

Ted Ward: A Global Legacy

In January 2016, Dr. Ted W. Ward entered eternal rest. He is internationally recognized for his enduring contribution to educational studies and Christian education as Professor of Education at Michigan State University, and as Professor of Christian Education and the founder of research doctoral programs in Education and Intercultural Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. During his 30-year tenure at Michigan State University, Ted, as his students called him, was “often accused (justly) of running a seminary on campus because of the Christian students he attracted, and his ongoing insistence that Christians must think theologically about educational questions.”¹ He supervised over 200 doctoral dissertations and his students serve in theological education globally.

In the following short essays, the authors reflect personally on the ways in which Ted Ward has influenced their lives, ministries, and practice of theological education.

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- A Friend with a Global Perspective – Suraja Ramanan
- Forming the Practice of Theological Education – Yau Man Siew

¹ Hoke, Stephen and Linda Cannel. “Ted W. Ward.” *Christian Educators of the 20th Century*. February 24, 2016. http://www.talbot.edu/ce20/educators/protestant/ted_ward.

A Legacy that Speaks Today

VICTOR BABAJIDE COLE

KENYA

African cultures value the lasting memories of those who have passed on as evidenced by John Mbiti's famous documentation of the African philosophy of "the living dead," which immortalizes the legacy of ancestors. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews provides a striking analogy that enriches this traditional African concept. Like righteous Abel, who "still speaks, even though he is dead," the departed heroes of the Christian faith also "speak" for they constitute a "great cloud of witnesses," urging on those who are still running this pilgrim race (Heb. 11:4, 12:1 NIV).

Africa, with its diversity and rich cultures, has benefited a great deal through the labors of Western missionaries and educators, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries. We still have lasting memories of the explorer and medical missionary, David Livingstone, and of pioneering anthropologists such as Geoffrey Parrinder and Edwin W. Smith, who have left behind numerous writings on Africa and her peoples. Their work has shaped prominent African thinkers from key centers of higher learning throughout the continent.

Another group has left their mark in a different way. Although professors like Ted Ward traveled to Africa from time to time as consultants to build up African educators and to visit their protégés on the field, they largely operated from key centers of higher learning in the West, where they developed new generation of mentor-educators for the Evangelical movement in the Majority World in the latter half of the 20th century.

A Cascading Legacy: Ted Ward's legacy on the African continent will continue to "speak" for a long, long time. His impact could be categorized into two broad areas. First, he ventured into East, Central, and West Africa as an educational consultant, introducing the value of not only formal, but also nonformal education for addressing Africa's unique challenges. Second, he directly mentored key African leaders and Western missionaries, who would serve in vital educator roles across Africa, for four decades at Michigan State University (MSU) and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS). While writing this piece, I counted offhandedly, with the assistance of a colleague, well over three dozen key educators across Africa who were Ted's direct mentees. Over the years, these educators have in turn impacted numerous other educators, who may be considered as Ted's indirect mentees. As can be seen, Ted's influence has multiplied exponentially.

It is therefore quite fitting that in 2004, the leadership of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) invited Ted back for what would be his valedictory lectures on theological education in Africa. On that visit, Ted, like an African patriarch, reconnected with a number of his direct mentees, whom he referred to on that occasion as “my children” (although he had been fond of referring to each of them during their time at MSU and TEDS as “my African brother/sister”). To his delight, he also met a core group of educators who have been built up through the service and ministry of his direct mentees. These younger leaders he described on that occasion as “my grandchildren.” These designations are especially poignant in the African context, where the honor of a traditional African patriarch is tied to the number of surviving children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. By the mercies of God, Ted lived to see his intellectual and spiritual descendants during that last visit to Africa, and he returned home with deep satisfaction.

The Power of Story: Ted, in typical African pedagogical fashion, loved to employ vivid anecdotes from personal experience in his teaching. One such story was from a much earlier visit to a rural part of Central Africa, where he had spoken on theological education. Ted noticed that whenever he used the term “seminary” during his presentation, the translator would go on in what seemed to be circumlocution. At the end of the presentation, Ted asked his translator about the word for “seminary” in the local language. The translator chuckled, saying, “You don’t want to know, or do you?” That response only stirred Ted’s curiosity further. Finally, Ted was told that in the local context, the elders referred to “seminary” as “the place where little boys go to get big heads”!

In Africa, Ted’s memory lives on among his African “children,” “grandchildren,” and future “great-grandchildren.” Memories of Ted’s personal touch and concern for his mentees, his deep listening abilities, his teachings and transformative pedagogical style, and of course his many formal writings, as well as his many off-the-cuff nuggets of wisdom scribbled on scrap paper, remain and “still speak.”

References

Mbiti, John. *Introduction to African Religion*. New York: Praeger, 1975.



Victor Cole

Victor Babajide Cole is Professor of Curriculum Development and Evaluation, who heads the Education department at Africa International University (AIU), Nairobi, where he has served for the last two and half decades. His research and ministry in the last 30 years has focused on promoting curricula innovation in higher institutions of learning, a subject on which he has written in books and journals.

An Indelible Mark

ADRIAN BAN

ROMANIA

My first encounter with Dr. Ward was in 1995 at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL. I had been accepted into the doctoral program in Educational Studies and Dr. Ward was a major reason why I decided on this program. I first heard about Ted from Dr. Jim Pluddeman, my academic adviser at Wheaton College (IL). Dr. Pluddeman would constantly give credit to Dr. Ward for certain educational ideas and concepts in the classroom. I was already very pleased with my experience at Wheaton College and began to wonder about this Dr. Ward who had left such a positive and lasting impression on one of his former Ph.D. students at Michigan State University.

Learning from Jesus as Teacher: Fast forward to September 1995 to find me now sitting in my first class with Dr. Ward, learning about how high conformity limits discovery learning. From the very first class, it was clear to me how deeply Dr. Ward was immersed in the Scriptures and how much he admired Jesus' teachings. He often pointed to how Jesus' greatness could be seen in his teachings, as well as in his style of teaching. Jesus moved around a lot, and taught in diverse settings on various occasions while eating, walking, sitting down, traveling by boat, and so on. Parables, metaphors, similes and other literary devices were often employed to help his audiences learn. He often communicated complex truths using simple imagery. He used metaphors to draw people into a discovery process, and invite thinking and learning. Dr. Ward helped me understand the great value and power of nonformal education, and offered me a fresh and biblical perspective on Christian education that has had an impact on my own philosophy of ministry ever since.

Later, when I was preparing for my dissertation and Dr. Ward had graciously agreed to be my first reader, I began to see and understand that asking good questions can lead to new findings and perspectives. It was then that I realized what had made Dr. Ward such an outstanding teacher – it was not only his deep desire to follow Jesus, but also his willingness to be challenged by Jesus' teaching and to ask how they apply in day-to-day life situations. Dr. Ward believed in first *observing* with his mouth closed before asking questions. In other words, he taught us to control our biases in order to see and hear what is actually going on in the Scriptures or around us. Then, we may look for patterns – things that are happening, not necessarily by chance. By keeping track of our observations, we

may then discover possible meanings and identify plausible relationships. Finally we are to reexamine our observations so that our conclusions can be as objective and clear as possible. This was a discipline that I was personally lacking at the time. Dr. Ward helped me to learn and apply these steps in my work.

Clear Focus: During my final year in the PhD program, when the process of dissertation writing could be very hard at times, Dr. Ward would constantly remind me of yet another important concept: “zoom in and zoom out.” I still remember his words: “Adrian, do not forget to zoom in to make sure the necessary details are all in, but then you need to zoom out to make sure you are staying on the main course and to keep moving forward.” I knew what he was talking about. As a Program Fellow, I have seen many ABD (All But Dissertation) Ph.D. students who are so concerned with zooming in that they forget to zoom out and see the big picture. Others fail to zoom in enough on the important details in their work.

I love and cherish Dr. Ward for who he was as a follower of Christ called to be an educator whose life and work have inspired so many others. For the way he instilled in me the desire to be the person God has called me to be, I will be ever grateful.



Adrian Ban

Adrian Ban, Ph.D. (2001) is a writer and speaker who serves as the President of Integra Romania, a not-for-profit organization focused on both formal and nonformal training. He resides in Oradea, Romania, where he and his wife Ema (M.A. in Bioethics from TIU in 1998) are deeply involved in the ministry of the Emanuel Baptist Church of Oradea. Adrian and Ema are blessed with three sons: Andy, Eduard, and Thomas.

The Gift of Listening

ROSE AND BULUS GALADIMA

NIGERIA

We praise God for the life of Ted Ward. We first met him in the early 1990s when Bulus was studying at TEDS. We reconnected a decade later when Rose came back to earn her PhD at TEDS. We consider ourselves Ted’s “academic grandchildren.” We were both students of Victor Cole at Jos ECWA Evangelical Theological Seminary in Nigeria a decade earlier in 1980s. Victor Cole was one of Ted’s doctoral students at Michigan State.

We have many fond memories of Ted. We remember him as a very friendly, hospitable, compassionate, honest, and direct master teacher, master storyteller, and faithful servant of Christ, among other things.

A Master Teacher and Profound Thinker: Rose remembers him coming to one of her classes as a guest lecturer for several weeks. His vast knowledge and experience in the field of education were both instructive and inspiring. We are sure that many can testify of Ted’s love for students. He and Margaret invited us to their home for lunch just to get to know us better. Their hospitality meant a lot to us as international students far away from our homes.

An Attentive Listener and Skillful Storyteller: Ted had a great influence on the founding of *Almanah* Rescue Mission, the ministry we started to serve widows and orphans in Nigeria. When we first told him about our ministry plan, he told us a story about one of his many travel experiences. He shared about a people group his party had visited in South America. They had asked the chief, a WWII veteran, what was the greatest need of his people. Ted said the chief stared for a long time at the old, worn army boots on his feet and told them the greatest need of his people was learning how to fix shoes. Ted then observed that the chief had been the only one wearing shoes.

This poignant story helped us in the founding of *Almanah*. We realized how easy it can be to focus on our own needs, rather than that of the people we are trying to serve. Leaders must take care to keep the right needs at the forefront of their mission. From Ted, we learned the great value of listening to the people we are serving. We began our work in 1995 and today, it is still going strong under the leadership of very compassionate Nigerians, thanks to Ted’s early influence.

When we heard that Ted was sick, we called him and asked if we could visit him.

He and Margaret welcomed us warmly, as is characteristic of them. We were both surprised by how weak he was and moved that he still made time to meet with us. We were eager to leave to allow him time to rest, but he took time to ask about our ministry and rejoiced with us in what God was doing. Even at one of his weakest moments, he taught us about Christian graciousness and deep faith in God.

Ted was very compassionate, and loved the poor and marginalized. He took seriously Jesus' exhortation in John 9:4, "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work" (NIV). And now, Ted has completed his work and entered his rest with his Savior.



Rose and Bulus Galadima

Rose and Bulus Galadima have ministered together in Nigeria and in the US. Rose earned her PhD in Educational Studies from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. She is the founder of Almanah Rescue Mission, a ministry to widows in Nigeria. She taught at Jos ECWA Theological Seminary in Nigeria for over 20 years and served in denominational leadership. She is currently engaged with Respond International, a ministry to help Boko Haram refugees.

Bulus earned his PhD in Historical Theology from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He served on the faculty at Jos ECWA Theological Seminary for two 20 years, including two terms as Vice Chancellor. He cofounded More than a Mile Deep, an indigenous African Theological Education program committed to train Christian leaders in Africa. He served as the Vice Chairman for ACTEA (Association of Christian Theological Education in Africa). He also serves on the doctoral committee of ICETE (International Council of Evangelical Theological Education). He now serves as the Dean of the Cooke School of Intercultural Studies at Biola University in California.

A Friend with a Global Perspective

SURAJA RAMAN

SINGAPORE

“Ho, Ho, Ho! You must be wishing that you could be back home in Singapore,” said a smiling Ted Ward to me on a cold winter morning in Deerfield, Illinois. He was holding a mug with steaming brewed coffee in one hand and a briefcase in the other. He was walking toward his office on the campus of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS). I counted it a privilege to walk alongside the Director of the Educational Studies Department. Dr. Ward was instrumental in guiding me during my studies and especially during difficult times of dissertation writing from 1989 to 93.

An Encouraging Mentor: Professor Ted Ward was indeed a teacher and friend to many students. He was also a mentor to many young leaders coming from North and South America, Africa, and Asia to pursue their degrees in higher education.

In September 1989, I received my acceptance into the Educational Studies doctoral program with great excitement over the opportunity to learn from this man of God. Dr. Ward’s passion for teaching can be seen in his many creative approaches to the teaching-learning process. He had a brilliant mind. “You need to read widely,” was Dr. Ward’s exhortation to me. He constantly challenged us to probe ever more deeply into our fields of study through research and writing.

For my dissertation, Dr. Ward encouraged me to bring relevance to my research by interviewing Christian converts from the Majority World now living in Chicago. During a class on research methods, he encouraged me by announcing that my research on the experience and conversion of Muslims was especially important during that moment of the Gulf War.

A Lasting Friendship: As I reflect on my professor and friend, I am convinced that Dr. Ward was a tower of strength to students from various continents. Dr. Ward (which is how I usually address him, as an Asian cultural expression of respect) was hospitable in many ways. Together with my colleagues, I was invited to Dr. and Mrs. Ward’s lovely and cozy home for lunch after the Day of Prayer, and for refreshments during our school vacation.

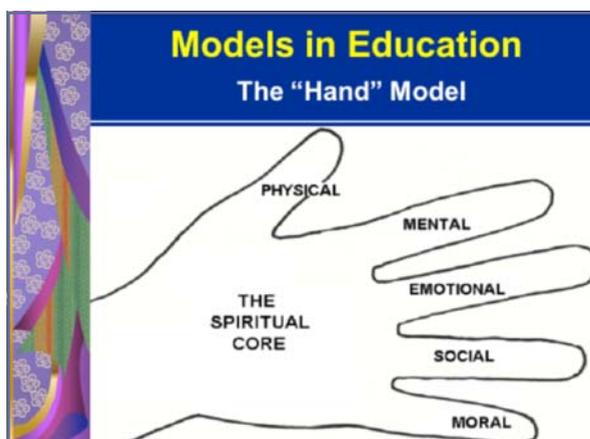
In 1994, my heart was warmed upon receiving news that Dr. Ward with his wife Margaret would visit Singapore. I had returned home and commenced work as faculty at a theological college. Several of my colleagues were excited and wanted

to meet him.

In 2000, when I was on the mission field teaching at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (now Africa International University), Dr. Ward arrived with Mrs. Ward and a team of educators to facilitate a conference with the faculty and alumni. In addition, several TEDS alumni were present for a special tea fellowship at the home of the principal, Dr. David Kasali (also a TEDS graduate).

A Transcultural Model: My deepest memory of Dr. Ward’s teaching and writing comes from his book, *Values Begin at Home*. For years, I have made reference to the “Hand” model in the classroom and during presentations at conferences. His model has inspired many trainers of teachers to aim for and focus on holistic education. This vital model also encourages leaders and educators to develop our own creative models from our different cultural contexts.

Our memories of Ted Ward as a person, teacher, and friend will remain close to our hearts. He was God’s servant who drew no “lines” between men and women, age groups, or nationalities. To God be the glory.



Ward, Ted. *Values Begin at Home*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1979.



Suraja Raman

Suraja Raman graduated from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 1993 with a PhD in Educational Studies. During her time there, Ted Ward was the Director of the Department and was also her dissertation director and first reader. Upon returning home to Singapore, she resumed her responsibilities as a faculty for theological schools in Singapore and later served as a missionary at Africa International University, in Kenya from 1997-2008. She continues to teach, write, and conduct training for church leaders in Southeast Asia and around the world.

Forming the Practice of Theological Education

DR. YAU MAN SIEW

TYNDALE SEMINARY, ONTARIO CANADA

As a teacher, Ted Ward valued and practiced holistic inquiry into truth, learning in community, and responsible service (not just knowledge for knowledge's sake). He was one of the chief influences on my life.

A Different View of Education: I will not forget my first seminar as a new doctoral student with Ted. My notion of a teacher was that of a “sage” and I thought of a good student as one who passively receives wisdom. When I saw other seminar participants engaging passionately with the material and with each other, I quickly realized that I was experiencing a totally new model of learning. I thought, “I’d better say something or Ted will wonder why he accepted me into the doctoral program.” I blurted out something and Ted immediately responded with care. He then commended me for my contribution. I felt as though Ted was holding my hand, allaying my fears and inviting me to contribute to the marketplace of ideas. That day, I found my voice!²

Teaching is enabling others to discover truth for themselves. A teacher guides toward resources and facilitates the birth of ideas. In Ted’s seminars, we would read texts in advance and come prepared to engage. Working in small groups, we would critique and debate ideas. It was not uncommon for the class to develop new paradigms and models.

Ted was a prolific author and he required us to be familiar with precedent literature in the field. However, for Ted, knowledge is found not only in textbooks, but also in life experiences. He often encouraged “reflective praxis” (an action-reflection feedback loop), and believed that examined experience leads to wisdom. Many in the doctoral program had significant years in ministry and Ted encouraged maintaining a dialectic between what we read and our life experiences.

² David Tracy (1987) notes that theological education involves “genuine conversation” with “hard rules” that include speaking and defending one’s ideas, endurance of necessary conflict, and changing one’s mind if persuaded by evidence. Susan Simoniatitis (2002) asks students, “Are your commitments based on unreflective choices?”

Ted developed the “rail fence” model while at Michigan State University. In this model, knowledge and experience form the top and bottom rails of the fence. From his research on effective professional development, he found that the best programs were those that integrated learning (knowledge) with the actual life situations of learners. We recognized this model in Ted’s seminars.

Most adults are “self-motivated” learners. They seek immediate application and prefer “transformational learning” in contrast to the “informational learning” of younger learners.³ Ted often reminded us that learners’ questions and contexts are a window to their needs.

Once I met a missionary on furlough in Chicago after several years in an African country. When he found out that I was studying with Ted, he touched my shoulder many times (as though I was a precious commodity). He told me that Ted was one of the most amazing teachers he had ever met. He described a conference in Africa where, before saying anything, Ted had asked the missionaries what issues and challenges they were facing. After hearing them out, he gave his presentation. The missionary told me he had never met a teacher who was so courageous.

Education in Community: Another critical value evident in Ted’s pedagogy is “community.” Trinitarian theology and the Church as Body of Christ are critical foundations in Ted’s educational philosophy. For Ted, education cannot take place without a good relationship between instructor and learners. We used first names with him and other professors in the doctoral program. He reminded us that we were colleagues in learning and ministry.

Ted and Margaret invited the doctoral students to their home at the beginning of the semester. Every faculty member in the program would be there (with spouses if married). Ted reiterated the values of the program and we would get to know each other over dessert and coffee. Friendships with our professors and colleagues persisted long after we graduated.

Ted cared for us. We were treated as his brothers and sisters, and he would do whatever he could to help us succeed. I will not forget a time when I was stuck in my data analysis for my doctoral thesis and could not proceed. I called Ted and asked if I could consult with him at his home. When I arrived, he had a cup of coffee for me, and he spent about an hour reviewing and clarifying my issues, with suggestions for a way forward. I told him later, “Ted, coming to see you is like visiting the doctor’s office. Even though I still have my problem, I am already feeling much better.” He laughed.

³ Sharan Merriam et al., *Learning in Adulthood* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 130.

As a learning community, we at Trinity engaged in collaborative learning. Ted expected us to help one another. He encouraged major joint projects, and we regularly shared resources and ideas. Ted criticized Christian higher education for its solitary nature – students would often study and research on their own. However, ministry is most often a team effort. Ted warned that if we had not learned collaborative work, it could lead to disastrous results in life and ministry.

One important room in the doctoral wing at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School was the “doctoral reading room” set aside for our doctoral student community. We often ate lunch together and continued our seminar discussions there, sharing ideas for research projects and socializing.

Integrated Learning Pursuits: The third value I learned from Ted is the integration of theology and social science in a holistic search for truth. Ted famously said that oftentimes, “Christian education is neither.” It is not “Christian” when teachers unwittingly embrace practices that may be antithetical to biblical principles of teaching; it is not “educational” because many teachers are ignorant of sound educational theory.

One of Ted’s favorite passages is Psalm 19, which speaks of God’s self-revelation in the Word and in the world. With his conviction that “all truth is part of God’s truth,” Ted modeled a holistic search for truth. He rejected a “sacred-secular” division in the academy and encouraged us to find links between internal (disciplinary) and external (broader) truths, which both belong to God.

Given that all truth is God’s truth, there needs to be as great a concern in “rightly dividing the general revelation” as in “rightly dividing the Word.” The world is much more truth-oriented toward the things [of general revelation] with which we are most casual, and so we often violate “their truth” while promoting “our truth.” We don’t get growth and honor God by mishandling the truth that he has revealed. We can’t manipulate, suppress or be casual about truth in either domain.⁴

Ted would often begin a seminar with a meditation on Scripture – reflecting not as a Bible scholar, but as an educator and social scientist. If we were discussing educational philosophy, he would inquire into Christ’s model of teaching and the theology of the human person. If we were learning about leadership, he would look at the biblical principles governing leadership. If discussing human growth and development, Ted would bring insights from developmental psychology, but he would also offer a theological critique. Ted brought ethnographic research into

⁴ Ted Ward, “Ethnographic Research Methods,” (Deerfield, IL: Trinity Evangelical Divinity School), 1993.

our doctoral program, fully convinced that pastors, educators and missionaries needed those tools to exegete culture.

Conclusion

I like to think that I am carrying on Ted’s legacy – his values and practices – in my own teaching.⁵ He taught me to always remember that students are people made in the image of God and are to be respected for their rationality, creativity, and rich life experiences. Teaching is to enable learners to develop their own framework of intellectual commitments, so they can judge among competing truth claims. Ted also taught me that each class is a community of learners in Christ. Genuine care and trust are foundational to education. A learning community emphasizes collaborative, not competitive, learning. Last but not least, Ted taught me that education is a holistic process of seeking God’s truth in both his Word and his world. Ted, you not only showed us how and why we teach; you also showed us how we should live. I will endeavor to pass on your legacy to my students. I really miss you.

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⁵ For a detailed description of how I structure and teach my classes, see Yau Man Siew, “Fostering Community and a Culture of Learning in Seminary Classrooms: A Personal Journey,” *Christian Education Journal* 3, no. 1 (2006), 79-91.



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