

BOLOGNANIZATION OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN GERMANY AND SWITZERLAND

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On 19 June 1999, 30 European governments signed the Bologna Declaration. The *goal* of the process agreed upon therein is to create, by the year 2010, a common European Higher Education Area, in which programmes of study, measurements of achievement and degrees granted are comparable and transparent. This fundamental reform of the structures of study courses, and, therefore, also of the entire domain of higher education, is intended to lead, in the participating countries, to improved offerings of courses of study, more strongly oriented towards areas of employment, to less lengthy periods of study, to increased mobility of students and lecturers, and to assurance of quality. In the meantime, there are now 46 participating nations. Follow-up conferences are held every two years to check on progress toward these goals.

The *implementation* of these goals is especially intended to bring about the following changes¹:

(a) A *system of academic degrees* is to be established, at the bachelor's and master's levels, which are to be compatible both nationally and throughout Europe, and recognized by all participating countries. Doctoral study can be included as the third step, beyond the master's degree.

(b) The courses of study are structured in *modules*. Modules are units of learning, defined by their content, each consisting of several aims to be achieved. Besides the content, the goal of study, the way it is to be carried out and tested, and the workload required of the student is defined in the plan for each module. The module concludes with an examination. In this way, the examinations which formerly were given only at the end of the course of study are broken up and distributed throughout the period of study.

(c) As a "guarantee" that individual achievements during the course of study are counted, a *credit point system* (ECTS, European Credit Transfer System) is to be introduced. One credit point corresponds to 30 hours of work by the student, including attendance at lectures etc. and preparation for examinations. This convertible way of recognizing achievement should make it possible to transfer credits for study work already accomplished between different programmes of study and between institutions in different places.

(d) To earn a *doctorate* it will no longer be sufficient, as previously in most subjects, to write a dissertation and pass a *rigorosum* examination. Instead, the student will be required to follow a course of doctoral study, during which his or her achievements will be documented by credit points ("Bologna III").

(e) Study should be undertaken as part of a process of lifelong learning. *Continuing education*, at the postgraduate level after earning a degree, will be more strongly promoted as a task for universities. It will include the recognition of achievements in learning which have taken place outside academic institutions.

For the study of theology, this new system brings about drastic changes, and there has been opposition from many faculties of theology in Germany during its implementation. The process of discussion and implementation in Germany continues at differing speeds, while in Switzerland it has already been completed. The theology faculty at the University of Basel was the first to do so and in the autumn of 2001 it had already introduced the ETCS and a programme of study structured in modules for the "licentiate" degree. It then proceeded to work out the division into "Bachelor's" and "Master's" programmes of study. These were launched in the autumn of 2004. During the spring semester 2009, the faculty evaluated its

¹ Information is available from the German *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* at www.bmbf.de/de/3336.php#inhalte.

experience gained so far and undertook a first revision of the system, so that shortcomings which became evident during the first phase could be corrected.

Since among all the German-speaking faculties of theology the Basel faculty has the most extensive experience with the Bologna system, I shall base the following observations on this model with which I am very familiar. Certainly there are difficulties with the structure that cannot be eliminated, but at best only reduced. Nevertheless, it offers important advantages that clearly represent gains compared with the previous arrangements for theological study. I shall describe these advantages and disadvantages with reference to the five points mentioned above.

The Different Levels of Courses of Study

The “Bologna Philosophy” provides for a clear distinction, or even a separation, between the broadly based bachelor’s and the specialised master’s programmes of study within an academic discipline. For the bachelor’s programme, 180 credits must be earned, normally within three years (though this is more the ideal than the reality). For the master’s programme there are 120 credits to be earned, supposedly within two years. The student is intended to have access to the master’s programme after completing a bachelor’s degree in any of a number of different fields, and the reverse is also true; completion of bachelor’s studies in theology should enable students to choose from a number of different fields in which to earn a master’s degree. This separation of levels also includes the basic principle that a bachelor’s degree represents qualification for an occupation.

If this model with its different levels is seen and practised in this way, so that the bachelor’s programme leads to an independent and complete degree that already qualifies one to practise a profession, and not all those who earn it go on to further studies, it cannot be applied to the culture of theological scholarship. The study of theology is an integrated course of professional preparation, and it does not make sense to separate it into segments. The same is true of other classic academic disciplines leading to professions, such as the study of medicine or law. Just as a bachelor’s degree in medicine does not qualify one to practise as a physician, and in law does not qualify one as an attorney or judge, in theology it is not sufficient preparation for priest or pastor of a parish church. Thus the churches are right to consider the B.Th. degree as an insufficient qualification for acceptance as a trainee (*Vikar*), a pastoral assistant in a local church. The B.Th. degree may be sufficient for certain areas of work within and outside the churches, but not for service in the pastorate. The master’s programme emphasises not only practical theology as a subject, but also the broadening and deepening of knowledge of the other subjects. In addition, the master’s programme gives the student the important opportunity to develop his or her own image.

In Germany, the Conference of Evangelical Faculties of Theology and the EKD executive committee on academic reform have criticised the two-level model and rejected it.² The intent is to look for ways of adopting some elements of the Bologna reforms (such as structuring the course material in modules), while avoiding the use of others (such as degree programmes at two separate levels).

However, it is entirely possible to make constructive use of the two-level model, a bachelor’s programme followed by a master’s programme, if it is made clear that, as a rule, the course of study is really *one* course, leading from one level to the other. In so doing, the Bologna concept would not be implemented in terms of only a smaller number among those who earn the BTh being allowed to continue to the master’s level. The guiding concepts of the Bologna reform should not be applied in a rigid,

² Cf.: Evangelisch-Theologischer Fakultätentag / Rat und Kirchenkonferenz der EKD: “Der Pfarramts-/Diplomstudiengang Evangelische Theologie im Rahmen des Bologna-Prozesses. Ein Positionsbestimmung”, in Friedrich Schweitzer, Christoph Schwöbel (eds.): *Aufgaben, Gestalt und Zukunft Theologischer Fakultäten* (see bibliography), 154-155, § 9.

legalistic, uniform way to all disciplines, but rather be applied flexibly and adapted to different academic cultures.

Unlike the German Conference of Ministers of Culture, the Swiss Conference of University Rectors recognized the bachelor's degree, not as a normal qualification for a profession, but only as signifying that one is preparing for a profession. To qualify fully to practise a profession, further educational steps are necessary. This solution makes sense from the point of view of theology. If it is made clear that the B.Th. and M.Th. programmes belong together, as two levels of a single course of study, the distinction between the two programmes does also make sense. It divides the course into a first phase, in which knowledge of ancient languages is acquired along with methodical and foundational theological studies and an overall perspective, while in the second phase one delves more deeply into the theological content and has the opportunity to specialise.

The B.Th. degree documents the student's progress so far. Through the module examination results taken together, the student can see whether he or she is able to meet the expectations of theological study and thus make an informed decision about whether to continue to the second phase. Under the old system, problems of suitability and capacity for achievement often were not confronted openly, despite intermediate and preparatory examinations, until the final exams after long years of study, resulting not infrequently in a deep personal crisis for the individual. But on earning a B.Th. the student has the opportunity to change direction earlier, and has in any case completed a university degree, instead of standing there empty-handed as someone who "couldn't finish".

A further advantage of the two-level model is the possibility of offering a variety of master's curricula, thus acknowledging the fact that not all theology students, by far, are planning to serve a church or to teach beyond the secondary level. At the University of Basel, where there are no students preparing to teach at college/university level, yet even so only about 60% of theology students are planning on a pastorate. The other 40% go into other fields of work. If a theology faculty has the capacity, it can offer both a master's programme of preparation for service in a church and another which is more oriented to cultural studies. Further differentiation is possible, and is being developed at some of the German faculties, for example at the University of Jena, where a programme called "Christianity in Culture, History and Education" leads to a "Master of Arts" (M.A.) degree rather than the M.Th.³ In this way a faculty can develop its own specialised image and academic market position. However, such a variety of masters' programmes can only be implemented if existing modules are offered for credit in several different programmes of study, or new modules are developed for such multi-purpose use, or credit is given for modules offered by other faculties. Even so, this sort of multi-purpose situation can be created easily.

The reform has also made it possible to incorporate the acquisition of the Hebrew, Greek and Latin *languages* into the B.Th. programme. The language and reading courses are offered at Basel for credit, and are either given in conjunction with Old Testament, New Testament and church history modules, or – as also at the University of Bochum in Germany – counted as elective courses. A student beginning the programme who already demonstrates satisfactory knowledge of one or more of these languages can receive the credits given for the language course(s) in question. In Basel language teaching is organized in three successive semesters, in which Latin, Greek and Hebrew can be studied, in that order. The courses are also intended to convey knowledge of the life of each particular culture, in order to mesh the acquisition of each language with its place in the actual study of theology.

The three-year period expected for completion of a bachelor's degree is, however, almost impossible to adhere to if all three languages have to be learned. A few faculties extend the normal period of study accordingly for each language which the student still has to learn.

³ www.uni-jena.de/unijenamedia/MA_Christentum.pdf.

Structuring of Study Programmes in Modules

The “Bologna philosophy” calls for programmes of study no longer to be structured primarily in terms of subjects (the most important for Protestant theology being Old and New Testaments, church history, history of theology, systematic theology and practical theology), but rather as modules according to content. Each module as a unit of study consists, as a rule, of a number of precisely determined individual requirements (lectures and seminars), is to be completed within two semesters and must be validated by a module examination. The contents, the goals for learning, the forms of instruction and the type of exams, along with the credits to be earned, are precisely defined. Each study programme consists of a certain set of modules which build upon one another. They can be put together like building blocks and can also be integrated into other programmes of study. The student has varying degrees of freedom to decide the order in which to complete them. However, this freedom is in fact quite limited within the bachelor’s programme, in which the logic of building knowledge upon other knowledge leads to a normal curriculum to be followed. In the master’s programme there is distinctly more such freedom. There is an area of required modules and another of elective or optional modules, in which students can pursue their own interests and develop emphases of their own.

The change of system from subject-oriented courses to content-oriented modules has opened the possibility for rethinking the content of studies and structuring programmes anew. Many faculties have profited from the opportunity to define modules touching on more than one subject area, in which exegetical and historical perspectives, and those arising from systematic theology and practical theology, are focussed together on one theme. For example, in the Catholic theological faculty in Freiburg/Breisgau, Germany, there is a module called “World and Humankind as God’s Creation”. It contains texts and concepts of creation from the Old and New Testaments, approaches to the philosophy of nature and philosophical anthropology, distinctions between [universal/monistic thinking *Alleinheitsdenken und Schöpfungsdifferenz*], theological anthropology, as well as sexual ethics and [*Ethik der Lebensformen*].⁴

Such multi-subject definitions of modules correspond to the basic principle of the Bologna reform, that orientation toward content and acquiring competence is to replace conveying knowledge of subjects in isolation. This also leads to increased exchange among theological disciplines and cooperation among the teaching faculty members. This cross-disciplinary networking among bodies of knowledge also mitigates, at least in part, the deficit that arises from the lack of the previously customary final examinations.

Before the Bologna reform, the study of theology was in actual fact often divided into three parts: in the beginning phase the emphasis was on learning the classical “languages of theology”; in the middle phase, the student attended theological lectures etc. and fulfilled the requirements for registering for the examinations. The third phase (which not infrequently lasted several years) was that of preparation for the final examinations, in which the students acquired the enormous amount of knowledge needed by working alone and in small groups. The final examinations consisted of written and oral examinations, not infrequently as many as ten in all. The need to master such a large quantity of material, together with anxiety, could constitute quite a psychological burden and sometimes resulted in postponement of the examinations, extending an already long period of study even further, or caused the student to give up altogether without receiving a degree.

The Bologna model provides for the final exams to be replaced by *module examinations*, each one to be taken as the module is completed. This spreads the burden of the examinations over the entire period of study. This model has been implemented by the Swiss Protestant faculties of theology, but the German ones are prevented from doing so by policies of the churches. In Germany the provincial churches (*Landeskirchen*) have the sole right to administer examinations to candidates for ordination to the pastoral ministry. Each church engages, for this purpose, professors from a theological faculty – usually the one at

⁴ www.theol.uni-freiburg.de/studium/studienberatung/mot/modulhandbuch-200709 (Modul M6).

the nearby university within its province (*Land*). By contrast, the comparable Swiss cantonal churches have agreed a “concordat on the training of pastors for German-speaking Switzerland”, in which they have yielded their right to examine candidates for ordination to the faculties of theology at the universities of Basel and Zürich, and dissolved their own “church examination boards”. This cleared the way for the change to the system of module examinations in the course of theological studies.

In my view this change is one of the greatest advantages of the Bologna system, but it too comes at a price. As the price of distributing the burden of the examinations throughout the period of study, the student loses the integration across subject boundaries of the entire body of knowledge acquired, which had previously been the result of preparation for the final examinations. Ideally, the student was thereby to gain an overview of theology. However, there are other ways of instilling this interdisciplinary view, for example through the cross-subject modules described above, or through interdisciplinary bachelor’s seminars and master’s seminars. In the Bologna model as implemented in Basel, a study programme does not end without an examination. At the end of both bachelor’s and master’s programmes there is also a scholarly paper to be completed at home, consisting of extensive study of a topic selected with the participation of the student, and a seminar which is related to this paper, but also goes beyond it.

The introduction of these interim examinations during the course of study, however, has created much more work for the teaching staff. This involves advising students about the exams, administering the exams and especially conducting them[? marking?]. Besides the module exams, attendance at each day’s lecture or other element has to be validated. In Basel, this validation covers the examination requirement for many modules, which eases the double burden for both students and lecturers.

For the students, their studies have become a permanent hurdles course from one exam to the next. Especially around the end of the academic year, module exams are bunched together and are given during an exam week outside the lecture schedule. Preparation for these exams can end up being postponed into vacation time. The students complain about this burden, but they are also aware that it spares them the “big crunch” at the end. They have to learn to organize their work properly, to judge what they can accomplish and to implement it by practical management of their time – capabilities which will serve them well in their future careers.

Not only regarding examinations, but also with regard to planning their studies and following them through, the intensity of *counselling for students* has clearly increased. Students need support in choosing lectures to attend according to modules, and in deciding which modules it makes sense to pursue within a given academic year. There are also many questions regarding validation of individual lectures, seminar sessions etc. Much of this advice takes place “horizontally” between students, which in turn promotes communication within the student body and thus works against the individualization of each one’s study plan. But it has also increased contact between students and teachers.

The organisation of the study material into modules also has consequences for the *planning of courses to be offered*. Each module must contain certain obligatory offerings. This includes more introductory and general survey offerings, i.e. basic courses and lectures that cover the material of the entire module or at least a large part of it. The lecturers are obliged to offer such lectures and sessions in a regular cycle. That means that on one hand, they have to give lectures with the same content about every four semesters, like the former “lecture cycles”. This entails less preparation for the lecturer each time the material is repeated, even when a lecturer is conscientious about bringing it up to date each time. On the other hand, it becomes harder to keep one’s teaching responsibilities in step with one’s research. However, new vessels can be created for this purpose. In Basel we have met this need with the possibility of offering research-oriented activities in modules designed for in-depth study.

The change of system also affects the *sequencing of the study programme*. Since modules usually extend throughout a year, the academic year becomes the structural unit, instead of the semester. This brings about more continuity in the learning process for the individual student. He or she becomes part of a

group of students who are more likely to be in the same year of their studies, and can build relationships among themselves. This in turn influences the grouping of participants in lectures and sessions, and thus affects the way these can be conducted. Under the old system a given lecture would be attended by students at all different stages of their study programmes, but now the range is more limited, which means the levels of knowledge of the participants are more comparable and the presentation can better avoid being too demanding for some and not demanding enough for others.

The European Credit Transfer System

Under the ECTS, credit points are given for the fulfilment of every academic requirement during a programme of study. As a rule, this applies to all learning opportunities offered as part of the programme, including lectures but also work done at home, as well as the module examinations. In special cases, for example when required lectures etc. are not available or for compelling reasons the student is unable to attend, it is possible to make a “learning contract” with the professor under which credits may be earned through alternate activities. A basic principle is that credits can only be earned through active work or participation, not by mere attendance. Presence at lectures is validated by oral or written checks, while in interactive seminars etc. one must not only attend, but also participate in discussions and present papers or other individual achievements.

This leads to regular attendance by the students and motivates them to be prepared and to collaborate in the learning process. The discussions in seminars profit from it. In general it can be observed that this system encourages students to be more disciplined and forthcoming.

But the two-level structure, the modules and the granting of credit points are repeatedly criticised as characteristics of the system which are incompatible with study in the humanities. David Plüss sums up the complaints against the Bologna reform as follows: “Rather than all-inclusive *education* of the person as such, it is said that this should be called goal-oriented *training*. Rather than being allowed their *freedom*, as under the previous system, and having *responsibility* expected of them, it is said that students under Bologna are *dictated to*, and the [customary] *freedom* of the student is *massively reduced*. It is claimed that the *organization as in a school* makes individual, independent theological educational experiences impossible, and that the Humboldt university [concept] is being degraded and reduced to a school [for children].”⁵

There is no doubt that study under the Bologna system is much more clearly structured than used to be the case. This structuring is intended to bring about reform. The introduction of the module system clearly increases the requirements to be completed during study. Especially in the bachelor’s programme, the opportunity for choice is quite limited. Certain academic offerings (lectures etc.) are also prescribed within the modules in this programme. In the master’s programme, however, the plan of study establishes only the *types* of offerings (lectures, seminars etc.), so that students can decide according to their subject preferences which ones to choose. The area of elective courses is also increased.

It is my experience that the individual initiative of the student, and his or her readiness to design an individual path, does not suffer greatly under a more strongly structured system. In making their choices, students are certainly concerned about earning their credits, and they adapt their choices to the guidelines of the study plan, but they have enough leeway in creating their individual plans to pursue their own interests – in any case, provided that they dispose of enough time and energy to invest largely in their studies as opposed to other demands.

⁵ David Plüss: “‘Bologna’ in Basel. Struktur, Chancen und Risiken eines Bachelor- und Masterstudiums Theologie and der Universität Basel”, in Albrecht Grözinger, Jan Hermelink, David Plüss (eds.): *Reform der theologischen Ausbildung* (see bibliography), 101.

On the other hand, the more structured character of the bachelor's programme in particular prevents disoriented and chaotic approaches to studies, in which the foundational learning takes place too late in the game. The clearly ordered initial period of study helps students find their way at the university level. The lack of orientation which many students used to display has been reduced, and a more goal-oriented and effective approach has been made possible. The demands of a structure do not have to hinder, as many people fear, development of an independent intellectual personality, but can actually strengthen certain learners. Admittedly, any system will be better suited to particular students, and the Bologna system tends to foster certain types of students, just as the previous system tended to foster others.

The reproaches that students are dictated to and their freedom is limited certainly may not simply be ignored, but they are not generally applicable to all types of learners, only to specific ones. No system can cover entirely the needs of all types of learners and do justice to them. What is crucial is how well the system can absorb the other types. The more "niches" and possible variations there are, the greater the capacity to absorb, even though administration is thereby complicated.

This discussion must also include consideration of how theology can benefit from students' opportunities to earn credits in other faculties and have them counted as electives. This ruling also attracts students in other faculties to try attending offerings in theology. Some may have been interested in theology, but were deterred by the language requirements from choosing it as their field; in this way they can come into contact with theological subject matter, students and professors. This may even motivate some to change their field of study.

Conversely, theological students benefit from a more interdisciplinary influence on their programmes of study. They, too, can make use of the opportunity to earn credits in other faculties and programmes and thus broaden their horizons. In this way, theology can become more strongly associated with the other university disciplines than it used to be.

The theological faculties could also seize upon this opportunity to design offerings specifically to meet the needs of students in other faculties. A few semesters ago in Basel, an introduction to theology for art history students was very well received. Possibilities for cooperation between faculties may also be discovered, for example, joint offerings by exegetes with scholars of ancient history from the philosophy and history faculties. This applies also to other subjects and their neighbour disciplines in still other faculties.

Structuring of Doctoral Study Programmes

The structural reform of theological study extends to doctoral study as a third level. The degree of Doctor of Theology is earned through the successful completion of a structured programme of study which, besides the dissertation, requires other achievements of the student. This is intended to prevent the narrowing of students' vision to the particular topics on which they are working and to promote the gaining of further subject-related, interdisciplinary knowledge which is relevant for their future careers. Implementation of Bologna III has not yet advanced very far in Germany, so I will speak mainly about the planning and developments in the process here in Switzerland.

The three theological faculties of Basel, Bern and Zürich have made an agreement to cooperate in setting up a joint doctoral programme as their institutional vessel for doctoral study. The aim is networking in the supervision of candidates, to offer them more learning and continuing education opportunities, but also to enable intensive contact among them, so they can share experience and support one another in their research projects. The existing doctoral colloquia in all three places are included in this programme while retaining their independence. In addition, doctoral candidates from the three faculties in all theological fields are invited to a regular series of interdisciplinary plenary conferences, where they work on issues of method and content.

The curricular portions of the doctoral study programme, for which 30 credits may be earned, are completed through central and decentralized programme offerings. They also include the acquisition of competence in areas outside the student's subject of focus, and research skills which help in preparing written work but also increase one's employability. Credits can be earned through presentation of the student's own research project, through lecturing, writing reviews and essays, taking part in conferences, acquiring teaching skills, learning languages or developing working methods such as presentation technologies and writing according to scholarly standards.

Advising and supervising a doctoral student is no longer solely the province of the professor who is chiefly responsible for him or her. A small committee is formed for this purpose, and may include representatives of different subjects, especially in the case of an interdisciplinary dissertation topic. Colleagues from other universities can also be included.

An agreement is made between the doctoral candidate and the supervising persons, specifying the sequence, the aims, the supervision and the conditions of the study to be undertaken. It must definitely ensure regular feedback to the candidate on the progress of his or her research work. This agreement is not a hard and fast contract, but rather a friendly arrangement which also takes into account the candidate's personal situation. Many doctoral students are also working during their studies, and have a limited amount of energy to invest in their dissertation. Therefore, the three years foreseen for the completion of a doctorate only works in ideal cases.

A doctorate can also be pursued outside the structured doctoral study programme. This also entails curricular requirements to complete, but not as many. The previous route, in which a dissertation is written under the individual supervision of a single professor, is to remain an accessible choice. The future will show whether it proves useful to preserve both possibilities.

Lifelong Learning

For students who complete the master's programme and do not seek a doctorate, but rather plan to continue towards ordination and a pastorate, the third level of their training, after the B.Th. and the M.Th. programmes, is practical training as assistant to the pastor of a local church (*Vikariat*). The transition to this level has always been regarded as an almost complete change of learning environment and learning content, aims and methods, as well as in definition of the personal role of the candidate for ordination. The "Bologna philosophy", however, seeks a stronger cross-relationship between studies and academic training [?]. And even more, it stands for lifelong learning that continues to enrich a person's life during the practice of a profession. For theology, this means that study, field work, *Vikariat* and further education should be more closely linked during the first years of service and throughout one's professional life. "The various phases of training and further education should be distinct, yet integrated parts of a process that lasts throughout one's career."⁶

This opens up new fields of endeavour for theological faculties, making new demands on their capacities. They will need to work together with other institutions such as preachers' seminaries, church programmes of further education for pastors, church adult education, and community adult education (*Volkshochschulen*).

Theological study programmes should include spaces left open for *field work* (*Praktika*). In the Basel and Zürich faculties a "church practical semester (EPS)" has been introduced, during which students explore different areas of church work such as teaching school religion classes, social service agencies,

⁶ Jochen Cornelius-Bundschuh: "Der Bologna-Prozess und die zweite theologische Ausbildung", in Albrecht Grözinger, Jan Hermelink, David Plüss (eds.): *Reform der theologischen Ausbildung* (see bibliography), 132-133. [English not found, provisional trans.]

work in a local church; this period also can be used to gain insight into different domains of society such as economics, politics and the environment. The EPS is the responsibility of the churches, lasts five months and is usually taken between the bachelor's and master's programmes. Participants "deal with basic questions of faith in various areas of church and society. They continue the thinking process of their bachelor's study by reflecting on the mission of a church community in the postmodern age, they gain experience during their own work in a Reformed provincial church."⁷ The programme begins and ends with a church seminar co-sponsored by the theological faculties of Basel and Zürich.

At the University of Bern, the "practical semester" has been integrated into the bachelor's programme and credits can be earned for it. It lasts 24 weeks and begins with practical work in a social service agency, business or agriculture setting. The practical stint in a local church then follows in parallel with the autumn semester. The students also take part in seminars in which they prepare for, are supported during, and evaluate their practical work.⁸

An area with great potential for development is *further education* for those holding higher education degrees, those practising professions and those interested in education. Offerings can range from one-time events to several-year study programmes leading to a certificate. The theological faculty in Basel offers, together with the Advanced Study Centre at the University of Basel, "Studies in Theology and Philosophy of Religion" especially for people in non-theological careers, to inform them about Christianity and other religions and also help them to understand religious content. It is possible to complete the study programme in three years and earn the degree of "University Professional" (UP).

The postgraduate programme on "Integration in a Multi-religious Context" is targeted at people in theological careers, teachers of religion, professional caregivers, social welfare educators, and ethnologists who work with people from different cultures and religions. Theoretical basic concepts in the culture of religions, theories of integration, ethnology, jurisprudence, conflict management etc. are studied, practical exercises are carried out and concrete projects discussed. The programme begins with a section leading to a certificate then the opportunity is offered for more intensive study towards a diploma. In a third phase, a "Master of Advanced Studies in Multi-religious Integration" (MAMRI) can be earned.

Summing Up

The Bologna reform, the essential features of which we have described here, has far-reaching consequences for theological study and the work of faculties of theology. The advantages outweigh the undeniable disadvantages. This is also true of the increased structuring of the study programme, which has been and will continue to be strongly criticised as a return to a "school-like" situation. It is the result of a basic paradigm shift. Whereas it used to be especially examinations, particularly the final examinations, which were regulated (by sets of rules for examinations), now the efforts at structural improvement take in the entire study process. The perspective has shifted from the end of the road to the road itself, from the overall qualification obtained at the end to the individual areas in which competence should be achieved during a long learning process. This *paradigm shift* is based on a concept of higher education which is appropriate for our time, as well as a sensible understanding of scholarship and education which should not be seen as opposed to the Humboldtian ideal.⁹ The students receive continuous feedback. They receive much more support along their way, and are taken notice of and evaluated, which communicates to them that they are valued.

⁷ www.konkordat.ch/htm/eps.thm.htm [English not found, provisional trans.].

⁸ www.kopta.unibe.ch/content/praktisches_semester.

⁹ Cf. Michael Beintker, "Die Evangelisch-Theologischen Fakultäten in Deutschland und der Bologna-Prozess. Einige Momentaufnahmen", in Friedrich Schweitzer, Christoph Schwöbel (eds.), *Aufgaben, Gestalt und Zukunft Theologischer Fakultäten* (see bibliography), 15-30.

Another good and important element is the *distribution of the material to be learned* from the various theological disciplines over the entire process of study. Students have previously tended not to deal with issues of systematic and practical theology until relatively late in their studies. The study programme structured in modules places introductory courses in all subjects near the beginning. For example, in Basel the fundamental module in “Systematic Theology / Dogmatics I”, the *prolegomena* of dogmatics which deals with the doctrine of God and with Christology, must be completed during the bachelor’s programme.

One goal of the “Bologna philosophy” has not been met, however: the *mobility* of students, the ability to move freely from one university to another, has not been increased. Experience in Switzerland has shown that it has actually become more difficult to enroll for individual requirements and whole modules in other faculties, or to move to another place during the bachelor’s or master’s programme. Since modules are defined differently by different faculties, entire modules from one faculty can only be counted at another faculty in individual cases. Instead, individual achievements must be fitted into the modules of the new place of study. But this also can cause difficulties, because often the instruction given by one faculty does not fit well into the module structure of the other faculty. The only time to transfer to another university without such problems is after completing the bachelor’s degree. But these limitations on mobility are not caused by the Bologna system as such, but rather by the way it is being implemented and the policy context of the universities in which this process is carried out. The pressures of competition and of image which have been and are being felt by universities have led them to construct the most varied and competitive study programmes and modules possible. In so doing they have neglected consultation with other universities.

Even though *this* goal may not be fulfilled, other substantial improvements have been made, so that in my assessment the overall outcome is positive. The deficits of which the critics complain can be lessened in part by implementing the Bologna guidelines in more flexible ways. The gains in quality will more than compensate for the faults that remain.

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