

In working through a batch of "Philosophy of Religion" college-level final examinations [77S], I was struck with how many responses to the what-good-is-this-course question were pertinent to the planning of theological education. This thinksheet offers one example--from a black woman:

"I have learned that ideas are naked, and need to be clothed. They need a story to drive them home, give them life; and it's the story that's the sermon, the profound truth. God has done a wonderful thing for us: he has left the universe open for all kinds of shaping. I find myself reading scriptures in a fresh way--looking around at different objects and immediately my imagination shapes pictures and images in my mind. I point out to my pastor the many images he uses in his sermons, and he's surprised! Recently, one Sunday morning, the adult class teacher didn't come, and I was asked to fill in. I found myself faced with a big dilemma: how could I reduce the lesson to the people's comprehension, and use some of the wonderful things I've learned in 'Philosophy of Religion'? I proceeded to have them read the text, select the key words, and imagine out the images in those words: from what common life-experience did each image come? In their own lives, what stories emerge as they meditate on those images?

"Well, we were overwhelmed with stories, and wound up with a terrific Bible class! If this is what 'interfacing the Bible and life' means, I guess I ought to be a minister! Seriously though, since getting into this course, I have been nursing the idea of entering the ministry in a more formal way. Of course I have not verbally expressed these thoughts to anyone; and the idea of women preaching, especially 'Baptist' black women, does not sound entertaining; but reading and trying to understand Philosophy of Religion presents quite a challenge to me.

"The course stirred my soul and imagination....things like 'How can I help God grow?' I listed several ways that my services can enrich God's life:" [Here she appends "community projects," "improved listening," etc.].