of, particular useful pastoral skills. It has a lot to do with a spiritual ‘habitus’, a spiritual disposition. I try to impress upon students that participation in Christian ‘communion’ begets an authentic *personhood* by pointing out the mystery, instructive hints of the ***doctrine of the Trinity***. This is a ***counter-logic*** to the current social ideology that upholds the priority of individuality as preceding the community. Theological formation tries to persuade that by participating in the ecclesial community that is “gifted” by God through Christ in the Spirit leads to the true personhood that fulfills the purported destiny of humanity, not the individuality which fragments and, though briefly coruscating, yet petrifies leading to lifeless evidence. This doctrine of the Trinity shapes and influences other theological approach to other doctrinal consideration. I tried to do this with “The Trinity in Tillich and Its Implication for Inter-religious Dialogue,” in Trinitaet und/oder Quarternitaet—Tillich’s Neuerschliessung der trinitarischen Probelmatik (Muenster: Lit Verlag, 2004): 47-56; “Mystical Impulse and the Protestant Principle,” in Mystisches Erbe in Tillichs philosophischer Theologie. Tillich-Studien Band 3 (Muenster: Lit Verlag, 2000).
- 3) I view an educated leaders as learned teachers, who can enlighten other’s mind, empowers other’s will in an appropriate direction, and inspires other’s heart, so as to make them ‘disciples of Jesus the Christ. Jesus Christ taught in an unusual manner in that he becomes a transparent narrative to God’s redemptive work. He subjected himself to be ***framed*** by the *mythos* (story) of God, even in his mediation of God’s revelation precisely through making himself saturated with the divine presence. This is what it means to “follow” (discipleship) the “master teacher”. He embodied the hearts of God in his own life pattern in concretion. In my teaching, I always stress upon an important point, *sedula lectio* (constant, concentrated textual study of the Holy Scripture) in that one is defined and framed/shaped by the God’s narrative. That is one most important way to be/come a disciple of God in Jesus Christ. Otherwise, we may follow something other than what we should follow. All my theological courses are embedded in the Biblical exegetical engagement. But this *sedula lectio* does not only

involve the Holy Scripture, but also involve other texts—philosophical texts as well as scientific texts which may guide us to engage in the ongoing divine revelatory signs. Hence I emphasize and encourage students to actively engage in reflecting on various philosophical scientific literature, be it of German Idealism, Philosophy of Deconstruction, Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, even atheistic claims, etc. Following Anselmian insight, one's theological conviction should be capable of demonstrating its feasibility through intellectual means even to non-believers, including fools. Even the self-evident truth should be made self-evident through argument in the market place of ideas and religious truth claims. In this vein, I offer courses such as on Dietrich Bonhoeffer; Jurgen Moltmann; Karl Barth; Paul Tillich, Katherine Tanner, Gustavo Gutierrez; etc. without neglecting the other ancient theological heroes/heroines. I tried to work this out in "The Doctrine of Incarnation according to Tillich and Its Significance Today," in Christus Jesus—Mitte der Geschichte!? eds. Gert Hummel et al (Muenster: Lit Verlag, 2007); "Hegel in Tillich," in Die Bruecken der Versoehnung (London-Hamburg-Muenster: Lit Verlag, 2003).

- 4) The church as the 'body of Christ' is a society of sinners and at the same time a community of the saints. She may be termed as a "justified sinner". But she is also a "mother church" where a sinner may be birthed into a new being in the power of the Holy Spirit, because the church is formed in the power of the Spirit insofar as it is church. Christian theology is a servant who understands itself as servant for, in, of, and to the church, and at times called to be even against the church. Because it should identify its task to be that of renewal of the church, through which to transform the world. If "theology" loses its nerve, then it cannot serve the church in its authentic form and thereby fails to work with, and for, the transforming power of God. If it does not allow itself to be addressed by God, then it becomes 'inauthentic activity' and falls to the level of laughable agent. Theology must become "human-experience cormorant" and also "cultural omnivorous" in that it should extend its horizon to other "worlds" through active engagement in immersions and exposure, even to the extent of being dislocated from its original moorings and dislodged from its temporary home. God comes from the "future horizon" and thus "from strange dimension". Theological education should train students to be open, even vulnerable, to the liminality of the known world, where one may encounter God in a new way. God may be saying now to all of us, "Why are you seeking for me where I am not?" Hence, I endeavor to offer students various **"Immersion courses: Haiti; Korea and China; Cambodia and Vietnam; Holy Lands and Turkey, etc.** These sensitize students for the dignity of the "Other". If we are sensitized with the human "other", chances are that we may be able to better equip

to encounter the divine "Other". God is the one who ultimately transforms the world, and we are called to be assiduous disciples of the Christ Jesus, an ultimate icon of God. See my work, "Love: Power in Hearing the Other into Being," in Loving God, Loving Neighbor: Ministry with Searching Youth. Ed. Sondra H. Matthaehi (Xlibris, 2008): 44-59. "A Theology of Culture: Tillich's Early Conception and Its Significance Today," in Religion-Kultur-Gesellschaft: Der fruehe Tillich im Spiegel neuer Texte (1919-1920) (Wien: Lit Verlag, 2008): 153-170' "Prayer in Korea from a Tillichian Perspective," in Das Gebet als Grundakt des Glaubens. Eds. Werner Schuessler et al (Muenster: Lit Verlag, 2004): 137-151; "What I learned from Haiti," in Connection. Kansas East United Methodist Annual Conference Newsletter (March, 2004).

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