Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
REGNUM STUDIES IN GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY
(Previously GLOBAL THEOLOGICAL VOICES series)

Series Preface

The latter part of the twentieth century witnessed a global level of change in Christian dynamics. One significant development was the rise of the churches in the global south, not only in their number but also in their engagement with their socio-cultural contexts. *Regnum Studies in Global Christianity* explores the issues that the global church struggles with, focusing particularly on churches in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

The series publishes studies that will help the global church learn not only from past and present, but also from provocative and prophetic voices for the future. The editors and the publisher particularly pray that the series as a public space will encourage the southern churches to make an important contribution to the shaping of a healthy future for global Christianity. The editors invite theological seminaries and universities from around the world to submit relevant scholarly dissertations for possible publication in the series. It is hoped that the series will provide a forum for South-to-South as well as South-to-North dialogues.

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Handbook of Theological Education in Africa

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Forewords by John Mbiti, Andre Karamaga, Russel Botman, Olav Fykse Tveit, Mercy Oduyoye and Denise Ackermann
And yet for us it is when he is on the cross that we cannot resist him

They call me African;
African indeed am I;
Rugged son of the soil of Africa,
Black as my father, and his before him;
As my mother and sisters and brother, living and gone
from this
World

They ask me what I believe . . . my faith.
Some even think I have none
But live like the beasts of the field ....

‘What of God, the Creator
Revealed to mankind through the Jews of old
The YAHWEH: I AM
Who has been and ever shall be?
Do you acknowledge him?’

My fathers and theirs, many generations before,
Knew him.
They bowed the knee to him
By many names they knew him,
And yet ’tis he the One and only God.
They called him:
UVELINGQAKI: The first One
Who came before ever anything appeared;
UNKULUNKULUL The BIG BIG ONE,
So big indeed that no space could ever
Contain him;
MODIMO: Because his abode is far up in the sky.
They also knew him as MODIRI
For he has made all;
And LESA: The spirit without which the breath of
man cannot Be.

...Later on He came, this Son of Man:
Like a child delayed he came to us
The white man brought him.

He was pale, and not the sunburnt Sun of the Desert.
As a child he came.
A wee little babe wrapped in swaddling clothes.
Ah, if only he had been like Moses,
Lying Sun-scorched in the banks of the river of God
We would have recognized him.
He eludes us still, this Jesus, Son of Man.
His words. Ah, they taste so good,
As sweet and refreshing as the sap of the palm raised
and nourished on African soil.
The truth of His words are for all men, for all time.

And yet for us it is when he is on the cross,
This Jesus of Nazareth, with holed hands
and open side, like a beast at a sacrifice:
When He is stripped naked like us,
Browned and Sweating water and Blood in the heat of
the sun,
Yet silent
That we cannot resist Him.
How like us He is, this Jesus of Nazareth,
Beaten tortured, imprisoned, spat upon, truncheoned.
Denied by his own, and chased like a thief in the
night.
Despised, and rejected like a dog that has fleas, For
no reason...

Holy Jesus, Lord, Son of Man and Son of God,
Make peace with your blood and sweet and sufferings,
With God, UVELINGQAKI, UNKULUNKULUL,
For the Sins of Mankind, our fathers and us,
That standing in the same Sonship with all humankind
and you.
Together with you we can pray to Him above:
FATHER FORGIVE.

Meditation and poem: by Gabriel Setiloane, former youth secretary of All Africa Conference of Churches, lecturer on Ecumenics at Selly Oak, Birmingham and Professor at University of Cape Town.


Prelims
Explanation for cover picture: The painting of the African Crucified Christ is part of a series of 62 New Testament scenes of the life of Jesus Christ which has been published under the title ‘La Vie de Jesus Mafa’. This project originated 1973 in North Cameroon, where Mafa Christian communities wanted to have an African representation of the gospel. A committee was formed to work on the project. Some important New Testament scenes were selected for liturgical and catechetical use and then adapted to be played by the village people. The sketches were photographed and then painted. After a careful and detailed study Jesus MAFA paintings were carried out by a French artist chosen for her fine and deep perception of religious and African spirits.

Vie de Jésus Mafa est un ensemble cohérent de tableaux illustrant 62 scènes du Nouveau Testament. Ils sont imprimés en différentes tailles (de 10x15 à 70x100 cm) et sur une video cassette. Ces reproductions sont envoyées à travers le monde depuis plus de 30 ans, notamment dans les régions plus particulièrement concernées par un Jésus noir dans un environnement africain. Jésus ressuscité parle à chacun de nous dans son propre langage et sa propre culture. Il est devenu l’un des nôtres.

Tous droits réservés : VIE DE JESUS MAFIA, 24 rue du Maréchal Joffre, F-78000, VERSAILLES
website : www.jesusmafa.com

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Contents

Forewords:
- John S. Mbiti xv
- Andre Karamaga xviii
- H. Russel Botman xx
- Olav Fykse Tveit xxi
- Mercy Oduyoye xxiii
- Denise M. Ackermann xxv

Editorial xxvii

List of Contributors

PART I: HISTORY OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA
1. Theological Education from its earliest Jewish and African Christian beginnings – some currents in the wider history of Christianity
   Andrew Walls (Scotland/USA) 3
2. Good News Turned by Native Hands, Turned by Native Hatchets and Tendered with Native Earth - A History of Theological Education in Africa
   John S. Pobee (Ghana) 13
3. Historical Developments of Theological Education in Eastern Africa - The Example of Johanness Krapf
   Julius Gathogo (Kenya) 28
4. Bishop Stephen Neill, the IMC and the State of African Theological Education in 1950
   Dyron Daughrity (California, USA) 47
5. Ecumenical Theological Education and The Church in Africa Today
   Nyambura J. Njoroge (Kenya/Switzerland) 64
6. Viability and Ecumenical Perspectives for Theological Education in Africa: Legacy and New Beginnings as seen from ETE/WCC
   Dietrich Werner (Germany/Switzerland) 70
7. The Cross-cultural mission: An Agenda for Theological Education in Africa
   Tharcisse Gatwa (Rwanda) 84
8. The past and presence of Christian theology in African universities
   James Kombo (Kenya) 100
9. The Future Is Not What It Used To Be: Changes and choices facing theological education in Africa
   Bill Houston (South Africa) 108
10. The future of Theological Education in Africa and the challenges it faces
    Jesse Mugambi (Kenya) 117
### PART II: REGIONAL SURVEYS ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Evangelical Theological Education in the Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>Richard Hart (Jordan)</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Theological Education in West Africa</td>
<td>Kwabena Asamoah Gyadu (Ghana)</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Theological Education in East Africa</td>
<td>Christopher Byaruhanga (Uganda)</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Theological Education in Ethiopia</td>
<td>Desta Heliso (Ethiopia)</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Theological Education in Francophone Africa</td>
<td>Tharcisse Gatwa (Rwanda)</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Theological Education in Southern Africa</td>
<td>James Amanze (Malawi/Botswana)</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Theological Education and Ministerial Formation in Madagascar</td>
<td>Laurent W. Ramambason (Madagascar)</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Theological Teaching and Formation in South Africa</td>
<td>Christina Landmann (South Africa)</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>If God Is For Us, Who Can Be Against Us? Theologizing Survival, Hope</td>
<td>Afe Adogame (Nigeria/Scotland)</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>PART III: DENOMINATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Theological Education in the Coptic Orthodox Church</td>
<td>Wedad Tawfik (Egypt)</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Theological Education in Angola and Mozambique</td>
<td>Luciano Chianeque (Angola)</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Theological Education in Ethiopia</td>
<td>Ayalkibet Berhanu Tesfaye (Ethiopia/South Africa)</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Theological Training and Formation in the Eastern Orthodox Churches in Africa</td>
<td>John Cosmas Njoroge (Kenya)</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Unleashing Theological Energy for Africa and the World Church – Roman Catholic Perspectives on African theological education</td>
<td>Gosbert Byamungu (Tanzania/Italy)</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Theological Formation in the Roman Catholic Church in Africa</td>
<td>Paul Béré (Côte d’Ivoire)</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Theological Education for Roman Catholic Religious Sisters in Africa</td>
<td>Chika Eucharía Eze SHCJ (Nigeria/South Africa)</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Studying and Doing Lutheran Theologies and Theological Education in Africa</td>
<td>Paul Isaak (Namibia)</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Anglican Theological Education in African and the role of ANITEPAM</td>
<td>Henry Mbaya (Malawi/South Africa)</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Theological Education in Presbyterian Churches in Africa</td>
<td>Isabel Apawo Phiri (Malawi/ Switzerland)</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Theological Education in South Africa from a Reformed Perspective</td>
<td>Nico Koopman (South Africa)</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
32. Major Concepts and Understandings of Theological Education in Baptist Churches in Eastern and Southern Africa  
   *Hany Longwe (Malawi)*  
   363
33. Theological Education in Methodist Churches in Africa  
   *Kwabena Asamoah Gyadu (Ghana)*  
   380
34. Theological Education in Evangelical Churches  
   *Bill Houston and Victor Nakah (South Africa/Zimbabwe)*  
   386
35. Pentecostal Theological Education – A Ghanaian Perspective  
   *Opoku Onyinah and Emmanuel Kwesi Anim (Ghana)*  
   393
36. The Development and Role of Pentecostal Theology in Botswana  
   *Fidelis Nkomazana (Botswana)*  
   402
37. Theological Education in African Pentecostal Churches—Perspectives from Zimbabwe  
   *Kudzai Biri (Zimbabwe)*  
   411
38. Theological Education in African Independent Churches in East Africa  
   *John Njeru Gichimu (Kenya)*  
   420
39. Theological Education in African Independent Churches: A Plethora of Pedagogies  
   *Thomas Oduro (Ghana)*  
   423
40. Theological Education in the African Independent Churches in Botswana  
   *Obed Kealotswe (Botswana)*  
   433
41. Theological Education in the Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA)  
   *Mary Getui (Kenya)*  
   440

**PART IV: KEY ISSUES AND NEW FRONTIERS IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA**  

**Biblical Studies**
42. Les Etudes Bibliques Dans L’enseignement Theologique En Afrique  
   *Priscille Djomhoue (Cameroon)*  
   455
43. Biblical studies in South(ern) Africa: An Overview  
   *Madipoane Masenya (South Africa)*  
   454
44. Biblical Studies in Theological Education in Africa: Some Methodological Considerations  
   *Lovemore Togarasei (Zimbabwe/Botswana)*  
   466
45. L’hébreu biblique dans l’enseignement théologique en Afrique centrale  
   *Levi Ngangura Manyanya (DRC) et Viateur Ndikumana*  
   475
46. Bible Translation and Christian Theological Education in Africa – A Historical and a Pan-African Overview  
   *Aloo Mojola (Kenya)*  
   486
47. Bible Translation and Theological Education in Lusophone and Spanish Speaking Africa  
   *Gosnell Yorke and Edouard Kitoto Nsiku (West Indies and Mozambique)*  
   500
48. The significance of Bible Translations for African Theological Education  
   *Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole (South Africa)*  
   508

**Mission and Dialogue**
49. Restoring mission to the heart of theological education  
   *Michael McCoy (South Africa)*  
   523
50. Inculturation Theology in Africa: Historical and Hermeneutical Developments  
   *Justin Ukpong (Nigeria)*  
   530
51. The Contribution of Missiological Theology to the Theological Education in Africa  
   *Paul Isaak (Namibia)*  
   543

Prelims
52. Doing Theological Education from the Context of Migration in Southern Africa: A Theology of Reconstruction in Missiological Perspective
   Chammah Kaunda (Zambia/South Africa) 555
53. Teaching African Religion in Theological Institutions
   Tabona Shoko (Zimbabwe) 566
54. Theological education and the relevance of African Worldviews – shifting the paradigm
   Tony Balcomb (South Africa) 576
55. Theological Education in Africa in the Context of Modern Science
   Peter Barrett (South Africa) 589
56. Ethnicity in theological education in Africa
   Peter Nyende (Kenya) 600
57. Christian-Muslim Relationships in retrospect and lessons for theological education in Africa
   Nathan Samwini (Ghana) 611
58. The Inclusion of the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations as an Imperative for Theological Education in Africa
   Johnson Mbillah (Ghana/Kenya) 624

Gender and HIV and AIDS
59. HIV Research, Gender and Religion Studies
   Sarojini Nadar (South Africa) and Isabel Apawo Phiri (Malawi/Switzerland) 632
60. Mainstreaming Gender in Theological institutions in Francophone African: Perspectives from Cameroon
   Priscille Djomhoue (Cameroon) 639
61. “...For Gaining instructions in wise dealings, righteousness, Justice and equity”: Theological Education for Gender Justice and Sexual Empowerment.
   Fulata Moyo (Malawi/Switzerland) 647
62. Methods of interrogating HIV and AIDS in Biblical Studies
   Musa Dube (Botswana) 653
63. Religion and Masculinities in Africa: An opportunity in Africanization
   Ezra Chitando (Zimbabwe) 662
64. The Tamar Campaign: returning Tamar’s testimony to the church
   Gerald West (South Africa) 671
65. Gender, religion and politics in theological education
   Verena Grueter (Germany) 682

Public theology - Justice, peace and ecology
66. Political Theology in Theological and Bible Colleges Curriculum
   Godfrey Ngumi (Kenya) 689
67. Theological education for dignity in Africa - A Public Theological Perspective
   Nico Koopman 698
68. Sustainability in African Theological Education
   Ernst Conradie (South Africa) 707
69. Environmental Issues in African Theological Education
   Makamure Clement (Zimbabwe) 714
70. Poverty and justice as crucial themes in African theological education
   Rogate Mshana (Tanzania/Switzerland) 722
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>EDAN’s Journey in Introducing Disability Studies in African Theological Education Institutions</td>
<td>Samuel Kabue (Kenya) and Micheline Kamba (DRC)</td>
<td>731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Practical and pastoral theology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Pastoral Theology in African contexts</td>
<td>Maake Masango (South Africa)</td>
<td>744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Spiritual Formation in Theological Education</td>
<td>Marilyn Naidoo (South Africa)</td>
<td>755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Theological Education for African Ecumenism - Proposals from the Perspective of Christian Spirituality</td>
<td>Christo Lombaard (South Africa)</td>
<td>771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>African initiatives in the Ecumenical Movement - Theological Education for the Future of African Ecumenism</td>
<td>James Amanze (Malawi/Botswana)</td>
<td>779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Sunday Schools as the Foundation of Christian Nurture and their Relevance for Theological Education in Africa</td>
<td>Peter M. Mumo (Kenya)</td>
<td>793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>A Church Where Children are Welcome: A New Paradigm for Children’s Ministry in Africa</td>
<td>Dirk Coetsee and Jan Grobbelaar (South Africa)</td>
<td>803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Forms and models of theological education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Contextualizing Theological Education in Africa by Doing Theology in a Missional Hermeneutic</td>
<td>Jurgens Hendriks (South Africa)</td>
<td>818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Theological Education for all God’s People: Theological Education by Extension (TEE) in Africa</td>
<td>Kangwa Mabuluki (Zambia)</td>
<td>832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Distance and Open Learning Models of Theological Education in Africa</td>
<td>Vengesai Chiminige (Zimbabwe)</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Mentoring younger scholars in Theological Education in Africa</td>
<td>John De Gruchy and Lyn Holness (South Africa)</td>
<td>852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Mentoring younger scholars in Theological Education in Africa</td>
<td>Esther Mombo (Kenya)</td>
<td>858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Academic Theology and the Church – A West African Perspective</td>
<td>Godwin Ironeng Akper</td>
<td>869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>What is ‘Quality’ in Theological Education?</td>
<td>Bill Houston (South Africa)</td>
<td>875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PART V: SELECTED INNOVATIVE MODELS AND CASE STUDIES OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Theological Education as an Instrument of Socialisation and Church Growth of African-Jamaicans in the 19th Century</td>
<td>Roderick Hewitt (South Africa/Jamaica)</td>
<td>883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>From St. Paul’s Divinity School to St. Paul’s University - A story of Theological Education from Kenya</td>
<td>Esther Mombo (Kenya) and John Chesworth (Britain/Kenya)</td>
<td>893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Case Study on Theological Education and the African Inland Church in Kenya</td>
<td>Peter M. Mumo (Kenya)</td>
<td>902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>Higher Education as Mission: The Case of Uganda Christian University</td>
<td>Stephen Noll (Uganda)</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>The School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics: doing contextual theology in Africa in the University of KwaZulu-Natal</td>
<td>Gerald West (South Africa)</td>
<td>919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Seth Mokitimi – A New Way of Doing Seminary?</td>
<td>Peter Storey (South Africa)</td>
<td>927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Developments of Theological Education at the United Seminary of Ricatla, Mozambique</td>
<td>Hette Domburg and Isaias Titoce (Mozambique)</td>
<td>934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>The Akrofi-Christaller Institute, Ghana, as an Innovative Model of Theological Education in Africa</td>
<td>Gillian Bediako (Ghana)</td>
<td>939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>The African Theological Fellowship – an Innovative Model for Evangelical Theological Education</td>
<td>Gillian Bediako (Ghana)</td>
<td>947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Doing Popular Theology through the Institute of Women in Religion and Culture in Accra, Ghana</td>
<td>Mercy Oduyoye (Ghana)</td>
<td>956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Theological Education by Extension – A Case Study on TEE College Johannesburg.</td>
<td>Michael Taylor and Craig Dunsmuir (South Africa)</td>
<td>958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians – Transforming Theological Education</td>
<td>Isabel Apavo Phiri (Malawi/Switzerland) and Lilian Siwila (Zambia/South Africa)</td>
<td>966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>CEPROFORE – Le Centre Protestant de Formation et de Rencontre en Togo</td>
<td>Frank Agbi-Awume (Togo)</td>
<td>974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>The contribution of the Anglican Church to theological education in South Africa: the Case of St. Paul’s Theological College, Grahamstown</td>
<td>Henry Mbaya (Malawi/South Africa)</td>
<td>979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>University of San Francisco in Zambia Service-Learning Program: A Synergist Approach to Theological Innovation</td>
<td>Lilian Dube (Zimbabwe/USA)</td>
<td>990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PART VI: NETWORKS AND RESOURCES FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Reliable Leadership, Sustainable Seminaries: The NetACT Story 2000-2012</td>
<td>Jurgens Hendriks (South Africa)</td>
<td>1001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Ecumenical Theological Education in Africa: The Case of the Theological Association of Theological Institution in Southern and Central Africa (ATISCA)</td>
<td>James Amanze (Malawi/Botswana)</td>
<td>1018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>West African Association of Theological Institution (WAATI): History, Activities and Challenges, (1973-2011)</td>
<td>Thomas A. Odur (Ghana)</td>
<td>1032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa (ATIEA)</td>
<td>Edison Kalengo (Uganda/Kenya)</td>
<td>1039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>The Association of Theological Institutions in Francophone Africa (ASTHEOL) in the period between 1966 and 2011</td>
<td>Priscille Djomhoue (Cameroon)</td>
<td>1043</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Handbook of Theological Education in Africa_
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>African Pentecostalism Coming of Age: The Association for Pentecostal Theological Education in Africa (APTEA) from an Ecumenical Perspective</td>
<td>Chammah Kaunda (Zambia/South Africa)</td>
<td>1050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>African Network of Higher Education and Research in Theology, HIV and AIDS (ANHERTHA)</td>
<td>Edwina Ward (South Africa)</td>
<td>1059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>ACTEA and Quality Assurance in Evangelical Theological Education in Africa</td>
<td>Philippe Emedi (DRC/South Africa)</td>
<td>1064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Le Role De la CETA Dans l’Enseignement Theologique en Afrique</td>
<td>Simon Kossi Dossou (Benin)</td>
<td>1075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Le CITAF : Ensemble pour une formation théologique de qualité en Afrique francophone</td>
<td>Sylvain Allaboe (Togo)</td>
<td>1083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>The place and role of theological training in CEVAA</td>
<td>Samuel Johnson (Cameroon)</td>
<td>1088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Africa goes Online: The Global Library for Theology and Ecumenism</td>
<td>Christoph Stueckelberger (Switzerland)</td>
<td>1093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Challenges for Theological Publishing and Scholarly Books in Africa</td>
<td>Jesse Mugambi (Kenya)</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>Theological Education in Africa Needs Money</td>
<td>Manfred Waldemar Kohl (Canada)</td>
<td>1106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword – John S. Mbiti

In the mid-1950s, when I wanted to study Theology, it was impossible to do so anywhere in Africa. There were no Faculties, Seminaries, Colleges, or other Institutions of higher learning, where I could take Theological Education, to become a priest / pastor. I was excluded from even applying to the few suitable places available. South Africa would have had places, but the demonic Apartheid raged in full force. Egypt and Ethiopia would have had places, but I was not an Orthodox candidate. The few Catholic Seminaries would have had a place, but I was not a Catholic, nor did I envisage being a celibate priest. In Eastern Africa, there were a few “Divinity Schools”, but I could not be accepted there, because I was more academically qualified than the most of (or all) their teachers, since I had just obtained a B.A. degree from London University, through its Makerere University College in Uganda.

So, I headed for the United States of America, in spite of my grandmother’s fear, that in such a distant place the natives might cannibalise me. There, I got two theological degrees. In the Theological Education I received, there was no mention of Theology or Christianity in Africa, except “sending missionaries to convert the heathens and free them from evil spirits and pathetic bondage of sin”. I returned to Kenya, but Kenya did not know what to do with me, and my Theological Education. The colonial Government placed me at a Teacher Training College for primary schools. It also provided a spy on me, as that was the time of Kenya’s struggle for independence, with a ‘State of Emergency’, and it viewed the educated few as potential suspects.

But I still had thirst for advanced Theological Education. As this could not be quenched anywhere on our continent, again I headed overseas. I landed at Cambridge University, where I did my Ph. D. in the New Testament in relation to African traditional concepts, what nobody else had ever done. Besides my theological supervisor in the New Testament, Cambridge assigned an anthropologist as a consultant, who had done “field work” in Nigeria. In my dissertation I indicated that, one of the intentions of my study was “to raise the question regarding Christian Theology in Africa.” That was in 1963. The few of us African theologians (in the making), were just beginning to stammer about “Theologia Africana”, “African Theology”, or “Christian Theology in Africa”. We were shy about the name, but we knew there was something to be named and done in that direction. Critics of the name and the idea popped up like mushrooms in both the West and in Africa itself. Similarly, when in 1971 I proposed to introduce “Course 550, African Theology” at Makerere University, there was resistance from some academics, arguing that no such a course was offered anywhere in Africa or the world. But, it got into the University catalogue, and three female and eight male students registered for it. We had great fun exploring this pioneer topic.

When I finished my doctorate at Cambridge, no Church or Theological Institution in Africa could offer me a post. Makerere University College my Alma Mater, took me on in the newly established Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, to teach Theology and Religion. That was in 1964, and for ten years, I established my academic home there in doing and teaching Theology. During that time, a number of Theological Institutions in East Africa forged a link with our Department, so that they could teach certificate and diploma courses in Theology, for which Makerere examined and issued the appropriate qualification documents.
This “personal” account in the Foreword, is an illustration to show how Theological Education in Africa struggled at the beginning in the nineteen sixties and seventies. It then rapidly began to form concrete shape, take off, and reach where it is today. My “personal story” from Eastern Africa is not unique, and can be duplicated in other regions. Looking at it now, in these two decades of the twenty first century, it is clear that Theological Education has literally exploded both horizontally and vertically. If I were now to retrace the path of my theological studies, I would sail smoothly from the beginning to the end. I would be able to go to a Bible Institute half a kilometre away from my home at Mulango in Kenya. I would be able to go to any of the dozens of Church Universities in Kenya. I would do my doctorate at any of those universities. I could be working as pastor, priest, bishop, or head of many Churches. I could be professor at any of the hundreds of religious (Church) universities in Africa, including South Africa where politics have changed drastically. Ecumenism has taken root, and my Church affiliation (Anglican and Swiss Reformed) would be no barrier to my working in many of the churches. Whereas, in the early nineteen sixties there was not a single book by an African theologian, now there are thousands of such books and articles and periodicals by African scholars. There are dozens of Church and private publishers putting out a stream of religious (and other) publications. Whereas that time there were hardly any doctorates in Theology, we now have countless numbers of them everywhere, and many are in the making.

The landscape of Theological Education has changed drastically during the final twenty to thirty years of the last century. There is very much to appreciate about it and what has been achieved. We have ground to make us rejoice, and for which to thank the Lord. This African Handbook on Theological Education is a fascinating witness to the explosive status quo of Theological Education. The historical and regional (inter alia) surveys, open our eyes and ears to see and hear how fast it has taken root historically, geographically, and ecumenically. It is a challenge, to see the living issues that Theological Education is addressing today. This is a clear indication that, Theology is concerned with not merely the mind (academic gymnastics) alone, but also the body and spirit of individuals and communities. It is addressing the dynamic presence of Christianity in Africa, in all its manifold dimensions, opportunities, and challenges.

Yes, the book calls us to lift our heads, and project past achievements onto the would be future landscape. This is what the book specifically takes up in the fourth section: “Key Issues and new Frontiers”. It is clear that, the outreach of Theological Education has no boundaries. It cannot afford to remain static, otherwise it becomes impotent and rusty. This picture inspires us to wonder: With the great enthusiasm about the current state and future of Theological Education, are Churches and organizations heading towards a situation of overpopulation in theological institutions and their graduates? The shadow that goes with that question will remain, namely the concern with maintaining appropriate academic standards of that Theological Education.

So, with this promising future in mind, there is room for consideration of and work on items, among others, like:

1. Addressing the creeping secularisation and non-religiosity on the African scene;
2. (Aggressive) Inter-confessional (ecumenical) planning and coordination;
3. Bible translations from original languages (Hebrew / {Aramaic} and Greek) into African languages.
   It is the Bible, which is shaping African Christianity today (and hopefully tomorrow). Some Institutions that specialise in Biblical languages, could also perhaps promote Bible translations from original to African languages;
4. Cooperation in the courses given by the institutions, perhaps designating some to specialise in certain fields, according to the facilities and resources available. This can help avoid “unhealthy competition” and craving for “fame”. It could also facilitate exchange of faculty and students, for the sake of academic health;
5. Dialogue with other religious traditions (including African Religion, Islam, Judaism, and ‘New Religions’);
6. Involvement of Churches in matters like planning personnel needs, cooperation at local and community levels in addressing common concerns (like famine, environment, and health). Whereas the Institutions address the immediate “theoretical” dimension of Theology, Churches deal and live with the “practical” dimension. A working exchange would lead to a two-way enrichment, something that I experienced and treasured over many years while simultaneously doing pastoral work in the parish (at Burgdorf) and lecturing at the University (in Bern), Switzerland;
7. Promoting Ecumenical working and living together, as Christians and as the Church (and not just Churches). Theological Education is (almost by definition) an ecumenical mission of the Christian Faith. Each of the many Church traditions in Africa, has many features of value, which could enrich other traditions. They would also contribute towards drawing the Churches closer to the realization of the prayer of our Lord, “that they may be one” (John 17:21-23);
8. Promoting research, recordings (audio and video), and publications. Perhaps, this could also be done on the basis of cooperation and sharing of resources and fruits of the work;
9. Strengthening bodies of Networks to tackle among others, questions like amalgamation of resources. This book gives accounts of some such networks that have contributed enormously in Theological Education. These can still be expanded and strengthened;
10. Use of modern technology in the means of communication in Theological Education and life of the Church. Obvious ones include the Computer, the Internet, the television, the radio, audio and video facilities, the telephone, etc. There are also the means of physical communication and transport, such as the bicycle, motorbike, buses, boats, trains, planes, satellites. Theological Education can benefit from, and contribute to the technological area of life. What is the Theology of such communication?

We are very grateful for this volume. It is comprehensive, and very timely. It is both encouraging and challenging. It shows that Theological Education has come to Africa to stay. It is not just an “exotic” aspiration centred somewhere overseas. It is available at the grassroots, where the Church as the Body of Christ is, indeed where that Church is thriving. May the same Lord bless its Theological Education, to have a meaningful vision and to be relevant in the world where it is situated – in Africa and in the wider world. An African proverb says that: “An animal smells like the forest where it spends the night.” Theological Education is spending the night in the African forest – may it smell like that forest, to the glory of God.

John Mbiti
Former Professor for Theology and Religion at the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy at Makerere University, Uganda; Former Director of the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, Switzerland.

Prelims
Foreword – Andre Karamaga

Theological Education is central to the life of a living and growing Church. The ministry and service of any Church is a reflection of the quality of theological education given both to its leaders and members. Experience has shown throughout the history of the Christian Church that weakness or slackness in the life of any Church can be traced to its theological seminaries. Quality theological education that is accessible and relevant is not a strategic option for any Church – it is the only imperative choice. The Church in Africa is now of age. But with this comes the responsibility to shoulder the theological needs of the Church on the African continent. The Church in Africa cannot simply continue to pride in past glories or rejoice for the increasing number of individuals and communities engaged in the spread of the Gospel in Africa. The time is now to look forward with hope but with a firm commitment qualitative theological foundation.

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) realises the central position of theological education in the life of the Church on the African continent. The AACC through its Theology, Ecumenical & Interfaith Department is prepared to accompany the churches in Africa in the area of promoting relevant theological education on Africa in continuous dialogue with other similar initiative in other continent. The last two years has seen AACC revitalise and strengthen regional theological associations on the continent. In an effort by AACC to accompany the Church in Africa to take responsibility for theological education and reflection, an Africa Academy of Theology and Religion (AATR) and a Theological Education Fund as two initiatives of the Church in Africa will be launched in December 2012. These two initiatives will take care of theological training and standards in both theological reflection and education. We call on both the theological institutions and Church in Africa to support these initiatives. This book according to one of its authors is also a wake-up call for African churches to give proper prominence to theological education institutions and their programmes which serve them:

Indeed the recession of theological education in Africa could be linked to the ever decreasing financial support directed to this field. The theological colleges, the predecessors of these institutions, were founded by missions. As such, the missions and the churches abroad were their most loyal supporters. When missions handed over to the African churches, it is expected that the African churches were going to take up this role. This however did not happen—the African churches apart from legally owning the institutions never really supported the theological colleges. The support base for theological education in the majority of cases remained in the mission headquarters and churches abroad. Indeed one can say, sadly, that the theological colleges dotted across Africa are orphans of mission headquarters and churches abroad. The other way of saying it is that the African church has never really supported theological education. This is an issue that must be confronted. The African church must be reminded to take up its responsibility and support its own theological education.¹

AACC salutes the publication of this African Handbook of Theological Education as a step in the right direction. It is an expression of African Christianity lived out to benefit those on the African continent and

¹ James Kombo, Theology in African universities, in this Handbook, page…
beyond. We congratulate the editorial team around Prof. Isabel Phiri and Dr. Dietrich Werner and those supporting them for their magnificent work in bringing this Handbook together. This is a timely gift of the Church in Africa to the worldwide Church and will serve many generations of African theologians to come. It is my sincere hope and prayer that the contents of this book will inspire many to appreciate, value and support theological education on the African continent. We pledge our unreserved support to the Church in Africa in the realisation of her potential and fulfilment of her missionary imperatives.

Andre Karamaga
General Secretary of the All-Africa Conference of Churches, Former Head of Africa Desk of WCC, Ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda.
Theology in Africa is forever in motion, and therefore taking stock of theological education on the continent is bound to be an open-ended affair. However, this does not make it any less of a crucial undertaking. To the contrary, this book functions like a map by preventing us from getting lost in the terrain of the past and present and finding our way to the future.

An overview of the history of African theology shows that it has always responded to the challenges faced by the people of the continent at any given time. In the 1960s and ’70s, the emphasis was largely on dealing with the impact of European colonialism and the onset of the postcolonial period.

The alienation from indigenous identity and culture that resulted from enslavement and oppression had to be countered. Leading exponents of African theology at the time helped shatter negative theological stereotypes of indigenous African thought. This provided space for African theology to develop with greater independence from European models.

Also present in this early discourse of African theology were strains of critical thought directed at ongoing and newly emerging injustices suffered by the people of the continent even after Uhuru had come about.

With the advent of the 1980s, the increasing international prominence of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa added a political and ecumenical dimension to African theology. Influenced by the liberation theology of the Americas, theology on our continent started focusing on promoting human rights and countering racism. This produced prominent theological texts – especially the Kairos Document and the Confession of Belhar – in which apartheid was condemned as a heresy and other forms of injustice were similarly denounced. Quite recently, the Kitwe Declaration of the Southern African Alliance of Reformed Churches synthesised ecumenical declarations on living pursuing economic justice in a neoliberal context.

Out of these developments, serious experiments in constructive theology emerged, variously concentrating on reconstruction, transformation and reconciliation. In addition, a growing awareness of women’s rights and gender issues added fresh impetus to the quest for a contemporary African theology.

This has resulted in an African public theology for the 21st century, with as its raison d’être the agency of the victim, the poor and the marginalised. As readers of this book will see for themselves, public theology in Africa feels compelled to pertinently address such issues as justice and peace, ecology and sustainability, race and human dignity, class and poverty, as well as reconciliation and disability. And that means that the transformation of African theology is likely to continue.

The best learning comes from education that goes beyond merely providing information. This book not only opens up new vistas – it stimulates the will to explore them.

Russel Botman
Professor in the Department of Practical Theology and Missiology in the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch and the first black Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University in the Western Cape, South Africa; former President of the South African Council of Churches.
Foreword – Olav Fykse Tveit

The new *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa* is a great achievement and a unique contribution to future generations of students and theological educators in African churches.

This vital work is the result of an intensive three-year process of conceptualization, collaboration and hard editorial work under the leadership of Prof. Isabel Phiri, Associate General Secretary for Public Witness and Diakonia in the World Council of Churches (WCC), and Dr. Dietrich Werner, Director of Ecumenical Theological Education programme of the WCC. They have worked closely with a committed team of African associate editors and assistants. The *Handbook* is unique, comprehensive and ambitious in its aim and scope. It is:

- truly interdenominationally oriented, bringing perspectives from all major Christian traditions on the African continent
- broad in geographical extension, collecting voices from all major regions of the vast African continent
- life-centered and ecological in orientation, as voices are brought together on an impressive number of new key themes and contextual challenges for theological education in Africa
- grounded in expertise, drawing on a pan-African unprecedented gathering of leading African theologians, men and women.

The publication of the *Handbook* is both timely and appropriate during the jubilee assembly of the All African Conference of Churches (AACC) in Kampala, in June 2013. The AACC shares with the WCC’s upcoming assembly in Busan, Korea, a thematic prayer, “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.” But the AACC has added another element, crucial for the African continent. Their prayer reads, “God of life, lead us to justice, peace and dignity!”

The prayer and both assemblies in the year 2013 mark a broadened understanding and concept of life-centered ecumenism, directly relevant to the future of African churches and their theological education programmes. With the prayer theme,

we are drawn into the good news, into the gospel of creation: Life is a gift of light, a gift from God…. And life can only be received as a gift – a gift to be given – to others, for others. The ecumenical movement is a movement of creation. We are participating in a movement that is called to bring the churches in a fellowship in which they see their common role in participating in the wholeness of God’s work. It is a movement with great ambitions: Not only to be church together but to improve the churches’ witness in the world, to change the world according to the creation of God.²

Dignity has something to do with the intrinsic essential value that every human being has as a unique image of God (*imago dei*), regardless of color, gender, social status and ethnic belonging. Dignity is about liberation from any captivity in colonial or traditional concepts and mentalities that might reduce human

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potential and the promise for freedom, justice and fullness of life, or endanger the full realization of the basic human rights. The restoration and cultivation of attitudes and values of dignity has to do with education, particularly with theological education as it is in the training of pastors and lay people, in the academic and spiritual formation of future church leaders that the culture and values of dignity, justice and peace are nurtured for the generations to come.

The WCC has a long history of commitment to theological education in Africa, which started with the Theological Education Fund (TEF) of the International Missionary Council in London and its “Special Program for Theological Education in Africa,” begun during the TEF committee meeting in Edinburgh in 1960. Ecumenical cooperation, quality improvement and interregional networking for theological education remain strong commitments on the WCC agenda of the future.

We hope that this book, in its print and later digital versions, will make its way into the hands of African theological educators, will inspire students and will be a standard reference volume in all major African theological libraries, in both universities and church-related seminaries. As I have stated on another occasion:

Christian theology for our understanding always and in all continents has a double accountability: Christian theology relates to the church – and we emphasize – always to the whole church – by providing solid grounding and critical reflection for authentic Christian public witness, mission and social service of Christian churches in a context which is marked by massive changes in the landscape of World Christianity. And Christian theology relates to the world – and we emphasize to the whole world – as the Gospel of Jesus Christ irrevocably relates to the whole world and its reconciliation with God. The old and fundamental key vocation within the ecumenical movement, to relate the whole Gospel, the whole Church and the whole world properly to each other, therefore has a fundamental importance for what is going to be considered about the present and future of Christian theology and theological education.

We congratulate those who have undertaken and contributed to this magnificent project, and we express our hope that this *Handbook of African Theological Education* will serve this double accountability of Christian theology and theological education for Christianity in Africa for many years to come, for the glory of God and the presence of God’s kingdom.

**Olav Fykse Tveit**

General Secretary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva; Ordained Pastor of the Church of Norway and former General Secretary of the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations.

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4 Olav Fykse Tveit, “Theology and Unity in the Changing Landscape of World Christianity,” keynote address at the Oslo consultation of WCC-ETE on “The Future of Theology in the Changing Landscapes of Universities in Europe and Beyond,” Oslo, 6 June 2012, page 2. See www.oikoumene.org for full text.
Foreword – Mercy Oduyoye

Focus on Women as Subjects of Theological Education

Given the privilege to contribute a preface to this handbook, I would like to begin with an acknowledgement and an appreciation of what ecumenical theological movement has meant for theological education in Africa. From its inception as Theological Education Fund, through its days as Programme for Theological Education to its present profile as Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE), it has been instrumental in developing theological educational institutions, developing faculties of theology providing scholarships for theological education, stimulating the publication of theological works in Africa and in the development of new approaches to and concepts of theological education. Through all this there have been Africans in its commissions and staff. Africa has had three illustrious presences on staff including one woman. I have selected my focus so as to heighten the profile of women in this endeavor because of the significant contribution of ETE in mid-wifing the creation of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (CIRCLE) and in promoting theological education at the tertiary and doctoral levels for African women.

The history section of the handbook will provide an indication of when it became necessary to disaggregate participants in theological education on the basis of gender. To begin with those with formal theological education before the middle of the last century, were men and were educated outside Africa with Fourabey College Sierra Leone, making a significant contribution for those in West Africa. The church seminaries, Bible Schools and Colleges were for men on the road to ordination. The women who participated in Theological Education (TE) did so with the opening of Divinity Schools at the newly created state universities. They usually were to be found in the general Arts programmes with comparative religion as a third of the offering. The studies leading to the London BD was a men only option until this was breached in 1959 at the University College of Ghana. The scene was such that when in 1980 a conference of African women theologians was being called by a group of African women, the response of Revd Prof. E.B.Idowu whose patronage they sought was something to this effect “we have no African theologians” (meaning men) not to talk of women theologians.

The anthology indicates that from 1950 things began to change significantly for TE in Africa. From 1989 women began to organize themselves to participate vigorously in developing theology and TE in Africa. The chapter on The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians tells the story. At its inception it was the same Prof. Idowu who provided the Circle with the imagery “a bird with one wing does not fly’, thus urging the women to grow the second wing so that the African theology that was being crafted during that period may have the chance of flying.

Women participated in the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), providing an Executive Secretary, a President and a vice President in its hay days. African women theologians participated in the Ecumenical Association of African Theologians and contributed to its Bulletin of African Theology. African women theologians have been on the platform of ETE and from its PTE days
and have offered leadership in many aspects of the work. With the men, women have been involved in the processes of the study of inculturation and from the Circle have called attention to the centrality of religion and culture for theology in Africa. The women have not only talked about doing theology in a multi-religious context. They have practiced the art in the Circle.

The factor of Islam in religious studies is critical in Africa. While the Departments of religion in state universities take for granted the presence of Islam and African Traditional Religions, church seminaries, universities and Bible schools are not so insistent on these. The world today demands a theology that responds to our multi-religious communities.

**Challenges to ETE**

For Christian theology, Biblical languages are in crisis, depriving us of the crucial area of biblical scholars in an Africa that has the Bible as authority for many and beyond the Christian community. The promotion of Biblical languages and Biblical scholars therefore should be a top priority. The scholars here are few and the women even fewer, but I ought to name at least one, Prof. Theresa Okure, who is a founding member of the Circle. We need many more. In history of Christianity we are yet to see and include North Africa as an integral part of the African Christian world. Our Early Church studies need to shift perspectives to name and study the Africans of this period and their contribution to Christian theology and ecumenical practice.

The challenges of inclusiveness in theological education are before us. The challenge to be ecumenical, meaning all Christians together, inclusiveness as serving a multi-religious continent with its islands is before ETE. Inclusiveness and ecumenical commitment as encompassing women and men, young and old in theological education has been on agenda in ETE. The challenges in terms of responding theologically to the issues that confront Africa - all of Africa - , the religious, political, social, cultural issues and the challenges of people’s spirituality and identity are to be on the radar of ETE if theology is to be relevant in Africa. How theology relates to the churches and to the spirituality of the people of faith cries for urgent attention.

This Handbook of Theological Education in Africa has something for everybody. We do need specialists, but we also need persons who can communicate the role and power of theology in Africa. You have this rich and nourishing array before you. Fill your plate and be nourished with the provisions that God places before you through the diligent work of the women and men who have made this handbook possible. Go to work, read, mark and do your part.

**Mercy Odoyoye**

Director of the Institute of African Women in Religion and Culture at Trinity Theological Seminary in Ghana; former African Deputy General Secretary of the WCC and former president of World Student Christian Federation.
Foreword – Denise M. Ackerman

The prodigious scope of this volume reminds me of jiggling a kaleidoscope and watching many colours tumble into view. No wonder, as our continent is home to a great variety of denominational, regional, and historical contexts. Rich, varied, and sometimes contesting ideals for theological education are presented in this work. When the many pieces of my kaleidoscope settle into a vivid multi-coloured pattern, a picture of hope emerges for an approach to Christian theological education that in different ways uphold the values of the Reign of God – love, justice, equality, freedom, peace and all that values the worth and dignity of human beings. Such an approach confronts the reality that the African continent is not immune to the intolerance of fundamentalisms, political instability, poverty and corruption. In some quarters there is even growing scepticism about the nature of faith that challenges the validity of theological education as an academic project. Where is hope to be found in such a theological educational project?

To begin with, theological education should contribute to the self-understanding of faith communities that can inform and transform people’s lives. At its best, it becomes a dialogue between the academy and people of faith. For this to happen it has to be accessible, contextual and situated. Next, our theological theories are judged by the praxis they engender. Theory is born in practice and there is a symbiotic relationship between theory and praxis. Knowing and doing are inseparable and we are judged by the ethical content of our conduct, a crying need in our times. Furthermore, contextually based theological education is also challenged by the relationship between culture, gender and faith. This demanding triad is a vital prerequisite for theology taught on our continent. Happily members of the Circle of African Women Theologians are participating in increasing numbers in theological education and are tackling these issues in their teaching and writing. A further values based challenge to theological education is the impending environmental disaster faced by the African continent. Because it is rich in mineral resources for which the world is hungry and is endowed with an immense variety of animal and plant species, the protection of our natural riches is an urgent issue for all who claim to have faith in the generosity of our Creator God. At all times, theological education in Africa is deeply biblically based. This raises questions of hermeneutics and how we read the scriptures from our different places. A kaleidoscope of approaches to the biblical text that honours our differences, is contextually situated, and in dialogue with contextual tissues of gender, culture and tradition, brings hope to all for whom the bible is the means to deepening our faith in a God of compassion, mercy and love.

Finally, the question of the relationship between theology and spirituality is central to a values based approach to theological education. Spirituality draws on and is formed by prayer, the bible, Christian practices and theology. Since theology started to reflect more seriously on human experience in its contextual and cultural particularity, spirituality is no longer seen as abstract spiritual theology but as a dynamic, central ingredient for the life of the faithful. I am heartened that spirituality today is slowly gaining a place in the academy as a respectable discipline with its own methodology, acknowledging its significance in all our theological endeavours. Of course much more can be said about theological education that emerges from the Reign of God values. For all of us involved in theological education the task is challenging. This timely publication amply illustrates how this challenge is being taken up across
our continent with dedication, energy and hope. Both the varied concerns and rich content of theological education in a variety of contexts are amply illustrated throughout this volume and it will serve as a guiding handbook for years to come.

**Denise M. Ackermann**  
Retired Professor of Christianity and Society at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa; Extraordinary professor at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Stellenbosch in the Department of Practical Theology, South Africa.
Editorial: Handbook of Theological Education in Africa

Behind this first ever published *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa* is a three year process of intense conceptualization, strategic network-building and editorial work. First, following the World Council of Churches (WCC) initiative for publishing the *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity* and suggestions from several African partners, a group related to the process for revitalizing associations of theological institutions in Africa which was linked to the AACC Theology department (Dr. Simon Dossou, AACC, Prof. James Amanze, University of Botswana, Prof. Isabel Apawo Phiri, University of KwaZulu-Natal and Dr. Dietrich Werner, WCC) met in Gaborone, Botswana between 12-14 August 2010. They developed the first plan for the publication of a major *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*. From the beginning, it was envisaged that this book would provide a major contribution to, and would be made available for, the All Africa Conference of Churches Jubilee Assembly in June 2013 in Kampala, Uganda, as well as for the WCC assembly taking place in Busan, South Korea, in 2013.

Five major goals for the project had already been identified at the first planning meeting in Botswana in 2010:

a) to provide regional surveys of the developments and recent challenges of theological education in the different regions of Africa;

b) to identify some key common themes and challenges for the future of theological education in Africa;

c) to describe the different and newly emerging forms of theological education in Africa (TEE, church related colleges, secular universities, Christian universities, distant-learning institutions);

d) to provide more visibility and a comprehensive mapping of theological education institutions in Africa;

e) to accompany the process of revitalizing associations of institutions of theological education by creating a common platform and presentation of TE developments in Africa which will be crucial both for churches within Africa and their support for TE as well as for relating to partners outside Africa.

The same meeting also proposed the following key thematic sections for the Handbook:

1. History of theological education in Africa
2. Regional surveys on theological education in Africa
3. Denominational perspectives on theological education in Africa
4. Key issues and new frontiers in theological education in Africa
5. Selected innovative models and case studies of theological education in Africa
6. Networks and bibliographical resources for theological education in Africa

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*The Handbook for Theological Education in World Christianity*, published by Regnum Publisher in June 2010 (800 pages) (edited by Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang and Josha Raja) has 16 contributions from the African continent, but at that stage could not do justice to the complexities and varieties of theological education processes on the African continent.
The second stage was a more sustained and concentrated working process for the Handbook of Theological Education in Africa Project in 2011 and 2012, which was then directed and driven by Isabel Apawo Phiri from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg and Dietrich Werner from WCC-ETE in Geneva. The two were assisted, encouraged and supported by a group of committed colleagues in many parts of Africa. In the process that followed, an overwhelming panorama unfolded of very diverse and multi-faceted realities as well as challenges for ministerial formation and theological education on the African continent. The process of encouraging colleagues to write and contribute, and the discovery of new relevant themes and urgent needs as well as new models of theological education, more than proved true some of the key motivations which have accompanied this project from the very beginning and even grown in the course of its completion. Some of the major issues that have become clear are as follows:

1. **Growing Christianity in Africa** needs well informed and biblically sound theological education and formation of its priests, ministers and church leaders: While Africa had less than 10% Christians in 1910, its population was nearly 50% Christian in 2010, with sub-Saharan Africa well over 70% Christian. Christianity in Africa has grown from 10 million in 1900 to more than 360 million today and is predicted still to grow in the decades to come. It is expected that Africa will have 600 million Christians by the year 2025. Yet the theological institutions are not producing enough ministers to provide leadership for this growing church. In some cases we have a situation of one minister being responsible for around 7000 church members.

2. The issue of the **social, political and public relevance of Christian theology on the African continent**. Theological education in its varied forms is absolutely vital not only for the future of African Christianity and for future African church leaders, but also for the social and political witness of Christian churches in African nations and for informed political and prophetic witness in civil society. This is due to the fact that often Christian churches are a major, or the only, partner in civil society in the African continent. Therefore, support and promotion for theological education and relevant public theology and ethics is not only an issue related to inner affairs of churches. It is an overall concern for social and political development and a crucial factor in higher education policies in Africa which should not be neglected by church leadership and university policy makers as well as development agencies. As there is a new international discourse on the intersection of religion and development the churches and church related development agencies should be the first to support and articulate the need for strategic planning, ecumenical cooperation and quality improvement of theological education and ministerial formation on the African continent.

3. The work for strengthening **collaboration and quality standards for theological education through the work of regional associations of theological schools** which has re-started in the new century, supported by both WCC and the AACC, has great potential and needs a common visual expression which can become manifest in the Handbook of Theological Education in Africa. The issue of quality assurance in theological education in Africa becomes urgent as some churches put in place short term measures to train ministers quickly on a tight budget in order to address the problem of shortage of ministers to lead the growing church in Africa.

4. Churches of different denominational traditions on the African continent can learn from each other and complement each other in their understanding and practice in theological education. The formation of a **new style and commitment of ecumenical cooperation in theological education** in Africa is urgently needed over against tendencies for each denominational tradition to only seek its own advantage. Many denominations are opening their own universities where theological

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education and ministerial formation have become a small section of a wider educational vision. It also often means withdrawing from ecumenical cooperation in theological education in order to be part of the denominational universities.

5. **Women have contributed greatly to African theological wisdom, knowledge and expertise in theological research**, particularly in areas which are vital for the very survival of humanity in Africa, such as issues of HIV and AIDS, gender and overcoming violence. Only good scholarly collaboration between men and women in African theological education can pave the way for a brighter future. The first challenge is to get all theological institutions to include the theological resources produced by African women theologians in their curriculum. The second challenge is for more women to become part of the faculty and teaching core theological subjects. One of the reasons why we have fewer women contributors in this handbook is because there are still many theological institutions in Africa that do not have women on their staff, teaching core theological subjects.

6. Another major issue is proper exposure to theological materials produced by African theologians and religious scholars. This project proves that African theologians are writing relevant theological materials for the equipping of African church leaders to face African challenges. Unfortunately many theological institutions do not put as a priority the buying of books and journals from the continent itself. As a result, their libraries are full of donated books from the global north that address contextual theological questions from other contexts, which the African church itself is not asking. There is the need therefore to circulate theological books from one African region to other regions. The article in this handbook relating to the existence of the global digital library for theology and ecumenism (GlobeTheoLib) points to this new instrument as another useful way to circulate books, thesis papers and journal articles in their digital versions from the African continent and to make the theological voice of African Christianity heard globally.8

7. The vastness and size of the African continent also implies that it is not easy for those working (for instance) in a context like of Egypt to know what is going on in a context like that one of DRC or Namibia. Thus African theological education, while emphasizing the continued need for ‘contextualization’ of theology and theological curricula in the different cultural and national contexts also has to strengthen ‘intercontextuality’ in theological education today, i.e. proper understanding and partnership relationships with other forms of Christian traditions in different social, national and cultural settings in different settings of the same continent and beyond.9

8. Despite the size and volume of this Handbook there are also some shortcomings still in its composition. There is for instance a shortage of both French articles and articles in Portuguese in this volume. The original plan was to have contributions in all the three major colonial languages used in Africa, which are English, French and Portuguese. Although invitations were sent to all regions in Africa, responses from Francophone and Lusophone regions were received less frequently. Nevertheless, we have a few French articles in the Handbook and also contributions in Portuguese, although written in English. The issue of languages and linguistic division in Africa reflects our loss in capturing the deeper theological discourse that takes place in the vernacular languages.

9. There also remain some crucial thematic gaps in this handbook, as we did not manage to include major contributions, for instance, on African Church history or on interfaith dialogue in theological

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8 The entire content of this *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa* will be made available online in GlobeTheoLib after a certain period of circulating the printed versions.

9 See: Dietrich Werner, Contextuality, Inter-Contextuality and Ecumenicity in Theological Education in: Dietrich Werner, Theological Education in World Christianity. Ecumenical Perspectives and Future Priorities, Kolkata 2011, p. 3-25, part. p. 19ff
education. For some topics we invited scholars who are experts in those areas to contribute but unfortunately for one reason or another, they were not able to meet the deadline. The 2nd Joint Conference of Academic Societies in the Fields of Religion and Theology however, which was held at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa from 18-21 June 2012, became an appropriate forum for us to share this project with a wider academic community. Through this forum we received valuable comments on missing themes and contributors which have contributed to the present final shape of the project.

As stated at the beginning, this new Handbook of Theological Education in Africa is meant to be presented at the Jubilee Assembly of AACC in June 2013 in Kampala. The theme for this AACC assembly combines the prayer for justice and peace with the prayer for the dignity of African people: “God of life, give us justice and peace with dignity”. Dignity is rooted in a desire to find out what it means for church, society and education to theologically reflect on the reality of each African bearing the “imago Dei”, the direct image of God. Restoring dignity and self-confidence in African identity and theology (which this Handbook wishes to contribute to, see article from Nico Koopman on Theological education for dignity in Africa in this volume) is also a matter of correcting a long-lasting misconception about the general course of mission development between the North and the South. Thomas C. Oden\textsuperscript{10} once stated:

The rapid growth of the African church presents great challenges and risks as well as significant opportunities. The African church’s effectiveness in influencing a promising future for Africa and world Christianity might easily be undermined through church division, teachings counter to the received tradition, persecution, all of which threatened early African Christianity. Christians in Africa face many difficulties: poverty, war, famine, disease and AIDS. Yet, Dr. David Niringiye, Assistant Bishop of Kampala, Church of Uganda writes, “Africa’s crisis is not poverty; it is not AIDS. Africa’s crisis is confidence. What decades of colonialism and missionary enterprise eroded among us is confidence… We Africans must constantly repent of that sense of inferiority.” Kwame Bediako suggests these many years of self-doubt have resulted in a “crisis of identity”: the subtle and profound self-perception particularly in sub-Saharan Africa that Africa lacks intellectual substance. This is compounded by the common misconception that in the history of Christian intellectual leadership that the movement was from Europe to Africa, north to south. But this cannot be validated by Christian history! Contrary to common assumption, the flow of Christian intellectual leadership largely moved from Africa to Europe—south to north.\textsuperscript{11}

This Handbook of Theological Education in Africa, presented here, underlines not only the historical depth and tradition of theological scholarship on the African continent, but also its cultural and geographical breadth and broadness. Oden in following up his world famous book How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind continues to argue that:

It is often forgotten both in African churches as well as in western churches, that historically it is on the African continent that the earliest forms of Christian doctrine, education and church structure were formed on African soil. It is Africa which shaped the Christian mind by providing the raw model of all later medieval European universities through the shape of the community of scholars and students around the ancient Alexandria library\textsuperscript{12},

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\textsuperscript{11} Thomas C. Oden on the website: http://earlyafricanchristianity.com/about/aboutceac.html
\textsuperscript{12} “The unrivaled library of Alexandria was the model for university libraries all over Europe. It was unexcelled for five centuries. The experimental model which later became transformed into the western model of university was first an embryo in the community that surrounded that Alexandria library. …The vast learning community of philosophers, scientist, artists, writers and educators that surrounded the Alexandrian library provided the essential archetype for the university of all medieval Europe. The history of first medieval universities such as Padua (Italy), Paris (France), Salamanca (Spain) and Oxford (England) followed methods of text examinations, curricular patterns and philosophical

\textit{Handbook of Theological Education in Africa}
by providing the first forms of spiritual and historical exegesis of Scripture which matured in Africa, that it were
African thinkers which shaped the very core of early Christian dogma, that the early ecumenical decisions of the
Ancient church followed patterns of conciliarity developed in Northern African Christianity, that it were the
ancient traditions of early African monastic disciplines to form and inspire the first western forms of spiritual
formation which were at the beginning of theological education.\textsuperscript{13}

It may well be that African Christianity has a strategic significance for the future of World Christianity
as a whole. It may be true as well that the future of relationships between Christianity and Islam, to a very
large extent, will be determined and decided by factors involving countries of the African continent. But all
of this will be possible only if proper attention, educational policy support and financial and staffing
priorities are given to the enhancement of proper and high quality levels of theological education for all the
churches on the African continent.

It is the hope of the editors that this African Handbook can contribute to this goal. It is even the hope -
in light of both the AACC assembly and the forthcoming WCC assembly in 2013 -that this new standard
Handbook can contribute to the formation of a new kind of African ecumenism which has been envisioned
in the following way:

A New Ecumenism: What the Holy Spirit is manifestly doing in Africa today is very different from engineering
institutional mergers through negotiation or strategic planning (Old Ecumenism). It is rather through grace
quietly awakening faith. That faith is surely manifesting itself in the works of love, for love is what faith does.
Those whose faith is active in love are living out true religion as defined by the Epistle of James, whether they
call themselves Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox, or Charismatics. They embody the one family of God in
different family memories and genetic variations. The recognition of emerging unity is itself what the Holy
Spirit is enabling in the new African ecumenism: enabling persons to identify their deeper unity in Jesus Christ:

north and south, doctrinal and practical, liturgical and dogmatic. It is not a matter of negotiating or dialoguing in
order to produce institutional unity. The challenge is to elicit behavior transformed in personal faith in Jesus
Christ which finds ways of loving the next one we meet (the neighbor) as Christ loved us.\textsuperscript{14}

The editors would be gratified if this new Handbook can

\begin{itemize}
  \item contribute to the preparation for this new ecumenism in African theological education;
  \item facilitate better networking between African theological researchers and educators within the
        continent and beyond;
  \item create more working relationships between institutions of theological education and research in
        different regions of the African continent;
  \item support the visibility and public recognition of the relevance of Christian theology and religious
        studies in higher education on the African continent;
  \item help to enrich theological curricula and courses by using the multitude of selected thematic
        bibliographies added to each of the articles brought together here;
\end{itemize}

imperatives that were refined in second century African Christianity as early as Pantaenus and Clement of Alexandria.
Clement’s writings, the Stromateus and the Paedagogus, reveal much of the method and content of education that
became normative in the medieval university.\textsuperscript{13} Thomas C. Oden, \textit{How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind} (Downers
Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 44.

\textsuperscript{13} Thomas C. Oden, \textit{How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind}, 29ff and 42ff. This book also is available in full length
digitally under: http://books.google.ch/books?id=CVQKjPQQNpoC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=one
page&q=&f=false

\textsuperscript{14} Thomas C. Oden, \textit{How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind}, cited in: \textit{The African Memory of Mark}, chapter 2:

Prelims
increase and encourage strategic dialogue between leadership of African churches and institutions and theological education on the future of ministerial formation and Christian lay training on the African continent;

- encourage the younger generations of African theologians to enter into the world of theological discourse and to make their voices heard with regard to contextual African theological reflection;
- enable many institutions of theological education to meet the current needs of both African churches and societies for responsible religious leaders;
- contribute to develop proper and contextually relevant forms of international partnerships for theological faculty development and research with theological education institutions on the African continent (which would strengthen African resources and programs and avoid brain drain and too long periods of cultural estrangement in international PhD projects).

As we come to the conclusion of this editorial, we have to turn to very special acts of thanksgiving and gratitude:

We first give a special word of thanks to some 90 peer-reviewers from renowned academic backgrounds who have read through each of the articles carefully. This is because in the third stage of our editorial work we undertook the mammoth work of sending each article for blind peer review by scholars who were experts in each field covered in the handbook. By following this process, we had to turn down several articles which were not recommended for publication by the peer reviewers or had to be rewritten and amended. The peer reviewers are almost doubling the number of contributors of this handbook and therefore there are too many to be mentioned by name. Yet their work was very valuable for quality control of the articles.

Second, we are also grateful for the enormous support we have received in completing this project by the wider team involved in the editorial process: Gratitude goes to the two associate editors, James Amanze (Botswana) and Priscille Djomhoue (Cameroon). Great appreciation and personal thanks particularly goes to the team of research students, who served as assistants in the editorial processes. They are Kennedy Owino (Kenya), Chammah Kaunda (Zambia) and Stephen Phiri (Zimbabwe) from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

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Isabel Apawo Phiri
Dietrich Werner

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15 http://www.globethics.net/web/gtl/globetheolib

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Isabel Apawo Phiri and Dietrich Werner, co-editors of the African Handbook on Theological Education with Archbishop Desmond Tutu during the AACC Theological Symposium, Nairobi, Kenya, December 2012. Archbishop Tutu was the Africa Secretary and Associate Director of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in London, Bromley (predecessor organisation of WCC-ETE) between 1972 and 1975, which had launched the first Special Program for Theological Education in Africa already in 1960.
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PART I

HISTORY IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA
Introduction

The Old Testament is not only the first textbook of Church history, it is the oldest programme of theological education on record. Addressing originally a single Mesopotamian clan, the programme, which lasted many centuries, was extended to a group of related tribes and then to a whole nation.

In Christian understanding, God made Israel the demonstration model of his dealings with humanity, imparting to Israel exceptional knowledge of his being and character. And that demonstration involved the nation as a whole, on behalf of humanity as a whole; Israel was to be light to the nations. As the book of Revelation makes clear, though the peoples of the nations enter the holy city through gates that are open equally to traffic from North, South, East and West each gate bears the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

In this first programme of theological education, addressed to Israel as a whole, the Torah was understood as instrument of education. Paul called it the paidogogos, the slave entrusted with the formation of God’s children. It hardly comes as a surprise then that, in the New Testament didache, teaching (i.e. theological education) is also for the Church as a whole. It is one of the special gifts the Holy Spirit bestows on some for the benefit of all. Such concentrated and extensive bodies of teaching as the Epistles to the Romans and to the Hebrews were not given as lectures to Divinity students; they were written to be read in churches.

Our concern, therefore, is theological education, not simply education for the ministry. We are interested in how the whole Church receives the divine paideia, not just how some of its practitioners are trained. I hope to show that, at some of the most fruitful periods for theological education in Christian history, the target audience was not specifically the ministry but the Church as a whole.

It is clearly impossible to cover the history of two thousand years in six continents here. I propose therefore to select a few chapters from various times and places that may illustrate some of the themes we may wish to ponder.

The First Cultural Frontier

Let us begin with the second century. Combining the Book of Acts and the Epistle to the Galatians reveals a series of events that propelled the gospel of Christ across its first cultural frontier, so that it passed from its original Palestinian Jewish environment into the Hellenistic Gentile world of the East Mediterranean. These events brought about a transition from the converted Judaism (Jewish life lived in the light of the Messiahship of the crucified and risen Jesus) practised by the Church of Jerusalem, as described in the first seven chapters of Acts, to the bold Christian invasion of the established Greek intellectual universe that we witness in the writings of Justin Martyr.

Justin’s own Christian conversion took place in the course of his quest for the highest Platonic ideal. He describes his conversion experience in terms that reflect the philosophical quest of metabole, the transforming change that marked the passage from folly to wisdom in the philosophic life. Justin pronounces Christianity as the safe and profitable philosophy, and adopts the Greek Scriptures, especially the Prophets and Gospels, as philosophical texts. For the rest of his life, until martyrdom brought it to an
end, he continued to teach and debate, wearing the philosopher’s short cloak, the academic gown of the day.

Justin introduces us to an often neglected aspect of the early Hellenistic Church: its adoption of the philosophical school both as an evangelistic and educational method. Few methods of public proclamation were open to Christians in the Roman Empire of the second century; but anyone could open a school, and it is clear that Christians opened many schools. By this means, they entered the marketplace of ideas that Greek institutions and habits of thought had established; they interacted with those ideas, both challenging and applying them. Justin explains the Christian faith to believers and unbelievers alike and introduces both groups to the Logos identified in the prologues to the fourth Gospel as the incarnate Christ by means of the Stoic and Platonic uses of the same word. He answers Greek questions by Greek methods in the Greek language. In the process, Justin begins the formulation of classical Christology, and sets it on the path to the great creeds. The Nicene Creed is the product, not just a subject, of theological education.

A telling remark of the second century medical writer and philosopher, Galen, is preserved in an Arabic source. Galen did not like Christians or their methods of argument; he grudgingly acknowledged, however, that they often achieved what the philosopher's life was meant to achieve: self-discipline, the pursuit of righteousness and contempt of death. Many Christians, he concluded, attained a pitch and state of mind not inferior to that of genuine philosophers. Galen thus recognizes that the final test of philosophical education, the transformation of life, was often achieved in the Christian “school”. In fact, Christians were converting the philosophical school into an instrument of theological education and the transformation of life was the final test of the process.

The Catechetical School

Theological education, then, was instrumental to the Church’s functioning in the Roman Empire in the days of persecution; it was directed equally to self-acknowledged Christians and interested outsiders – the sort of people who would regularly attend philosophical schools or take part in philosophical discussions. Serious inquirers had to be led to commitment and baptism, and convinced Christians to maturity and fuller knowledge. Either might be called to the ultimate test of commitment, martyrdom, before the process was complete.

The school we know most about was in Africa: it was that of Alexandria, a metropolis of Greek culture, boasting the greatest library in the ancient world, as well as the Museon (museum), with its chairs of philosophy endowed by successive emperors and the lecture halls where Origen and Plotinus were students of the same mentor. It also had a Jewish community that had produced as learned and acute a missionary thinker as Philo. Alexandria offered a rich mixture of intellectual and religious activity. It was one of the chief nurseries of Gnosticism.

People attending the Catechetical School in Alexandria, therefore, might be serious inquirers or they might be dilettanti; in either case, they might have already tried half a dozen other teachers or systems, and be prepared to proceed to try as many more. The Catechetical School, the basis of the Church’s theological education system, had to get a hold of such people, draw their attention and lead them to decision; and to do so in a situation where they might attain martyrdom before having attained baptism. There were many philosophical and religious alternatives open to inquirers and seekers of religious and philosophical wisdom. The forces and needs that drew someone to inquire about Christianity might easily be diverted to other channels. Inquirers must therefore be taught to discriminate, to distinguish things that differed. And the questions they asked – questions often prompted by Greek assumptions or established intellectual traditions – would ensure the continual development of Christian thinking and Christian understanding. It was a formative process for Christian theology.
Of the three leaders of the School in Alexandria whose names we know, two, Pantaenus and Clement, were converted academic philosophers; the third, the boy genius Origen, who took over at a point when persecution had battered the Church and almost broken the School, had a dual education, having become thoroughly at home in the Greek world of thought and absorbed Biblical learning from his Christian home. All, until Origen’s controversial ordination in Caesarea, seem to have been laymen.

Origen’s work opened new pathways in Christian theology. As teacher, first in Alexandria and then in Caesarea, he explored the relations between the Bible and Greek thought, developed the biblical commentary, worked out an intellectual framework for Christian use of the Old Testament, and carried out the first exercises in biblical textual criticism.

All this was evangelistic theology for the Greek world. If Justin shows how Christians began to cope with the Greek academy, Origen displays Christians in the business of converting the academy, seeking to turn it towards Christ and making it serve Christian purposes.

Origen’s former student, Gregory Thaumataurgus, has left an account of what Origen’s teaching was like. He describes how it involved the comprehensive study of the philosophers and poets that formed the body of Greek literature, acquaintance with natural science (inducing wonder at the Creator’s works) and the endeavour to build up the faculty of discrimination in his students. A letter survives from Origen to Gregory, urging him not to be sidetracked into becoming a lawyer or an academic philosopher, but to draw from every branch of Greek learning things useful for the study of Scripture, thus making Greek learning ancillary to Christian studies. He points to the account in Exodus of the making of the Tabernacle, with all its splendid furnishings, in the wilderness. Such things, he says, were possible at such a time only because the Israelites had “spoiled the Egyptians.” It was Egyptian gold from which the Mercy Seat and the Cherubim that denoted God’s presence were made; and the Tabernacle was hung with Egyptian cloth. Things misused in the heathen world, Origen tells his old student, such as Greek literature, philosophy and science, can be moulded, like Egyptian gold, to fashion things for the worship and service of God. He acknowledges the dangers: such material can also be used to make idolatrous golden calves. So the work requires the utmost attention to the Scriptures, on which all other studies can provide a commentary.

In the end, the Greek academy was converted. It had long been running out of intellectual capital, and Origen’s contemporary, Plotinus, proved to be its last dominating pagan figure. It was Christian theology that gave the Greek academy a new lease on life, providing, for minds trained in the Greek philosophical tradition, all the exercise they could want and topics of importance to pursue. What we now consider classical theology emerged out of the Church’s routine need to nourish, strengthen and instruct its members, and to explain Christian faith to the outside world in terms of the contemporary globalizing culture.

T. R. Glover long ago argued that early Christians not only out-lived and out-died their pagan contemporaries, they also out-thought and out-wrote them. If the early Church had forms of training specifically for its ministry, they have left remarkably little trace of them in its literature. Cyprian, for instance, the outstanding Latin theologian of his generation and one of the most outstanding pastoral theologians of all times, was a layman until the day he was elected Bishop of the leading church in Roman Africa, even before he had been a Christian for a long time. He and the others who out-thought and out-wrote the pagan world were products of the pattern of pervasive theological education that addressed the whole membership of the Church and wider community.

**Theological Education in the Syriac World**

Outside the Roman Empire and the dominating influence of Greek culture, Christian practice was somewhat different. Syriac Christianity indeed made the school a major instrument in its activities, but a school of a different character from that of the Greeks. Here, where Jewish influence was so buoyant, the
Church adopted and adapted the model of the Jewish school, devoted to the interpretation of Scripture and designed to produce disciples of high quality. Such schools taught a range of subjects. They had a teacher of secular studies and a librarian, as well as specialists in biblical studies. Syriac Christian schools, however, seem to have been directed – at least in the earliest period – towards the most committed youth in the Church, those known as the “children of the Covenant.” The Scripture passage used recurrently in relation to these “children of the Covenant” is Deuteronomy 10, on the circumcision of the heart: for the “children of the Covenant” were to “love the Lord their God, to walk in all His ways, and to serve Him with all their hearts and all their souls.” Their programme of theological education was directed to producing a corps of spiritual warriors to be the Church’s vanguard. Eventually the “children of the Covenant” merged with the monastic movement, though in earlier times they seem to have been simply the youthful elite of the Church, the sector from which both scholars and missionaries were most likely to be drawn. And Syriac Christianity produced a notable tradition of scholarship, which was to leave a trail of libraries across Asia. Will other caves yet be found in China to rival that remarkable cache of documents in Sichuan?\(^1\)

The Syriac scholarly tradition was characterized by profound meditation on scripture. The Greek intellectual tradition was not unknown or ignored in Syriac Christianity; indeed, the time would come when Western Christianity would recover some of its lost Greek inheritance by way of Islamic sources in Arabic, which themselves came from translations originally made by Syriac-speaking Christians. Syriac Christianity produced a distinctive form of teaching that was poetic and dramatic rather than metaphysical. The discourses of Ephrem, for instance, with the dialogues in which Death and Satan battle against each other as to which is stronger, are packed with teaching about sin, temptation, free will, death, eternity, the work of Christ in redemption, and eschatology. Choir and congregation are called to emphasize, affirm and appropriate that teaching. Even from its written form we get a sense of how vivid this catechetical method must have been. Through such channels the teachings of Edessa and Nisibis and other great schools were dispensed to the congregations of Syria and Mesopotamia in the days when Iraq was one of the major Christian centres of the world. Through the “children of the Covenant” those churches produced an extraordinary missionary movement that planted the faith in Iran, sent it across Central Asia, even to Tibet, took the Gospel to the court of the Emperor of China and set up churches from Siberia to Sri Lanka.

**Radical Christians and Theological Education**

The principle of placing such a group as the “children of the covenant” at the heart of theological education, intensively training a spiritual elite, was adopted by a large sector of the early Church in areas where Greek culture was not dominant. In the Coptic culture of the Nile Valley, it took a special form, driven by the radical movement of discipleship pioneered and typified by Antony. This movement was eventually to become monasticism, giving the Church in both East and West one of its most powerful, adaptable and versatile institutional expressions. The movement inspired by Antony was vernacular, not learned; in youth Antony had declined a Greek education, and he never learned the language. But the movement produced a new form of literature designed to encourage, inform and illustrate the life of radical Christian discipleship. The *Apothegmata Patrum*, full of striking sayings and stories, should perhaps be seen as early African proverb literature, where the African peasant finds a literary voice.

Ethiopian Christianity has, throughout its long and turbulent history, known periodic revivals of spiritual life, evangelistic fervour and scholarship, which have come from its own special version of the “children of the covenant” idea. It is typified in those dedicated young men gathered around the great evangelist Takla Haymanot, who were prepared to live in caves on wild fruits, renewing the flagging faith

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\(^1\) The Nestorian documents and stele found in the Chinese province of Sichuan point to the enormous spread of Syrian Christianity in the first seven centuries, see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nestorian_Stele](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nestorian_Stele).
of Christians and convincing unbelievers as they triumphed in spiritual power encounters with the gods of
the land, and confronted the political potentates with the righteousness of God; people also ready to copy a
gospel manuscript while sitting on a narrow ledge above a precipice.

**The Birth of Western Christianity**

Western Christianity as we know it today is the product of the passage of the Christian faith to the peoples
of northern and western Europe whom the Romans called barbarians. The process was long, painful and
complex. It can be briefly expressed by saying that, over time, the peoples of the North and West came to
accept Christianity as the basis of their traditional law and customs, moving *en masse* to adopt Christian
symbols, norms and standards, until virtually the whole of Europe could be called Christendom. This term
stood for Christianity on the map, the part of the world that was subject to the law of Christ.

The situation of these Christians was entirely different from that of earlier Christians in the Greek-
speaking and the Syriac-speaking worlds under the Roman or Persian Empires. The new Christians were
pre-literate peoples with no more than glimmerings of the globalizing cultures known in the Hellenistic and
Persian spheres. The coming of the Christian gospel indeed brought books and literacy to the northern
peoples, who took in a diluted form of Latin culture with their Christianity, but these processes did not lead
to a literate community until many centuries later. What they produced was a literate class, a body of
people with literacy skills who were also representatives, guides and interpreters of the Christian Church,
charged with explaining, commending and propagating the Christian norms that had become the law and
custom of the peoples of Europe. The Church’s association with books and learning has always been
manifest; even today, the English word “clerical” has two meanings: one referring to the ministry of the
Church (as in “clerical dress”); and the other referring to occupations where writing is a characteristic
activity (as in “administrative and clerical workers”). The clerical class, the “clergy”, were the spiritual
guides of Christendom, and Christendom was Christianity expressed territorially and virtually co-extensive
with the Church, the people of God. For all members of the community were now members of the Church
and baptized in infancy accordingly. Christianity was the law and custom of the states and peoples that
made up Christendom. No member of a community can easily opt out of that community’s law and custom.

In the early days of the Christianization process in Europe, the clerical class, not surprisingly, used
Latin, which had been the official language of the Western Roman Empire from where Christianity. The
process, however, continued as Latin was ceasing to be vernacular. The result was that in Western Europe
(the situation was different in Russia and among most of the Slavic peoples), the language of the literary
class, Latin, became the special language of Christianity, universally used for Scriptures and liturgy, for all
theological discourse and, indeed, all learned discourse. Latin gave coherence to the diversity of ethnic,
linguistic and political units that constituted European Christendom. It also internationalized the literate
class, the clergy, who could move across Europe, everywhere reading the Scriptures, performing the liturgy
and expounding Christian theology in the special language of Christianity.

In the earliest centuries of the Church, both eastern and western, a separate ministry, a “clergy” distinct
from the “laity” had developed, although as we have seen, for a long time theological education was
directed to the whole church. Western Christianity developed in a different climate in which, while the
Church as a whole and, in principle, society as a whole received Christian teaching, the clergy, the clerical
class, were the experts, both in theology and in learning generally. The situation is illustrated in the strange
little Middle English poem, “Adam lay ybounden.” After describing the four thousand year captivity of
Adam following the Fall, it proceeds:

And all was for an apple
An apple that he took

*Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa*
As clerkes vinden  
Written in their booke.

For the author of the poem, even the most basic Christian doctrines, the most familiar stories and themes of Scripture can only be found by “clerkes”, that is, the clergy, for only they have the Bible – it is their book.

In the setting of Western Christendom, theological education had two distinct spheres. One was the Christian formation of the whole community. In principle, everyone, in every town, village and settlement, every dwelling place and every rank of society, needed to learn the elements of the Christian faith and practice, as the ideal behind Christendom was the systematic Christianization of the law and custom of the whole community. It was the function of the clergy to carry out this task. And this in turn gave rise to a second, and largely separate sphere, the education of the clergy, the literate class of teachers of the community.

In a way quite different from that of earlier phases of Christian history, the effectiveness of Evangelization, catechesis and pastoral care now depended on the quality of teaching given by the clergy and the separate specialist education of the clergy took on a new importance. Furthermore, since Christendom implied the Christianization of the whole of society, the wider evangelistic aim of the earlier theological education, its outreach to people beyond the Church, was no longer needed; for there was no world to reach beyond the Church. The world was divided between Christendom and Heathendom; and both of these were geographically defined.

Western Christianity has in various ways continued over centuries to bear the marks of its conversion period. Only in comparatively recent times, with the breakup of Christendom in Europe and the rise of Christianity in the non-Western world, has the possibility of fundamental structural change become evident. The Reformation, which in both its Protestant and Catholic forms, brought vast improvements to the specialist education of the clergy, made little difference to the concept of Christendom. In both Catholic and Protestant lands, the idea of the whole community as being in principle Christian, needing Christian teaching from a specialist clergy, remained intact. The difference was that, especially in Protestant lands, the nation, expressed in a national church, became the focus of Church life. And when political, religious or practical difficulties made this impossible to maintain – the United States, founded by people of European origin, being the supreme example of this – the nation gradually gave way to the denomination as the principal ecclesial unit.

For the Western Church, Catholic or Protestant, national or denominational, the formation of the clerical class became the key to the Church’s welfare. And theological education became the teaching of the Church’s teachers – the training of the ministry. One major influence in theological education in Western Christianity over the centuries deserves notice: the impact from radical movements such as marked the “Children of the Covenant” in early Syriac Christianity and Antony’s revolution within Coptic Christianity. Born in the Egyptian and Syrian deserts and adapted to Western conditions, climate and culture, these movements for radical discipleship issued in and led to the institution of monasticism as Western Christianity knew it. For a long time monasticism was the most dynamic force in theological education within Christendom, promoting scholarship (the early European universities are products of it), preserving the resources of scholarship (the role of the great monastic houses and their libraries was crucial in this), and in spreading Christian teaching, education and letters. At its best monasticism functioned rather as the righteous remnant within old Israel did, modelling in small communities what the whole community was intended to be, and often compensating for the defects of the parochial system, the mechanism designed for the basic theological education of the laity of a Christian society by its clergy.

The Protestant Reformers abolished the monastic institutions. Their place has been taken in Protestant history by a long line of renewal movements seeking true Christian discipleship, often finding corporate expression in associations less formally structured than the monasteries and, like the monasteries, existing
within or alongside the wider Christian community. Such movements – Anabaptist, Puritan, Pietist, and Evangelical among them – often distinguished between “real” Christianity or the “Christianity of the heart” and the formal or nominal profession of Christianity they saw in Christendom at large, in the society that bore the Christian name. Monastic conversion and Evangelical conversion share the same genetic tree. Perhaps the Coptic St Antony was the first Evangelical.

Theological Education and the Missionary Movement

The missionary movement from the West first developed in Catholic Europe during the sixteenth century. Effective cross-cultural missionary activity requires a supply of missionaries with a high level of spiritual commitment and a degree of intellectual resilience. The Catholic Reformation produced a certain number of missionaries who met these criteria. They were people of spiritual commitment shaped by the movement’s spiritual renewal that occurred in the Catholic Church during the sixteenth century. For the most part they belonged to or joined one of the orders of monks or friars. Such orders had long been vehicles for those who desired true Christian discipleship, and the Catholic Reformation retained them, and new orders and societies also emerged – the Society of Jesus being the best known.

The orders and societies were intended for spiritual formation and often for intellectual training as well. The missionaries who came through them were used to discipline and to strenuous effort, particularly the Jesuits. Thus Roberto de Nobili in India acquired a deep knowledge of Brahmin culture, adopted the lifestyle of a Hindu ascetic, learned the language of the Vedas, and urged the Church to use it instead of Latin in India. In China, Matteo Ricci, another Jesuit, determined to be a scholar in the Chinese sense and thus know the Chinese classics as well as a Chinese scholar by use of the mental “memory palace.” This early Catholic missionary movement had no real Protestant equivalent. It took Protestants another two hundred years to develop missions in Africa and Asia. Prior to the eighteenth century, only in North America and then on a relatively small scale among the Native American neighbours of the European settlers, did Protestant Christians attempt cross-cultural evangelization.

The reasons for this are various, but among them was the Protestant abandonment of the monastic orders and societies of dedicated people. Reformers argued that, not only monasteries had become nests of corruption, but even at their best they were misleading models: a Christian life could be lived as fully in secular society as in a monastery. A married cobbler, said Luther, could live as holy a life as a celibate monk. And so the Reformers abandoned the concept of special communities of committed people, the instrument on which Catholic cross-cultural overseas missions had hitherto depended. When the concern did, therefore, arise among Protestants to bring the Gospel to other parts of the world, there was no obvious way to give effect to that concern.

When the Protestant missionary movement began, it owed much to the influence of the Pietist movement in Germany and Central Europe, which had also given an impetus to schemes for wider and better Christian education in European Christendom and its colonies. It is also no accident that the most assiduous of early Protestant missionaries were the Moravian Brethren, who had developed a Protestant form of the dedicated community. By the end of the eighteenth century the distinctively Protestant organ of association for mission was being established: the voluntary society, which co-opted an originally secular organizational model. And by the beginning of the nineteenth century, a range of societies existed that were committed to missions and sought missionaries to carry out this purpose.

What was a missionary and what sort of preparation did missionaries need? William Carey, the key figure in bringing into being the first of the new-type mission societies, discusses this in his book of 1792. He makes plain that a missionary is a preacher of the Gospel, and is, therefore, a minister with the usual calling: only with a different the location. As to the anticipated hardships and dangers of missionary life, he says that such were what anyone dedicated to the Christian ministry should be prepared for. Combining
pastoral with secular occupations for much of his ministry, Carey, with little formal education, had nevertheless taught himself Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French and Italian, read voraciously, and, to demonstrate the world’s need of missions, compiled and published his own country-by-country survey, noting area, population and religious composition. It is a picture of theological and general education at the lower end of the English Dissenting spectrum: little formal education, immense personal effort. In India this same man was to set up a virtual factory for Bible translations into Indian languages, mostly made from the Greek and Hebrew texts. He was to become a professor of Indian languages in the college maintained by the British East India Company for its staff, and acquired a reputation as a botanist. But he had never attended a university or even a seminary.

Carey was by any standards a remarkable man, although in many respects he is representative of many Protestant missionaries of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Few were highly educated according to the standards of the dominant culture in Britain. Often they came from the lower classes of society – frequently they were artisans – but were prepared for immense intellectual labour at languages and theology. What drove them was their evangelical conviction. One fruit of evangelical conversion was seriousness of purpose, which often manifested itself in language learning and intellectual pursuits. The candidates’ papers of the early missionary societies record their accounts of their conversion and missionary calling. Most confessed to the sins of youth, and most commonly trifling pursuits, that is, wasting time. The widow of the China missionary, Robert Morrison, a man exceptional in his dogged labour at the seemingly impossible task of translating the Scriptures into Chinese, at a time when no foreigner was permitted to learn the language, eloquently describes how evangelical religion enlarges the intellect as it transforms the heart.

At the foundation of the London Missionary Society in 1795, one of its leaders, the Anglican Thomas Haweis, declared that the needed missionaries would not come from the educated class from which the Anglican ministry drew, but from the shop and the forge; in other words, from the artisan class. It was to be welcomed: knowledge of the dead languages (Latin and Greek were the staple of a good education) was not necessary to communicate the Gospel in living languages; and men from the shop or the forge, unlike those from the usual sources of the ministry, would also be able to support themselves by their own labour.

The Missionary Society began by sending to the Pacific two separate large parties of missionaries recruited mainly from the sources Haweis had recommended. Like most of the Protestant missions of the 1790s, both missions met with disasters. The Missionary Society came to recognize that one reason for this was the inadequacy of preparation – mental, intellectual, and spiritual – of the enthusiastic and well-meaning young men who volunteered as missionaries. The London Missionary Society appointed the Scottish minister, David Bogue, to prepare their future candidates. Many of the missionaries still came from the shop and the forge, but they now took a rigorous course of theological study under Bogue at Gosport including Latin, Greek and Hebrew, but also prescribed reading of the Reformed divines, with passages to copy, reflect and comment on. It must have been very similar to the training of many Dissenting ministers. The missionaries so equipped weathered the early years of mission service unlike most of the first missionaries; and Bogue’s lectures went on being reproduced well into the nineteenth century, even being translated for the benefit of Polynesian candidates for the ministry.

Meanwhile, in 1799, the Evangelical Anglicans, who, unlike Haweis, elected to scrupulously adhere to the formularies and discipline of the Church of England, formed the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East. Anglican discipline, according to their interpretation, required missionaries to be episcopally ordained men; but despite intense efforts, the new society was unable to find any in its early years. Nor could it recruit men who might be put forward for ordination; as bishops, who alone had the power to ordain, usually insisted on two characteristics that were rare among those being offered for missionary service. One of these was a sound education, not necessarily a theological education; the preferred sources for candidates for ordination in the Church of England were the two English universities, Oxford and

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Cambridge, and neither of these offered special provision for ministerial training. But a general education, such as the universities offered, (not always after a great deal of labour) was usually expected by the bishops. They also expected social position, or at least what we might call the social graces; the contemporary phrase was “the appearance of a gentleman.” The reasons for both requirements were the same: a clergyman of the Church of England held the social status of a gentleman. The Church was part of the constitution of the nation and the framework of English society. But Anglican gentlemen simply did not offer themselves as missionaries, and for several years the new missionary society had no one to send. It is true that many bishops disliked evangelicals or (what was often the same thing) Calvinists, but the social and educational hurdle was still more important.

In the end, it was the network of immigrant churches in London that, not for the first time, saved the situation. They forged a connection between the Society and German and Swiss institutions, and thus gave the Church Missionary Society (CMS) most of its earliest missionaries. Some received a Lutheran ordination, which was acceptable at the time as being from the national church of another Protestant country. This led the CMS to an expedient rather like that of Bogue’s scheme for educating missionaries of the London Missionary Society (LMS). The young Germans were brought to England and lodged with an English clergyman who instructed them in Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Theology while they learned English.

To this curriculum Susu, the only West African language for which a grammar existed, and Arabic was later added. The tutor at the time, Thomas Scott, the well-known Biblical commentator, knew neither language, but undertook to learn and teach both. The students were soon staggering with the overload. “Pious men, but poor theologians” was Scott’s comment.

Eventually the CMS opened its own college at Islington, which continued through the nineteenth century. The motive was not to specifically provide missionary training but to impart sufficient liberal education and social polish to those who did not possess enough to pass as English clergymen. Promising young men from West Africa were also sent there: Samuel Adjai Crowther, for instance, not to mention his son and son-in-law. Indeed, by mid-century some young African clergymen were becoming better educated than the senior English missionaries under whom they were serving, to the disgruntlement of the latter.

Thus for a long time, the training of missionaries seems to have followed the general lines of training for the home ministry. This is because the missionary office was long seen (allowing that there might be lay auxiliaries such as teachers or craftsmen) as essentially ministerial. And, leaving aside the curious episode of Arabic and Susu, it was a long time before topics specific to the mission field itself made much impact on Western theological education, even for missionaries. Before that could happen, the missionary movement had to be de-clericalized, freed from the assumption that a missionary was a minister, and a minister a member of that separate clerical class that had appeared at the birth of Western Christianity, surviving the Reformation and all later developments. Many disparate factors led to the eventual de-clericalization of the missionary: the burgeoning of medical missions with the rise of the medical profession, the forces that produced the new non-denominational mission agencies heralded by the China Inland Mission, the numbers of women missionaries that these developments helped to bring about. While all this was happening, it is hardly surprising that when it came to establishing training for the emerging churches of Africa and Asia, missionaries followed, broadly speaking, the patterns they already knew.

**Yesterday and Today**

To summarize one of the key results of this historical development of theological education: There were essentially similar patterns of theological education, patterns forged in the special circumstances of Western Christianity, which were passed to the new churches that emerged in Africa, Asia and elsewhere. Now, suddenly, well after midnight, we find ourselves in an entirely different pattern today, constituted by a non-Western Christianity and a post-Christian West. Old landmarks are disappearing. New models will
certainly arise. Is it possible to devise models of theological education which, like some of those in the early Church, can simultaneously instruct and nourish Christians and engage people outside the Church in the examination of Christian truth? Might such a process bring the sort of theological advance that Christians engage with the issues arising from the cultures of Africa, Asia and the post-Christian West, which the early centuries saw?

And what of the latter day equivalents of the “Children of the Covenant”, the radical Christian youth that can become the Lord’s front guard on every front, not least the intellectual one? How can the content of theological education be transformed by taking seriously African and Asian and Latin American Christian history, thought and experience? How can we realize the potential of Christian life, and renew and extend the study of Christian theology in the world opening up beyond the West? And what part may the non-Western Christian Diaspora in the West have in this process? These are some questions that past currents in theological education provoke us to raise about its present and its future.

**Bibliography**

GOOD NEWS TURNED BY NATIVE HANDS, TURNED BY NATIVE HATCHET AND TENDED WITH NATIVE EARTH – A HISTORY OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

John S. Pobee

Ethiopianist Call
The title of this piece is an adaptation of a statement by Mojola Agbebi, a.k.a David Brown Vincent¹ (1860-1917), a member of the Ethiopianist Movement of Nigeria, which fielded such personalities as Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912), James Africanus Beale Horton (1835-1883), Rev. James Johnson, and Rev. Essien Ukpabo. Agbebi saw Christianity as the bedrock of his life, although he equally insisted on the legitimacy of many African customs and institutions which the missionary practice of *tabula rasa* had denounced as un-Christian.

Thus he distinguished between institutionalized Christianity and the Christian Faith itself. It is the faith that the title identifies as Good News (gospel). By implication, one is claiming that theology starts from gospel rather than dogma and the gospel is a story. The additional claim is that whatever the theological construct may be, it must be experienced as good news and therefore, a challenge to one’s circumstances. Theology may not be just a Mandarin’s art. The construct must take seriously the environment/context and use relevant contextual artifacts. This is key to viable, vibrant and vital theology and faith.

History, Story, Memory
Agbebi’s statement is already an interpretation of the originally assigned title, *History of Theological Education in Africa*. History is more illuminating when taken with such words as Story and Memory. Story is an epistemological category.² Memory is key to identity. In other words, theological construction should foster understanding and meaning and identity. Such coupling of history with story and memory signals the pursuit of narrative with a view to understanding where and how far we have come to be who and what we are, so as to obtain meaningful orientation and secure the future of the institution. History is thus concerned with more than the past.

Theological Education
The sub-title signals a concern with theology as well as education. Theology is scientific identification of the sense of *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*.³ Though *prima facie* the subject has integrity and order beyond the comprehensive control of humans, one cannot but use secular language and ideology to carry out the task. That secular tool travels through space and time and therefore, assumes different and diverse and changing forms. This signals that any particular construct must be understood in its context and the springs of its origins, and no construct may be held up as the absolute. This is central to the rise of different

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and diverse theologies. Further, theology that is alive must address the hopes and fears of people; hence African Theology as an attempt to be freed from North Atlantic captivity of theology and to be able to speak to the hopes and fears of *homo africanus*. Hence also Liberation Theology in apartheid South Africa and Zimbabwe.

**Ideologies and Culture as Solvents of Theologizing**

Context represents the solvent in the formation of a religion and construction of a theology. Thus Enlightenment ideology, Pluralism, other Ideologies, African World-view (cultures), Christendom, Reconstruction etc have been solvents in the construction of theology.⁴

However, even if the *logos* part in the word ‘theology’ signals rational processes, it is equally important to insist with Martin Luther that “a theologian is born by living, nay dying and being damned, not by thinking, reading and speculation”.⁵ This is a commitment to orthopraxis, a correlation between correct belief and correct practice. It is in that spirit that in Africa there emerged Black Theology and Liberation Theology; both in South Africa because of the traumatic context of apartheid, racism and discrimination.⁶ Hence the vibrant and seemingly militant theological statements of Bishop, later Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Bishop Manas Buthelezi, Albert Nolan, Itumelaing Mosala, Allan Boesak, and Takatso Mofokeng. In Zimbabwe there was Canaan S. Banana, a United Methodist, who was the first African President of the Independent Zimbabwe. From such theologies emerged the important *Kairos Document* from the Republic of South Africa in the apartheid days.

**Also Education**

Theology is also education, an instrument and structure for securing the institution’s future. Therefore, education is purposeful.⁸ As regards purposeful education, two poles for achieving the goal may be identified in Africa. First is environment, interior and external. Niblett writes: “much of education … is made possible or impossible simply by external and internal environment around them.”⁹

By external environment is meant physical surroundings, material gadgets and inventions and so on. By interior environment is meant non-quantifiable aspects of human life and existence, such as values (of affection, loyalty, enterprise etc) which turn out to be the cement of the society and represent indices of the identity of society as of the individual. Interior environment proves to be the most influential factor in engagement, and change and renewal.

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⁵ Martin Luther, *Table Talk*, updated and revised from a translation by William Hazlitt (Gainsville, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2004), 352.


The realization of the crucial and critical importance of environment in education means such language as normative theology is misleading, if not imperialistic. Further, every theology is, by definition, contextual. Hence, contextuality and contextualization became the *cantus firmus* of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) in its third mandate.\(^\text{10}\)

A continuing issue in theological education in Africa is how far theology has truly engaged environment in Africa. The metamorphosis from Departments of Theology/Divinity in colonial times to Departments of Religions/Study of Religions in post-independence Africa is an example of the birthing of serious attempts by theology in Africa to engage the African environment which is pluralistic, and has not the luxury of a Christendom ideology which shaped theological construction in the West.

There is biblical warranty for taking environment seriously in theological construction. The Bible’s story of Creation tells of the creation of the firmament after the creation of light (Genesis 1:6-8). Thus environment is critical for understanding Theology in Africa. Still on the agenda is the engagement between the Word of God and Environment/Context (African realities).

### Reminting of Inherited Patterns

Christian Theology in Africa was, for a start, a foreign artifact transplanted through colonial structures and missionary endeavours. Thus, a second aspect of linking theology and education is seeing in right perspective the place, the model of the academic excellence, technical proficiency and breadth of experience. The modeling of those important values has sometimes tripped theological education in Africa, shortchanging its viability. The continuing agenda is engaging “the questions of ‘hybridizing’ the transplant (from Europe / America) and search for native plants. Standards of evaluating new patterns and methods ultimately have to be found within the context, whatever reference is made to western standards”.\(^\text{11}\)

### Theological Education in Africa – Ancient and Modern

Africa is a continent of 54 countries. The Christian Church came to Northern parts of Africa in the first and second centuries. By A.D.180, Roman North Africa (the Maghreb, i.e. Algeria, Tunisia and parts of Morocco) had Christian churches which produced martyrs and, later, produced such theologians as Tertullian (160-225), St. Augustine of Hippo Regius, Patron of the theologians (354-430), Cyprian of Carthage (d.358). Augustine’s publications *On the Trinity*, *On Baptism*, *City of God* and *Confessions* are classics which have stood the test of time. Tertullian’s *de Baptismo* (c.200) is the sole pre-Nicene treatise on any of the sacraments. Indeed, his theological writings laid the foundations of later Trinitarian and Christological formulations. These made theological contributions that shaped Latin Christianity. Sadly, they did not engage the native Berbers, because the constructs were very Latin in idiom, and this accounts, in part, for the fall of the Christian Church in North Africa before the Muslim influence. That story underscores the crucial importance of natives of Africa taking ownership of the theological projects and turning the good news in native earth and with native hands and with native hatchets.

On the other side of North Africa, in Egypt, as early as AD.180, there was established a Catechetical School whose heads included Pantaenus (c.190), Clement of Alexandria (c.150-c.215) and Origen.

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Clement’s vision was a benchmark because he “sought a synthesis of Christian thought and Greek philosophy,” thus ensuring “the acceptance by the church of scholarly thinking” \(^{12}\) and research.

Origen (c.185-c.254) has been described as the founder of biblical science (cf his Hexapla, a sixfold Bible, the first attempt at a critical text of the OT in Hebrew and Greek). Origen, again, has been described as the first systematic theologian as evidenced by his publication First Principles, a closely knit system of doctrine, combining Christian pronouncements about God, and humanity.

In the second centenary AD., Egypt produced two Egyptian Gnostics, Valentinus and Basilides. This era signals vibrant theological thinking, an attempt to carry a dialogue between the faith-belief and some philosophy or other. We may identify them as heresy, but they represent theological activity. They were described as schools i.e. they had a following and there was theological education and formation. May they be intimations that the line between orthodoxy and heresy was already being drawn in North Africa rather early?

In the third century there is evidence of some theological activity. First the Christian Faith penetrated the native Coptic-speaking peoples. Hence there were Coptic translations of the Bible, in the two families of Sahidic and Boharic. Translation is as well interpretation and therefore, theology. The work of translation was located not only in communities of faith but in Monastic Community.

Another indication of theological development is the Monastic movement associated with the movement in Egypt initiated by Pachomius (c.290-c.346). The Rule of Pachomius published in 321 represents the work of theology and theological education and formation. More importantly, the works represent decisive and unusual spiritual and institutional development in theology in the Egyptian Church and the World Church. They also represent Greek formulations and a struggle for Coptic expression in a search for cultural identity. Athanasius (c.290-c.346) represents that quest, for he was a Greek theologian and an Egyptian ascetic in the one person. His publications, De Incarnatione and Life of Anthony, represent the quest and agent of contextual theology, developing theology with native hatchets, soil and hands. The message is clear: theology and theological education must be tied into the cultural identity of particular peoples. The quest predated the insight of Mojola Agbebi.

From Egypt the gospel and theology went to Ethiopia. Ethiopia represents another scenario. It had Hebraic character because of Ethiopian’s belief of being descended from King Solomon of Judah. The development of a pre-Chalcedonian Monophysite theology, at once different from Latin and Greek statements of the Faith, is evidence of a theological development authentic to the locale. \(^{13}\) The insight of Mojola Agbebi was already in practice.

### Legacies Many

The North African experience with theological education reminds us of the monastic contribution to theological education. Africa is an inheritor of several traditions of theological education and ministerial formation. But let us make a special note of the monastic model.

The monastic ideal strove to be a concrete realization of Jesus’ invitation to single-minded discipleship, including the abandonment of wealth and the security of home. The modern Seminary needs constantly to remind itself of its origin in the monastic tradition. It needs to be a place where commitment is acknowledged and nourished, without becoming an alibi for slackness and presumption…. As in the monastic period the

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
disciple is asked to undertake an interior transaction with his or her own body and its desires, and to learn a technique of self-discipline. What separates us from medieval period is appetite for spiritual athleticism.\footnote{Stephen Sykes, “Ministerial Formation: Liberating Continuities from the Past,” in *Ministerial Formation* 64 (January 1994), 14.}

The monastic model comes in three forms: Benedictine, Ignatian and Celtic. But whatever form, it reminds all of the need for spiritual discipline in Seminarians, if not all theological students and professors. This is a continuing challenge: for the painful truth is that in the Seminaries and other academic institutions, spirituality has often become hostage to the scientific excellence.

**Africa South of the Sahara**

Christianity in Africa, south of the Sahara, was involved with two movements: Christian missionary movement and colonial expansion. In both cases, the artifacts of Europe, the provenance of the two movements, remained the models for education in Africa. The two, though originally separate, became entangled one with the other. When the Berlin conference of 1845 balkanized Africa, Africa was carved up among the European nations, particularly the English, the French, the German, the Portuguese, and the Belgians.

One particular aspect of this story is that the structure of education in Africa is according to Metropolitan models in Europe. Africa came to bear the ineradicable marks of the colonizers: (a) Belgian Colonial models in Congo-Zaire, (b) Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique (c) French in Côte d’Ivoire, Togo etc. (d) British in Gold Coast/Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone etc. (e) German in Togo, and Cameroon. In all these, Europe was the paradigm. With that, colonial languages became the medium of theology and theological education.

These implied certain philosophies of education. The Belgian education calculated to produce *evolues* or *immatricules*, natives who through education were westernized, virtually ceasing to be African; Portuguese colonial *assimilado* or *civilizado* assimilated the African peoples to Portuguese official standards and were assimilated into Portuguese society; in the French system, an indigene was judged civilized, cultured and French when he/she imbibed French culture. In these structures, the theological scene was dominated by expatriates. Whether such expatriates could develop authentically African theology was questionable.

In Anglophone Africa, because theology was adjudged the queen of the sciences, it was on the University curriculum and paid for by the state. Consequently, admission, accreditation and advancement were predominantly academically determined. On the other hand, in Francophone Africa, thanks to the rigid separation of Church and State, theology was not on the University curriculum. It was handled by *Faculté* which was independent of the State University.

Churches and Christian missions, for whom theology was their life stream and their ministry, also established Seminaries to train their personnel, especially priests and ministers, e.g. Lutheran Theological Seminary, Makumira, Tanzania; Trinity College, Ghana; St. Paul’s Theological College, Limuru, Kenya; St. Victor’s Roman Catholic Theological Seminary, Tamale. Initially, these were denominational institutions. Down the line, however, under the canopy of the ecumenical vision and imperative, joint and inter-denominational theological colleges emerged.

So the spread of theological institutions has run the gamut of University Departments and Faculties, Seminaries, Bible Schools and Theological Education by Extension (Extra-mural courses). With the emergence of vibrant African Initiatives in Christianity and the Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement, other models of theological education were now on hand.
The burden of our submission so far is to suggest that there are varieties of traditions in theological education, which exist openly alongside each other. They have not appeared in a vacuum: colonial patterns, missionary denominational interests and so on have served to some extent as the fulcrum for theological education constructs.

**Interface of Africa and Europe**

The interface of Africa and Europe has left a legacy on theological education. Under the canopy of the Enlightenment culture and ideology, a relic of the Cartesian mindset, theological education in Africa too has been ensouled with the scientific method. Fundamental to it is rationality (*ratio*) with its undergirding of *fact, theory and objectivity.*\(^{15}\) In the process, the link between epistemology and ontology has been often short-changed. Besides, the ultimate goal of theological education, namely creating men and women who have commitment to the mission of the church in a plural world, has, time and again, been short-changed. Consequently, it has been said that the *seminary,* the place for geminating the seeds of true religion and mission, has become the *cemetery* for faith and commitment.

**Post – World War II**

The end of the Second World War (1939-1945) saw two developments that influenced theological education. There was, on the one hand, deep consciousness of the effects of the wars on the political, social and economic life of the whole world, Africa included. On the other hand, the dynamics of world society changed in the sense that “the weak things of the world were confounding the mighty”. With independence movements sweeping Africa, the vision and structures minted in the North could no longer be left intact and became due for revisit, review and renewal.

As an African Anglican bishop Prince E.S. Thompson put it, “we seem now to be in the watershed of two different eras: the old colonial era now coming to an end, and a new era in which Africa and all things African are dipped in the waters of baptism to emerge cleansed and purified and productive according to God’s grace”.\(^ {16}\) Thompson adds “theological education is our nerve centre and that our willingness to shoulder it is an indication of maturity in Christ”.\(^ {17}\) The change required commitment and vision vis-à-vis theological education in Africa.

It is demanded of Africans to take ownership of the project of theological education. As another African Anglican Church leader, Archbishop Walter Khotso Makhulu of Church of Province of Central Africa put it, “there is an urgent need for efforts to be made through which African Church leaders may take ‘ownership’ of the opportunities for training of God’s people and act as facilitators and mentors, enabling such training to take place”.\(^ {18}\) It is an option for the academy and the church to do business together. For after all, the Churches are consumers of the produce/products of the theological institutions.

Taking ownership means encouraging and placing Africans in the institutions. Alas! All too often, African theological educators have been birds of passage in the academy on their way to high profile positions in the church. So they often did not mature as theological educators. The charism for being academic may not be identical with being a church leader. There is a second issue: ownership means also

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putting money where the mouth is. African churches have, time and again, been dependent on foreign sources, including expatriate personnel, even after years of existence. These too shortchange the vision of Mojola Agbebi.

Consequently, there is often lack of continuity at the staff level. That cannot be good for the viability and vitality of the theological institute and through that, the church.

There is one more thing. Because of the precarious state of funding, there is a concentration on formation of would-be clergy. This shortchanges another plank of the biblical faith, namely the priesthood of all believers (cf 1 Peter 2:6-11). Therefore all believers are entitled to theological education and by extension, also pursue formation as laity. But many a time such programmes are not owned by churches. Democratizing theological and ministerial formation is on the agenda of theological education in Africa.19 In this regard, allow me to compare theological education to the scales of music, from high notes to low notes.

Hey Presto! Theological Education Fund (T.E.F)

At this juncture there appeared an organization called Theological Education Fund. The word ‘Fund’ in its designation signaled some preoccupation with funding as an instrument of renewal. But it did more than funding; I elaborate more on this below.

The naissance of TEF is striking.20 It was set up by a meeting of the International Missionary Council (IMC) at its meeting at Achimota, Accra, Ghana, 28 December 1957 to 8 January 1958.21 Ghana became an independent sovereign state on 6 March 1957, and that was to initiate a torrent of many African States becoming sovereign independent states. TEF was recognition that Africans had come of age and must take ownership of Church and theology and mission.

Funding or transfer of resources from the rich North to the South was a key tool for shoring up and refurbishing the selfhood and dignity of the churches and peoples, especially the less well-endowed. Though many tended to concentrate on transfer of resources from the more fortunate and better endowed, on the one hand, to the less fortunate, on the other, the motivation was deeper: It was sharing of resources entrusted by God to be used for the benefit and betterment of all humanity, especially the poor, the marginalized and the excluded.

Funding aside, TEF establishment by the International Missionary Council, was a claim that theology and theological education served the mission of the church. The titles used to propagate the vision included Leadership Formation, Theological Institutions, especially of ecumenical nature; Library Development; Theological Education by Extension; Literature Development (African); Theological Curriculum Development in Africa; Women in Theological Education and others which came under the rubric Innovative and Creative theological education.

Contextualization and Contextuality

One of the geniuses of TEF was to latch onto contextuality as the organizing principle of her efforts toward the renewal of theological and ministerial formation and education, especially in the Third World, in her Third Mandate.22 Of the word ‘context’ Burtness writes:

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19 Sam A. Amirtham and John S. Pobee (eds), *Theology be the People. Reflections on Doing Theology in Community* (Geneva: WCC, 1986).
20 Linemann-Perrin, *Training for Relevant Ministry*.
22 Russell, *Contextualisation*.

Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa
the word ‘context’ is a key to a very modern awareness of the interpenetration of subject and object. It is a word which points to the demise of absolutes and the embracing of relativities, whether in physics or theology or politics. It is a reminder that the inductive method, whether in the chemistry laboratory or in a Bible study group, yields probabilities rather than necessities. It signals an eagerness to live with specifics rather than generalities, with particulars rather than universals. ‘Context’ is a word which fits naturally with such phrases as theory of relativity, scientific method, situational ethics, and statistical probabilities. It is a very modern word and a very modern emphasis.23

Obviously, this perspective in theological education was a departure from, if not a challenge, to the time-honoured and so-called classical theology. The departure was not a signal that anything goes. There was a threefold critical principle that was intended to guide theological construction – authenticity, integrity and creativity. This was originally the Asian Critical Principle, which was an option for theology that is “biblically based, missiologically oriented, educationally shaped, pastorally advocated and spiritually empowered”.24

The Asian Critical Principle which emerged in Asia in TEF circles naturally came into the lingo of African Institutions. The Process of Viability of Ministerial Formation in Today’s World, however, varied the trio a little: they spoke of Quality,25 Authenticity and Creativity. Quality was preferable to integrity. Quality signaled an art grounded in technical competence; it is an option for excellence. The South African theologian, John de Gruchy, picking it up writes:

…a quality theological education requires that we must resist the temptation to give priority to one aspect of theological education at the expense of others, and seek rather to develop approaches which are holistic, coherent and integrated.

Quality theological education does not mean scientific training at the expense of spiritual formation or being equipped for pastoral ministry …, social witness, or vice versa. All these are indispensible. A quality theological education is likewise not one which is fragmented into disparate and competing parts, whether this is understood in terms of academic discipline, visions of ministry, or models of education. A quality theological education requires technical ability then, but for the sake of producing the authentic and creative pastor and prophet, indeed, the authentic Christian community.

A quality theological education, in other words, is grounded in a particular understanding of theologia. If there is uncertainty, shallowness or misunderstanding at this point, it will affect the whole enterprise, no matter how technical, complement its products.26

It is what leads to authenticity of a witness which carries weight. Creativity signals the ability to produce things old and new.

Many Attempts at Contextualization

Several other phrases signal the essence of contextualization – Savannah Theology (Northern Nigeria), Indigenization, Incarnation, Inculturation, Reconstruction, African Christian Theology, Skenosis (Tabernaclling), Black Liberation Theology.27 These are preferred terminologies according to region and

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23 TEF, Learning in Context.
denomination. For example, Catholic schools tend to prefer inculturation e.g. Justin Ukpong. Savannah Theology has been the preferred language of the Savannah region of North Nigeria.

However, such theology was not to be entrusted to non-Africans. Thus, the churches and TEF-PTE concentrated on the development of African Theologians. And so, Africans can celebrate such African Theologians as Jean-Marc Éla (Cameroon), Meinard Hebga (Cameroon), Mgr. Tshibangu Tshishiku (Zaire), R. Tossou Ametonu, Masamba Mpopo (Zaire), Cardinal J.A. Malula (Zaire), Ngindu Mushete (Zaire), E. Mveng (Zaire), Yemba Kekumba (Zaire), R. Zoe-Obiang (Cameroon), Vuadi Vibila (Zaire), all from Francophone Africa. Others are Sam Kibicho (Kenya), John. S. Mbiti (Kenya), Mercy Amba Oduyoye (Ghana), Harry Sawyer (Sierra Leone), Teresa Okure (Nigeria), Musa Dube (Botswana), Isabel Phiri (Malawi and South Africa), Elizabeth Amoah (Ghana), Esther Morea (Kenya). A Muslim woman Rabiatu Ammah (Ghana) may not be left out, K.A. Dickson (Ghana), Canaan S. Banana (Zimbabwe), J.S. Pobee (Ghana) etc, etc. Now there are native persons equipped to do creative African Construction of theology. With independence and the unprecedented communications technological revolutions of our time, there was now cross fertilization of ideas across the various borders – French Africa and Anglophone Africa, Portuguese Africa, ghettoized leprous apartheid South Africa, and the rest of Black Africa, North of the Zambezi.

**Scientific Study, Mission, Ecumenism**

Words like theology and education have been run through the prism of the Enlightenment culture as raised in earlier section. But TEF’s birth in the IMC matrix suggests that whatever else theology does, it also serves mission. Thus theology becomes scientific identification of the Word of God and its communication to church and society. Mission is often understood as proclamation, making disciples (evangelism) and obedience to the expressed will of God or spirituality. But we may also understand it as building a community of communities with the perspective and vision of God’s sovereign rule.

The Enlightenment’s ideology is an option for rationality and individualism. These two pillars jar with Africans’ communitarian epistemology and option for feeling and emotion. It is these two strands of *homo africanus’* epistemology and ontology that make Africans more inclined to understanding mission as building a community of communities. Theology in Africa, whatever else it does, is concerned with being an instrument in building community of communities.

**Theological Associations**

For the same reason, theology as an aid to ecumenical vision means much in Africa. Examples of that ecumenical orientation are the emergence of Departments of Religious Studies on the African continent to respond to the context of religious and cultural pluralism. The Associations of Theological Institutions in Africa were also agents of building community of communities for mutual enrichment.

These Associations include: Association of Central African Christian Training Institutions (ACACTI), Association of Christian Lay Centres in Africa (ACLCA), Association of Evangelical of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM), Association of South African Theological Institutions (ASATI), Association des Institutions d’Enseignement Théologique en Afrique Centrale (ASTHEOL Centrale), ASTHEOL Occidentale (ASTHEOL West), Association of Theological Teachers of Madagascar (ATTM or in French, FINPATEMA), West Africa Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI), Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa (ATIEA), Eastern African Association of Theological Education by Extention (EAATEE), Association of Theological Institutions in Southern and Central Africa (ATISCA), Theological Education by Extension Association in Nigeria (TEEAN), Organisation of Independent African Churches-TEE. Whether each of these is still operational and as dynamic as in 1970s is a matter for further probing.

*Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa*
The associations represent an attempt to achieve the ecumenicity of understanding released at Pentecost across linguistic barriers. This represents an attempt to form communitarian spirit. These Associations included schools of all denominations and in some cases, Muslim. Their meetings included an Institute on a theological theme and business. There was also the African Network of Institutions of Theological Education preparing Anglicans for Ministry (ANITEPAM). The spectrum of denominations and religions in each association made them useful institutions for building ecumenical consciousness. In addition, there is the Conference of African Theological Institutions (CATI), a forum for all the theological associations in Africa. The political instability in the region often made meetings difficult, if not impossible. For example, the instability in Liberia and Sierra Leone made it difficult for participation in meetings by institutions of those countries in their regions. In these associations there are different theological Institutions:

(a) University faculty which takes in persons of any religious persuasion or none, and without any denominational input or supervision. These used to be predominantly state institutions: Now Christian denominations and Islamic groups have also established Universities. The issue is for us to define is what the religious descriptions in their self-description really mean.

(b) Residential denominational colleges which prepare and form people for priestly ministry.

(c) Non-residential training facility with part-time distance learning.

The ecumenical vision concerning theology has meant that institutions that stood parallel and never meeting, let alone engaging each other, have now engaged each other. The original French Ma Foi d’Africain by Jean-Marc Éla published in 1985 has now become available in English as My Faith as an African and has been made accessible to English speakers to their benefit and enrichment.\(^{28}\) Even beyond sharing within Africa, John Pobee’s *Towards African Theology* has been translated into German as *Grundlinien einer Afrikanische Theologie* in 1989.\(^{29}\) Thus African theology is being shared ecumenically and across and beyond the continent. African Theology is steadily taking its place around the global theological table.

### African Initiatives in Christianity, Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches

The much acclaimed change in the demography of world Christianity, with Africa becoming the heartland of the gospel is, in part, due to the vibrancy of that genre of Christianity. There are varieties in the genre: Messianic Movement, Spiritual or Pentecostal Churches and so on.\(^{30}\) But the common denominator is the emphasis on and desire for the experience of the Holy Spirit in its power. This of course accords well with the religious-spiritual epistemology and ontology of *homo africanus*. It used to be said a prophet arises and needs no theological formation and education or that they go to the University of the Holy Spirit. As Hollenweger put it, “for them [the Pentecostals of the Third World] the medium of communication is, just as in biblical times, not the definition but the description, not the statement but the story, not the doctrine but the testimony, not the book but the parable, not a systematic theology but a song, not the treatise but the television program, not the articulation of concepts but the celebration of banquets.”\(^{31}\)

Sepulveda comments as follows: “there is a ‘deep cultural gap’ between the traditional models of theological education and the realities of Pentecostalism. Therefore, the viability of ecumenical cooperation in theological education depends on the progress to be made in the area of intercultural

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theological thinking. Furthermore, it presupposes the overcoming of the still very influential ‘neo-orthodox’ rejection of ‘experience’, and particularly religious experience, as a sound basis for reflection.”

Now AICs such as Church of the Lord, Aladura, Nigeria and Good News Institute, Ghana, are taking part in the theological Associations. That constitutes an opportunity and fulcrum for inter-cultural theology. AICs represent a style of theologizing which is different from the inherited propositional style, reminding us that in a world of “all sorts and condition of humanity” there can be no one and absolute style and content of theology. We must be thinking in terms of diverse and different theologians.

**Theology in Africa and the Future of Theology in the World**

Africa is the second largest continent in the world. The Scottish missiologist, Andrew Walls has drawn attention to “a complete change in the centre of gravity of Christianity so that the heartlands of the Church are no longer in Europe, decreasingly in North America, but in Latin America, in certain parts of Asia, and most importantly… in Africa”. Walls goes on to draw a conclusion: “Theology that matters will be theology where the Christians are … What happens within the African Churches in the next generation will determine the whole shape of Church history for centuries to come. Whether and, in what way, world evangelization is carried on may well be determined by what goes on in Africa; what sort of theology is most characteristic of Christianity of the twenty-first century may well depend on what has happened in the minds of African Churches in the interim.”

This fact is a promise and a hope. But the promise will be realized if the African Church and theology and theological institutions will take themselves seriously and accept the destiny God has assigned them. We have made an instructive experience in the Magreb, which had what looked like a vibrant Christianity and theology in the early church. That church died out because it was never contextualized among the native Berbers of North Africa. May theology in Africa learn from this experience and work for a theology and church that are truly a tabernacle of the eternal word of God which renews life, and give account of faith and hope in a troubled world and meaning to life. That task is to be done by committed Africans in the African context and principally with Africa resources.

Earlier references were made to the publications of Éla (Cameroon) and John Pobee (Ghana) which may be described as Africa sharing her wares with the *Oikoumenē*. Here we may add the name of John S. Mbiti, whose contribution to the world’s theological pool has been phenomenal. Mbiti is from Kenya, Eastern Africa. Beginning as Professor of Theology and Religion in Uganda, he went on to become first and only African, indeed Southerner, to be the Director of the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland and then part time Professor at the University of Bern, Switzerland. He has been visiting Professor at Universities in Europe, South Africa, Canada, Australia and others. He has to his name something like 400 articles, reviews and books on theology, religion, philosophy and literature. His book *African Religions and Philosophy* has been acknowledged as a standard work and an essential reading. This is an African turning the good news with native hands, tending it by native hatchet and tending it with native earth; and that, as a contribution to the world of scholarship.

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32 Juan Sepulveda, “Pentecost and Ecumenical Theological Education: Some Introductory Reflections,” *Ministerial Formation* 75 (October 1996), 44.
Our Mothers and Sisters in Theology

There is one more word – last not least because it is an after-thought, but more so because it is ultimate. For women constitute more than one half of the population of the church and society and are proving to be the most committed, vital and vibrant part of the community. As such they constitute a most vital resource for theology in Africa. The Apostle Paul asks with scripture: “how can people call for help if they don’t know who to trust? And can they know who to trust if they haven’t heard of the one who can be trusted? And how can they hear if nobody tells them? And how is everyone going to tell them, unless someone is sent to them” (Romans 10:14f).

Therefore, the emergence of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (the Circle) with its first convocation at Trinity College, Legon in 1989 arose as a renewal organ to renew women for renewed intelligent discourse and contribution in theological education. And so, Africa since then has been fielding such women theologians as Mercy Amba Oduoye, Teresa Okure, Rabiatu Ammah (Muslim), Bette Ekeya, Esther Moraa, Vuade Vibila, Isabel Phiri, Musimbi Kanyaro, Musa Dube, Nyambura Jane Njoroge, Elizabeth Amoah, Mary Getui and many more.

The striking thing about the Circle is that its members are not only in the academy but are very much inserted in the communities of faith and making their contributions. They are not first a protest movement; they seek to explore the God-word and the life of the Community of Faith together with the men-folk who, for long, have been dominant in the Church and theology. They are a reminder that to fail to take seriously one half of the face of the actors’ theology leads to a jaundiced theological expression and Church life.

Theology in Africa has made great strides since its beginnings in colonial and missionary times. It has been conscientized that it cannot be a clone of North Atlantic artifacts nor in North Atlantic captivity. But there is a long way to go before it can be said theology in Africa has arrived.

A precondition is a constant reminder and focus that theology serves the Community of Faith, the Word of God, the Creator. Its goal is to serve what is human in a plural world and society, and to underscore the values of God’s sovereign rule, namely truth and truthfulness, peace and reconciliation, with dignity of each and all, and justice, compassion-mercy-sacrificial love. Theology may never forget that it has three constituencies – the academy, the church and the world. Its vitality, vibrancy and viability are determined by whether it keeps faith with the three constituencies.

The words memory and memorial are important and key in biblical faith and therefore, in theology. For that reason, I am most mindful of my association with the TEF-PTE tradition and would like to end with some notes from PTE memory. In 1996 an ETE global consultation issued Message to Churches, Theological Institutes and the World Council of Churches. It states:

ETE is also urging a radical change in attitudes of dominance and dependence. We are convinced that new life for all will result, and the formation of ministers who are human not heroic, in churches which are vital and viable, and open to ecumenical resource-sharing for mission, not dehumanized and despondent and shut in on themselves. When the knowledge of God is not a commodity but a relationship, students and church members may teach teachers and ministers how to read the mind of the Spirit…. As we move into the 21st century we have a renewed commitment to remain open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit by listening more carefully to the multiple voices of God’s people and responding with life-giving forms of theological education and ministerial formation.

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37 John S. Pobee (ed), Towards Viable Theological Education: Ecumenical Imperatives Catalyst of Renewal (Geneva: Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
I confirm those insights and say a loud ‘Amen’ to them so that theological education and ministerial formation in Africa shall be viable, vibrant and vital because it is experienced as good news. Above all it has been turned by native hands, turned by native hatchet and turned in native earth.

If the right conclusion is drawn from the fact that Africa has become the heartland of world Christianity, it becomes a responsibility to share with oikoumene Africa’s creations. The one-way street from North to South has to be re-envisioned as a dual carriage-way, one from North to South, the other from South to North. That issue was tabled at the Africa Conference in July 1986 at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration, the proceedings of which have been already cited above as Theological Education in Africa. Quo Vadimus?

Some issues in the area were: (i) Publications in use in African Institutions are from the North and bear the hallmarks of theology and theological education in the North. These, though useful, may not necessarily be conducive to theology minted in native soil and with native implements (ii) Such productions proved rather expensive and beyond the capability of most Africans. So it was decided to encourage literature development in the vernacular. “In my view library and literature development is a crucial structural tool for developing theology in the African context and shared with the ecumenical arena for sharing and mutual critique.”

There is another matter in the vision of literature development in Africa. TEF-PTE had sponsored several African students to do research degrees abroad and their theses were as yet not ploughed back into the African region and were rather sitting on shelves in London, Edinburgh, California, New York etc.

So the ETE’s Africa desk composed an international editorial board to hunt for and process such books for publication. The Legon Ecclesiastical Studies issues to date include:


These are helpful beginnings. But there is some catching up to be done. Good News Turned by Native Hands, Turned by Native Hatchet and Tended with Native Earth must become the inheritance of the Oikoumenē.

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Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa


John S. Pobee


**Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa**
(3) HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN EASTERN AFRICA
– THE EXAMPLE OF JULIUS KRAPF

Julius Gathogo

1. Introduction

There is strong justification for studying the birth and development of Christian education in Africa today. This justification is seen in the fact that the numerical centre of Christian gravity has shifted to Africa; for indeed, Africa is portrayed as the most Christian Continent in the twenty-first century. Dr. David Barret (1982) says that Africa records an average of 4 000 new converts everyday and this puts the Christian population (in Africa) at more than 50% of the overall population of about 800 million. This phenomenal growth of African Christianity has been accompanied by an increasing number of cognisant reflections by African theologians. At the dawn of the World Council of Churches meeting in Nairobi in 1975, Donald McGavran wrote:

In 1952, African South of the Sahara had, I calculated, 10 million Christians. In 1968, sixteen years later, a second careful calculation showed 50 million. In less than 20 years, the Christian population had increased by 30 million. Nothing like it had been seen in Christian history. The Church continues to grow a pace. Dr Barret, Anglican Authority, has made careful demographic forecast that if present trends continue, there will be 457 million Christians in Africa by the year 2000. I have no reason to doubt his estimate, but it is only half right, there will still be 180 million Christians in Africa twenty-six years from now (1974).

Jesse Mugambi is, however, critical of the idea that the centre of Christian gravity has shifted to Africa – an idea that is well propounded by Kwame Bediako in his works. Mugambi contends that African Christians cannot quantify the idea that the shifting has now come to Africa when there are only a few written books by African theologians. To add an insult to an injury, even some books that are already authored by African theologians, are published in the North Atlantic (cf. Orbis books in New York, Regnum in UK among others). This makes them too costly for African Christians to afford. Mugambi regrets that even the most outspoken advocates of indigenisation and inculturation are foreign missionaries to Africa – and not African Christians themselves! This undermines the ideal that the Gospel becomes rooted when “the converts live in it [and] in their own lives with full appreciation of their cultural and religious heritage” and not when they theorize about it. He says,

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2 See David Barret (ed), World Christian Encyclopaedia (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1982).
3 Donald McGavran, “The Dimensions of World Evangelization,” in J.D. Douglass (ed), Let the Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization, Lausanne, Switzerland (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1975), 101.
Although there has been rejoicing in some quarters that Christianity is rapidly spreading in Africa, it is important to ask ourselves what brands of Christianity are being propagated on this continent’s rural and urban areas. If they are brands that prevent Africans from managing their present and future, then Christianity will be judged as very bad irrespective of what missionaries think of themselves and their mission. If, on the other hand, Christianity helps Africans to stand [against] the natural, social, economic and political forces that continue to dehumanise them, and if it facilitates their total liberation, then the Christian missionary enterprise of the future will be an improvement on the failures of the past. The success or failure of the Christian missionary enterprise ought to be assessed on the basis of this self-criticism.6

Chukwudum B. Okolo, a noted theologian, also appears to be critical of the idea of the shift of Christian gravity to Africa as he contends that despite the high statistics associated with seminarians in Africa, the important thing is not how many indigenous seminaries and Priests Africa turn out every year, but the kind of education and training given to them. He says,

Quality not quantity becomes decisive in realizing the main objectives of African theology. …It is important that those who educate and train African seminarians plan the curriculum in philosophy and theology with the background of the African situation and experience in mind. The one sided training in Western philosophy and theology is grossly inadequate.7

In view of this, even though we may not aptly say that the centre of Christian gravity has authentically shifted to Africa – even at the beginning of the twenty-first century – we must however insist that the fact that the numerical figures are arguably high gives us a reason to take Christian Education seriously, as the early missionaries such as Johannes Ludwig Krapf must have worked hard enough to see the realisation of the ‘fulfilled dream’ that we are now experiencing in Africa today. Undoubtedly, failure to have ‘authentic’ Christianity does not dissuade us from our yearning to know the historical development of Christian or theological Education in Africa, and especially the East African region, which was greatly threatened by the spread of Islam. In any case, who knows? Africa may yet become the cradle of the Christian civilisation!

2. A Historical Overview of the Church as a Teaching Community

From its inception, Christianity has been, basically, a teaching religion. Jesus Christ, its founder was known as a rabbi (Matthew 10:17), a Jewish teacher of the law. Interestingly, his disciples were known as the Mathetes or learners under a master or teacher (Mark 1:22). In demonstrating the education mission of their task, Jesus sent them to go into all parts of the world, to teach people all things that they had been taught (Matthew 28:20). All the other activities that they had to carry out were to be guided by Christ’s teaching (cf. Matthew 5-7). It is no wonder that the early church emphasized on teaching the new believer in the faith (Acts 2:42). St Paul advised Titus and Timothy to make teaching the principal role of the Church (1Timothy 4:6, 6:2; Titus 2:1, 7-9). Seen from this background, Christian mission is basically educational in genre. As such, the Rev. Dr Johannes Ludwig Krapf and other protestant missionaries of the 19th century CE were certainly carrying out the educational task of the church.

2.1 Early Christianity

In addressing the educational mission of the church in the early Christianity, it is critical to appreciate the Greek heritage as of immense value to Christian/theological education. For as Freeman Butts, a church


*Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa*
historian, observes: “We think the way we do in large part because the Greeks thought the way they did. Thus, to understand our own ways of thinking we need to know how the Greeks thought.”8 Given this dependence upon Greek thought in the so-called modern education, educational thought and practice reflect distinctiveness of the Greek intellectual heritage. In particular, Socrates maintained that knowledge itself was a virtue. For him, to really know what is good is to prohibit one from doing evil. He stressed the place of reason and logic, with thinking itself viewed as objective reasoning. To Socrates, human reason was the means by which to discern divine revelation and its implications for all of life. Interestingly, even though Socrates (and other Greek philosophers) stressed the importance of moral life, he did not do so in terms of the God of Christendom.9 Similarly, Plato’s view of an ideal world, which exists in the theory of forms, fostered a concern for social and political reforms as a fruit of education in the lives of those persons who grasped the ideals. Clearly Greek thought cannot be divorced from the on goings of the early church and the Christian fraternity up to the present times.

For in the early church, there was an emphasis on the faithful transmission of the Christian heritage. Certainly, this was something which was done in a hostile society, thereby resulting in a largely counter cultural stance of contending for the faith.10 Nevertheless, various educational forms emerged to deal with the challenges of interpreting the faith in the light of unfulfilled eschatological expectations. In particular, catechesis arose as an essential component of passing on the faith. To this end, John Westerhoff points out that the Greek source for this term refers to resounding or echoing, to celebrating or imitating, to repeating another’s words and deeds. Accordingly, when the term catechesis was first used, it referred to the activity of instruction by oral repetition in which persons were taught by being made to sing out the answers to posed questions.11 In attempting to fulfill the need for catechesis, catechumen classes emerged in various localities to support home training and worship services. Even though the form and length of this catechesis varied, the training generally continued for three years. In turn, this period served as a time of training and probation before full acceptance into the church.12

In addition to catechumen classes, catechetical schools were formed; for Christianity soon found itself in dire need of highly educated apologists in order to interpret the faith in the Hellenistic ways of thinking and to defend it against cultured attackers. To this end, future leaders of Christian thought and life were instructed in the various disciplines and philosophies of Hellenistic culture at the catechetical schools like the University at Alexandria. Curiously, some leaders such as Tertullian maintained that to use the thought forms of Greek philosophy so as to express the Gospel was dangerous and even heretical. Others like Origen found it essential to synthesize the Christian faith with contemporary thought forms in order to address the world on its own terms.13 And in view of the fact that many converts were not Jews, they were exposed to the Old Testament for the first time; and needed an interpretation of how Jesus’ life and ministry related to God’s previous dealings with people and creation prior to the incarnation. Similarly, the

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9 Similarly, Plato who defined education as the training in excellence from youth upwards and which makes a person passionately desire to be a perfect citizen, as it teaches him/her to rule with justice, viewed the ideal as real with actualities as mere copies of the transcendent and perfect ideal. This aspect of Plato’s thought was particularly attractive to Christian thinkers like Augustine who later synthesized these insights with the Christian faith.
converts who were Jews needed a reinterpretation of the Old Testament in the light of the claims of the Messiah. Clearly, Christianity has remained a teaching religion since its inception.

2.2 The Monastic Schools

As a matter of fact, modern education, as we know it today may claim its roots from the 4th century Monastic Schools. In turn, Monasticism, which is an ascetic type of Christian movement, was gaining popularity particularly through the activities of famous monks such as Antony of Egypt and Basil of Caesarea. In their monasteries, these monks developed a highly systematic form of Christian education. In particular, the Monastic Schools developed the first rational curriculum, which together with theological studies included the seven liberal arts, which were divided into two main groupings. That is: the *Trivium*, comprising grammar, rhetoric and dialectic; and the *Quadrivium*, comprising arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music.\(^{14}\)

The 11th and 12th centuries CE saw the emergence of the so-called Schoolmen. This was followed by the production of highly intellectual theological works, which were competent enough to stand against the challenges of secular philosophies, particularly the Greek and emerging Islamic philosophies. In view of this, Christian scholars such as Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, Albert Magnus and Alexander of Hales produced outstanding Christian literature that portrayed the Christian faith as an intellectual religion at a time when it was beginning to appear as mere superstition. Apart from theological works, these men produced documents on law and philosophy. As a result, they became the forerunners of the establishment of medieval universities. In the nature of things, Universities were founded as special institutions, which offered, specialized studies in such disciplines as theology (University of Paris, 1180; Bologna, 1158); and Medicine (Salerno, 1224). Other Universities were founded in Salamanca (1230), Oxford (1214) and Naples (1224). By 1500 CE, there were over 70 Universities all over Europe, all of whom had links with the Church.\(^{15}\) In turn, the emergency of these Universities brought about the period of great intellectual awakening known as the Renaissance. In turn, this period became the precursor of the 16th century Protestant Reformation, which sought to liberate the people from the extremely authoritarian hold of the church by the papacy.

2.3 The Church and Education in Africa

As will be noted later in this article, efforts to establish the Church in Africa before the advent of the missionary advent of the 19th century ended as a mere pipedream. A part from Ethiopia and Egypt, early Christianity in North Africa was buried in the sands of the Sahara as soon as the Islamic wind started blowing during the 8th Century CE. As will be noted, the Portuguese version of Roman Catholic Christianity in the 15th, 16th and 17th century CE also evaporated in the tropical heat of Africa together with their attempted social influences at the East Coast of Africa. In view of this, the article will attempt to demonstrate that the African Church as we know it today, and despite the failure by the early missionaries to contextualise it adequately, is indeed a product of the 19th century and 20th century Western missionary endeavours. It is indeed a product of what Stephen C. Neil calls “The Heyday of Colonialism” about which he quotes David Livingstone as having said: “I beg to direct your attention to Africa, I know that in a few years I shall be cut off in that country, which is now open. Do not let it be shut again. I go to Africa to try to make it an open path for commerce and Christianity.”\(^{16}\)

All in all, the nature of Christian education in Africa, as was propagated in the 19th century CE by the European missionaries is well summed up by Dr David Livingstone as he describes how his wife, Mary,

served the Bakwena of Botswana, for eleven years, from 22 January 1845 to about 1857. Thus, in about 1846, Livingstone reported thus:

Mrs Livingstone has recently commenced an infant and sewing school, but as it still possesses the attraction of novelty we cannot form an opinion as to the ultimate success of the measure. Paul and David continue to render valuable assistance in all our operations...The infant school under the care of Mrs L. afforded us much encouragement. The attendance during the past year may be stated as from 60 to 80. The failure of the native crops has lately had considerable effect on the regularity of their attendance, for the children have been obliged to go great distances in search of locusts and roots on which to subsist. Mrs L must also soon discontinue it for a season, but it will be resumed after her confinement.

Thus the protestant missionary education, like the traditional African education was holistic in that it did not only address metaphysical concerns, but more importantly, it concerned itself with practical subjects such: as day-to-day survival, dress-making (tailoring), agriculture, and stock keeping among others. Indeed, as the post 19th century missionary Christianity took root, African Christianity began to emerge in its diverse fashions. It is a trend that continues to date, to an extent that even the Rev Dr Ludwig Krapf who is the pioneer protestant missionary in East Africa cannot afford to control, if he were to come back to his earthly life. The coming section will thus attempt to survey the two stages of Christian/theological education in East Africa since Christianity was re-introduced to this part of the world by both the Portuguese and the London-based, Church Missionary Society.

3. Stages of Christian Education in East Africa

The first stage of Christian Education in East Africa is seen in the brand of Christianity, which came under the Portuguese prowess of the fifteenth to seventeenth century. Jesse Mugambi contends that the first European missionaries in Africa (and in particular, East Africa) were the Portuguese. Arriving in the fifteenth century, they brought Christianity to Africa under the auspices of the Papal see at Rome. This agrees with T. A. Beetham who states that Priests generally accompanied the expeditions. They “served as Chaplains to the new trading settlements and as missionaries to neighbouring African peoples.” Mugambi dismissively acknowledges that the Portuguese mission to bring Christianity to Africa failed because they were not interested in spreading Christianity. They were not even primarily interested in Africa – “their main interest was trading with Asia, and Africa happened to have been ‘discovered’ while the new sea route via Southern Africa was being explored.”

Certainly, the beginning of the Christian Church in East Africa can be traced to that Sunday afternoon, 7 April 1498, when Vasco da Gama anchored off Mombasa near where Fort Jesus stands today. Even though Mugambi stresses that da Gama’s main interest was trade, he not only discovered a new route to India and the Far East, but he nonetheless brought a new religious impetus. His motivation and that of his predecessors was to establish an alliance with a legendary Christian King in Africa, Prester John. This legendary African King is one whom the people of Europe had heard much about. In the scheme of things, they hoped, an alliance with such a “powerful Christian King” at the heart of Africa might be a great help.

18 I. Schapera, *Livingstone’s Missionary Correspondence, 1841-1853*, 113, 121.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
in the long struggle against Muslim expansion in Africa. Accordingly, Vasco da Gama was part of the grand design of the Portuguese King, Henry the Navigator, who worked passionately against the Moors (Black Muslims) who had threatened Portugal and Spain. In view of this, Henry was looking forward to finding an African ruler who was willing to become an ally in the struggle against the Muslims. Even though he had strong interest in expanding his country’s trade, he “privately…had a desire to spread the Christian faith [read Christian Education] in Africa as a way of counter-acting Islamic faith,” as he thought that the Christian faith would have a civilizing effect as well.

As he moved from Mozambique to Mombasa, Vasco da Gama discovered that the Muslim inhabitants who were already a well-established lot in the East Coast of Africa did not welcome him. He was however comforted in being accepted by the people in the port of Malindi, who thought the Portuguese could be a possible ally; part of the reason being that the ruler of Malindi was always in perennial conflicts with his more powerful neighbour in Mombasa. For this, da Gama erected a marble pillar at Malindi to commemorate the friendly treaty that was concluded between Malindi and Portugal. Largely, this pillar was both a symbol of the sovereignty of Portugal on the East Coast and as a symbol of the Portuguese version of Roman Catholic Christianity. From there, Malindi remained a very useful ally of the Portuguese occupation in the midst of hostile Islamic forces. Consequently the Portuguese sent various characters to promote her interests in the East African Coast. This included, Francis d’Almeida in 1505, Francis Xavier, John Dos Santos, and Dom Pedro Mascarenhas among other notable personalities. In particular, Mascarenhas is the Portuguese viceroy of India who gave orders for the construction of a Fort at Mombasa. He also instructed that the Gospel be taught and preached to inhabitants, even though Muslim hostility was overwhelmingly strong.

This Islamic hostility is well explained in the fact that in 1585, Mir Ali Bey, a Turkish, made a dedicated attempt to oust the Portuguese from the Indian Ocean. To do this, he preached a jihad against the Portuguese. Interestingly, he got enthusiastic support for his operation. A case in point is in the island of Pate where a Portuguese by the name of John Rebello was dragged round the town and pelted with stones for his refusal to give up his Christian faith, and subsequently died from the injuries incurred. Even though the Portuguese avenged his death by attacking Faza, razing it to the ground, slaughtering the inhabitants – men women and children, cutting palm trees, and so forth, Rebello’s death became one of the early Christian martyrs in the East Coast of Africa. Nevertheless, the Portuguese ruthlessness, failed to give witness to the Christian faith that they intended to propagate; nor did it improve the relationship between them and the locals.

As a ‘Christian country,’ thus, Portugal was eager to propagate its Roman Catholic Christianity in the midst of Islam influence. As John Gray notes, even though a Cathedral and an Augustinian Monastery were established in Mombasa, Christianity did not flourish among local inhabitants due to the Portuguese moral behaviour. Their immoral conduct is seen in the fact that their relationship with the locals was so

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24 Zablon Nthamburi, “The Beginning and Development of Christianity in Kenya,” 1
28 Fort Jesus, which became a contested Fort between the Arabs and the Portuguese, was completed in 1595. It was built under the architectural instruction of Giobanni Battista Cairati. It is after this fortification of Mombasa that the ruler of Malindi was appointed by the Portuguese to govern Mombasa as well. As a puppet ruler, all decisions were made by the Portuguese; and although he was distressed by the uneven political arrangements there is nothing he could do about it as his hands were already tied by the prevailing situation. It is no wonder that when he died in 1609, the leadership mantle was handed over to his son, Hasan bin Ahmed.
strained that it could not attract people to the God of Christendom whom they were propagating. John Dos Santos, a Dominican friar, who was stationed in the Kerimba Isles and who managed to baptise a nephew of the ruler of Zanzibar in 1591, gives an account of the Portuguese personal and ethical behaviour which did not reflect Christian maturity, thus:

If a chicken belonging to a Moor [Muslim] enters the dwelling of a Christian [Portuguese] and the Moor asks for it, the Christian answers that the chicken entered his house because it wanted to be a Christian, and cannot give it back.32

The same trickery was practised with goats and other animals. According to Nthamburi, the Portuguese were infamous for their oppressions and frauds that such happenings were nicknamed “Pemba tricks.”33 Additionally, they were known to keep concubines as well as being downright cruel and inhuman, the behaviours that capsulated their bid for Christian education. All in all the Portuguese did not appear to practise, in daily living, the teachings of that God whom they claimed to be representing. Additionally, their version of Roman Catholic Christianity was seen mainly through soldiers and traders, a lot that portrayed a Christianity that was devoid of moral underpinning, thus negatively turning the people from accepting the Christian education. 34

Nevertheless, there were four established worshipping places around Mombasa in 1624 with a population of 4,000 Christians. Even though there were tensions between Muslims and Christians that resulted in perennial wars and subsequent expulsion of the Portuguese from East Africa by Arabs, 1,000 baptisms were reported by 1624. In lowering the Portuguese flag in 1729, for the last time, the Roman Catholic Christianity shrunk.35 Apart from lowering the Portuguese flag as a mark for the diminishing of East African Christianity, as was propagated by the Portuguese, the lack of training for indigenous leadership helped in facilitating the death of ‘Portuguese Christianity’ in the East African Coast. As a result, the locals seemed to have developed a thin veneer of Christian education and faith, “which could not hold its own in the midst of storm and turbulence that followed.”36 Thus, the failure to inculturate or indigenize the Christian faith by the Portuguese meant that their brand of Christianity was bound to disintegrate upon their demise. Again, their moral laxity gave Christianity a distorted image to the local populace. It is no wonder that by the time the second phase of Christianity begun in the 19th century, the Christian presence in the area was almost zero.

The second stage of Christian Education in East Africa is the brand of Christianity that was propagated by the early missionaries of the 19th and 20th centuries. These (nineteenth and twentieth-century) missionaries to East Africa, and Africa in general, actually brought the Christian gospel despite its being clothed in Western attire. Consequently, African theologians have grappled with this issue since the early 1960s. It is not an overstatement to observe that these missionaries “exercised exclusive authority on matters of faith. They alone had the full access to the word of God, and their interpretation was final.”37 However, this trend underwent a paradigm shift when the Bible was translated into the indigenous languages of the various African communities. Consequently, a yardstick of reference emerged which was outside of missionary control. By loosening the missionary interpretive control of the Bible, some African Christians adopted a new hermeneutical technique to exegete the biblical texts within their notion of authenticity.

34 Zablon Nthamburi, From Mission to Church, 1ff.
The second stage also saw the birth of theologies of adaptation, indigenisation or inculturation and liberation, which were indeed energized after the Bible was translated into the indigenous languages of the diverse peoples of Africa. In translating the Bible to the African languages, the Africans were able to discover that the Bible is their story, it has relevant stories such as the Exodus event where the oppressed were freed. They could now see that God in Christ did not come to destroy the established rules (read cultures) and patterns of peoples lives (Matthew 5:13-17) but to give it a better meaning thereby strengthening it. In view of this, African Christianity began to courageously challenge the missionary theologies and sought to install an African Christianity “as experienced by Africans themselves.”

Similarly, African Christianity began to challenge oppressive structures in the society. These oppressive structures included colonialism, racism, sectionalism, favouritism and all sorts of prejudices. In particular, the fourth stage did not only see to the birth of adaptation and inculturation theologies, it also saw the birth of theologies of liberation, which stresses on Exodus motif. Indeed, African theologies have, since the 1960s, emphasized on the Exodus metaphor as the dominant motif. As a matter of fact, the African people have, metaphorically, been likened to the people of Israel on their way to the land of bondage in Egypt (referring to the colonial regime) to the Promised Land (referring to the anticipated liberation) – which can be interpreted to mean the official end of apartheid or, generally, European colonialism. As a motif, it has been modelled on the Exodus event (Exodus 5) where Moses led the Israelites from the Egyptian Pharaoh’s oppression to liberation.

In East Africa, the Rev. Dr. Johannes Ludwig Krapf is one of the leading 19th century European missionaries who pioneered Christian education especially through preaching and translations of the Bible into the local languages of the African peoples. In view of this, a survey of his life times as a pioneer of Christian education will be considered. At this juncture, it is critical to appreciate that while Western powers (refer to Britain, Belgium, Portugal, Spain and Germany) partitioned Africa during the Berlin Conference of 1884/85, it is obvious then that Christianity came to East Africa forty years before colonialism. It is also critical to appreciate that although the explorations of such pioneers as David Livingstone gave a new impetus not only to the missionary cause but also colonization, Christian explorers were more concerned about opening opportunities for the evangelisation of the Africans. Certainly, if commerce and civilization were to accompany such a noble venture, these were interpreted to be a Modus Operandi and not an end by themselves. Thus, even though we are majoring on Ludwig Krapf in this article, there are other outstanding protestant contributors during the 19th and 20th century CE, who cannot be considered in this article owing to space and time. Certainly, Krapf’s pioneering role is unique in itself.

3.1 Sampling Rev. Dr. Johannes Ludwig Krapf

Born in 1810 in Germany of a peasant farmer Johannes Ludwig Krapf started schooling when he was 13 years old. Interestingly, he began to contemplate about how he would later take Christian education to the “heathens” right from childhood. His passion for missionary vocation was further energized in his post-adolescence, a fact that made him seek training so as to gain skills. It is no wonder that after his conversion experience, he offered himself to be trained as a missionary at Basel, and thereby completed his theological studies. In turn, it is critical to recall that Basel was an important training institution for pietists.

Modern Protestantism in East Africa can be said to have officially began in 1844 when the first protestant missionary to bring the Christian gospel, Johannes Ludwig Krapf of the London-based Church Missionary Society (read Anglican Church) arrived in the Port of Mombasa-Kenya. Another missionary followed him from the same society Johannes Rebman in 1846. In 1884, the first administrative Anglican Diocese was formed with the name of Eastern Equatorial Africa (combining Uganda, Kenya and

38 For details, see Zablon Nthamburi, A History of the Methodist Church in Kenya (Nairobi: Uzima 1982), 17ff.
Tanganyika) with James Hannington as the first Diocesan Bishop. In 1898, the Anglican Diocese of Mombasa, covering all Kenya and Northern Tanganyika was formed. As the Church grew, Northern Tanganyika was removed from the Diocese of Mombasa, which now covered Kenya only. In 1955, Festo Olang’ and Obadiah Kariuki were consecrated in Uganda as the first African Bishops of the Anglican Church in Kenya by the Archbishop of Canterbury.40

Thus the Evangelical Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) sent out the pioneer missionary to the East African Coast, Johannes Ludwig Krapf, who was from Württemberg Germany and a Lutheran Priest, to Ethiopia in 1837.41 As an outgoing preacher, he found himself better working with the Church Missionary Society, which was London-based, than his Lutheran Church, which did not appear as missionary minded as the CMS. Interestingly, the CMS had been working in Africa since 1818, and had sent a group of German missionaries to work among the Copts in Egypt.42

Before his arrival in East African Coast, Krapf first arrived in Egypt where he spent six months in Cairo learning Arabic. From there, he travelled to Ethiopia with a load of Bibles; and in 1837, he landed at the port of Massawa. At the time of his arrival, Ethiopia was a very unstable country, where Emperor Negus Negusta was only a nominal ruler while the regional princes ran the show. An example is the Shoa who ruled in Tigre and Asmara. On the other hand, the Galla people, who were making incursions from the South since the 16th century, were becoming more and more brutal. The Orthodox Church, which can be described as the only binding force, was not influential enough, hence the instability facing the country then. When missionaries like Krapf arrived, they were seen as potential suppliers of weapons and new techniques. Others held the missionaries with suspicion. For example, three months after Krapf arrived in Adowa, the ruler of Tigre expelled him and his colleagues from the country. Why? The fabricated reason was that the Roman Catholics had already arrived. In view of this, the ruler saw Krapf and his protestant Christianity as of little political and military value when compared with that of the Roman Catholics.43

Following the expulsion, Krapf’s bid to spread Christian education and thereby win as many converts as possible to the God of Christendom, did not die there. With other compatriots from CMS such as C W Isenberg and C. H. Blumhardt, Krapf decided to go to the territory of one of the other rulers, Sahela Selassie of Shoa. He later returned to Europe to have books on the situation in Eastern Africa printed.

3.2 Methodology

A relevant question is the kind of working methodology that Krapf and other pioneer Christian educators in Eastern Africa used in their discourses. In turn, this drives us to wonder: Are these methodologies relevant

40 See Church (Anglican) pocket book and diary 2003
41 It is critical to appreciate that The Church Missionary Society had been founded in 1799 by the Eclectic Society, which was a small association of evangelical clergymen and laymen in England, with the sole aim of promoting missions to Africa and the East. With slavery and the slave trade being the principal link between Christendom and the Dark Continent, the CMS wanted to link Africa and Europe with the Gospel because the interior was unknown. Indeed, East African slave trade, largely in Arab hands, was expanding during the period when mission work was beginning. Equally, West Africa was the bloodstained coast where English traders were still carrying on their accursed traffic in slaves. On another note, most of the 19th century CE missionaries were conservative evangelical or fundamentalists who were deeply concerned about personal conviction. To this end, their theology was basically individualistic, selective, biased, pietistic, unreflective and to an extent, ethnocentric. Its being ethnocentric can be seen in the fact that it did not have room for cultures outside the British territories. It was prompted by factors such as, reacting against the age of Enlightenment, which was seen as an age of no faith but of atheism, deism, rationalism, secularism, doubting, scepticism, and excessive materialism. Whatever their weaknesses, the 19th century missionaries, starting with Krapf, were instrumental in the birth of protestant theological education in East Africa, as we know it today. For details, see Julius Gathogo, “The Quest for Religious Freedom in Kenya (1887-1963)” Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae, South Africa, XXXIV No.1, July 2008.
43 See Ype Schaaf, On Their Way Rejoicing, 69.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
in Africa today? Do they inspire African Christianity in its educational task? And do these approaches aid Africa in its postcolonial reconstruction phase? A brief look at these seven approaches will suffice:

3.2.1 TRANSLATING THE BIBLE INTO LOCAL LANGUAGES

Translation of the Bible or portions of it marked Krapf’s major methodology in his version of Christian education or theological education for that matter. Specifically, his approaches included: the translation of the Bible into Ethiopian languages, teaching Hebrew to young Ethiopians, and setting up small schools to enable Ethiopians to study the Scriptures in order to come to a more Bible-based form of Christianity. A thought provoking concern is, who aided these translations? On 7th March 1804, the urgent need for Bibles in England, Wales, France and Germany was laid before a meeting in London attended by 300 people from all the Churches in England. In turn, these 300 people founded the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS). As it turned out, its (BFBS) Board Membership was made up of lay people. That is, 15 Anglicans, 15 free church representatives and 6 foreigners living in London. BFBS had three secretaries: one Anglican, one Baptist and one German Lutheran. The Society’s aim was to distribute the Holy Scriptures to everyone in the world in a language they could understand and at a price they could afford. With time, the Bible Society became the institution in which all Christians could work together.

With regard to Ethiopia, BFBS had managed to publish a New Testament in Amharic, the language of a large part of the Ethiopian people in as early as 1824. It was later printed in Ge’ez (Ethiopic), the church language that only the clergy understood. As a working methodology, Krapf and his colleagues used these editions together with the Arabic Bible. In particular, Krapf’s colleague, Isenberg, worked on a translation of Luke into the Tigre language and on an Amharic dictionary and grammar. As fate would have it, the Ethiopians were very interested in these editions of the Bible.

Krapf’s methodology of first learning the language of the locals before engaging his mission with them is clearly evident in every region of Eastern Africa where he visited. An illustration on this: On his arrival in Mombasa Kenya in 1844, after leaving Pemba and Zanzibar, 1842-43, Krapf began his education mission, of his protestant ministry, with a passion to study Swahili, which is the trading language of over 130,000 people living in the East and Central Africa. He also learned other East African Coast languages such as the Nyika (also called Duruma). And due to his vast knowledge of the Arabic language, the Arab Sheiks and Wanyika Chiefs helped him. In turn, his interests in studying the local languages of the locals helped him to avoid ethnocentricisms, which characterised most of the 19th Century European missionaries.

Thus, right from the initial stages of planting Christianity in East Africa, missionaries placed importance on studying African languages and translating scriptures into vernaculars. An example of Krapf’s first version of Genesis, translated in 1844 and published in the first volume of Proceedings of the American Oriental Society in 1851, reads:

1. Genesis 1:1-5 Mooanzo alioomba Mooigniazimoongo oowingo na n’te
2. Yalikooa n’te aina oozoore na tooopo; yalikooa keeza katika shimo na roorkhoo ya Mooigniazimoongo yali ikipepea katika madjee
3. Alinena Mooigniazimoongo; iwa nooroo kooa ikawa nooroo
4. Akaona Mooigniazimoongo, nooroo kooa endjema, akapambanooa baina ya nooroo na keeza
5. Akaita Mooigniazimoongo, nooroo m’taka, na keeza oosikoo. Yalikooa magribee na soobookhee sikio modija

Krapf’s problem with translation is that he adopted the typically English writing oo for the u sound, which would have been written u in the German as in modern Swahili. Nevertheless, these translations,

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44 See Ype Schaaf, *On Their Way Rejoicing*, 42.
most of whom were sent to Bombay for printing – as it was cheaper, were used in literacy classes long before the more polished documents were prepared.  

3.2.2 SCHOOLS AS MEDIUMS OF CHRISTIAN/THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Upon reaching Ankobar, the capital of the Shoa, which lies in the centre of the present-day Ethiopia, Krapf was warmly welcomed by King Sahela Selassie. In this encounter, Krapf discovered that Selassie would have preferred European craftsmen and doctors rather than missionaries, but he gave him permission to open a small school. In turn, this also acted as the centre of Christian/theological education. With great difficulties, he gathered five pupils. Krapf faced difficulties in getting pupils in his school because even though the Orthodox priests were going to him to ask for Bibles, they did everything they could to prevent members of their congregations from enrolling in Krapf’s school.

As a ‘diplomat’ Krapf was able to convince Emperor Theodorus of Ethiopia to see the logic of his version of education. Consequently, Theodorus approved of Krapf’s craftsmen on condition that they included a gunsmith and an architect. Nevertheless, Krapf could not go far South, as Emperor Theodorus was still at war with the Galla (Oromo). On the other hand, it is critical to recall that the Craftsmen went out to help Emperor Theodorus to build roads, bridges and houses. Krapf seized this opportunity to bring in three shipments of Bibles to Ethiopia thereby taking his protestant version of Christian education a notch higher. Even though Emperor Theodorus ended up a complete tyrant, who arrested all Europeans, and only committed suicide in 1868 when a British expeditionary force from India came to free them, Krapf had succeeded in introducing his protestant version of Christian education through Schools as Mediums of Christian/theological Education. He was himself a trainer, who trained technicians in Basel. Like in the African system of education, Krapf did not dichotomise between the secular and sacred form of education; rather, they both run concurrently.

On the whole, Krapf’s educational model turned out to be one of his major legacies that he bequeathed to the missionary societies that followed later. For his methods and approaches are well reflected in the International Conference at Le Zoute, Belgium, from September 14-21, 1926. In turn, Le Zoute Conference, which was held under the auspices of the International Missionary Council, influenced the African missions in Africa in the formulation of their education policy. In the preamble, the Conference stated:

The true friends of Africa wish that the Africans should remain Africans, maintaining a proper pride in their own heritage.

The conference tried to spell out the intention of the missions’ involvement in education for Africans. For the Conference, sound education involved:

Character development based on religion...colouring every educational activity. Hygiene and health should be emphasized, not only in the practice of the school and home, but in the reading, writing and arithmetic of the school. Agriculture and industry should be taught in classroom and field workshop. The building of a sound home life and the value of recreation should be taught both by precept and practice.

46 For details, see Provincial Unit of Research Church of the Province of Kenya, Rabai to Mumias: A Short History of the Church of the Province of Kenya 1844 to 1994 (Nairobi: Uzima), 1-17.
47 See Ype Schaaf, On Their Way Rejoicing, 70.
48 See Ype Schaaf, On Their Way Rejoicing, 73.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Further, in considering Schools as Mediums of Christian/Theological Education, the Church Mission Society (CMS) later transferred its Divinity School, which was founded in 1903 at Freretown, in the East Coast of Africa, to Limuru in 1930. In 1946, plans were made to transfer the Divinity School from Limuru to a site, which was closer to Nairobi. Accordingly, Canon Capon, who was the principal at the time, proposed that the issue of joint theological training across various protestant churches should be raised once again. As it turned out Capon’s Bishop did not agree with his idea of transferring St Paul’s Limuru to the capital city of Nairobi. Certainly, when more land was acquired for the theological seminary, it remained in Limuru. In turn, Limuru Divinity School, which was initially a mere Anglican theological Institution, became an ecumenical theological College in 1950 when a constitution was drawn up and subsequently ratified by the College Council on July 5, 1957, making it an institution offering theological education.51 Today, it has been renamed St. Paul’s University, Limuru, after the Kenyan Commission of Higher Education (CHE) granted it a charter to operate as a private Ecumenical (read protestant) University in 2007. In turn, St Paul’s Limuru which is jointly owned by various Protestant Churches (refer to Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Reformed, among others) compares well with the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa (FEDSEM), 1963-1991, which was a result of coming together of a number of English-speaking denominational streams in South Africa (refer to Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Methodist). It collapsed in early 1990s.52

In other developments, the missionaries introduced both agricultural education and modern medicines in schools. As numbers of Christians increased, so did the missionaries discourage their converts from paying visits to traditional medicine men, though it did not wholly work, as traditional medicine or herbal medicine remains in Africa to date. In particular, the aims of the Methodist Missionary education were fourfold: a) academic training; b) artisan training; c) health training and d) evangelical training.53 With regard to the need for teaching good agricultural methods, the purpose was the desire to be self-supporting, especially where a mission had acquired a large piece of land around the mission centre. For instance, the East African Scottish Industrial Mission, which was the first British Missionary group to arrive in Central Kenya in 1898, later renamed, the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM, read Presbyterians), had over 3,000 acres of land, at Thogoto. Rev. Thomas Watson headed it as it set up its first mission in Tumutumu in Nyeri District, in 1908.54 On the other hand, Africans looked at Agricultural education with suspicion, as they feared that there could have been a conspiracy between the settlers and the missionaries to prepare them for cheap labour in the European’s plantations. Again, the forceful take-over of clan lands by the missions did not make them better disposed towards agriculture as part of the curriculum. In the nature of things, lack of interest resulted in its decline in the school curriculum, even “though traditionally every school had a garden.”55

This formal education as was introduced by the missionaries, in following Krapf’s legacy, compares with the traditional African education, which was informal, utilitarian and practical. It consisted in handling down to successive generations the arts, folklore, myths and traditions of the community. Generations after generations were taught what held the society together. Its practicality is seen in the fact that it included initiation into the mysteries of the community after a person had undergone the relevant rites. To this end, the Senior Members of the society took it upon themselves to inculcate the societal moral values to the younger ones. Thus, in introducing the formal education, the post 19th century missionaries were ideally supplementing the already existing form of education, and not replacing it.

3.2.3 INTERESTS IN KNOWING THE LOCALS

Another important methodology that greatly aided Krapf’s bid to impart Christian/theological Education in Eastern Africa is his passionate interest in knowledge about the local communities. By seeking to know his audience, Krapf demonstrated his being a good communicator, who must necessarily understand his context as he/she does his/her transmissions; for as Pope John Paul II once said: “teach Latin to the Youth, it is not enough to know Latin, it is important to know the Youth.”

In particular Ludwig Krapf was very much interested to know more about the Galla community. Could they be the great non-Christian people who lived in a still unknown part of Africa to the South of Ethiopia? And if so, could the Galla with their Oromo language be the key, which would open the door to this vast area to the South? He wondered. Consequently, he started a little school in Ankobar for both the Shoa and the Galla who lived there with the hope of learning their language. From this, he was able in 1839 to publish a draft translation of John’s Gospel into Galla. He called it, in Latin, *tentamen imbecillum*, in whose title page he gave full credit to a Galla helper named Birkius. By recognising that he as a European missionary had various limitations and hence sought to depend heavily on mother-tongue auxiliary translators, Krapf demonstrated his competence as a translator. Armed with this dynamism in translation, where he worked hand in hand with the locals, Krapf was able to translate Luke, Matthew, Mark, the Acts of the Apostles and Genesis into Oromo, the language of the Galla.

3.2.4 Acting as Interpreter and Adviser to the King of Shoa

Another critical method that Krapf and other pioneer Christian educators in Eastern Africa used in their efforts to propagate Christian/theological education was that of an interpreter and an advisor. In particular, when the British trading delegation came to talk with the Shoa King, in 1840, Krapf acted as interpreter and advisor to Sahela Selassie and was given a silver sword in recognition of his good efforts. This acceptance to serve as an interpreter and adviser has positive implication to Christian/theological education to the locals in that he was now taken seriously in whatever he did. In view of this, he was able to propagate his teachings easily as he was widely accepted in the locality. In his discourses, he was thus able to marry Christian/theological education with secular education without causing tensions or problems for that matter, as “his education” was now seen as a necessity, considering his advisory and interpretative roles.

3.2.5 RAISING MISSIONARY ENTHUSIASM IN EUROPE THROUGH PUBLICATIONS

Another important working methodology that Ludwig Krapf employed in his education mission of his protestant ministry is through publications. An illustration on this: After leaving the Church Mission Society (read Anglican Church) in 1853, Krapf went back to Europe. Though he had achieved a lot, as noted above, he had only managed to baptize only two persons, his first child and a dying cripple by the name Mringe. He could also boast of having Abbe Gunja, a Giriama outcast, who remained a faithful disciple.

Back in Europe, Krapf wrote his famous book, *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours*. It is through this book that the Methodist Church was inspired to start work in Kenya. Apart from raising missionary enthusiasm especially among the Protestants in Europe, Krapf offered to help the Methodists in their earlier stages. How? In 1862, Krapf returned to Mombasa in order to help Thomas Wakefield, the first missionary of the United Methodists Free Church to establish a mission station at Ribe. In turn, Wakefield

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57 Which literally means stupid draft translation.
58 See Ype Schaaf, *On Their Way rejoicing*, 70.
59 See Ype Schaaf, *On Their Way rejoicing*, 70.
opened various stations such as: Ganjoni (Mazeras), Jomvu and Chonyi. In particular, the establishment of the mission station at Jomvu in 1878 was a daring venture since it was in the middle of a Muslim community.61 Coupled with this, the Arab-Swahili slave owners were a constant threat to the existence of meaningful Christian presence. Nevertheless, Krapf’s publications were instrumental in raising the awareness of the East African plight.

3.2.6 CONSISTENCY IN HIS DREAM

Another methodological approach in his mission is that Krapf held his mission dream strongly even when everything seemed lost. For example, even though he had given up the Galla project, he strongly wanted a ‘chain’ of mission stations right across Africa. In the scheme of things, he cherished the idea of creating a chain of missions between East and West Africa.62 For him, Mombasa on the East Coast had to be linked with Bishop Adjai Crowther’s work on the West Coast. In the nature of things, the heart of Africa could be reached with the Gospel and the advance of Islam halted. In his view, Fourah Bay College, in Sierra Leone, West Africa, together with Europe, would supply the skilled power.63 For this dream to come true, he felt that it was necessary to venture into the interior. But since the CMS seemed to be procrastinating, Krapf encouraged the Methodists to help him realise his dream, which ultimately happened.64

Krapf’s consistency of thought and practice is clearly seen, for instance, in 1850. For when he tried to set up a station in Kambaland, it turned out to be a fiasco. As a result, he lost his porters, his money and his goods, had to travel by night and hide by day and reached the Coast more dead than alive. Certainly, powerless Chiefs, tyrannical Kings and scheming Arab slave traders made further stations in the interior very difficult, or impossible for that matter.65 Despite this discouraging scenario, Krapf soldiered on! Further after he raised awareness about the Eastern African Coast, Rev. Johannes Rebmann from Württemberg, Germany, joined Krapf in 1846. Together with Rebmann, they unconsciously became the ‘fathers’ of modern day attempts at the indigenisation of Christianity in Africa when they set to work on African languages. In particular, Rebmann revised Krapf’s Swahili translations, while Krapf translated John, Luke, Romans and Ephesians into Nyika, the language of the Wanyika. In 1848, Luke, the Heidelberg Catechism and a reading book in Nyika were printed in Bombay, India.66 Jacob Erhardt soon joined them in 1849. Being joined by his colleagues did not change his dream of “going into the interior” of East Africa to educate people about the Gospel of Christ. This was bitterly opposed by his colleague, Rebmann, but his dream remained.67 As a result of their differences, Krapf and Rebmann later travelled alternately into the interior; and in these travels, they became the first Europeans to see the snow-capped peaks of Mount Kilimanjaro (Rebmann) and Mount Kenya (Krapf).68 Such difficulties did not affect his missionary agenda negatively.

Before he was sent to Africa, Krapf himself was privy to the fact that whenever the CMS sent missionaries to the tropical Africa, they either died in a few months due to tropical diseases like Malaria or for other reasons, returned home ill or did not dare to travel. Krapf himself had, at one stage, to return to Europe for reasons of health, and only returned to East Africa at the end of 1854. He however did not allow his dream to turn to a nightmare. In particular, one of his other ambitious projects, apart from the Galla mission – which he reluctantly abandoned after coming close to reality that it was highly exaggerated, was

63 See Ype Schaaf, On Their Way rejoicing, 72.
65 See Ype Schaaf, On Their Way rejoicing, 72.
68 See Ype Schaaf, On Their Way rejoicing, 72.
to build another ‘chain’ of mission stations in Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia – the Apostles’ Road, a series of twelve mission stations running from Cairo to Gondar in Abyssinia and staffed by craftsmen.69 Reportedly, a Galla girl played a part in developing these plans. She had been taken back to Europe by a German nobleman and baptized as Pauline Fatme. She came in contact with Christian Friedrich Spittler, one of the founders of Basel Mission. On her deathbed, at 27, she vowed that the Gospel should be brought to the Galla.70

Another interesting dimension is that upon his return to Germany in 1855, ill, and subsequent rest at Kornthal in Württemberg, he was still optimistic about the ‘chain’, which he still hoped would be established between East and West Africa. He was also optimistic about the Apostles Road from North to South. His consistency of thought and practice was thus instrumental in the success that he had.

As Ype Schaaf notes, Krapf remained active until his death. In 1866, for instance, despite his advancing age and health, he helped the Ethiopian Debtera Matteos prepare the four Gospels in Tigre for the press. He also worked on editions of the Bible in Amharic and Ge’ez. In 1870, he prepared a Galla Luke with the help of a Galla called Roof and an Ethiopian called Debtera Sanab; and in 1872, Genesis was published in Galla.71 Clearly, Johannes Ludwig Krapf was a Christian educator who used his linguistic skill to enhance his work. He was a devoted Swabian from Württemberg, Germany, with weak health but immense endurance.

3.2.7 WORKING CLOSER TO THE LOCALS

Unlike Portuguese Catholics, noted above, most Protestant missionaries of the 19th century chose to get as close as possible to the African conditions of life through hose-based evangelism. Oral history has it that as Krapf was penetrating through the interior, Chief Kivoi of Ukambani accompanied him. When he saw a snow-caped Mountain, which stands in Central Kenya, he asked Kivoi: “What is the name of this mountain?” As it was called, Chief Kivoi retorted: “It is Kirinyaga.” And due to the pronunciation problems, Ludwig Krapf wrote “Mt. Kenya” – as the name of the Mountain. In other words, he anglicised the name of Mt. Kirinyaga to read Kenya. Since then, the Mountain is referred to as Kenya – as Krapf called it. Similarly, the country was renamed after the Mountain.

In following the example of Krapf, the secret of the success of the protestant missionaries to Eastern Africa was due to their ability to work closely with the locals. According to a research by the Provincial Unit of Research of the Anglican church of Kenya, 1994, the missionaries

…lived in a house which was only a better type of traditional hut and on a diet similar to that of the local people. They aroused African initiatives in the evangelization process. The participation of African evangelists and teachers in the study and writing of African languages and in scripture translation, shows the extent to which evangelization [read Christian education] was accomplished by African catechists rather than Europeans. Besides, the early [protestant] missionaries were entirely dependent upon the Africans for their safety, food and shelter.73

Thus the 19th century protestant Missionaries’ method of identifying themselves with the culture and the religious discourses of the locals, as Krapf set pace, was a big plus for Christian education in Eastern Africa. Such earned genuine converts to African Christianity. Dr Crawford is such a unique example. In

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69 The first chain of mission stations was that one where he envisaged to link Mombasa on the East Coast with Crowther’s work on the West Coast. In so doing, he hoped to conquer Islam.
70 Ype Schaaf, On Their Way Rejoicing, 73.
71 See Ype Schaaf, On Their Way Rejoicing, 73.
72 For details see C. G. Richards, Johann Ludwig Krapf: Missionary, Explorer and Africanist (Nairobi: German Embassy, 1973), 52-54.
73 Rabai to Mumias: A Short History of the Church of the Province of Kenya 1844 to 1994, 8.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
particular, Crawford attempted to identify himself with traditional system of government; and in 1910, he sought to join the Embu Council of Elders with the hope of influencing the society from within. And for his entrance fee, “he presented the elders with a Bull and there was a great feast.”\textsuperscript{74} This made the Embu Elders to recognise him as one of their own, and his ‘religion’ as part of theirs. In turn, they promised him “that they would now insist on all the people keeping God’s Day and attending service, and that he was to be the leading elder (\textit{Muthamaki}).”\textsuperscript{75} Indeed such gestures served the Missionaries well. Nevertheless, it is critical to appreciate that not all protestant missionaries identified themselves with the local people. Dr Crawford and Dr. Krapf were such unique examples.

Certainly, their (Krapf and Crawford) gesture agrees with the incarnation model as St. Paul set it in 1 Corinthians 9:22 when he said:

\begin{quote}
To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.
\end{quote}

In other words, St. Paul acknowledged that in order to reach people, the Gospel must be shared with them on their own level of thinking. This agrees with John V. Taylor’s observation; for in his book, \textit{The Growth of the Church in Buganda},\textsuperscript{76} Taylor states that many Baganda began to respond positively to Christianity when the pioneer missionaries began to “assimilate themselves to social structure and to look less foreign.”

### 3.3 Some Challenges at the Family Level

#### 3.3.1 KRAPF’S MARRIAGE AND HIS PROBLEMATIC RETURN TO ETHIOPIA

From Eastern Africa (read Ethiopia), Ludwig Krapf decided to travel at the end of 1841, to North Africa (read Cairo). In this journey, he wanted to visit Gondar to see what could be done with the new \textit{aboena} or head of the Ethiopian church. As he travelled, he also wanted to pass through Adowa (in Ethiopia) to explore the possibility of making a new start among the Tigre people. Additionally, he wanted to get more Bibles in Malta; and above all, he wanted to marry the fiancée of a fellow missionary who had died. Laden with presents from King Sahela Selassie, he set out on his travels in March 1842. Within a few months, he was at the East African Coast via Egypt though he had been robbed all he had with him. Upon his arrival in Cairo, he married the Swiss Rosina Dietrich with whom they returned to Ethiopia with a consignment of Bibles and New Testaments. Unfortunately, Krapf and Rosina were prevented from returning to Ankobar. Why? Orthodox priests had worked on King Sahela Selassie to make him forbid entry to the protestant missionaries, because their pupils, basing themselves on the Bible, were criticizing the priests too sharply. In addition, King Selassie saw greater political advantage to be gained from the French Catholicism than from this protestant German from Britain. This unprecedented turn of events made Krapf to think of turning his missionary efforts towards the Galla through whom both Ethiopia and the unknown South could be penetrated, but the proposal was rejected by the sending body, the Church Missionary Society (CMS). He was however able to take the Bibles to the Tigre.\textsuperscript{77}

#### 3.3.2 DEATH OF CHILD AND WIFE ROSINA

Even though Krapf was able to recover a number of old Amharic and Ge’ez manuscripts, which he had left at Adowa, he however did not succeed in establishing a permanent mission in Adowa. Worse still he

\textsuperscript{74} John Karanja, \textit{Founding an African Faith}, 72.
\textsuperscript{75} John Karanja, \textit{Founding an African Faith}, 72.
\textsuperscript{77} See Ype Schaaf, \textit{On Their Way Rejoicing}, 71.
encountered bands of robbers who made his efforts to propagate Protestantism almost turned into a nightmare. Worst of all Rosina got her first born prematurely, somewhere in the bush. Krapf baptized her Eneba, which means ‘Tear.’ Sadly, the baby died a few hours later. Ludwig and Rosina buried their Tear under a pile of stones. Interestingly, such grave set backs did not stop Krapf from proceeding with his protestant education mission.

As they moved towards Mombasa, Kenya from Zanzibar via Pemba, Krapf and Rosina, who was pregnant again, caught Malaria. On 5th July 1844, Rosina died. Krapf was too ill to attend her funeral. Ten days later the baby died. Even though Krapf recovered, hard work was his remedy for sorrow; for indeed, he had completed not only a Swahili grammar and dictionary, but also the books of Genesis and New Testament. In 1850, these books were printed in Tübingen, Germany.

3.4 Honouring Ludwig Krapf

Despite the many ‘tears’ that he shed as he struggled to propagate protestant missionary education, the Rev. Ludwig Krapf’s efforts were finally recognised when the University of Tubingen in Germany invited and gave him an honorary doctorate. The basis for conferring this doctoral degree was due to his research into the ancient Ethiopic manuscripts that he had collected.

Upon being conferred with his doctoral degree, Dr. Krapf and his wife Rosina did not stop there, he travelled in a leaky Arab ship to Zanzibar, the headquarters of Said (Seyyid) Said, the Sultan of Muscat. Even though slavery and slave trade had been officially abolished, Krapf and Rosina were able to see, as they travelled, that it still flourished in secret. They also gathered much information about the unknown peoples in the interior. In view of this, the British and American consuls of Zanzibar pressed Krapf to begin work on the island among freed slaves, but Krapf was still obsessed with his mission to the Galla people. Krapf’s objective to convert the Oromo (Galla) was due to his belief that their population was to be between 6,000,000 to more than 8,000,000 hence he would quip, “to my mind, Ormania is the Germany of Africa.” As it turned out later he was mistaken about their number. He was also mistaken about their ability to reach out to others if they were converted to Christianity. Nevertheless, the Sultan agreed to allow him travel to the mainland and even wrote a letter of recommending him thus:

This letter comes from Sultan Said [Seyyid] Said with greetings to all our subjects, friends and governors. This letter is written to commend Dr. Krapf… a good man who wishes to convert the world to God. Receive him well and render him every assistance.

From Zanzibar, Krapf went to Pemba where he settled for a few months before moving to Mombasa Kenya; and by 1844 he was in Rabai near Mombasa where he can be said to have inaugurated the protestant movement in East Africa, as we know it today. As noted earlier, the East Coast of Africa had been visited by the Portuguese who did not leave a lasting effect, as Krapf and his team would later do. As noted above, his working methodology as one of the pioneer protestant Christian educators in East Africa (Kenya in particular) remained the same as in the case of Ethiopia. Thus, his being conferred a doctoral degree was indeed a befitting honour.

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78 See Ype Schaaf, On Their Way Rejoicing, 71.
79 See Ype Schaaf, On Their Way Rejoicing, 71.
81 See Ype Schaaf, On Their Way Rejoicing, 72
4. Conclusion

The article began by introducing the nature of African Christianity as that whose phenomenal growth has shot up admirably high, such that Africa has become the most Christian continent in the 21st century. And in accounting for this, the paper was able to demonstrate this by building on three main arguments. First, that this phenomenal growth can traced from the dedication of pioneer missionaries of the 19th century such as Johannes Ludwig Krapf of the Church Mission Society, who sacrificed his entire life for the Gospel. Second that Krapf and other 19th century protestant missionaries’ methodology of identifying themselves with the locals, learning their languages and culture, as Krapf set pace, was a big plus for Christian education in Eastern Africa. Such earned genuine converts to African Christianity. Third, that since Christianity, from its very inception, is basically a teaching religion – in its missionary task, it has a future in Africa; for being a teaching religion means it will win genuine converts bit by bit. This therefore calls us to exploit this reality for the good of Africa, hence engage the education mission of the church with even greater urgency that Krapf and other pioneers of Christian faith in our continent.

With regard to his working methodologies, the article was able to identify them as: Translating the Bible into Local Languages; Use of Schools as Mediums of Christian/Theological Education; Interests in Knowing the Locals; Acting as Interpreter and Adviser to the King of Shoa; Raising Missionary Enthusiasm in Europe through Publications; Consistency in his Missionary Dream; and Working Closer to the Locals – as some of the factors that enabled the success of the educational/missionary task of Ludwig Krapf. In so doing, Krapf’s methodology contrasts that of the Portuguese whose immoral conduct speaks for “how not to be a good agent of Christian/theological education.” For Krapf thus, his missionary task was educational in genre, a role he played with a great distinction. As he introduced the God of Christendom, he also educated people on the same. Certainly, the modern church in Africa has something to learn from this pioneer protestant missionary and educator.

On the whole, the article was able to highlight the historical development of Christian/theological education since its inception in the first century CE, where it was argued that given the dependence upon Greek intellectual heritage in the so-called modern education, it therefore follows that Greek thought cannot be divorced from the on goings of the early church and the Christian fraternity up to the present times. And in surveying Krapf’s pedigree, the article was able to demonstrate that only dedication at individual level, as is the case with him, that Africa will be able to authenticate the Gospel. Certainly, Ludwig Krapf is the kind of a person that African Christianity, in the twenty-first century, will need to recall for inspiration and for genuine reconstruction of Africa.

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Minneapolis: Minnesota.


BISHOP STEPHEN NEILL, THE IMC AND THE STATE OF AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN 1950

Dyon Daughtry

Introduction

From April to July of 1950, Bishop Stephen Neill (1900-1984) embarked on a sweeping tour of East and West Africa to assess the state of African Theological education. He visited Egypt, Sudan, and the six British territories in tropical Africa: Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Gold Coast (Ghana), and Sierra Leone. Employed by the World Council of Churches (WCC) at the time, Neill was invited by the International Missionary Council (IMC) to head the project as a ‘one man team’. The overall objective was to shed light on what could be done to improve the quality of theological education and the training of ministry in Africa. Neill produced a considerable amount of material during and after the trip including a 120-page ‘travel diary’ and a 51-page confidential report.

Arising out of the Whitby (Canada) World Missionary Conference of 1947 and spearheaded by Bengt Sundkler, Norman Goodall, Kenneth Scott Latourette, and other notable figures, Neill’s tour of East and West Africa was part of an ambitious attempt to understand the state of the worldwide ecumenical church in the aftermath of war.

This paper aims to accomplish three tasks:
1. Explain how and why this research project came together;
2. Provide an overview of Neill’s research trip through his diary entries; and
3. Reflect on Neill’s conclusions and suggestions for what ought to be done.

How and Why the Research Project Came Together

Communications for a survey of African theological education began in May 1948 with a letter from Bengt Sundkler, Research Secretary of the IMC, to ‘Principals of Theological Colleges and Bible Schools.’ The letter explained that the Whitby conference had called for regional studies ‘for the recruitment, training, and maintenance of the indigenous ministry in the younger churches.’ Reports on China and India had already been completed and a report on the church in the Pacific was under way. Africa was the next region of focus and considered ‘high priority’ because of the explosive growth in the churches. Sundkler attached a survey to the letter and stated that his committee was considering who would be best prepared to investigate the situation on the ground. Stephen Neill served on this committee as the representative of the

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1 A previous version of this paper was published by Edinburgh University Press in Studies in World Christianity 18:1 (2012), 41-62.
2 Tanganyika included modern-day Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanzania (minus Zanzibar).
4 Dr Sundkler to Principals of Theological Colleges and Bible Schools, 7 May 1948. Located at Yale University Divinity School Library Special Collections: International Missionary Council archives: Research and Study Program: Series 1: Research Department: Subseries 6: Survey of the Training of the Ministry in Africa: Box 263138 (Files 1-13). Henceforth Yale IMC archives.
5 The China report was compiled by Luther Weigle and the India report was completed by C. W. Ranson.
Latourette served as chairman. In July 1948 Neill’s name was put forward.6 By March 1949 it was decided. Latourette wrote, ‘I am delighted that you have obtained Neill to head it.’7

Neill was uniquely qualified for this role. He had recently completed a similar project. In early 1948, he spent fourteen weeks traveling all over Asia to ‘take stock of the situation’ of the younger churches and to ‘restore the links of personal fellowship’ in the aftermath of a devastating war.8 That project was funded jointly by the IMC and the World Council of Churches since these two organizations did not merge formally until 1961. At the time of his tour of Asia in 1948, Neill was the Associate General Secretary of the WCC working alongside Willem Visser’t Hooft, the first Secretary General.9 He was still serving in that capacity when he went to Africa in 1950.10

Early communications proposed that Neill be joined by an unnamed African American, but Neill rejected it, saying in a letter to E. J. Bingle ‘You know the difficulty I feel about having an American Negro.’11 Bingle responded by suggesting that Neill conduct the research trip alone.12

The goal of this research project was laid out by Sundkler:

It is assumed here that the Whitby Conference when initiating this research project did not primarily envisage a technical survey of ways and means of missionary propaganda but rather, and above all, a fresh interpretation, for our age, of the theological foundation of the Missionary Obligation of the Church.13

Latourette was responsible for expanding the project’s focus and identifying its rationale.14 In the final draft of the ‘Terms of Reference’ which was sent out widely to key people, it was explained that Neill had been commissioned with three tasks:

1. To investigate the present situation and prospects of theological education in the African territories concerned.
2. To report on trends and tendencies within the areas as they affect the work of recruiting, training, and supporting the ministry of the church.
3. To make suggestions to the International Missionary Council, and through it to the various national councils concerned, with regard to the future development of theological education in these African territories.15

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7 Letter from K.S. Latourette to Dr Sundkler, 14 March 1949. See Yale IMC archives: Box 263138.
9 Neill also served as ‘Co-Director of the Study Department’ with Nils Ehrenstrom. See Neill’s unpublished autobiography, Section VII, ‘Ecumenical Developments,’ 1: ‘I was Associate-General Secretary responsible for study.’ See also Section VI, ‘Apprentice Ecumenist,’ 29, for further clarification on how Neill came into the co-director position.
11 Letter from Stephen Neill to E. J. Bingle, 10 November 1949. Latourette thought it ‘wise’ to include an American Negro who is not Anglican. See Letter from K.S. Latourette to Dr Sundkler, 14 March 1949. This quotation raises many questions regarding Neill’s view of race. However, Neill dodged the issue. In a document entitled ‘Notes on Talk with Bishop Stephen Neill at Mansfield College, Oxford, September 8th 1949’ Neill is recorded as saying the ‘WCC was not greatly interested in this question of Race Relations.’ Both documents located at Located at Yale IMC archives: Box 263138.
14 Letter from K.S. Latourette to Dr Sundkler, 14 March 1949. Located at Yale IMC archives: Box 263138.
15 Letter from E. J. Bingle to IMC Secretaries, CBMS, Secretaries of Christian Councils in Africa, Principals of
Neil’s Research Trip: April to June, 1950

Initially, the IMC laid out an exhausting itinerary for Neill that would have taken him all over Africa. It was revised several times and became much more manageable. Between early April and late June, 1950, Neill was scheduled to visit a plethora of theological schools and mission societies in Egypt, Sudan, Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Gold Coast, and Sierra Leone. Neill immediately drew up a ‘most formidable list of books’ to digest in order to comprehend the context of each region he would visit. He understood the great expectations being placed on him. E. J. Bingle, the Acting Research Secretary of the IMC at the time, described this project as being ‘vitally important for the well-being of the Church in Africa.’

A flurry of international correspondence demonstrates the anticipation of all parties involved. Several commented that Neill was uniquely poised for this herculean assignment. Several media outlets wrote about the upcoming trip, including The Church Times, The Christian, The Guardian, and the Ecumenical Press Service.

By early January, Neill was producing long letters and papers displaying an impressive knowledge of history, missions, and theological education within an African context. His previous experience (1930-1939) as Warden of a theological college in Tinnevelly, South India, proved useful in preparing for the trip. Neill knew the questions to ask. He understood patterns in missions history. He had a remarkable combination: he was a seasoned missionary, a respected academic, and he comprehended the unique challenges of theological education in the younger churches. While Neill was no expert on the African context, all parties involved were confident in his abilities.

Neill kept a travel diary during his journey that ended up being over 120 single-spaced pages. The diary entries are classic Stephen Neill: impeccably written, engaging, highly informative, and, above all, opinionated. Neill loved to write and it shows. The first diary entry reads:

‘Travel by air, if you have time.’ This cynical saying was once again proved true, as my aircraft was eighteen hours late, an inauspicious beginning to a long tour.

Neill covered a great deal of ground on the first leg of his journey. He began by paying a visit to the Greek Patriarch in Cairo. They discussed whether Muslims and Christians could join together against communism. Neill cited the ‘specifically Christian basis of the World Council’ which refers to ‘Jesus Christ as God.’ Thus, while cooperation with Muslims is possible, Christian conviction must not be diluted.
Neill then visited the Coptic Patriarch who, somewhat surprisingly, offered him a Coca-cola. Neill conjectured how this ubiquitous and American staple had become ‘the national drink of Egypt.’\textsuperscript{23} Afterward, Neill visited the Coptic Theological Seminary and had little good to say, for example, ‘We looked into the library – a strange collection of junk.’\textsuperscript{24}

Neill provided fascinating insights into the Egyptian church. He discussed the sheep-stealing which led Copts to be very suspicious of Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: ‘Almost all the pastors of the Evangelical Church are of Coptic origin.’\textsuperscript{25} His assessment of the Seminary of the Evangelical Church in Cairo was pessimistic. He critiqued the teachers for their aloofness and claimed the students were left to their own devices when it came to social life and pastoral care.

Neill described the mood in Egypt as being generally unhappy due to several factors, notably the mass disillusionment within the greater Arab world after surprising defeats by Israel. The majority of Egyptians believed Israel would soon collapse since the terrific level of financial support from outside could not be sustained. Postcolonial hopes in a Koranic Dar al-Islam were fading fast. The inspiration of the early ummah pulled the Muslim world backward into the seventh century instead of ushering them into the modern age. In Neill’s observation, the rich were getting richer and the poor poorer in newly liberated Egypt; what was needed was a true social revolution anchored by the Sermon on the Mount.\textsuperscript{26}

At the end of his Egyptian stop, Neill spent a delightful few hours in Alexandria, or, what he termed ‘the city of Athanasius.’ He described the famous city as standing up ‘like a dream city from its lagoon.’\textsuperscript{27}

From Alexandria, he traveled ‘a thousand miles up the Nile’ to Khartoum, where his narrative begins with a bang:

There are I suppose some fervent opponents of ‘imperialism,’ who hold that the white man should never in any circumstances interfere in the affairs of the black. But one who considers the contrast between the abject misery in which the Sudan lay in the days of slavery and the steady progress and prosperity which it has enjoyed in the last fifty years may be forgiven if he doubts whether the generalization holds in every case.\textsuperscript{28}

Neill noted the growing nationalism in Sudan and his doubts as to whether a united church could ever occur there. I found one section here to be brilliant. Neill discussed the complexity of Bible translations. He pointed out that many Christians supported the use of Arabic in the church, a language he labeled ‘great and glorious.’ He argued the merits of using Arabic because when the Scriptures are translated into various dialects that are unintelligible to one another, there is an inherent tribalism that develops within the church, stifling unity. Thus Arabic was a language that could potentially unite Christians. However, this posed a dilemma, because by endorsing Arabic as the common language, Christians were more susceptible to an increased Islamic influence. In addition, the Arabic language has ossified in Islam, and there runs the risk of the same thing happening were Christianity to adopt it. He concluded this discussion by asking ‘Do people ever really absorb the Gospel except in their own language, do they ever really pray except in the language that they use at home?’\textsuperscript{29}

Theological education in the Sudan was a close collaboration between the mission agencies and the government, with the government footing nine-tenths of the costs, including missionary salaries.\textsuperscript{30} At the
time of Neill’s writing, half of the clergy were European and half African. Many Muslims were strongly opposed to the arrangement and had voiced their concerns publicly. With humor, Neill described the fact of the matter—Muslims had little to fear. ‘There is a small Divinity School. … It has a staff of one, and, as the whole staff is at the moment on leave in England, operations are temporarily suspended.’

From Khartoum Neill traveled to Dar-es-Salaam, where he learned that the local theological school had recently collapsed due to a row over teacher salaries. There he also met the famed Frank Laubach who was involved in ‘one of his endless literacy campaigns’ and advised Neill that ‘the only people who were really tackling the problem of literature for the African were the Seventh Day Adventists.’

Next Neill visited a Lutheran seminary at Lushoto, Tanganyika, and was pleased to discover that the Lutheran missions in East Africa were finally waking up to the need for indigenous clergy.

In Morogoro, Tanganyika, Neill met with some missionaries who emphasised rural education—for example how to prevent soil erosion and better cultivate the land. His impression was that Africans were generally suspicious of these endeavors, seeing them as ‘a scheme … to keep [the African] down and to withhold the blessings of western knowledge.’

Next Neill went to Kongwa, Tanganyika—site of the famously ill-fated groundnuts scheme where ‘many millions of the British taxpayers’ money have just been poured down the drain.’ Neill deplored the scheme as ‘a gigantic example of the contemporary worship of mammon and of the denial of God. … If this is development, let us stay in our primitive savagery,’ he wrote.

Neill then traveled by road to Kenya, accompanied by an African Pentecostal teacher who viewed Neill’s tobacco pipe as the mark of the beast. In Kenya, Neill visited several places, providing illuminating insights into the world of 1950. For example, he began diary entry number four with a discussion on race relations. He discussed what he termed the two extreme views in that country:

At one end are the European settlers, who still dream of a great white dominion stretching from Kenya to the Cape; these people are still living in the world of Cecil Rhodes … At the other end is the party of Jomo Kenyatta, which would like to see the last European depart from the land.

Neill went into some detail analyzing the Kenyan political scene, as he saw it critical to the development of theological education in the country. He marveled at the Kikuyu people whose first baptism was in 1906 but by 1950 could claim tens of thousands of Christians. He admired the ‘quasi-military’ ethos of the Salvation Army theological training school in Nairobi which, he claimed, was ‘excellent for Africans at that stage of development.’ He praised the Canadian Pentecostal Mission at Nyangore as an ‘admirable organization.’ The Society of Friends mission, Neill was told, had suffered from a lax church organization. True to form, Neill figured the problem could be easily remedied with episcopacy.
Neill observed that English was fast becoming the Kenyan language for theological training due to the number of tribes that did not speak Swahili. He conjectured that ‘As the African is educated, he is growing away from his tribal background.’ Since Africa was changing so quickly, he argued, it was ‘anachronistic’ for the church to take the tribal background too seriously.

In Neill’s visits to various Kenyan Bible Schools, he remarked that ‘All are in the general sense of the term fundamentalist,’ and many of them were ‘first generation converts,’ or ‘still somewhat primitive.’ He was relieved to learn that female circumcision was being abandoned in the missions, although male circumcision was retained on hygienic grounds and as an initiation rite into Christianity. Neill was overjoyed to get out of this ‘rarefied’ environment and into a CMS mission where he could freely smoke his pipe.

In Uganda, the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches were growing faster than clergy could be provided. Neill observed that Anglicans had been more effective in raising up indigenous clergy, but it was due to ‘a terrible shortage of missionaries.’ He grumbled that the indigenous Catholic priests were ‘not allowed to do a single thing without consulting their Italian overlords.’ After picnicking at Lake Victoria, the source of the Nile, he traveled to Kampala, where he discovered tensions between locals and the Indian population. He wrote about the ‘Indian menace,’ remarking that Indians had outmaneuvered Africans to the point that they were in control of ‘almost all of the immensely profitable sugar and cotton estates.’ He reasoned that had the British not intervened, Indians might have gained complete control of the place.

The growth of Christianity in Uganda was spectacular. Neill pointed out in his diary that seventy five years prior, there was ‘not a Christian in the area’; however, at the time of Neill’s writing there were over half a million. The local bishop confided to Neill that he was overwhelmed by the success of Christianity; he characterised its growth as ‘simply miraculous.’ There was a downside, however. The work was ‘understaffed’ and ‘Christianisation has been dreadfully superficial.’ Neill critiqued the local kings and chiefs as being ‘frankly polygamous as the German Lutheran princes in the sixteenth century; and the rank and file tend to follow the example of their leaders.’

Neill’s visit to Bishop Tucker Theological College in Mukono, Uganda, caused him to reflect on the differences between African and Western thinking. While participating in what he deemed ‘the first conference of theological teachers ever to be held in East Africa,’ he critiqued Western theology for being overly influenced by Greek philosophy. He then questioned whether we should accept the African mind as it is and work along its natural processes; or whether we should constrain it somewhat unwillingly to accept our ways of thought; or whether the African mind can be stimulated, perhaps more along Hebraic lines, to form its own pattern of thinking and general concepts, which will probably be very different from the European. I don’t think anyone has made very much progress in finding the answer.

At that conference, an issue that rose up repeatedly was ‘the dreadful dearth of Christian literature’ both in English and in the vernaculars. This could be considered a passing observation were it not for Neill’s...
subsequent work in Geneva after his tour of Africa. He gave the next decade of his life to addressing this problem, a matter discussed later in this article.

After the Mukono conference, Neill visited Martyr’s Cross—where fourteen boys were burned to death in the 1880s. The boys were heard singing praises to Jesus as they courageously died. Neill’s tour guide for this moving experience was Ham Mukasa, who had been a page-boy to King Mwanga at the time of the persecution.54

From Uganda Neill flew back to Nairobi to attend his cousin’s wedding, ‘Elizabeth Crabbe, the younger daughter of the Bishop of Mombasa.’55 His tour of East Africa was done. He was now headed west, stopping at Tripoli for a few days en route to Nigeria.

Neill’s first stop in West Africa was Kano, Nigeria. He had a terrible time clearing immigration, leaving him in a state of ‘simmering indignation.’56 His immediate impression was that West Africa was ‘much more African than the East.’ He took notice of the Muslim-style long white robes for men, and the nakedness of the women—other than ‘a bunch of leaves fore and aft,’ and brightly coloured head-cloths tied in ‘ingenious shapes.’57 He characterised the Muslim influence as being ‘everywhere dominant.’58

In Kano, missionaries of the Sudan Interior Mission took care of Neill. Neill characterised the SIM as naïve and arrogant, yet having ‘astonishing success in getting in where everyone else has failed.’ In his view, these ‘fundamentalist missions … are doing nine-tenths of the pioneer missionary work in the world.’59 While applauding their evangelistic success, he resented their insularity: ‘They might have heard that some people called Episcopalians existed and were rather like Roman Catholics, but that would be about all.’60

Neill’s next destination was the city of Jos, a missionary hub for the SIM and SUM (Sudan United Mission). He lamented the anemic state of the CMS in West Africa as opposed to its ‘gigantic influence’ in East Africa.61 He traveled north by car and attended a conference where sudden and deafening storms interrupted his lecture:

At one point I had just got out the words ‘Speaking frankly as Christian brethren’ when the heavens opened and it became impossible to speak either frankly or as Christian brethren.

Neill was deeply moved at that conference: ‘I felt the deep creative movement of Christian fellowship among us, and I have rarely been so conscious of a meeting being wholly under the direction of the Holy Spirit.’63

Neill’s letter from Jos ended on a political note as he discussed the plans for Nigeria’s new constitution, designed to ‘give Africans far greater responsibility for the future of their own country.’64 However, Neill had little good to say of it. ‘I do not know who drew up the scheme; it probably represents the strong pro-Moslem influence in British government circles.’65

54 Diary No 6, 6.
55 Diary No 6, 7.
56 Diary No 7 (11 May 1950), 3.
57 Diary No 7, 1.
58 Diary No 7, 1.
59 Diary No 7, 2.
60 Diary No 7, 2.
61 Diary No 7, 4.
62 Diary No 7, 7.
63 Diary No 7, 7.
64 Diary No 7, 8.
65 Diary No 7, 8.
In the ‘damp and steamy’ climate of Enugu, Nigeria, Neill wondered how European missionaries managed to keep their health. He wrote of ‘bursts of that tropical rain about which you read in books.’ He applauded the Americans for taking much better care of their missionaries than the Europeans. He wrote of the diverse student body at St. Paul’s College in Awka, necessitating instruction exclusively in English. This was a fundamental problem because the boys had to minister in their own languages when they returned to their tribal communities. Complicating matters was that graduates often acquired the ambition to move to the UK or the USA. Then there were the political complexities:

Nigeria does not really exist. It is an entity created entirely by European occupation … The two main races of the South, the Yoruba in the West and the Ibo in the East, very much dislike one another. Both are intensely disliked by the finer and on the whole more civilised, though educationally less advanced, people of the North. The question of whether Nigeria can hold together at all is one that cannot be readily answered.

After these matters were explained to Neill by Miss Stewart—an Irish SCM missionary there—he began to feel depressed, questioning whether ‘deep character development’ was really taking place in Africa. He was reminded of an African leader who once made the statement, ‘You Europeans are always talking about sin; sin is an idea in which Africans are not very much interested.’

At St. Paul’s College the staff became defensive at Neill’s scathing criticism. He pointed out that they could not produce one graduate capable of serving on staff. He blasted them for being ‘segregated from the life of the Church in their immense mission compound … not speaking any African language … largely unaware of the changes taking place in the life of the Church.’ He bemoaned the lack of an agreed standard of admission to the theological college and urged higher academic standards. He noticed the utter absence of theological books in local languages and suggested a ‘series of short books’ dealing with Christian doctrine should be undertaken.

Neill resented the flourishing work of the ‘Rivals in the Field’—the Roman Catholic Church in Nigeria—describing their strategy as a ‘gold rush’:

The Roman Catholics are trying to stake out their claim in every village by putting up a church or founding a school; when that is done, it is too late for other people to come in. Almost every ship brings a fresh load of Irish priests and sisters … I cannot pretend to think that Irish Roman Catholicism, as it presents itself on the West Coast of Africa, is of the highest type of Christianity.

After Awka, Neill reflected on the many obstacles to Christian unity in West Africa: ‘nonsensical’ political boundaries, tribal affiliations, language differences, and denominational loyalties. Neill saw the only possible solution to be membership in the World Council of Churches.

The next stop was Benin City in Nigeria. Neill had a pleasant time looking at art, listening to music, and experiencing the local culture. While touring the public library, a young man remarked, ‘We lack books.'

66 Diary No 8 (19 May 1950), 1.
67 Diary No 8, 5.
68 Diary No 8, 3.
69 Diary No 8, 4.
70 Diary No 8, 7.
71 Diary No 8, 8.
72 Diary No 8, 9-10.
73 Diary No 9 (28 May 1950), 2.
74 Diary No 9, 2.
75 Diary No 9, 7.
While in Benin City, Neill visited an unfinished, but impressive, church building. It had been built by King Oba Akenzua II (1933-1978) as a temple for a new religion he created to merge Christianity, Islam, and paganism. The king, however, converted to Anglicanism and the church was abandoned. Neill thought Christianity was in its infancy in Benin: ‘the old paganism has been driven only a very short distance below the surface.’

The church in Benin presented Neill with ‘the head of an Oba carved in wood, and in brass the head of a lady whose task it was to look after the harem of the Oba.’ Neill had them parcelled up and posted to the World Council in Geneva. He labeled them ‘idols’ and queried to himself: ‘What the customs duty on idols is in Switzerland I have never had occasion to enquire.’

From Benin City Neill made his way to a centre for the training of fiancées and young wives in Akure. This prompted him to ruminate on family life in Nigeria. In Neill’s mind, polygamy led to a ‘second-class type of Christianity’ and should be rooted out of the church. Nigerians ‘simply do not know what Christian marriage means’ since they have grown up with low moral standards, polygamous surroundings, and young fathers/husbands who might go to England for a three year stretch. One cannot help but wonder what Neill, a lifelong bachelor, really knew about family life—especially in a culture he was encountering for the first time.

Neill’s next stop was Ogbomosho, ‘the centre of the Southern Baptists.’ He was hosted by Dr Pooh, prompting Neill to remark: ‘We were uncertain whether we should be welcomed by a China-man or a bear. When we finally got there, we discovered Dr Pooh was neither, rather he was a Texan.’ As it turned out, Neill’s instructions were mistaken and the man’s actual name was Dr Pool.

Neill then launched a short history of the Southern Baptists in Nigeria who arrived in 1850 and were celebrating their centenary. They founded an academy in 1925 with connections to a Baptist seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. After critiquing their lax marking standards, he gave rare commendation to this Baptist academy at Ogbomosho with its six full-time faculty: ‘This is the one adequately staffed theological school that I have seen in Africa.’

Next was Ibadan, ‘the largest purely African city in the world.’ Neill was fascinated by the city, if a little perturbed when the children kept calling him ‘O-imbo,’ which is translated literally as ‘peeled man’ due to his white skin. Ibadan was around 50 percent Muslim, 30 percent pagan, and 20 percent Christian in Neill’s estimate. He visited the new University of Nigeria and was impressed by its department of religious studies. He preached at the university with 230 in attendance and later met with the students. They were most interested in his views on polygamy.

Once again Neill attended a conference. In contrast to the others, this one was mainly attended by Africans. They discussed how Africans who are trained in English develop two ‘almost unrelated zones’ in their minds. Several attendees confessed to having great difficulty preaching in Yoruba because their training was in English. Neill remarked: ‘In this meeting … the Africans were not talking to us; they were

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76 Diary No 9, 7. I cannot help but to think that the ‘Chrislam’ phenomenon in Nigieria may somehow be related to King Oba Akenzua’s movement. For more on Chrislam, see PBS ‘Religion & Ethics’: http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/episodes/february-13-2009/chrislam/2236/
77 Diary No 9, 8.
78 Diary No 9, 9.
79 Diary No 9, 10.
80 Diary No 9, 10.
81 Diary No 9, 10.
82 Diary No 9, 11.
83 Diary No 9, p 12. Ibadan was one of the largest cities in Africa at the time, perhaps after Cairo and Johannesburg. Neill estimated the population at 300,000 to 400,000.
84 Diary No 10 (3 June 1950), 1.
85 Diary No 10, 4.
allowing us to listen in as they thought aloud, and we were deeply grateful for the privilege.’ Neill was moved. ‘From my point of view, I felt that my tour had been worthwhile for this experience alone.’ 86

Neill’s next visit was to the Gold Coast, where his brother taught for years. He reckoned about half the population was nominally Christian. He spoke at the new University College of the Gold Coast, opened in 1948. In just over a year it had assembled a staff of 60, of whom nine were African.

Neill described the Gold Coast as being educated and prosperous. The excellent education system was developed by missionaries with government aid. 87 He noted a zeal for self-government that occasionally became violent. He derided the man who would become Ghana’s first Prime Minister and President—Kwame Nkrumah—who happened to be in jail at the time. Neill described Nkrumah’s emerging self-rule movement as ‘extremist,’ ‘irresponsible,’ and yet very popular. Neill questioned one acquaintance, ‘When these friends have got self-government, have they any idea of what to do with it?’ 88

Next Neill made his way to Akropong, where the Church of Scotland had inherited the work of the Basel Mission. ‘Another great merit of the Basel Mission is that all over the world they have taught their Christians to sing.’ 89 He met with Colin Forrester-Paton, a famous Church of Scotland missionary who was later appointed chaplain to Queen Elizabeth.

On his drive to Abetifi Neill ruminated on politics:

Colonialism is a phase of the world’s history that is passing away. It is the fashion of today to vilify it in every possible way. But I wonder whether the final verdict of history will be quite the same. It seems to me that the British have remarkably little to be ashamed of in their service to the Gold Coast. Many mistakes have been made. But the country has been opened up … the people given peace, unity and security of life, property and land tenure, such as they had never known before, contact with the outside world, education and unimaginable wealth … When the Gold Coast attains self-government, as it very soon will, the country will be handed over to the people in excellent working order. 90

Next was Kumasi, ‘the Klondyke of the Gold Coast.’ Money just poured into the city and people became rich. Neill noted the bountiful church work going on by all denominations: ‘The citizens ought to be a godly folk. Whether they are or not may be considered a moot point.’ 91

Neill found the Anglican service quite formal: ‘Apparently here, as in the USA, to become an Episcopalian marks a sense of having taken a step up in the social scale.’ 92 After the service, he was ‘a little taken aback’ when served whiskey, sherry, and beer, since it was only 11:15 am. ‘Apparently, here as in Korea, it is expected that the good Anglican will smoke and drink, to make it quite clear that he is neither a Methodist nor a Presbyterian.’ 93

At Kumasi Neill visited several theological training schools and a Methodist centre for training women and girls. At nearby Mampong he visited a group of Sisters of the Holy Paraclete who ran a secondary school, a college, and a maternity work. He confided in his diary that they were known troublemakers.

At Kumasi was another conference; yet again the issue of polygamy arose. One of the attendees made a remark considered ‘brilliant’ by Neill:

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86 Diary No 10, 4.
87 Diary No 11 (10 June 1950), 3.
88 Diary No 11, 5.
89 Diary No 11, 6.
90 Diary No 11, 8.
91 Diary No 12 (22 June 1950), 1.
92 Diary No 12, ‘confidential extracts,’ 1.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
The African Christian, even if his marriage is monogamous, lives as though it were polygamous; meaning not that he is immoral, but that the spiritual significance of the permanent union of one man and one woman has not yet begun to dawn on him. 94

From there Neill traveled to Ho, in British Togoland, and visited a co-ed teacher training college. He frowned upon the experiment of educating boys and girls together, ‘I don’t regard this as progress, but there are some who think otherwise.’95

Next was Accra, where he met with the Executive Committee of the Christian Council of the Gold Coast. A controversy broke out which Neill attributed to ‘intense suspicion felt by the African’:

What the African wants to learn is Latin and things like that, to show that he is as good as the European, and ‘to learn the secret of the Europeans’ power.’96

He continued, in frustration,

I have felt countless times, especially since I came to the Gold Coast that the curse of British West Africa is that in everything it has followed so closely the English model, even down to tweed suits.97

He then lost restraint in a caustic rant set off by a newspaper article:

If there is any even moderately good daily paper in West Africa, I have not yet discovered it. When I think of the high standard of the best Indian papers in India, and compare it with what apparently satisfies the West African public, I am filled with anxiety for the future. The press is a fair indication of the level of intelligence and responsible thinking in a country.98

Following the catharsis, Neill pulled himself together, ‘On to Freetown … the last lap.’99

Neill’s tour ended in Sierra Leone, ‘the Canterbury, the Mother Church, of West Africa.’ He described Freetown as ‘somewhat ramshackle … one of the most backward areas in Africa.’ He struggled with the language—‘Creole patois … English words put together according to African idiom.’100

Neill claimed the policies of the CMS in Sierra Leone should ‘serve as an awful warning as to how missionary work should not be done.’101 However, he commended the work of the United Evangelical Brethren who had grown to become the largest Protestant body there.

Neill was outraged by the racially divided churches. He remarked that this ‘may seem strange to some of my readers but it will be easily intelligible to those who come from the southern States.’102 He made reference to South Africa, how blacks and whites would eventually have to reach a ‘happy integration.’103

At Freetown Neill visited Fourah Bay College and gave glowing praise, ‘I doubt whether any single Christian institution has exercised a wider or more beneficent influence on a great area of the earth’s surface.’104 He then enjoyed a swim with Cyril Bowles of Cambridge and Rev. Roberts, the Principal at

94 Diary No 12, 6.
95 Diary No 12, 8.
96 Diary No 12, 10-11.
97 Diary No 12, 11.
98 Diary No 12, 11.
99 Diary No 12, 11.
100 Diary No 13 (28 June 1950), 1-2.
101 Diary No 13, ‘confidential extracts,’ 1.
102 Diary No 13, 5.
103 Diary No 13, 3.
104 Diary No 13, 7. Fourah Bay College has produced great leaders such as Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Sir

Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa
Fourah Bay. They had a candid discussion on mission work in Africa. Neill wrote, ‘We all agreed that the Church in Sierra Leone is much more awful than anything we have met with elsewhere … Even after a century, Christianity is terribly formal and superficial.’ They discussed how fetishism was rampant, even among the clergy. Neill argued that Europeans tended to show little sensitivity to the changing context of African Christianity—a situation he compared to Europe’s Dark Ages:

I suddenly saw a great light. The period of Church history we ought most to teach to the younger churches is the very one we usually most neglect, the Dark Ages. The author who should be put into their hands is Gregory of Tours, with side glances at the Venerable Bede, Alcuin, and Boniface; then they would feel much more closely their kinship with us, and would come to understand something of the way in which the Church worked its way up through those appalling times into the Golden Middle Age. Christian Literature Societies kindly take note.

In Sierra Leone, Neill also met with the United Christian Council to discuss missions and theological education. During the meeting, Solomon Caulker, an African, spoke up about what he considered to be a ‘revolutionary situation’ which held great promise for Christianity in the region. However, he confessed, ‘We are compelled to recognise that the small and struggling African churches have not in themselves the strength to take advantage of the new opportunities.’ They needed help from the older churches. Neill agreed heartily with this assessment but frankly admitted ‘It would have been difficult for a European to put forward this point of view.’ The council decided they should ‘sit down with the map of Sierra Leone, and try to think and plan strategically, along the lines that God seems to be marking out as the lines of advance for His Church.’

Neill’s diary ends here. The ‘Finis’ is worth quoting entirely:

And so my Odyssey comes to an end. All being well, tomorrow the Wayfarer will take me from Freetown to Dakar, and on Saturday morning I should be in New York. It has been a long and complicated journey, but it is wonderful how one thing has fitted in with another, and the way has been smoothed before me. I have not had a single day’s illness. I have often been tired, but never worse than I often am in Geneva. I have not missed a single engagement through ill-health or overtiredness. I look back with gratitude on memories of an uncounted host of friends, African, missionary and government, who have made me welcome, taken me into their homes, cared for my needs, shared their problems with me, and showered upon me unmeasured kindness and affection. Their names are written in the book of life. But the deepest gratitude lies elsewhere. ‘I being in the way, the Lord led me.’

The Aftermath and Neill’s Suggestions for Improvement

Neill condensed his diary to a 51-page report for the IMC entitled ‘Survey of the Training of the Ministry in Africa.’ It was published in 1950 and read carefully by many. Responses were mixed. Some thought Neill’s report to be very helpful in understanding not only the situation of theological education in Africa, but even larger issues pertaining to the younger churches in general. Others decried it. For example,

Milton Margai—the first Prime Minister of Sierra Leone.

105 Diary No 13, ‘confidential extracts,’ 2.
106 Diary No 13, ‘confidential extracts,’ 2.
107 Diary No 13, 11.
108 Diary No 13, 12.
109 Diary No 13, 12.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
CMS chief Max Warren critiqued it on several points, particularly Neill’s self-assured attitude. He thought some of Neill’s views to be ‘sheer nonsense’ and some of his perspectives ‘unrealistic.’

While some cheered and others jeered, it is clear that Neill spent considerable time and energy on this project. He accomplished a tremendous amount of work in a very short period of time, and it took a heavy toll on him. He visited nearly all of the institutions that prepared candidates for ordination along with many Bible Schools. He met with myriad groups in many capacities, although never with a Catholic institution. He participated in several conferences, most which had been organised specifically for his visit. He addressed many different audiences: churches, national Christian councils, and clergy gatherings. He met individually with scores of high ranking church officials and made time for countless students. He walked the compounds of many and diverse mission stations.

Neill’s health was brittle throughout his life. Quite predictably, after this period of intense work he had a serious breakdown in health. While he was able to finish his findings, reports, and summaries in a punctual manner, the Africa tour left him utterly spent, and his colleagues knew about it. Those who commissioned the tour even apologised to him for the weight of the assignment.

Neill prepared several versions of his conclusions for various audiences ranging from the 51-page report to a four page ‘brief summary’ consisting of two sections: General Recommendations and Area Recommendations. In the General Recommendations, Neill argued the following points:

1. The standards of living of the servants of the Church need to be raised.
2. There should be a greater focus on youth, especially in recruiting ministry candidates. Further development of the Student Christian Movement should receive priority in these matters.
3. More conferences should be held dealing with all manner of Christian education: from catechist training to higher education.
4. English should be the language of theological education; however, greater attention should be paid to understanding how ‘the African mind actually works.’
5. Pedagogy must change. The dictation of notes is insufficient. Teachers must use the tutorial method.
6. Theological education will be more effective in community. Provisions and accommodations should be made for the families of students.
7. There is a severe dearth of good text books in Africa. This must be addressed immediately.

In the Area Recommendations, Neill provided several suggestions for the regions he visited. For example, his top priority was to see a Christian college in East Africa. In several places he pressed for using the English language since, in his view, ‘the time has come when all theological education on the

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111 Letter from Max Warren to Rev. N. Goodall, 3 July 1950. Located in the University of Birmingham CMS archives, CMS/OSD AFg O27/6. Other papers related to Neill’s tour of Africa are located in the same archive at: CMS/G59/AD 5 1950.
113 See, for example, a letter from E. J. Bingle to Stephen Neill, dated 17 October 1950. Bingle mentions that Neill is ‘under doctor’s orders’ for ‘some extended form of treatment.’ He apologised to Neill, ‘I should also like to say how deeply sorry I am personally that you should have been reduced to inaction at this time. We of the IMC have placed very great burdens on you during the past year and we can never be grateful enough.’ Located at Yale IMC archives: Box 263139 (Files 1-12). See also letter from M.A.C.W. to T.F.C.B., undated, entitled ‘Christian Literature—Bishop Stephen Neill—and all that.’ The letter states, ‘Bishop Neill, as you may know, has had a very serious breakdown of a form which precludes his being able to exercise a normal ministry.’ In all likelihood the letter dates to late 1952 as plans were coming together for Neill to begin his new job working for the IMC on his World Christian Books project. This letter is located at University of Birmingham CMS archives, CMS/OSD AFg O27/6.

Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa
ministerial level should be put into English.’ He strongly believed that ‘there should be complete separation of teacher training from training for ordination’ in Africa since the two tended to get mixed. He argued for specific local endeavors, for example, that Nigeria needed an ecumenical United Church, and the whole of theological training in the Gold Coast should be concentrated around the new University College.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is important to point out that Stephen Neill did much more than give advice after his tour of East and West Africa. He devoted the next chapter of his life to a publishing venture sponsored by the IMC called World Christian Books, with heavy support from Cambridge professor Charles Raven and the backing of the IMC and WCC. During the 1950s and 1960s Neill oversaw the publication of 70 books in 35 languages. The chief goal was to produce ‘good simple literature’ that would be widely available to younger church leaders. Neill wrote seven books for the series and devoted the next fifteen years of his life to taking on the problems he had witnessed firsthand in his African tour. In 1969 he moved to Africa and founded the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Nairobi, which exists today as one of the most prestigious religion departments in all of Africa. He worked there for four years before semi-retirement in Oxford.

In some ways, Neill’s survey of African theological education can be easily criticized from the vantage point of over 60 years later. However, his efforts to address the problems he identified are admirable indeed. It is remarkable that many of his observations are as relevant today as they were in 1950. Christianity continues to proliferate in Africa, and the need for theological education is as urgent a problem now as it ever was. There are simply not enough resources, institutions, or trained leaders to handle the explosive growth taking place. Neill foresaw this dilemma, and he warned it would only get worse. However, there are two ways of seeing a river. From one perspective, African theological education is in crisis. From a different angle, this exponential growth is not a problem at all, but an enormous, unpredictable blessing from God. After many decades of selfless commitment, the hard work of preparing soil and sowing seeds is yielding unimaginable harvest. From this more positive perspective, God has turned his face towards Africa and bid “come.” Not even the gates of Hades can overcome the epochal shift. Africans are rushing towards God through Christ.

Let us fast forward to 2012 in order to gain perspective on what has happened in only a few generations. We will see that, if anything, the problem is more acute than even Neill envisioned in 1950.

Today, Africa has 59 countries and territories. In 31 of those countries/territories, Christianity is the largest religion. In 21 of them, Islam ranks first. In six of them, indigenous religions form the largest group. Mauritius is unique in that Hinduism ranks first there. The majority of Africa’s Christians are Protestant/Independent. The Roman Catholic Church claims almost exactly a third of the continent’s Christian population. The ancient Orthodox Christians—based mainly in the Nile Valley—account for one-tenth of the Christian population on the continent. No longer just a passive recipient of Western missionaries, Africa is today a major player in world Christianity:

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• Two of the six General Secretaries of the World Council of Churches were African: Samuel Kobia from Kenya, and Philip Potter from the West Indies but of African descent.

• Two of the nine General Assemblies of the World Council of Churches were held in Africa: in Kenya (1975) and Zimbabwe (1998).

• Africa has half a billion Christians and, within a generation or two, will have more Christians than any other cultural block in the world, surpassing Latin America and the Caribbean. This is partly due to Africa’s very high fertility rates.

• The African diaspora is huge, and is changing world Christian demographics. The Primate of England—John Sentamu—is from Uganda. Sunday Adelaja, pastor of Kiev’s megachurch Embassy of God, is Nigerian. His church holds 40 services weekly and claims to have planted congregations in 45 countries.117

• International denominations are being significantly impacted by African churches. The Anglican Communion, for example, has witnessed a shift in leverage as Africa takes the reins of leadership in that denomination.

Perhaps the most important aspect of African Christianity is that it represents the turning over of a new leaf in world Christianity. While Christianity in the West declines, Christianity in Africa grows in numbers, strength, and in energy. While Western societies deepen the divide between Christianity and culture, sub-Saharan Africa seems poised to become the new Christendom. While Western youth in the twentieth century broke faith with their ancestors, Christianity, African youth broke faith as well, yet they turned to Christianity.

And what does this mean? I believe our children and grandchildren will look back upon these days as a turning point. Christianity is still the largest religion in the world, yet it will not be a Western religion, as it has tended to be conceived for centuries. It is likely that Christianity will be more identified with Africa than with any other place in the world. And the reverberations are already being felt. For centuries the Christian narrative has been mainly told from a European perspective. But an African narrator is now settling in.

I believe an African narrator has several important implications for telling the story of Christianity.

• Recently I worshiped in a church in Dundee, Scotland. While the congregants were mainly white, the music was led by young men from Africa. They danced, held up their hands, and appeared very comfortable in their unrestrained approach to worship. That is very different from the austere approach to worship that dominated the Church of Scotland for centuries. But the Dundonians were quite open to following these African leaders.

• Gone are the days when Westerners “bring the gospel” to Africa. My students go to Africa to get revived. Africans now regularly bringing the gospel to places in Europe where Christianity has disappeared or at least has been muted.

• Africans will deeply impact the way Christians read the Bible. Many of us in the West studied F. C. Bauer, Bultman, Althizer, and Tillich. I suppose the future of biblical interpretation will not necessarily include those names. Africans offer a different set of biblical interpreters, who come to very different conclusions than the commentators of the last 200 years in the West, since the so-called “Enlightenment.”

• African Christians bring confidence. Their context is radically different. Christ represents victory and success in Africa, whereas in the West many of our churches are now residential flats or carpet warehouses, or pubs. In Europe, preachers of the gospel seem sheepish in their presentation of faith. Africans seem not to share that reticence.

• Africans bring momentum to Christianity. Western Europeans can hardly speak of momentum and Christianity in the same sentence. Christianity is in recession, even crisis in many places in the West.

Indeed, the new Christian narrator will be an African one, and this will inevitably bring opportunity. As an American, I think it is a bit like having a new president. We are in anticipation. We do not know how the new president will go about his task. We do not know if he will be able to achieve what he sets out to do. We do not know exactly what his priorities will be. What we do know is that we have all elected a new president, and most of us will cheer him on, hoping he can improve the condition of our country with his policies and decisions.

Similarly, an African-infused Christianity holds many possibilities. World Christianity waits in expectation for what new things will be revealed. None of us know precisely how this will affect our faith, but we do know that changes are coming. We hope the changes will be good and will ultimately improve the condition of our faith. And so we remain excited and eager that the new leadership will prove to be a blessing, both to the individual and to the international state of world Christianity.

What does this mean for the Westerner? I believe Stephen Neill’s insights and recommendations are not far off the mark. Westerners have a disproportionate amount of the world’s wealth. Thus, Western Christians must find ways to invest in Christianity. This may come from contributing to denominational coffers in the case of international fellowships; it may mean theological institutions offering full fellowships that enable Africans to study at Western schools.

Bringing Africans to the West, however, does not solve the problem of a dearth of theological education in Africa. New initiatives must take place that truly invest capital and resources into Africa, separate and apart from Western institutions of higher learning. Additionally, there is a good argument to be made that Westerners should begin to take their tuition money to African institutions, and place themselves under the tutelage of African theologians and preachers. In other words, the answer will not always be to bring Africans to the West. Perhaps a better alternative is to encourage Westerners to adapt to the African context of theological education. This interplay would be dynamic and certainly more authentic for Westerners wanting to know more about how and why African Christianity is growing. It is somewhat common these days for Western seminarians to encounter African Christianity from an African professor who has relocated to the Western world. It would be far more lively and impactful for the Western seminarian to take a degree in Africa. It would also open up countless avenues of contact that would enrich both sides.

Neill’s general recommendations were revolutionary, and will require a complete re-imagination of how we have gone about our tasks in the past. His ideas were ahead of their time in 1950, and—at least I would argue—have yet to be fulfilled: 1. The standard of living of clergy must be raised; 2. More focus should be directed towards youth; 3. More conferences; 4. English medium for teaching; 5. More creative pedagogies; 6. Accommodations must be made for the immediate families of those who choose theological study; 7. Good books are urgently needed. Neill addressed these problems head on. He moved to Africa. He established a theological department at Nairobi. He wrote many accessible books. He actually attempted to do something about the problems faced in the African church. While many stood on the sidelines in the comfort of Euro-American universities, Neill actually went out. His legacy is debated. Some consider him an imperialist, and in ways they are right. However, his efforts speak for themselves.

Bibliography


Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa
Nyambura J. Njoroge

The wretchedness of the African people dishonours their creator. Therefore every Christian has a moral responsibility to do their best to correct the situation.\(^2\)

The issues at hand are challenging and they not only require us to examine our journey of faith individually and collectively but also to dream of new ways of being church in Africa today. I hope my struggle with these issues will provoke questions and discussions which will lead us to see visions and dream dreams through the power of the Holy Spirit. I understand my task to be that of examining ministry or service of the church rather than the missionary nature of the church. The latter, I believe, is the task of another presentation.

Church is people and not buildings and structures. Buildings and structures are only tools which enable us to carry out our responsibilities. The church is called upon to be a witnessing, healing and caring community in a broken world but it cannot do so unless it clearly understands the message it witnesses to and has the right tools to use. In this paper we are searching for ways of doing ecumenical theological education which will equip the people of God, the body of Christ which is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom we are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Ecumenical theology, and theological education, among other things should help us understand how we travel with God our creator and source of life in a church and world full of strife and tensions. Fortunately we are not beginning from scratch, neither are we reflecting in a vacuum. We have a body of witnesses from ancient Israel, the apostolic and universal church, of which we have become part as people who have heard, believed and who in turn are called to be witnesses. On the other hand, we have African cultures, traditions and religions which not only provide tools and styles for our theological education but also create critical challenges as we go about our faith in God.

First we will examine what it means to be a people of God, the body of Christ; the rationale for ecumenical theological education and what are the implications of ecumenical theological education on ministerial formation processes? Second we shall explore some of the issues that should be at the heart of ecumenical theology and theological education in Africa today.

The People of God

It is common practice in Africa to do theological education only for men who are preparing for the ministry and sacrament (a number of churches now accept women); even though in the Bible ministry and mission are the responsibility of the whole people of God (1 Peter 3:15; 2:9). The present structures of theological education programmes have developed along denominational lines.\(^3\) This practice has been inherited from western Christendom and impact on how we understand the meaning and role of the church, especially

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3 There are seminaries where several denominations have formed united institutions. On the other hand the same denominations build other Bible schools and pastoral institutes which reduce the spirit of ecumenism in the united seminaries.
within the context of ecumenism unity. It is, therefore, imperative to reexamine the meaning of the church and its role in the world.

In this section we shall reflect on the letters to the Galatians and Ephesians for our understanding of the people of God. Whereas New Testament scholars agree that St Paul was the author of Galatians, the authorship of Ephesians is disputed. In Ephesians we are provided with a summary of the first holy nation of God, the ancient Israel, chosen and adopted in Christ before the foundation of the world to be the people of God. (Eph 1:3-14) But in the fullness of time, the same Christ through his life on earth, suffering and death on the cross, and resurrection extended the adoption to the Gentiles to become part of the holy nation, the people of God. (Eph 2:11-22) Through a revelation; Paul, a Jew, well-schooled in Judaism, and who persecuted the young Christian community was mandated by God to proclaim the crucified and risen Christ to the Gentiles. (Gal 1:11-21 and Acts 9 & 26). Through the coming of Christ in human form, the Word became flesh and lived among us (John 1:14), the dividing wall, the hostility between Jew and Gentile was abolished, creating one humanity and making peace.

The two groups were reconciled into one body in Christ, thus proclaiming peace. In Eph 3: 1-6, we learn that the breaking down of the wall that divided the Jew and Gentile is the mystery of Christ and was only revealed to the apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit. Hence both Jew and Gentile who heard and believed in this message narrated in the four gospels, became the new holy nation, the people of God who are called to one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God, the Creator of all. (Eph 4:4-5) Together the new holy nation, the church in Christ, is invited to see the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, so that through the church the wisdom of God and its rich variety might now be made known to all. It is in this context and understanding that St Paul proclaims our oneness in Christ through baptism so that there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female and that we are heirs of God's promises. (Gal 3, especially 27-29)

Rationale for Ecumenical Theological Education

In Africa through the faithfulness of the apostles and prophets who heard, believed and witnessed to the mystery of Christ throughout the centuries, we have become part of the holy, apostolic and catholic church. Like the Gentiles in Ephesus, all Africans who have heard and believed in Christ have been marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit and have become the people of God. (Eph 1:14) However, the writers of Galatians and Ephesians indicate that the new communities of faith were faced with false teachings and distortions of the gospel. As such besides praying for their strengthening in their inner being, they also prayed for deeper theological understanding and exhorted them to be footed and grounded in love.

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ...I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of W. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generation, forever and ever. (Ephesians 1:17-19 & 3:16-21, emphasis from the author)

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4 For more information on the early African Church in North Africa and Ethiopia see Harvey J. Sindima, Drums of Redemption: An Introduction to African Christianity (Westport CT, Greenwood Press, 1994), 3-47.

Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa
I have quoted these verses and highlighted some of them because I believe they provide the rationale for ecumenical theological education for the whole people of God. This is not to say we do not need technicians or the academically trained theologians who are equipped for particular functions in the church and its related institutions. Rather, we are saying that these specially trained theologians and ministers of word and sacrament need to recognize the great need to equip every Christian with basic knowledge of the riches of what we have inherited and the unfathomable treasure of Christ (to use the words in the Jerusalem Bible). The people of God need to understand what they believe in and that it is important to be properly rooted and grounded in God (who is love) before we can witness to the gospel of Christ. Just by reading the New Testament we realize how central ecumenical theological education is in the life of a Christian because much is required from us. In Acts 18, we read of Apollos, despite his eloquence and burning enthusiasm in teaching about Jesus, his colleagues Priscilla and Aquila realized that he needed greater understanding of what he taught in the synagogue. Profound understanding of our faith is crucial lest we teach false doctrine.

On the other hand, we are called to be partners with God in restoring God's reign in a world where evil forces rage from all directions. Witnessing to the Kingdom of God i.e. for justice, truth, love, peace, reconciliation and righteousness is a fulltime responsibility whatever we do for a living. It is the nature of being a Christian. Earlier on, Jesus himself had demonstrated the great need for ecumenical theological education. Like his followers, rather than teach about it, he also prayed:

Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternak life to all whom you have given him. And this eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ... I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from evil one .... Sanctify them [set them apart] in the truth, your word is truth. (John 17:1-3, 14-15, 17)

As much as John 17 is a prayer for unity which we shall deal with later, Jesus prayed that his followers, the people of God, the church, may know the true God, the eternal life and the word of God. When Christians engage in doing theology and theological education we are seeking to understand and know the core of our faith, the true God and Jesus Christ. We are searching for the truth about the things we have heard and experienced in life individually or collectively in our relationship with God. We are seeking for ways of living a faithful calling as the worshipping, witnessing and serving church through the ministry of all believers. Therefore we must be equipped for the work of ministry, for building up one another in the body of Christ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and knowledge of God.

The treasure of Christ is unfathomable, immeasurable and boundless. For the last twenty centuries, Christians have been digging into this treasure. Ecumenically we are called to labour together as we search for truth. We are not only expected to work together with other Christians of our time but we are also called to be united with all the saints who have gone before us who have faithfully laboured in their time to restore God's reign. In other words, ecumenical theology and theological education draw from the lived experience of all people of God including ancient Israel as we labour to face the – challenges that confront us today. In light of this discussion the Bible is a central resource for our Christian faith and the basis of ecumenical theological education. Hence Bible study and biblical interpretation are at the heart of ecumenical theological education which should be available for all the people of God. This approach in ecumenical theological education for all people of God has direct impact on the ministerial formation processes to which we now turn.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Ministerial Formation

The church has the responsibility to equip leaders who will guide the whole people of God in the ministries and mission of the church. In other words, the goal of ecumenical theological education for all the whole people of God is to equip the church for the two fold task of ministry and mission in all the spheres of life as prophets of hope and priests of reconciliation. That is, the ordination of ministers and priests important as it is in the life of the church should not be the object of ecumenical theological education. Taking the Scriptures seriously, especially Romans 12: 3-8, 1 Cor 12, Eph 4:7-16 we are reminded that there are varieties of gifts (charismata), services and activities from the same Spirit. Ecumenical theological education is at the service of the people of God and must take these diversities into account but also the context in which people are living. The service rendered by the whole people of God must be relevant to the needs of the people in the church and in society. Different ministries have to be created in accordance with the needs of the people. This we see happening in the New Testament especially with Jesus whose ministries included teaching, preaching, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, counseling the grieving (pastoral care) etc. Ministry has to take its orientation from the challenges that people face in their given context. If we fail to engage in ecumenical theological education and to take the human condition seriously, the people of God will remain darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of ignorance and hardness of heart. People are bound to lose all sensitivity towards the suffering and needy and get greedy to engage in injustice and exploitation of others.

Critical awareness of the human condition, varieties of gifts, services and activities will affect the processes of ministerial formation. For instance, the process of equipping theologians and ministers must be evaluated periodically in order to meet the challenges confronting the church. Ministerial formation process must also take into account those who wish to share their God-given gifts which are otherwise excluded because they do not seek ministry of word and sacrament or because of their gender, ethnic background or physical disabilities. These God-given gifts need to be nurtured, improved and channeled into relevant services in any given situation.

However we should not lose sight of the centrality of prayer and guidance of the Holy Spirit in ecumenical theological education and ministerial formation. I do not just mean teaching doctrines on prayer and Holy Spirit, but serious engagement in prayer and searching the will of the Holy Spirit who discerns the gifts in the whole people of God. Doing this is following in the footsteps of Christ and his apostles from whom we have received the good news. Ecumenical theological education, prayer and guidance of the Holy Spirit will equip the people of God with renewed minds and new vision to be fully involved in the problems and battles of their world.

But we need leaders who are compassionate and have the vision of a better Africa. Quoting John Scott, George Kinoti reminds us: “Vision is a deep dissatisfaction with what is and a clear grasp of what could be. Vision begins with indignation over the status quo, and it grows into the earnest quest for an alternative. This combination we find in Jesus who was indignant over disease and death, and the hunger of the people, for he perceived these things as alien to the purpose of God.” The crisis of church leadership in many of our churches calls for a critical evaluation of ministerial formation processes in Africa today. In the Gikuyu language there is a saying: Iguthua ndongoria itikinyagira nyeki i.e.”if the leaders are limping the flock will not reach the green pastures”.

The Search for Authentic Ecumenical Theological Education

We have already alluded to the dependence of African theological education and ministerial formation on inherited structures from western Christendom. Dissatisfaction with the methods of missionary

5 Kinoti, op. cit., 68.
evangelization and its collaboration with colonial powers in some areas provoked African Christians to establish African Indigenous (Instituted) churches. These churches attempted to anchor Christianity in the African cosmos. According to Harvey J. Sindima: “The challenge that Indigenous Christianity has taken very seriously is to make Christianity authentically African. The process involves deep theological reflection. Indigenous churches have not only done this, but they have also put into practice the changes called forth by their theological reflection. Though unsophisticated in their approach, these Churches have posed a challenge to mission Churches to engage in the kind of theological thinking which will help to produce an authentic African Church”.

For a long time mission churches ignored the existence of the Indigenous churches and their struggle for independence from missionary mentality and colonial dominance. From the 1960s African theologians began to call and search for an authentic African theology and church. But this exercise has largely remained in the academic arena and the best it has produced are cosmetic changes, for example, some hymns sung to traditional tunes and instruments but no fundamental changes to the liturgy and models of ministries. In the book we have quoted above, Sindima has demonstrated the great damage caused by missionary thought and practice which was rooted in the Enlightenment: “The aim of the Enlightenment was to rid Christianity of myth and remain with truth only, and truth was that which could be discerned by pure reason ... When Christianity was brought to Africa, missionaries brought this baggage of the Enlightenment with them. The baggage became a stumbling block in their attempt to understand African life and world. Anything that could not be proven or was not logical according to their way of reasoning was superstition and evil”.

This approach towards the African way of life created the belief that anything African is inferior including the people themselves. Hence the need to hang on and look up to anything foreign especially if it comes from the North. Ecumenical theological education needs to address dependence which permeates all spheres of life in Africa today. During this process of developing ecumenical theological education for the whole people of God, we need to take seriously all the available resources beyond the God-given gifts that we bring to the church. Here I have in mind also the tools and methods of communicating the education we bring to the whole people of God. We should listen to the people and together search in their communities how best to share the information. Theologians, ministers and teachers should avoid imposing foreign tools and methods on the people.

I am reminded of the narrative story of David, King Saul and Goliath during the war between the Israelites and Philistines in 1 Samuel 17. David, a shepherd boy, was sent by his father to take provisions for his three brothers at the battle field. On arrival David got curious about Goliath, the Philistine giant whom no Israelite could dare approach. Despite his brother's anger and silencing, David got interested in fighting Goliath and word reached King Saul. Although he was young, David had the experience of fighting with lions and bears when they attacked his flock. King Saul allowed David to face Goliath but insisted on clothing David with his armour and strapped him with his sword. But David could not walk! In place of the armour and sword David pulled out his tools and with his boyish methods he killed the giant.

Another story in the Bible which is a challenge to us is the feeding of the five thousand men besides women and children (Mt 14:13-21, Mk 6:30-44, Jn 6:1-14). The key issue in this story is what the disciples had at hand! It did not even need to belong to the disciples, but come from the people themselves. What do we have? These stories should challenge every African that we need to draw on our many resources, and that we need to have confidence in ourselves and in God. Likewise theologians and ministers should not dismiss anyone because of their age or level of education. Together we should identify tools and methods that will enable us to develop Christian faith that will reach the people. The objective is to act with power

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6 Sindima. op. cit., 153.

which “cuts people to the heart.” (Acts 2: 6. 11) It is important to critically examine the way people communicate in their local communities which will enrich our learned skills and structures of theological education.

More important; theologians must develop ecumenical theological education together with the people in the pews. Elsewhere I have examined how theologians can work with local congregations to develop theology and ethics for the people, following the example of Ngugi wa Thiong’o, a leading Kenyan novelist and playwright who worked with a poor community to develop a musical play.8 The play *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)*9 was very powerful, the Kenyan government considered it subversive. Consequently, Ngugi wa Thiong’o was detained and the play was banned.

But the play taught many Kenyans how oppressive governments operate and how institutions including the church can become dominating and controlling. Wa Thiong’o used the local language of the people and later the play was translated into other languages. We have the skills and resources; all we need are creative and determined people.

The church (the whole people of God, not just the theologians) in Africa has to wrestle with the damage created by the negative image of the ‘dark continent’. Africans have internalized this negative image which has nurtured dependence in many aspects of our lives. Dependence has caused a lot of hardships and misery in Africa, a thing that ecumenical theological education needs to address. Dependence has distorted the image of Africa and African humanity. We should be able to affirm our humanity which is created in God’s image. Like the Psalmist we must shout with confidence:

> For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
> You knit me together in my mother’s womb.  
> I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
> Wonderful are your works;  
> That I know very well (Ps. 139:13-14)

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9 “Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Ngugi wa Mirii, I Will Marry When I Want”, translated from Gikuyu by authors (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1982).
(6) VIABILITY AND ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVES FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA: LEGACY AND NEW BEGINNINGS AS SEEN IN ETE/WCC

Dietrich Werner

Accra 1958 – The Concern for Ecumenical Theological Education, Rooted in the International Missionary Movement and Started on African Soil

I am grateful for this Joint Conference of Academic Societies for the Study of Religion and Theology in Stellenbosch University to provide some space for a major dialogue on the future of theological education in Africa and for interacting both with ecumenical partners and with leading theological educators from other African countries. As a European rather than an African, I am probably not well placed to speak on theological education in Africa, whilst so many real experts are assembled here who have much more in depth knowledge on this. But representing the program of Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) of WCC as the program coordinator I wondered whether I could provide the humble service of reminding us of some of the important insights and steps in the journey of dialogue on theological education in Africa which is part of the precious history of this programme which in 2008 celebrated fifty years of existence. In the following I will briefly highlight some six stations in the history of the WCC’s commitment to theological education in Africa through PTE/ETE which since five decades has always stood for contextuality in theological education, catholicity (ecumenicity) in theological education, spiritual formation in theological education and inter-contextual networking and exchange.

Let me begin by referring to two different statements on the realities of African Christianity which underline the enormous relevance of the issues of theological education in Africa we are dealing with today. John Pobee has argued: “Because Christianity is growing faster in Africa than in any other continents, the future of world Christianity may well depend on how African Christianity develops”.

John Baur, author of 2000 years of Christianity in Africa has argued: “The picture of the church in Africa after thirty years of ecumenical history is disappointing. What has been achieved is a general peaceful co-existence, but little cooperation and much less congruence. Almost nobody feels the urgency to go further, and it would be difficult to distribute the blame for this lethargy”.

The future of African Christianity is of strategic relevance for the future of world Christianity as a whole – the first conviction expressed. And: The actual stage of African Christianity and church unity in Africa still leaves a lot to improve and to wish for. Both statements for me point to the strategic importance of theological education for the future of African Christianity. Without proper theological education fragmentation and both ethnic and religious disunity will increase in African Christianity. Without proper theological education African Christianity cannot play the vital role it should play for the future of world Christianity.

Both convictions are close to some of the very early motives in the international missionary movement which developed a key concern for theological education in Africa already in its early years in the 20th century.

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1 Lecture during the Joint conference of Societies for Religious Studies and Theology in Stellenbosch, South Africa 2009, reprinted with kind permission from Missionalia Vol. 38, No 2, August 2010, 275-293
century, a development ending up with the foundation of its first visible programmatic expression on
African soil, the formation of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) in Accra, Ghana in 1958:

The concern for new models of education and theological formation is deeply rooted in the history of
the ecumenical movement, particularly in the history of the International Missionary Movement. Already
in Edinburgh 1910 there was an intense debate on the “lack of adequate ministerial training in the Younger
Churches” and it was emphasized, “that in no department of mission work are the efforts at present more
inadequate to the necessities of the case than in that of theological education.”

In particular there were two commissions in Edinburgh 1910 where there was an intense debate on theological education, namely
commission III (“Education in Relation to Christianization of National Life”) and commission V (“The
Preparation of Missionaries”). A decade later, in the 1920s, some of the outstanding missionaries like
Charles Ranson, the former British Methodist Indian missionary and later General Secretary of the IMC,
articulated the conviction that it would be essential for the future of the younger churches to train
indigenous persons for ministries and teaching responsibilities. The second world mission conference in
1928 in Jerusalem reiterated that the training of local pastors was grossly inadequate and demanded as a
catchphrase for the “Transfer of responsibility and authority to Younger Churches.”

It consequently was
the missionary movement that first established most of the poorly equipped colleges in churches and
countries of the South, humble beginnings of an educational revolution without which much of what
happened afterwards in terms of decolonialization, nation building, liberation and return to indigenous
traditions would have been unthinkable. Following some crucial recommendations of Tambaram Mission
conference in 1938 for the improvement of theological education in the Younger Churches a series of
detailed studies on the needs and challenges for theological education in Asia and in Africa was developed
in the years between 1941 and 1957, one of which was called “Surveys of the Training of the Ministry in
Africa and Madagascar” (between 1950 and 1957) in which, among others, S. Neill, C. Baeta and B.
Sundkler were involved. It was the International Missionary Council (IMC) – and not Faith and Order
which was regarded as the stronghold of all theology in the ecumenical movement – which drew some
strategic consequences for action out of these study surveys and took the step to structure the concern for
theological education programmatically.

The Ghana Assembly of IMC in 1958 received the series of critical surveys on theological education in
Asia and Africa which were started by Charles Ranson (General Secretary of IMC at that time) and
formulated as a consequence the action plan to create the so-called Theological Education Fund (TEF) as
the first institutionalized attempt to promote theological education with a major global fund. The major
goal of TEF was to promote creative indigenous leadership in the churches of the South and to support
“theological excellence” (which at this time certainly still was understood primarily in terms of copying
Western standards). It was by a major grant of J.D. Rockefeller – the same man who had donated for the
founding of the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey/Geneva – that the creation of TEF was achieved. His
remarkable donation of 2 million US$ which were given on the condition that within two years mission
societies would raise the similar amount sparked off a remarkable history of solidarity in global theological
education which lasted for some 50 years. The three distinctive dimensions or concerns in the
understanding of the overarching goals of TEF’s work were

• Quality of theological education combining intellectual rigor, spiritual maturity and commitment

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5 Christine Lienemann-Perrin, Training for a Relevant Ministry: A Study of the Contribution of the Theological
6 Christine Lienemann-Perrin, Training for a Relevant Ministry, 6.
7 Christine Lienemann-Perrin, Training for a Relevant Ministry, 9ff.
• **authenticity** involving critical encounter with each cultural context in the design, purpose and shape of theological education

• **creativity** of theological education, understood as promoting new approaches of the churches obedience in mission.

Already in the TEF committee meeting in 1960 in Edinburgh a “Special Program for Theological Education in Africa” was launched which focused on “1) strengthening a limited number of theological schools, 2) assisting many theological school libraries, and 3) developing theological literature and aiding the “increased use of Africans as faculty members of theological schools”.” A crucial role in this early program of TEF for Africa was played by Desmond Tutu who belonged to the core staff of the Theological Education Fund between 1962 and 1966.

In its three Mandate periods the Theological Education Fund has promoted different strategic objectives all related to the major aim of an indigenous or contextualized theological education in the churches of the South. It might be helpful just briefly to recall the key phases which all had it’s own characteristic emphasize:

• **First Mandate period 1958-1965**: emphasis on indigenous and interdenominational places and institutions for theological education in the South

• **Second Mandate period 1965-1970**: emphasis on new curricula developments for the churches of the South and new teaching materials written by leading theologians from the South

• **Third Mandate period 1970 to1977**: critique over against western concepts of theological education and major calls for contextualization of both forms of ministry and forms of theological education in the South.

If one reads the fascinating history of TEF which was published by Christine Lienemann one cannot easily overestimate the role which TEF and its subsequent institutional forms have played for developing a certain number of increasingly high qualified institutions of theological education in the South. An overall history of theological education institutions in Africa as supported by TEF in these early decades still needs to be written – a wealth of resources is waiting in WCC-TEF archives to be brought to light and researched about.

Some of the key studies coming from TEF and early PTE programs were around various aspects of ‘Contextualization in theological education’ – which became a key concept in the 70s (see publications like “Ministry in Context”, “Learning in Context”, “Viability in Context”). These years were also the birthplace of the new concept of Theological Education by Extension (TEE) which was first introduced in the PTE publication on “Learning in Context – the search for innovative patterns in theological education” in which Ross Kinsler reported about concepts of non-residential grass-roots theological education programs for lay leaders and theologians in Guatemala, but later was also brought to Africa.

### Nairobi 1976 – Ecumenical Key Convictions on the Strategic Role of Theological Education for Liberation and Development in Church and Society

The Nairobi Assembly was the first WCC assembly on African soil and was focusing on the liberative and uniting dimension of the work of Jesus Christ (“Jesus Christ frees and unites”). The emergence of contextual theologies from the South was in the air, the revolution in education and pedagogy was debated.

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8 TEF Committee Minutes Edinburgh 1960, Theological Education Fund Committee minutes, Edinburgh 1960, (WCC Archives), 30.


*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
A whole section dealt with “education and renewal in search of true community”. The Theological Education Fund by this time had become an integral part of WCC, particularly the Commission of World Mission and Evangelism, which since the integration of IMC and WCC in 1961 was carrying on the tasks of the global missionary movement within WCC.\(^1\)

The formulation of the core mandate of PTE program in 1977 clearly can be seen as reflecting the spirit and thrust of a liberative and contextual approach in both theology and pedagogy in the midst of the 1970s. PTE was asked to give attention to “the influence of the context and culture of theology and ministerial training and practices, 2) the need to liberate theological education and ministerial formation and practices from bondages which hamper faithfulness in their life and witness; 3) and cross-cultural discussion of key aspects of theological education.”\(^12\) The fascinating 30 years history of the journal of the WCC program on Theological Education (PTE) which was called “Ministerial Formation” and started in 1976 by Ross Kinsler can be seen as a proper reflection and unfolding of the spirit of liberation and contextualization in theology and education in these years. With the growing influence and discovery of development education emphasized by programs like CCPD these years also brought the formulation of “ecumenical learning” as a key concept to be explored and promoted in theological education.

Without being able to summarize all of what the period between Nairobi 1975 and Vancouver 1983 has brought in terms of a new common conviction about the urgency for a new commitment for ecumenical theological education some 9 key convictions might be formulated briefly as an inner core of WCC’s commitment to theological education from these years and beyond. This broad ecumenical consensus on the understanding and relevance of an ecumenical orientation in theological education can be characterized as follows:

1. Theological education is **the most essential key and strategic factor for the renewal of the churches life and mission.** Without proper and relevant theological education the very future of the Christian church, its dialogue with society and its participation in the daily struggles and longings of ordinary people is endangered; the less churches and their leaders are investing in theological education the more the future of Christianity will be left to those who promote a distorted image of Christian identity and endanger dialogue and co-existence with other churches as well as other religious traditions. Theological education thus is vital for the transmission of Christian tradition from one generation to the other and essential for the renewal and continuity of the church and its leadership. Theological education is a matter of survival for an authentic and contextual mission of the church in contemporary contexts.

2. Theological education is **crucial for the interaction between church and society** where many issues demand for a sharpened stand and position of Christianity. This has become a commonly held conviction both in western and eastern Christianity, in both the churches of the South and the churches of the North. The role of theological education is never limited just to training Christian ministers. With all legitimate attention and emphasis on ministerial formation the road and inclusive approach emphasizing theological education as a process of renewal and formation for all God’s people always needs to be kept in mind.

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\(^12\) Pobee, “Education”, 387.

*Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa*
3. Theological education is deepening biblical knowledge and the capacity to distinguish and to assess the different spirits and ideologies in order to discern God’s working in this world. More knowledge and awareness in the basic understanding of Christian faith is a vital contribution for the identity of Christian churches today and the lay involvement in church and society.

4. There are grave differences in the accessibility and quality of theological education programs in different parts of the world, therefore equal access to theological education (between rural and urban areas, lay and ordained, men and women, young and old) is a key issue for all churches. In some countries there are more institutions of theological education than a decreasing number of theological students can fill. In other countries despite fast growing local congregations only one or in some cases none theological colleges are available to offer BD, Master of Divinity or even Doctoral programs in theology. There is a need for a major step forwards in terms of bridging the divide between churches and countries with extremely different standards and availabilities of theological education programs.

5. Ecumenical theological education and broad based ecumenical formation is a vital priority for the changed landscape of Christianity in the 21st century and the continuation of the ecumenical movement (a conviction affirmed again by the assembly of WCC in Porto Alegre 2006). Without an increased commitment in theological education for ecumenical dialogue and cooperation, the unity of the church, its holistic mission and service in today’s world and dialogue with people of other faiths, we might see an increased fragmentation of world Christianity. Growing trends of religious fundamentalism and a severe lack of properly trained Christian leadership in many fast growing churches in the southern hemisphere demand for more investments in infrastructure and programs of theological education.

6. Theological education is not only serving the building up the church, but also is creating social awareness, political discernment, social involvement and Christian participation in transformation processes of societies. Thus investing in theological education is a direct investment also into social and political development and transformation of society and the raising of its educational levels.

7. The only proper remedy against religious fundamentalism is investment in education. Lack of education and theological formation often is one of the root causes for ignorance over against other cultures, religious traditions and special social contexts. Churches which take seriously their responsibility for theological education of lay people and future ministers and exercise a proper sense of ownership and support of the churches to all levels of academic and non-academic theological education are better equipped to counteract trends towards religious fundamentalism and communal tensions in their own regions and worldwide.

8. In quite a number of churches women still do not have equal rights and access to theological education and can enter into the ordained ministry of the churches. Ecumenical theological education since long has particularly promoted the theological education of women in theology, for ministry and various fields of pastoral work within the church. A renewed and transformed of the community of women and men in the church and their mutual enrichment in the different ministries of the church can be greatly enhanced by theological education programs.

9. Globalization and acceleration of technological and communication progress as well as deteriorating standards of human rights and Christian ethos in many issues of the global world today is demanding for more theological and ethical expertise in a number of crucial areas of social, medical and political ethics. It is only theological education which enables churches as well as Christians in civil society to face new challenges and social demands of the churches in the context of globalization and radical ethical challenges. Many issues like bioethics, ecology, migration or inherited patterns of social discrimination of marginalized groups demand for forms of
interdisciplinary knowledge and expertise for which high-level forms of interdisciplinary dialogue and quality theological education is vital.

Accra 1986: Theological Education in Africa: Quo Vadimus?

A decade after Nairobi a major new initiative for theological education in Africa was coming from PTE which has become known as the Accra 1986 consultation: Theological Education in Africa: Quo Vadimus? 90 theological educators from Africa and partner organizations in Europe and America came together in Accra in cooperation with the West African Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI) to discuss the question “What kind of Church and what kind of Theological Education would be relevant to the African context?” which at that time had become aware of the fact that the center of gravity of Christianity definitely had shifted towards the South and the future should be with African Christianity. Four major themes were dealt with

1. Theology, Theological Education and the Church
2. Continuity and Change in Theological Education
3. Ecumenical Perspectives and Dimensions in Theological Education and
4. Funding of Theological Education.¹³

Key proposals of the conference such as the creation of an African Ministerial Fund, the creation of a Centre for Women’s Concerns in Africa and an Africa – Asia exchange program of at least 10 theological educators were asked and recommended to be followed up by CATI, the Conference of African Theological Institutions.

It is not possible to review the tremendous wealth of insights represented from well-known and distinguished African theologians during this conference (like Archbishop Makhulu, Bishop Peter Sarpong, Mercy Oduoye, Ambrose Moyo, Kwesi Dickson or Michael Bame Bame). But it is still worth noting what was criticized and what was recommended in the final message of the consultation:

According to this consultation in most of African churches and theological education in Africa it is still prevailing

- a) the disparity between the context as well as the methodology of theological education and the context of people’s life characterized by continuous exploitation, political instability etc.
- b) the apparent lack of commitment on the part of theological institutions to the on-going mission of the Church, in providing leadership in spiritual formation and the renewal of liturgical life of the Church
- c) the elitism in church ministry and theological education which not only excludes part of the people of God such as women, but also enervates the Church by depriving her of the full richness of the ministry
- d) the resurgence of denominationalism even within united theological colleges largely due to the unclear ecumenical commitment of the churches.

The message from Accra 1986 goes on to positively recommend and to affirm

- the need for relevant theological education for all God’s people to enable them to be involved in ministry. In this regard churches and theological educators are invited to reckon seriously with the complex and varied nature of the African context as well as theologizing in local languages;

¹³ Reports from the Accra Conference ‘Theological Education in Africa: Quo Vadimus?’ 21-27 July Accra, Ghana, can be found in Ministerial Formation 35 (1986), 2ff (full thematic issue on the Accra conference; the Accra message to the churches, African theological colleges and associations of theological institutions can be found pp38-41) and in the report which was published as Theological Education in Africa: Quo Vadimus? ed. by John Pobee and J.N. Kudadjie, (Geneva: Asempa Publishers, Accra, 1990).
- that the traditional residential forms have proven totally inadequate for the overall theological education needs of the churches in Africa and so alternate relevant forms have to be created;
- that we already enjoy a unity in the common humanity of our peoples which we seek to visibly express in Africa (and therefore) the need for a more unified common theological reflection in the teaching of religion, be it Islam, Christianity or traditional African religions, in universities and theological seminaries is affirmed;
- that there is a need for new content and methods for theological education in the light of particular political, economic and multi-faith factors of the global village we live in;
- that ecumenism is affirmed through the informal structures of education as well as through formal courses in colleges and seminaries.¹⁴

One of the most far-reaching proposals of that conference which apparently has not received much follow-up but still is worth considering is the recommendation to set up an *African Ministerial Formation Fund (AMFF)* to give a start to the African Churches and institutions in their effort to be self-reliant as a measure of their growing maturity in Christ. The Fund is to be owned by the African churches and CATI. The Fund is in respect of specific objectives and is to be invested not only in Africa but also in the North.

The reasons given for the proposed creation of this fund are interesting to note. Apart from referring to the gradual shift of the center of gravity of Christianity to Africa the consultation affirmed: “If theological education is the bedrock of the church, then it becomes the responsibility of all churches, especially the more affluent, to help to ensure the security and survival of African churches as much as of the world church. In that sense the support for AMFF is a kind of investment in the future of the world church itself. At present most of the financial support of the churches in Africa by the partners is more ad hoc responses rather than strategic giving. Thus the proposed AMFF is an attempt to introduce some rationality into the funding patterns with regard to African theological education. It is as well a challenge to the partners to pursue a policy of strategic giving.”¹⁵

There were seven key areas listed in which Africa Ministerial Formation Fund should give and channel strategic support:

1. leadership formation programs
2. women in theological education project
3. literature development
4. library development
5. theological curriculum development in Africa
6. advanced theological studies in Africa program
7. alternative and innovative patterns of theological education program.

The proposal was transferred to CATI and its general secretary Msamba ma Mpolo for implementation and follow up. It would be interesting to know what has happened to this proposal since then and whether at any stage there was a serious attempt to call together a major group of both funding partners and African associations of theological schools to do some serious explorations around this proposal again.

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Moffat Mission, Kuruman, Northern Cape Province 1995:
Renewal out of Africa – Viability in Ecumenical Theological Education

Some ten years later in 1995 a major consultation was held in Moffat Mission, Kuruman, Northern Cape Province which brought together theological educators from many parts of Africa and tried to articulate a new confidence on “the renewing power and promise of Africa’s spiritual and human resources”. It was part of the ETE launched global study process on “viability in theological education” which led to the Oslo World Conference on Theological Education in 1996. In the report from John de Gruchy it is stated: “The ancient Romans were aware that something new always comes out of Africa. Our report is entitled “Renewal out of Africa” because we believe that Africa’s pain bears witness to the message of the cross that new life can only be born through suffering and because we have experienced the renewing power and promise of Africa's spiritual and human resources.”

At the heart of the conference message there is a vision for a renewed African Christianity:

Africa provides fresh metaphors for theology (our understanding of God). One metaphor which spoke to us in Kuruman was that of God as the root of the human tree with its many and diverse branches all of which belong together and draw sustenance from the same source. African sculpture often depicts the intertwined character of human society in which all members are organically related in their need, their solidarity, and their sharing. For Africans, sin is essentially the breaking of such bonds and redemption, their healing. African spirituality and worship have a distinct character which expresses this vision of Christian faith and community. It is a spirituality which is joyous and spontaneous, a spirituality of solidarity in suffering, a spirituality integrated fully into daily life.

Four aspects to the renewing vision of African Christianity may be identified. It is:

• An holistic vision: beyond dualisms of gender, body/soul/mind, spiritual/material; visible/invisible.
• A healing vision: transforming the human, social and ecological condition.
• A communal vision: stressing and celebrating the human family tree of interrelatedness and partnership.
• An ecumenical vision: inclusive of all confessions, denominations, people of other faiths; recognizing all God's children created in God's image.

As a consequence of this a commitment for Ecumenical Theological Education in Africa is formulated:

Given the needs of Africa, ecumenical theological formation (ETF) is vital if the church is to witness to the reign of God and participate in God's redemptive mission in Africa. ETF is demanded by biblical ecclesiology; by the multi-faith character of the continent; and by the need to share resources. We are particularly concerned that ETF embrace those traditions which have such a long history and rich tradition in Africa, notably Coptic Christianity and Ethiopian Orthodoxy; but we are also committed to pursuing our vision in company with African Initiated Churches, Pentecostals, and those Evangelicals who were not represented amongst us. ETF in Africa must give special attention to the need for dialogue between Christianity-Islam-African Traditional Religion because of their dominance throughout the region. But other faiths (e.g. Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism) which are numerically smaller should be warmly included in such dialogue in terms of African concerns. We are deeply aware that there are strong anti-ecumenical forces operative in Africa as elsewhere in the world. Part of the legacy of the missionary movement in Africa has been the proliferation of denominations, and this has been exacerbated by the rapid growth of independent church groups initiated within Africa itself. Denominationalism is a powerful reality, and the creation of denominational structures and pursuit of denominational interests often continue to undermine ecumenical endeavour. Some churches and leaders, even though they may belong to the World Council of Churches and other regional ecumenical organizations, are hesitant and suspicious and do not

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16 Conference message from Accra, see John Pobee and J.N. Kudadjie, Theological Education in Africa: Quo Vadimus?, 176ff.

Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa
encourage ecumenism. This is a major obstacle to ETF. There are also many Christian missionaries and church groups which are ideologically anti-ecumenical and right-wing.

The “Renewal out of Africa statement” formulated a comprehensive list of perspectives and urgencies in the framework of an ecumenical understanding of theological education in Africa, defined as bringing together catholicity and contextuality of theological education, demanding for

- a new responsibility of theological education for the whole of the laos, the people of God
- for a new dialogue with African Independent churches
- for commitment of theological education to issues of practical theology
- for a continuous curriculum reform focusing on African religious heritage, new forms of ministry in African Independent churches;
- for new attention to gender issues and social and ethical questions surrounding human sexuality.
- for more efforts in financial viability in theological education.

Thus this consultation was strong in unfolding again the ecumenical vision of African Christianity which needs to be supported and prepared by African theological education. But it was less strategic in terms of recommendations for follow up. It was proposed to “establish a task force to develop a strategic plan for the region and sub-regions which will give concreteness to our vision. We will present this plan to the global consultation and to our ecumenical partners indicating our priorities and financial needs”.

The recommendations were both forwarded to the WCC and AACC to be acted upon. But it is not clear immediately how the follow up of such a vast and broad agenda could be managed concretely in the years to follow.

### Kempton Park, Lutheran Conference Centre, Gauteng Province 2002: Journey of Hope in Africa – Plan of Action

A new emphasis on a concrete “plan of action” could be felt seven years later when in Kempton Park, South Africa, a major conference of African representatives of theological education and stakeholders from Africa, Europe and North America took place which came together to “reflect together and critically evaluate theological education and ecumenical formation in Africa and to formulate together strategies for action”.

The initiative was part of the so-called “Journey of Hope”, which took a crucial step with the Harare Covenant of Africans both from the continent and the Diaspora at the WCC 8th (Jubilee) Assembly held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1998 and which called for “a new vision of life for our people in Africa and for the rest of the world.”

In the consultation several programs of WCC were involved in planning and organizing, the WCC Education and Ecumenical Formation Programme, the Africa Desk of WCC and the Council-wide Framework on Special Focus on Africa. The major goal was to initiate a critical evaluation of the theological education and ecumenical formation as part of the interactive process to embark on the Journey of Hope of African Churches and people to make a difference on the continent in the 21st century.

There is an impressive and comprehensive list of commitments made which is part of the plan for action (reprinted below). Among them four commitments probably have made a tangible impact on the period following after 2002:

1. the commitment to support and assist the establishment of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians which since then has greatly encouraged the participation of women in theological education and research and made their voices more heard;
2. the commitment “to take on board, concerns of our communities such as violence, HIV/AIDS and other killer diseases, gender issues, NEPAD and ecumenism” amongst which mainly all issues
relating to HIV/AIDS have become a major issue in the ETE based initiative for HIV/AIDS mainstreaming of theological education in Africa which is now carried forward by EHAIA.

3. and the commitment to “addressing concerns of people with disabilities (who are physically challenged), such as incorporating sign languages subjects in our Theological curriculum” a call which has been answered vigorously by EDAN network in cooperation also with ETE/WCC

4. finally the commitment to “supporting and encouraging the networking of all TEE institutions in Africa in their efforts to sharing materials and standardizing their qualifications”. This recommendation to some extent was answered by the first All African TEE conference which was held one year later as All Africa TEE Conference, August 23-29, 2003 in Ankrah Conference Centre, Mukono Uganda and which led to the formation of the All African Network for Theological Education by Extension which is also now led by Dr. Kangwa Mabuluki.

It should be mentioned explicitly that much of what has been achieved in these years following and preceeding the Journey of Hope – Action plan for theological education in Africa was due to the committed work of Nyambura Njoroge, Program Coordinator of ETE until early 2007 and now in charge of the EHAIA program of WCC.17

Again the question remains: Who monitored the ongoing implementation of these plans and what were the proper channels and instrument effecting change and transformation in the institutions of theological education during this period?


The last station in this brief review of initiatives and major conferences related to theological education in Africa from the perspective of PTE/ETE program in WCC is referring to the AACC Assembly last year in Maputo. During the AACC Assembly in Mozambique, Maputo, a major new initiative was launched supported by various ecumenical partners amongst which ETE/WCC was a major part: Due to the sustained efforts by a committed team and the new regional consultant for African theological education (since 2008) from ETE, Dr. Tharcisse Gatwa, an African Theological Institute was held which brought together some 100 theological students from a wider variety of Christian churches in Africa. This was a visible expression already of a fresh concern for theological education in the new mandate period of AACC. The report of the African Theological Institute revealed an enormous interest and enthusiasm of African theological students to be brought together into ecumenical dialogue on a continental level and to meet with former leaders of the ecumenical movement in Africa.18

For the Post-Maputo working era of AACC it was made clear that whilst in recent years AACC has functioned without theological department, the General Secretary after Maputo underlined the fact that theology must be the foundation of every program and activities undertaken by AACC. The 2009-2013


AACC program as presented to a Nairobi meeting with ecumenical partners therefore outlines a plan of action which will be carried out under the supervision of the General Secretary in six major departments: Empowering and Capacity Building; Theology and Interfaith relations; Peace, Healing and Reconciliation; Finance/Administration and resource Development; The Lome Regional Office; the Addis/AU Liaison Office. During an international partners meeting of AACC in Nairobi in April 2009 Dr Karamaga said in introducing the central role of the Theology and Interfaith Relations department, that it will be expected to meet four challenges:

• the Search for Unity of a divided continent and of divided Christian community;
• the restoration of human dignity and image of God to many people of this continent who have lost hope, dignity and confidence in themselves and in the institutions;
• the engagement in a pilgrim for peace and harmony and in particular, for AACC, to articulate the spiritual basis of peace as a gift from Jesus;
• to focus on the ecumenical formation of young generations of theologians and leaders for churches and ecumenical movement.

The new AACC theological vision therefore is to promote contextual theology based on emerging issues in each sub-region of the continent, facilitate theological movement to enable a better future and well being of the members.

Clearly, what is sought is to organize the “theological intelligence” of the continent for new initiatives in mission and evangelism to emerge including contextual theology and ecumenical movement that will edify Christian thought locally and worldly. It is an engagement intended to make the kingdom of God-justice, peace and joy- available to all and to worship the God of life, life in its fullness.

Specific objectives were added to enhance the overall objective. These include: developing African theological literature; revitalizing African associations of theological schools; initiating a mechanism for financial self-reliance of the associations of theological schools; initiating centers for theological reflection to inform every intervention, action and engagement of the church; organizing theological publications accessible to both theological institutions and communities; developing theological library; organizing electronic communication as tools of networking and training for young theologians; promoting interfaith dialogue; revisiting ways of worship, and seeking ways sermons and exhortations can promote holistic well being of the people; providing space for young theologians for short term engagement and exposure to ecumenical experience through AACC; working with an advisory group comprising representatives of networking organizations.

To achieve the above goals the following activities will be carried out by the theological department:

1. to organize a master continental plan for theological education;
2. to elaborate a plan of joint writers process for handbooks in theological, social sciences and ecumenism;
3. to accompany the network of young theologians initiated during the 9th assembly;
4. to fund raise for a theological education fund in Africa in cooperation with partners and establish a global fund for theological education in Africa with the priority for theological studies at Master and Ph.D. Degrees.
5. to assist in developing curricula on thematic areas of new challenges (ethnicity, ecumenism, missiology, bioethics, HIV/AIDS; Climate change). To assist in developing quality teaching methodologies in theological education.
6. building up African theological digital library resources in cooperation with among others: Globethics.net, Princeton and Yale.
7. To organize encounters between young theologians to strengthen the sense of belonging and solidarity among them. To produce a periodical on Cutting Edge theological issues accessible to leaders and ministers.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
8. To provide space at AACC for ongoing theological reflection among elder ecumenists and young theologians.
9. To organize encounters and interactions to bring about healthy collaboration between Christian and Islamic theologians.¹⁹

**Crucial Questions at the End: How to Organize an Effective Process of Transformation and Quality Improvement for Theological Education on the Africa Continent?**

It has become clear that there are both enormous challenges for the future of African theological education, but also there are vast materials for forming a proper agenda for transformation and quality improvement and some key recommendations at hand for the promotion of ecumenical theological education in this context. But do we also have appropriate instruments for transformation, tools for strategizing, and proper mechanisms for networking which would allow mere recommendations and visions to be translated into an effective, inclusive and participatory process of real transformation in theological education in Africa?

Theological education in Africa and ecumenical cooperation in theological education still have major historical and contextual challenges to cope with resulting from the specific landscape of African Christianity like

**The Ambivalent Heritage of the 19th Century Evangelical Missions Era in Africa**

The very fact that much of the Church in Africa was born out of the missionary movement that characterized the history of the Church in Europe and America in the 19th century still has a profound impact on the ecumenical situation of African Christianity. The evangelical awakening which shaped the renewal of Christianity in Europe in 18th and 19th century has left its deep marks also on African Christianity, the zeal to propagate Christianity to all nations, the focusing on the individual conversion, the interest to promote education and a personal piety and a predominant lack of attention to social and political dimensions of the Gospel.²⁰ Europe transplanted a divided church onto Africa and made Africa a battlefield of Protestants over against Catholics, fundamentalists and liberals. It remained one of the most weakening factors of the missionary movement that it not only transplanted Western Christianity, but also unbroken Western denominationalism onto Africa – because African people were split up even more than they were split up already. Hostility between different mission agencies was transferred also to the different believers. Thus the departure of newly won converts to rival missions was often viewed with the same sense of loss and failure as that occasioned by the backsliding of local Christians into paganism. The few examples of missionary organizations which were already ecumenical in practice and orientation (like LMS and British and Foreign Bible Society) did not outweigh the general trend of denominational fragmentation which continues to leave its marks on theological education until today.

**The Historical Conflicts Between Protestant and Catholic Missions in Africa**

In African mission history rivalry and conflicts were most severe and bitterly distorted by mistrust, hatred and open aggression between Protestants and Catholics in many places. Catholic evangelization saw paganism, slavery, human sacrifice, Protestantism and Islam as root evils to be uprooted. Protestant mission on the other hand considered Catholicism or what they called “Popism” at that period as worse.

than Muslims. There are deplorable stories of hatred and open aggressions reported from late 19th century
mission work in Uganda where Protestants and Catholics turned into two warring groups each viewing
itself as the only true church of Jesus Christ and leading to a great civil war which only was ended with a
British Protectorat over the country in 1904 and a peaceful division into spheres of Protestant and Roman
Catholic influence. As a consequence, the denominational divide was continued into the formation of
different political parties which reflected the Catholic-Protestant divide, the Uganda Peoples Congress
which is Protestant (nicknamed United Protestants of Canterbury), and the Democratic Party which was
Catholic (nicknamed Dini ya Papa, religion of the Pope). Thus the most important thing and greatest move
forward for African ecumenism was the impact of Vatican II which enabled Anglican and Catholic
Churches in Sudan to develop the Sudanese Council of Churches, later followed by similar National
Councils in Namibia, Uganda (1963 Formation of Joint Christian Council), Swaziland, Liberia and
Lesotho. But the consequences for joint cooperation in theological education between Protestant and
Catholic Churches are not yet fully drawn and the scope which is offered by the Ecumenical Directory or
the 1996 declaration of the Joint Working Group between WCC and the Secretariat for Promoting
Christian Unity in the Vatican on “Ecumenical Learning in Theological Education” is not always known
and realized.

The Emergence of African Independent Churches (AICs)

It is widely known that due to the colonial history and the interrelation between colonial and mission
history many of the historic protestant churches for some still look foreign to African culture and
oppressive to the realities of African life and communities. The emergence of African Instituted Churches
represents a response to this foreignness aiming at liberation from colonial domination and providing a
place to really feel at home as African Christians. Particularly in South Africa where before independence
black people had no means of political action or other outlet of expression, save through the church, the
formation of African Independent Churches was a form of political action against oppressive forces. The
more European missionaries had kept Africans in subordination the more this has led to the formation of
African Instituted churches which asserted their autonomy from European ecclesiastical and political
control. But the historic alliance between Christian mission, health care and (higher) education which has
marked Protestantism doesn’t take the same shape in the life and mission of AICs. The majority of AIC-
leaders are without formal theological education. There are other forms of theological learning and
expression. But the question is how to develop new forms of theological education which are attractive and
accessible to members of AICs.

The Emergence of Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches

Though there is some area of overlapping the emergence and continuous growth of charismatic movements
and Pentecostal churches in Africa in the second half of the 20th century is a phenomenon which has some
impact not only on the composition of the theological student community (a sizable number now coming
from charismatic renewal and Pentecostal churches) but also on the content of the theological curriculum
which should be in some correspondence to the background of students and their religious experiences.

The Realities of Massive Migration and the Emergence of African Diaspora Churches

No other continent than Africa has so many refugees and migrants who either forced or decide voluntarily
to leave one’s own home country and to seek theological education in a different context and culture than
one’s own. How are the impacts of migration on theological education in Africa reflected sociologically,
methodologically and theologically? What are the repercussions of African Diaspora churches and the Diaspora community of theological educators on theological education on the African continent?

We would like to end this short survey with some eight open questions on how to organize an effective process of transformation for theological education in Africa – which hopefully can inspire the future dialogue on developing theological education in Africa:

1. What are the proper agents of change in theological education in Africa? What are the proper partners to be involved in a consolidated process towards renewal of theological education in Africa in order to have a long lasting impact and not just a mere repetition of verbal recommendations?

2. What kind of role can and should regional associations of theological education play in the process towards renewal of theological education in Africa (in the area of improving ecumenical cooperation, quality standards and common curriculum planning)? What is it that can make African associations of theological schools more viable, stable and effective?

3. What efforts can be made to develop regional or national master plans for the future of theological education in Africa? What role does strategic, future-oriented and common planning have for the future of African theological education in different national and regional contexts?

4. What is the role of the different regional systems and institutions of theological education in Africa over against each other in terms of support, cooperation, exchange of students, teachers and curriculum plans and free-place arrangements? (for instance the role of theological education institutions in South Africa for other African countries)

5. What expectations do churches, universities, academic communities have over against the future of theological education in Africa? How do churches assess and articulate their needs for theological education in Africa and for which model of theological education preferences are given in a given context and for what kind of reasons (Bible Schools; de-centralized TEE programs; church-related theological seminaries; privately funded Christian universities; publicly funded state universities)?

6. What role can African women theologian’s networks play to provide encouragement, support and further incentives for younger women theologians particularly in church settings where there still is no sufficient representation and participation of women in church leadership and theological education?

7. As African Christianity is predominantly young in age which models can be explored to facilitate inter-generational learning in theological education and the creation of a new generation of young Christian leaders for the 21st century?

8. And finally: Which models, mechanism and suitable channels can be envisaged for financial viability of theological education in Africa? Should the proposal for a major African Ministerial Formation Fund be taken up and/or reformulated under the conditions of today? Could there be something like an African Theological Education Fund located in AACC into which major ecumenical partners would be contribute in order to allow for more multi-lateral sharing and interdenominational support for theological education for fast growing Christianity in the African continent?

To close this brief and tentative survey: In a period of weakening global ecumenical structures and programmes WCC-ETE is committed to provide help and assistance to AACC and other relevant African partners to explore building up a reliable and strong ETE Africa program in a joint effort with key theological education institutions, functioning associations of theological schools and with key stakeholders which share an awareness of the urgency and strategic needs for strengthening theological education in Africa.

Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa
Christian education in Africa is at a cross roads. From its original inception within western models and systems of education, ministerial formation was done in small biblical colleges operating on a residential model. Because the idea of adapting education in general, and theological education in particular to the growing needs of a growing church was never manifested, Jesus’ proclamation that “the harvest is great but the harvesters are few” is crucial to the mission of the church in the South. The shift of Christian demography towards the global south poses a new challenge to Christianity here, as it is called to undertake a global responsibility to share the West’s burden of secularisation. The question is whether the vitality of the church in the South is mature and well informed enough to undertake such a global mission, including the revitalisation of Christian faith in the North. This author suggests that as far back as the 1950s, Africans had started to question a Christianity that stood like a western implant on African soil. A number of initiatives began to be taken by young theologians from different streams of Christianity to address issues of inculturation of the gospel, identity and autonomy; however the efforts have not been consistent and sustainable enough to nurture a long term project. To undertake the journey, African Christianity will need to revisit the curricula, taking into consideration a theology of healing the memories of the African people, and revisit the systems and models of education to make them more contextual.

Christianity is growing rapidly in Africa and many other regions of the Southern hemisphere. This has resulted in widespread suggestions by theologians such as Walls, Jenkins, and Bediako that Christianity in the South must undertake a new mandate aimed at carrying out a transcultural global mission.1

Mbiti, Walls, Bediako, Jenkins and others suggested that the centres of the church’s universality were no longer in Geneva, Rome, Athens, Paris, London or New York, but in Lagos, Buenos Aires, Kinshasa, Addis Ababa and Manila.2 As Western Christianity struggled to survive secularisation, a result of damaging ideologies that underlay different revolutions, the churches in the South demonstrated extraordinary vitality demographically and spiritually, with people of all ages and classes attending church activities and Sunday services.

Andrew Walls explores conditions of the missionary expansion in the world.3 After reminding us of the continuity of the presence of Christianity in Africa from the apostolic missionary movement, Walls describes Edinburgh 1910 as being a landmark in the understanding of the modern ecumenical and missionary movement, reminding us that “Christianity began the 20th century a Western religion but ended

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the century as a non-Western religion”. The then forgotten Latin America and Africa, dismissed as the soil of “cultures unfertile to the Gospel”, have now become the home of the movement of religious and theological experiments. Fifty years ago, Western Christianity was the only source of missionaries and resources for the missionary movement. Christianity is characterised by advances, recessions, retreat, and withering. Yemen, Syria, Jerusalem, Egypt, Libya, Carthage, and North Africa, once Christian lands, are today the monopoly of Islam. In Europe, many “unwanted churches have been turned into garages, furniture stores, night clubs”, mosques and theatre halls.

More and more then, voices are mounting, requesting that the global south send rescuers to Western Christianity. This may be a prophetic call for Christianity first conceptualised on the African land. It is no surprise therefore that the South plays a significant role at the crossroads. However, it must be recognised that Christianity in the South, Africa in particular, remains fragile. Adding to the incapacity to affirm its missionary identity, to adapt to rapid mutations and to learn from history is the weaknesses of its theological education. Several thousand new members may join the church every single day, yet this contribution argues that Christianity in the South is a giant standing on clay legs. And because of that, global pretensions from an impoverished South to undertake a missionary journey worldwide may be perceived as a threat towards the “first world”.

A Global Mission or a Global Threat from the South?

While many observers view the growth and strength of Christianity in the South as an opportunity for the revival of Christianity, some researchers, including Jenkins, perceive it as a threat to the rich North. Jenkins is concerned with the disappearance of Christianity amongst the population and countries of Caucasian stock. By 2050, he points out, of the seventeen countries whose population will be over 100 million, only the United States and Russia will be of Caucasian stock. Further, amongst the twenty-five most populated countries at that period with a population over 70 million, the United States, Russia, Germany and Japan will be the only present-day industrialized countries on the list. The largest Christian communities in 2050 will be in the United States, with an estimated Christian population of 330 million, mostly within the Latino and the Asian populations.

Jenkins is convinced that a threat from the global south is hanging over the West like the sword of Damocles; the growing demography of the South, even amongst Christians, is a serious threat. The North is at risk of being invaded by the South; hungry and less technically developed. This, he expresses in terms of an Armageddon of ethnico-religious conflicts causing imbroglio in countries like Cameroon, Congo, Uganda, Sudan, Nigeria and Chad. He presents a similar situation for Asia, where he argues that an ethnico-religious war in predominantly Muslim countries such as Malaysia or Indonesia targeting a Chinese Christian minority would inevitably trigger the intervention of China to protect their kin. If that

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6 Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*.
7 Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*.
8 In 2050, the Christian population in Brazil will be 195 million; Mexico will be 145 million; the Philippines will be 145 million; Nigeria will be 123 million; the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be 121 million; Ethiopia will be 79 million; Russia will be 80 million; China will be 60 million and Germany will be 57 million (Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 104). That Christianity will be amongst Latinos, Chinese people and other people of Asian origin, African-American, is clearly demonstrated in today’s trends. The world’s largest concentration of humans in 2015 and beyond will be in the South with the exception of Tokyo in Japan, which is not a Christian country: Tokyo (26.4 million), Bombay (26.1 million), Lagos (23.1 million), Dhaka (21.1 million), Sao Paulo (20.4 million), Karachi (19.2 million), Mexico City (19.2 million), Shanghai (19.1 million), Calcutta (17.3 million), Jakarta (17.3 million), Delhi (16.8 million) and Metro Manila (16.8 million).
was the case, inevitably, the ‘West, Christian’, would have no other option but to stand beside the Islamic countries to oppose China as well as defend the values of democracy and human rights. Meanwhile, the coming of a global Christianity, from Jenkins’ Western perspective, brings with it a potential apocalyptic end that would affect the western world. The South, combining demographic and religious growth to military powers, can pose a serious threat to the West.

A New African Personality to Re-evangelise World Christianity

The Congolese theologian, Kamana, perceives the coming of a global Christianity as the umbrella of the ultra-liberal ideology of the market economy. African, American, European and their daughter, Korean Christianity, each have their weaknesses. For example, European Christianity is nurtured by a neocapitalist spirit with its ultra-liberal ideology, the culture of ideological, economic, political violence, exclusion and domination, uncertainty and social fabric fracture. According to Kamana, African Christianity has a message to deliver to the other three. That is the need to dismantle the power of money, a perversion that leads those who have to dominate and impose the type of Christianity that is not contextually viable. Today, the people who had nothing are emerging with the essential – Jesus Christ, the one who places the paralytic and disabled onto their feet; the one who announced the year of the Lord for the excluded and the marginalised.

However, Kamana believes that Christianity in the West is not finished yet. The daughter of three strong geniuses – Jerusalem (or faith), Athens (knowledge) and Rome (order and rule) – it remains a dormant giant ready to re-jump. European Christianity is there, in the subconscious; it has survived many different perversions through successive revolutions up to the present one – globalisation. It is clear for Kamana that Europe, despite its excessive attitudes, for example against the refugees and migrants, would not deny its Christian heritage; it cannot betray its Christian ethical backgrounds, for it may end up degenerating into barbarism.

However, from the point of view of this author, Kamana appears to minimise the lessons of history: it is the same ‘Christian Europe’ whose imperial horizons and missionary expansion hide anti-black racism, perpetrated slavery, colonialism, genocides of indigenous populations. The task of African Christianity and theology is to remind Europe and America that they betrayed not only the roots and spiritual and ethical values of Europe, but also the whole of humanity; they made alliances and justified domination, exploitation and spoliation. Regardless of poverty, Africa may be in a position to conquer the global village, if it takes advantage of the unprecedented opportunities to benefit from other people’s progress in education, health, agriculture and infrastructure; if it improves the quality of life. To conquer the world village, Africa must be able to accumulate knowledge, to eradicate poverty through a proper mobilisation of international resources, equally, to access the world market and to engage in interactive creativity for development. African theology must engineer a new initiative for the re-evangelisation of the world, founded upon the God of peace, justice and life, carrying out a project of the civilisation of love and human relations. These are relationships founded on mutual understanding, creative solidarity and charity. The Church in Europe can be part of such an anti-globalisation alliance on the condition that it renounces its closeness with the neo-liberal forces.

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9 Jenkins, The Next Christendom, 221.
11 Kamana, La Mission de l’Eglise Africaine, 261.
13 Kamana, La mission de l’Eglise Africaine, 308.
Kamana’s expectations of African Christianity lose perspective when he recognises that the African human is “in the waters” between two banks, namely the European and African cultures, incapable of crossing either. The African is rootless vis-à-vis their history and cultural traditions, left without guiding principles to command respect from people of other civilisations, without rigorous engagement in the logic that commends modernity, without a global project for the future, rather depending on other peoples’ decisions and slogans. The majority of Christians live in a sort of mediocrity, never influencing day-to-day management of society. The Church never evangelised that type of person. The result is a superficial Christianity because of ‘Christians’ whose personality avoided a personal encounter with Christ.14

Ethics and religion constitute the foundations of the formation of the personality and the organisation of society; yet Kamana views African institutions of education and academy as languishing in lies, incapable of forming a class of men and women free from futile theories. Two major shapes will be needed to edify that new vision: a person with a high capacity for listening, elaborating propositions and communicating his or her contributions, and a society that reflects acts, builds and sustains every initiative for future generations.15 Only such a renewed Christianity would challenge the Western model of Christianity that managed to spread the Gospel around the world but has since become a ‘genetically modified’ institution that has evacuated God from their lives.16

Finally, Kamana’s suggestion of a mutual enrichment between the African and Asian Churches, in which the former shares her experience of enculturation while the latter helps to integrate Asian experience in social and ethical emancipation so that the two join efforts for a project of love amongst people and civilisations, may open contentious areas, recalling Jenkins’ idea of the threat posed to the North by the Global South through migrations as well as ethnic-religious conflict on their own land.

A Church Fraternity: Organic Theology versus Academic Theology

The adventure of Christianity from the South must be well informed by the reality of today’s Christianity in the West. McGrath rightly questions the belief of some sociologists of religion who maintain that a European paradigm must be universal even in Christianity.17 He submits that Western Christianity is one paradigm amongst many others. This advocates for a new identity of theology and ecclesiology that can adapt and sustain the new missionary entrepreneurs, which is not an easy task. In fact, most of the well-established institutions of theological education remain the milieus of different representations, emanations of churches of colonial institutions that were detached from the day-to-day reality of the African people. The perpetuation of an ecclesiology and a form of spirituality that is no longer a model in the West does not affect African society. According to Kounkou, “What the Churches stand for, the Churches have forgotten”.18 Distinguishing two forms of ecclesiology, “the Churches of colonial institution” and “the churches of African expression”, he said that the former satisfied themselves with exposing the illness and deadly danger facing the African continent, whilst the latter heal and balm the African scars, its household, family, country and continent.19 The hierarchy of colonial institutional churches failed to restructure so as to promote “a church-family” indispensable to Africa. They programmed the spiritual death of the continent because they refused to stir up the social, political, and psychological manipulations orchestrated against the

14 Kamana. La Mission de l'Eglise Africaine, 252.
15 Kamana, La Mission d'Eglise Africaine, 260.
19 Kounkou, Nouveaux Enjeux Théologiques Africains, 129.
children of God – structural injustices, all sorts of bigotry. Rather the churches of African expression overcame ecclesiological antagonisms, and under spiritual revival they demystified social positions that alienate the consciences of men and women. If then, as McGrath and Kamana suggest, the resilience of religion is more than proven, then the question of the model of ecclesiology and theology that the South would have as tools to fulfil and sustain its new mandate remains unresolved.

Innovative Ecclesiology: Belonging and Believing
In his book, *The Future Christianity*, McGrath made a powerful criticism of academic theology as opposed to organic theology. Academic theology has damaged the Church and faith community. It dominates social discourse, disconnecting Jesus from the Bible and the faithful. In as much as theology sees itself as part of the secular social sciences, answering to the academy rather than the Church, it has the problem of accountability which Karl Barth considered to be an important aspect. In fact, it has “more to do with elitism, ideological warfare and the principled cultivation of a discernibly anti-religious ethos, with some theologians apparently willing to be little more than acolytes to these academic and cultural trends”.

Unlike academic theology, McGrath writes, organic theology deals with believers who continually try to reconnect and to discover new experiences in worship, and support the world view of their community, liberating it from the hegemony of the establishment. An organic theologian is an activist who sees his or her task as supportive and systematic within the community of faith and as evangelistic and apologetic of popular culture outside, whilst academic theologians tend to sneer at popular culture and ridicule it. McGrath observes that much of Christianity in Africa grew amongst early converts who were at the margins of society, such as slaves, women and the poor. Today, African Christianity, like Latin American Christianity, is a decentralised model, mainly the result of the establishment of indigenous African communities that provided catechists and pastors to the growing number of converts. It is a Christianity led by Africans, preached by Africans, demonstrating little interest in mimicking the Western ways of thinking.

Whether this form of Christianity will adapt and be able to influence the West that is fundamentally imbued with neo-liberal ideology and different social and political world views, is questionable. It is a Christianity nurtured by a theological education that has not yet found its proper identity in western secular models because of the ostracism of its biblical schools and colleges.

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21 According to McGrath, religion will continue to be part of a ‘global culture’ in the twenty-first century with some adaptations, in the form of an amalgam of Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and revivalist or conservative forms of Protestantism, constructed according to taste. A. McGrath, *The Future of Christianity* (London: Blackwell, 2002), 25–27.
22 Christianity is in decline in the West, yet the Korean situation reminds us that the global story is far from simple. Growing from 800,000 Protestants in 1957 to more than 5,294,000 in 1978 (and 1,144,000 Roman Catholics), today Korea sends out Christian missionaries to nations throughout Asia, Europe, the United States, Africa and Australia. It catalysed churches’ programmes of social action from the 1960s. There is also evidence that strongly suggests major growth in Christianity within China despite official hostilities.
23 McGrath, *The Future of Christianity*.
24 Barth had the habit of opening his lectures with a prayer or hymn, thus pointing to the close link between theology and adoration, piety and reflection. This habit has been lost in most liberal theologies.
26 McGrath,*The Future of Christianity*, 33.
Theological Education: A Centenary of Ostracism

As world Christianity turns to African Christianity to establish strong links with the North to help in breaking the bonds of academic theology, creative efforts must be engaged to set up an agenda of theological and ministerial formation that equips for the new contexts of mission. Such a call from the North to sister churches in the South may result in a new form of missionary engagement. There is a more urgent need to address the dispersion and multiplicity of institutions of education in the Protestant churches, because the reality of a multicultural society in the North compels Christianity to move from proclamation within individual confessions to plural dialogue.

Like today, fifty years ago the formation of ministers and servant leaders to sustain a growing Christianity was a matter of concern for the ecumenical family. In 1954, Goodell and Nielsen conducted a survey in “almost all of the institutions in which training for the ordained ministry was being carried in”.27 Their still relevant reflections came to the conclusion that the general education of the population was rising, hence that of the ministers might be upgraded as well. The task of the Church, they wrote, is to witness within its “given situation”. “...It is the task of the minister to be ‘a minister of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God’; he is pre-eminentiy a ‘servant of the Word’. This does not mean that he can, or should, attempt to evade the tensions and problems of the society in which he ministers. He must feel the full force of the many bewildering and practical problems which confront the members of his congregations. But his first, distinctive and ‘realistic’ task is to see these things from the standpoint of the Christian gospel; he must see them in the light of the word of God and be able to speak to them in the power of that word. To do this he must be theologically trained, in the deepest sense of the term.”28 They observe: “The progress of the church, and especially in the last three decades, has been so rapid, and the part played by Christians in the life of the African countries is so remarkable as to hold out the hope that in fifty years time, tropical Africa might be in the main a Christian continent.”29

The Urgent Task: Overcoming Ostracism

In 2003, the present author surveyed seventeen theological institutions (including three Roman Catholic institutions) in francophone Africa.30 Five years later, another survey was conducted that showed that the situation was changing: Porto-Novo and Yaoundé have become Protestant universities for West and Central Africa, each of them with at least two faculties in addition to theology; Butare is transforming into the Protestant Institute for Arts and Social Sciences. Yet as shown in a 2008/2009 quick survey of nine institutions, the progress was slow, owing to a significant lack of resources and ostracism.

One of the serious dangers facing church-funded theological institutions in Africa is manifested in the ostracism that characterises many of those assessed. First is the intellectual ostracism due to dramatic deficiencies from infrastructure to libraries and academic staff, and the need to adapt to a university environment. The majority of Christians and the public in Africa today expect theologians to go further, not necessarily to leave oral culture itself behind, but rather to really strategise for the education of their communities. The situation may be gradually changing but a few years ago, there were no established programmes at a wider academic level, leaving the issue of standardisation and accreditation open for many. The second challenge is denominationalism. The autonomy of the churches coincided in many cases


*Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa*
with the effort of the ecumenical family to trigger the creation of ecumenical institutions to effect unity amongst the churches. But they have returned gradually to denominationalism to compete with some schools founded by groups that broke away from the institutional churches or Bible schools founded by the missions for teachers of catechism that never cut their umbilical cords from their mother missions.  

From Intellectual to Pastoral Ostracism

Today, Church leaders are nationals, and are better trained than fifty years ago. But Babe and Poucouta rightly point out that many Africans have taken the reins without fully understanding the responsibility involved in, for example, truly preaching the Gospel, as the foundation of Christian faith, to liberate people from all forms of dependence including the stigma of racial prejudices, colonial mentality, spiritual imperialism and financial mendicancy. Very few have made the effort to acculturate the Gospel, to say nothing of emphasizing the role of Africa in the history of salvation and the centrality of church history.

Ostracism in the pastorate as a consequence of the mediocrity in training and formation results in the insufficiency of general culture. It follows the African pastor or theologian into his or her ministry. This results in the absence of dialogue amongst theologians themselves, between the theologian and the people of God or society. In various issues – climate change, exploitation and looting of the ecosystems and other natural resources, the impoverishment and marginalization of populations, political and economic corruption, HIV and AIDS, ethno-politically motivated conflicts – the minister is poorly prepared, incapable of becoming a mediator for dialogue to resolve the crises.

Later in the nineteenth century, Edward Blyden, the father of Pan-Africanism according to Mudimbe, questioned the superficiality of Christianity on the African continent. He strongly criticized its incapacity to take root in the cultures of African societies, calling the intellectuals to more rigor in methods and organization, and in formation of various areas of knowledge including sciences and Greco-Roman languages. Unless the African Church produces genuine biblical scholars, African theology will be “sterile, bankrupt and unworthy of the African tradition that nurtured the Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine and others” as Fashole-Luke observes.

African Christianity may be able to help re-evangelise the West, on condition that training and formation empowers with general knowledge and openness to world cultures so as to convey digestible messages to all nations.

Reflections: Change or You Die!

Intellectual and pastoral ostracism are dangers that continue to affect theological education in francophone Africa. As a result of isolation, theological institutions in francophone Africa have remained distant to academic activities, and have developed little interaction and exposure to general and broad world knowledge. Thus, reading and writing and articulating the social and theological discourse has suffered severely from this context of isolation of Christian theology.

Hence the schools have remained the Baptist Institute of A, the Lutheran Institute of B, the Presbyterian Seminary of C, the Methodist Seminary of X, the Anglican Institute of Y. Rev. John Gatu, Rev. Nyambura Njoroge, alumni of St Paul’s, and ecumenical leaders ask the same question: why has St Paul’s failed to bring the church unity with which it was mandated?


Apart from occasional private encounters, many theologians and Church leaders do not communicate or dialogue with one another at an inter-denominational level. This lack of dialogue can also affect the pastor in his or her ministry, because of his or her incapacity to listen to their congregations. If this is the case, the theologian speaks only to him or herself, neither knowing nor sharing with others more deeply about the problems of the society.

Under these conditions, proper education of Christians who are not only Christians by name nor only on Sundays, calls for investment in a new and broader vision of Christianity; a type of Christianity which goes beyond what the Cameroonian theologian Jean Marc Éla calls parroting (psittacism). Unless the curricula of theological education are reformed and reformulated, theological education will continue to suffer from intellectual, ecumenical, theological and pastoral ostracism.

Long term sustainability of Christian mission depends on the effectiveness of pastoral training and the training of lay leaders, as was stated by J.N.K. Mugambi. However, as seen above, theological education in tropical Africa, particularly in the francophone countries, has remained fairly denominational. It was shaped as an extension of North Atlantic religious and cultural heritage, and has remained rooted in the fundamental denominational sources of Baptist, Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Pentecostal traditions, rather than being shaped by a more ecumenical and contextual training.

Because church-related institutions in francophone African countries developed in such a framework of narrow-minded denominationalism, isolationism and ghettoisation, they would hardly capture the reality of the context let alone engage in a theology of solidarity with the most vulnerable sectors of the society. In as much as such Christianity generally took its inspiration from Greek philosophy, which was concerned with the separation of soul and body, this was and is detrimental to the very reality of the daily life of the African people.

The lack of proper social engagement facing up to the multiple crises, civil strife, administration ineffectiveness, and economic failure in predominantly Christian countries like DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Congo-Brazzaville, Ivory Cost, Cameroon, urge us to work for the transformation of a curriculum to integrate skills, knowledge, experience as well as cultural and religious heritage. The curriculum should include the people’s languages into which the gospel is preached instead of remaining imprisoned in the colonial languages that remain the major tool of communication in francophone Africa. To become catalysts for the transformation of African societies, there is a need for a rupture from an African Christianity of “conformism and opportunism”. Yet, as Mugambi says, conducting such a transformation in an environment dominated by the power of money from the North Atlantic will not be an easy task.

A tentative answer to this concern is the step taken by some theological schools to transform into universities integrating more disciplines conceived in Africa. From the ecumenical perspective, this, in my view, remains an effort that needs to be envisaged in a broader view, equipping these institutions to raise funds locally, to link to ITC, to adopt marketing models, to have positive encounter with the true university environment, and gain experience in areas of standardisation and accreditation through working with national and international ad-hoc bodies.

Educating is Equipping Leadership for Future Generations

In order to be able to speak to situations in the power of the Word of God and to relate the past to the present, the minister must be theologically trained. This involves processes that are still missing in today’s theological education: intellectual disciplines and study, time planning, sourcing both staff and materials, teachers interacting with students in humility and never failing to learn even from their students, wrestling
with the meaning of the Word of God in diverse changing situations – from the ‘pagan life practices’ of the anthropologists to pagan patterns in post-Christendom Western societies. Goodell and Nielsen suggest that “With the rapid growth of a more educated African population there are pressing needs for African ministers to have formal education that does not lag far behind that of those they minister to.”37 Recent crises in universal ethics demands increased examination of biblical thinking and the nature of Christian traditions in the history of the Church, in order to provide guidance to society in general and to the community of faith in particular.

Goodell and Nielsen witnessed the situations of a “one-man college” in which a single person bore most of the burden of the institution. They suggested that a theological college requires at least three persons with a labour division as follows: Old Testament and Church History; New Testament and Doctrine; Ethics and Pastoral Theology. “The African theological student needs to realise that he or she belongs to a church that has a history, to see the developments, the tensions and the problems of his own local community as church history being acted and re-enacted.” Theological students must be taught the turmoil and contradictions of church history in Europe (the crusades, the religious wars, the papal conflicts, and the monarchs’ strikes with popes, some resulting in the creation of the most influential denominations that went to reproduce divisions in other parts of the world. With regard to pastoral theology and homiletics, the 1950s survey emphasised contextualisation with a sermon embedded in an African context to sustain the worship and spiritual life of community. Neill38 underlines yet another area of concern: cooperation in the production of relevant theological literature in commentaries on the Bible, doctrine, church history, African church history, biographies of Christian leaders of all ages, Christian ethics and pastoral theology.

Although the general picture was of newness,39 the survey reported that the Christian constituency represented more or less fifteen per cent of the entire population of the continent. Christianity had significant influence; there were wide areas in which every single chief of importance was a Christian. This came as a surprise as, in comparison, for four centuries India received the best of the missionaries and in 1950 it had five theological schools offering university degrees, whilst Africa had biblical schools; yet the Christian community in India made up just over two per cent of the Indian population.

According to Neill, “the shortage of trained and ordained ministers is one of the most serious weaknesses in the equipment of the Church. The majority of African Christians live in small and scattered groups, which makes the supervision and spiritual care more difficult than in countries where the parochial system in its fullness has long been established”.40 Yet only a handful of potential servant leaders found it possible to leave their families, their farms and their vocations to spend nine or twelve months in a central Bible school. Clearly, Winter was right to remind us about a reality that is true even today: to cling to such a “long-established, highly-cherished pattern of theological education cannot allow us to reach more than a small fraction of the total number of potential church leaders in any country. If we are keen to minister for future generations we need to invest in both quality and quantity education, equipping intellectually, spiritually and pastorally for both church and society.”41

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39 The first baptism in Kikuyuland took place only in 1906 (in Rwanda, 1911 for the first Protestant missions), and the first ordination of a deacon in Uganda only in 1879.
40 Neill, *A Survey of the Training*. Part I, 8. In Uganda, the average was one ordained minister for 5000 baptised Christians; in Nigeria, it was one minister for 3000 baptised. To that end, the church owed much to faithfulness and devotion of laypersons who carried on under conditions of great isolation, with little spiritual help.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Methodology as a Prerequisite

Africa was conquered and dominated on the basis of ideology and empire. It is on the basis of mature theological thought that Africans can dismiss all prejudicial claims. African Christianity must be proud and capitalise on the fact that large parts of Africa were evangelised by men who had been carried off as slaves, fought for their emancipation in the Americas and Caribbean, and those who were rescued and taken to the African Asylum in Freetown, Sierra Leone, Bagamoyo or in India. Amongst the well-known were Jacobus E.J. Capitein, Philip Quaque and, the most prominent of them, Adjai Crowther. After the election of Sierra Leone to the bishopric in 1852, no less than seventeen Africans had been ordained in the first ten years and worked in Sierra Leone and in Nigeria. In East Africa, William Jones and Ishmael Semler were the first two Africans to be ordained in connection with the Church Mission Society. They were former slaves who were rescued and taken to the African Asylum in India where they received Christian education and training.

These early precedents, as Fashole-Luke points out, did not result in the production of local theologies. Parratt was right to point out that the theologians who were influential in the 1980s were those who addressed the issue of methodology. He distinguished two trends: the African theologies dealing with the questions of adaptation and contextualisation and Black Theology that Southern Africa inspired. They were concerned with the relevance of theology in a context of oppression, discrimination, exploitation and liberation, as well as from the anthropological view.

Cross-fertilisation and Channelling the Cry of the People

A strong theological idea that will inform an African Christian worldview must take into account areas such as social harmony and ethics, and the exercise of power and authority in relation to religion. Without entering into details, we acknowledge the appeal from beyond Africa on the need of exploring and informing the universal Christian theology with thoughts from the African religions worldviews, focussing on values of ubuntu, solidarity, hospitality, humanness, dialogue and mediation, as well as the contribution African Christianity has made or is expected to make to world Christianity.

The Moratorium was such a missed call to maturity and responsibility. Since its establishment in Kampala in 1963, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) played a significant role in developing such an African theology. In the 1970s, it initiated the concept of Moratorium, advocating for selfhood, articulating a theology of reconstruction of Africa—physical reconstruction but above all social, moral and ethical reconstruction. This debate however stopped short of its realization. Visibly, Christian mission is not isolated but interdependent, for our witness has significance if only we share our personal stories and experiences.

42 A native of the Gold Coast, who was educated at the University of Leiden, he presented a doctoral dissertation in 1700 in which he defended the practice of slavery, was admitted to the ministry in a Protestant church, then sent to minister to slaves at Elmina Castle (awaiting the non-return journey); he died in 1747.
44 In his interaction with young theologians, in Maputo, Mozambique, 5th December 2009, the father of the Moratorium said: “If people had listened to us and received generously the moratorium we should not been where we are now, desperate, short of initiatives.” J. Gatu, “The Moratorium and the Churches in Africa 40 Years After” (address to young theologians during the AACC Ninth Theological Institute, Maputo, Mozambique, 5th Dec 2008).
The Moratorium: a Method in Mission!

There is no doubt that if the Moratorium was welcomed and developed as an approach and method in mission, Christianity in both hemispheres could have avoided experiencing today the emptiness lamented by the father of the African Moratorium. There was a need for envisioning the sharing of ideas on how global Christianity should plan to accumulate knowledge and to be able to articulate theological thought from social, cultural and religious, political, scientific and environmental experiences of the African human so as to build a new, consensual philosophy in mission.

However, we must recognise that training and formation, in a context where the majority of people were deprived of the basics, requires from us a listening and sustaining ecclesiology; it requires us to revisit the notions of paternity and maternity for new meaning, moving away from male domination or reproduction to the Old Testament reference of rock, tenderness and love or the New Testament’s idea of the Church as a Virgin, a young spouse, a mother. As Eboussi Boulaga reminds us, the paternity of God means that no one is entitled to be the children of God by birth, or by belonging to a particular group or nation; it is an “event and an advent”. In context, Eboussi Boulaga develops a thesis of the resistance against a “bourgeois Christianity” with all the concepts of indigenisation, inculturation, and incarnation versus “western Christianity”. For him it is not enough to reject one thing, western Christianity, to replace it with another concept that is not as clear as the first one.

A “bourgeois Christianity” appears in its double face in colonial and missionary roles, presenting a unified image of the western civilisation. It does not allow the African to enter into a dialogue with their systems, their techniques, their social, religious and political systems. The paternity of God is not a profession of an article of doctrine of eschatology or charity; it is rather a principle by which God is named “Father” in the context of human relations.45 Such a reform of ecclesiology needs to be reflected in curricula with the vision of what Cardinal Joseph Malula termed *Eglise-Fraternité*, resourcing people.

Theological education can then make a difference as compared with a model of Western Christianity that managed to evacuate God in their ethical values. To capture the imagination and the heart of the “first world”, we ought to avoid withdrawing God from the Western ideologies to enslave Him in the African cultures and civilisations which have their shining and darkest aspects. They endured the crisis of identity, exclusions of all sorts46, including the enslavement and exclusion of women.

Empower People for Global Mission

William Carey, the initiator of the modern missionary movement, is remembered for the famous slogan he launched during the gathering that formed the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792: “you expect great things from God, undertake great initiatives for Him”. Like the apostles Peter and Paul who followed in the footsteps of Jesus, the early missionary movements, the eighteenth and nineteenth century movements,47 were all the result of a miracle: people, many of them from modest even poor upbringing,48 had one major investment in common – faith in the power of the Spirit of God to move all over the world.

When you closely examine the journeys and distances, the missions and intellectual production of these people, combined with the pastoral ministries they carried out, you can hardly understand how such a

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47 He shows the role and impact of philosophies of the time, and the much-needed support of the empire.
48 The apostle Paul is an example, the fathers of the church including St Augustine, then former slaves like Samuel Adjayi Crowther, Joseph Merrick. The early missionary entrepreneurs Williams Carey, Robert Moffat, and David Livingstone left monumental work by today standards.
monumental work can be accomplished by a human being in one lifetime at a time of such fragile and precarious conditions in their environments. However, a closer investigation of these individuals’ stories, uncovers the power of a strong spirituality, organization and abnegation. Andrew Walls suggests that the existence and success of a missionary movement rests on a number of prerequisites. First, ecumenism was a source of togetherness and friendship. Second, Pietism (for example, in Central Europe, Germany and Britain) was a source of religious dynamism; people accepted martyrdom, backed by a tradition of learning and a commitment to philanthropy. According to Walls, what such a commitment needs to channel is a mature missionary enterprise involving a threefold process: the recruitment of a body of people with the degree of commitment, competence needed to live on someone else’s terms, together with the mental equipment for coping with the implications; a form of viable organization that could mobilize committed people, maintain and supply them, forge a link between them and their work and the wider church, implying political and ecclesiastical conditions that allow innovation and flexibility; and finally, a sustained access to overseas locations, with the capacity to maintain communication over long periods. At the time of missionary enterprise in the 18th and 19th centuries, that necessitated the “maritime consciousness, with maritime capability and logistical support”.

The present author doubts whether today, ecumenical, competent and committed people and viable organizations with links to the wider church and a sustained access to means of international transport would be willing to provide a South–North, South–South sustainable theological education. Should such a generosity be available, it would play a pivotal role in equipping Christians and Christian communities for a visible unity so as to support a viable missionary enterprise to evangelize the world.

Memory and Theology of Reconciliation

Reflecting on theological education in Africa, Kenneth Ross suggests some areas of concern as follows:

The meeting between Christian faith and traditional culture takes place in a community moving through a particular history. The history in that regard cannot be separated from the life of Christian communities in Africa as they have responded to the times through which they have lived. It is precisely within the dynamic history of the encounter of African peoples with Christian faith, amidst social change, that African cultural identity can be properly understood in theological terms. The coming of Christ to a particular time and place does not act to render every other time and place of no account. The reverse is true… The particular history through which it has passed, the crises it has met and the response it has offered have acted to form a robust and well-defined identity. Theology rising from this history will not lack roots in real experience.

To further Ross’s analysis, I suggest going beyond his categories: traditional marriage systems, kinship, loyalties, rites of passage, social clubs, traditional medicine, oracle and festivals, great historical movements such as globalisation or militarization, nation-building, governance, food security and economic development. In fact, history in Africa is a matter of life and death, resistance, resilience and resurrection. Africans must deal with the scars and the traumas of the denial of dignity and life imposed on them.

From an angle of political ideology, the well known historian, Joseph Ki-Zerbo suggested that:

Unless there was a critical reading of the past by the intellectual and political elites, it will be impossible to understand the processes of economical, social, cultural and political degradation Africa knows today. Poverty in

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50 Kenneth Ross, “Theological Education in Africa” (paper presented to the Africa-Scotland Forum, Dunblane, 2002).
Africa is a historical process and its content followed clearly the status the continent was imposed from the slavery period to neo-colonial era.51

The hugely influential scholar Cheikh Anta Diop52 contributed to the rehabilitation of African personality, history, culture and civilisation; his thesis on the Black identity of the Egyptian civilisation proved irrefutable. Nonetheless, the continent continued to be treated as pagan, primitive, with inferior cultures so that Mudimbe, one of the virulent critics of Western discourse on African societies, referred to the missionary enterprise as a “cultural propaganda with patriotic motivations and commercial interests, because the missionary program is in reality more complex than a simple transmission of Christian faith”.53

Africa and the History of Redemption

From the perspective of biblical anthropology, Africa played a significant role in the history of redemption: Christian faith as it stands in the Bible, Old and New Testament, Noble says, has its roots, not only in Israel, but also in the African land.54 Apart from Palestine, there is no other region referred to in the Bible with an understanding of its enriching contribution to the history of redemption. Reading biblical facts with African eyes can help to share the screaming of a continent that was not rewarded for its contribution:

- the stories of Abraham in Egypt, escaping the drought in Palestine.
- a land of reconciliation and hospitality: the tribe of Jacob reunited and settled on African soil on being given the opportunity to become a nation.
- a land of tolerance: Joseph was made a high ranking officer in Egypt and married African women.
- Moses was born, grew up and was educated in Egypt and married African women.
- Jesus and his holy family escaped from the genocide organised by Herod.
- Simon of Cyrene participated in the Calvary of Jesus or the Jerusalem event that had considerable participation from Africa.
- A high ranking officer of the Ethiopian monarchy was one of the first converts to Christianity; he was baptised by Philip.
- the rich and prosperous Christianity in North Africa and the first generation of missionaries and theologians conceptualised Christian theology.

This selection from many facts in the Bible links with the exuberant history of the Coptic Church in Egypt and Ethiopia, then to the fifteenth century Portuguese missionaries in Kongo. Thereafter, the former slaves played a hugely influential role in the eighteenth century. It is in that regard that the claims of the vast missionary enterprise undertaken at the period of the imperial expansion – that it brought the gospel to a “dark continent” – need to be challenged. Yet when you scrutinise the curricula of theological education in Africa, they are all western designed models which never open up to such historical analyses.

To recount such an extraordinary journey of Africa, African theologians ought to reconcile their traditions, the Western tradition and the Islamic tradition, for all the three impacted on the African human. The history of humanity is a history of violence of the nations in which, more often than not, the Church listened and fulfilled an imperial mandate.

African scholars, including Ki-Zerbo, Quenum and Mveng, asked the Church and Western Christianity the same question with regard to its obvious role in the cynical and shameful transatlantic trade of Africans. Mveng systematically and persistently analysed what he termed “anthropological annihilation”

52 A Senegalese-born nuclear physicist, historian and Egyptologist.
and “anthropological impoverishment of the African human” through the African slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Mveng, while admiring the role some missionaries played in the propagation of the Gospel, questioned the alliance of the churches with the dominant powers during colonial era and after. He reminds that the man at the origin of all history’s African tragedy, the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Father Bartolomé de las Casas, is considered a Saint in Western Christianity, a liberator of the Amerindians.

The implication of the Catholic and Protestant churches and missions in the Slave Trade, the Capuchins, the Jesuits, the Dominicans, the Protestant Anglo-Saxons, and the Reformed churches, leaves no doubt, as demonstrated by scholars including Father Alfred Quenum. With the same vivid analysis, Magesa rightly questions the attitude of the Church in the tragic history of Africa. “For 4 to 500 years Africa suffered the most vicious slave trade with no precedent in the history of humanity; then a century of colonialism and religious humiliation, of neo-colonialism that exists even today. The catechism and liturgy, discourse and sermon, the celebration of the sacraments never refer to these tragedies, as if nothing happened in Africa. With such an attitude some people are keen to say that “the African are not sensible to any problems”. Such a lack of sensitivity overlooks an appalling reality: African societies were dismantled, dehumanized, disorganized to the highest degree. Yet the church has never understood that it must be a collective memory, a political, social, cultural and religious conscience of the nations. In order to redeem herself, the Church ought to make an examination of conscience, even to revisit the curricula of theological education in Africa.

**Making the Pilgrimage Together**

To conclude this reflection, I submit the following suggestions. First, that Christianity has an actual mandate to remind the people of Africa that – without forgetting – they ought to turn the page of their tribulations from a dark past to engage towards a bright future. Like Israel who was given a land of promise not on a golden plate, the African people have to invest efforts and intelligence in the liberation of their future for their hopes to come true.

Second, the biblical references set a charter of forgiveness and of reconciliation that every society, including African society, should keep as a fundamental principle: the Bible teaches us that every event the people of Israel experienced, happy or unhappy, meant they had to attain the ability to behave ethically, for they were called to be holy as God is holy. It must be that with such a history of constant renaissance, Africa learns from its past to be a holy continent.

Third, what Africa is requesting from world Christianity is not privilege, nor to be looked at with pity; it is sitting together around the Lords’ table, to share the bread and cup of alliance for life, in order to draw up a new agenda for mission. If then common engagement is undertaken, it must include making poverty history, for it is on the ground of poverty that race was exploited to conquer, dominate and stigmatize the Africans. That may be the prerequisite for African Christianity to engage in a new journey of the rebirth of Christianity in the West.

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60 Lev. 20:26.
Finally, to undertake a cross-cultural global mission, African Christianity shall have to recount the history of the suffering of the people of this continent in order to heal memories, then to rehabilitate people in their dignity. Mbiti\(^{61}\) may be right to point out that such a journey, which needs to start in our theological education, must be a joint enterprise for both the South and the North:

Theologies from the new churches of the South have made these pilgrimages to the theological learning of the older churches of the North. We had no alternative … we have eaten theology with you; we have drunk theology with you; we have dreamed theology with you … We know you theologically. The question is: do you know us theologically? Would you like to know us theologically?\(^{62}\)

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1. Introduction – Academia and Perceptions of Theology

The context of this present study is the 6th to 8th June 2012 Oslo consultation of WCC-ETE on the “The future of theology in the changing landscapes of universities in Europe and beyond.” 2012. Here then is a reflection on the journey the African university has so far taken with theology and possible directions into the future. This discussion however must start with an understanding of the African colonial university. The colonial universities,\(^2\) many of which were constituent colleges of Oxford University and established after the Second World War, were designed to train an skilled elite class of more or less Europeanized Africans for post-independence Africa. This ‘skilled elite class’ would be the scorn of the many post-independence African literary doyens. Okot p’Bitek, for instance, does not think much could be expected from this lot. P’Bitek thinks their training was, to begin with, irrelevant and not suited for the questions emerging from the African grassroots. In Song of Lawino, p’Bitek portrays the upcoming leadership as follows:

… But the teachers of religion/Hate questions/A young tree that is bending/They do not like to straighten/Whether they do it purposely/Whether they themselves have no answers/I do not know/But I know they hate questions”\(^3\). Elsewhere he depicts the leadership as having read a bit among the Westerners, but education has not helped him. Instead he has: “Lost his head/In the forest of books.”\(^4\) And in the end, books have destroyed him: “… the reading/Has killed my man/In the ways of his people/He has become a stump.\(^5\)

In other words, for these critics, graduates of colonial universities are, for all practical purposes, ill prepared for the African context and, as such, are aloof, ivory tower and functionally impotent.

In carrying out their project, the colonial universities which became national universities expunged theology as an academic discipline from their broad curricula preferring instead religious studies programs. For the colonial universities, theology had no role in forming the skilled class for post-independence Africa. The post-independence African national universities remained largely in the trajectory of the colonial universities in many areas including what is clearly a dismissive and a hostile attitude to theology except that they reversed the Europeanization agenda and instead embraced the Africanization schema.

The critics of theology, notably the African novelists who shaped the structure of humanities and social sciences in the post-independence African universities indeed promoted the view that there is no boundary between the missionary, the oppressors, and theology embodied in Africa’s tragic history by slavery.

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\(^1\) This is a paper originally delivered at the WCC-ETE Oslo consultation 6th to 8th June 2012 on the “The future of theology in the changing landscapes of universities in Europe and beyond.”

\(^2\) One example of colonial university is the University of East Africa. This university was established in 1922, became a university college of Oxford University serving Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in 1949, and in 1970, split into three independent universities: Makerere University (Uganda), University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), and University of Nairobi (Kenya). The other example is the University of Ibadan. The university originated as Yaba College in 1932 and was the first tertiary educational institute in Nigeria. It transformed into the University College of Ibadan, in 1948. The others are the University of Ghana (1948) and the University of College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1955)

\(^3\) Okot p’Bitek, Song of Lawino, 90.

\(^4\) Okot p’Bitek, Song of Lawino, 113.

\(^5\) Okot p’Bitek, Song of Lawino, 113.
colonialism and the African dictators (also called vampires by George Ayittey). In fact in the thinking of p’Bitek, the definition of colonialism includes Christianity and all its trappings. In his Artist the Ruler⁶, he defines colonialism as the enslavement of Africa at home and transportation of other Africans elsewhere. It also means for p’Bitek the imposition of cultural items and values such as Christianity and looting not only of economic and commercial but also of cultural items. In Homecoming, waThiongo says that to gain “acceptability and perpetuation, the colonialists enlist the services of Christianity and Christian oriented education . . . To capture the soul and the mind . . . ” (1982). In Decolonising the Mind, waThiongo says that one who had gone through colonial education would more readily relate to the Bible.⁷ In Achebe’s Things Fall Apart, the newly converted Christians renounce their traditional lifestyle, thus advancing the cause of colonialism.

2. Theological Colleges and Institutions of the Church: The Custodians of Academic Theology

From the 1950s, the church, both Protestant and Catholic, burdened with the exclusion of theology from Africa’s mainstream academia responded by creating separate non-accredited but autonomous denominational as well as interdenominational ministerial formation institutions. These institutions became the safe homes which would house theology for many decades to come. Some of the theological colleges in East Africa which would play a major role in the church’s ministerial formation from the 1960s to the 1980s include Scott Theological College (Africa Inland Church, Kenya), St Paul’s United Theological College (uniting the Anglicans and the protestants, Kenya), Kenya Highlands Bible College (Africa Gospel Church, Kenya), Bishop Tucker Theological College (Church of Uganda, Uganda), and Lutheran Theological College, Makumira (Lutheran Church, Tanzania).

At the beginning of the 1980s, the need for graduate level theological training was increasingly being felt, particularly in Kenya, which at the time had transformed not only into a haven of peace but had also become a major gateway into the larger East African region. This period saw both the inception and the consequent rise into prominence of such graduate theological schools as Nairobi International School of Theology (NIST—now Africa Leadership University, by Campus Crusade for Christ), Nairobi Graduate School of Theology (NEGST—now Africa International University by Association of Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar—AEAM), and the Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa (CHIEA – now Catholic University of Eastern Africa).

Whereas for about three decades these seminaries became the safe environments within which theology in Africa would blossom, certain disturbing trends also emerged:

1) Theology became synonymous with ministerial formation and therefore its benefits were understood to be confined primarily to the church, its institutions and the believing community.

2) The theological colleges had loyalty to their denominational and confessional foundations, often headquarters of missions and conciliar movements abroad, thus they exhibited extreme caution on matters of academic freedom. This had to be the case because, although mission church gained their autonomy in the 1960s and the 1970s, missions remained the prime movers of theological colleges.

3) There was also a seeming lack of concentration when theology in Africa allowed itself to stray from what would have been the African theological agenda and got sucked into the endless debates fielding different western interests—the liberals, womanists-feminists, liberationists, evangelicals and so on.

4) Internal debates among local theologians degenerated into unwholesome, gruesome and often fiery tirades fielding groupings representing discussants who had moved out of the mainstream academia to the

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⁶ Okot p’Bitek, Artist the Ruler, 14-16.
⁷ waThiongo Decolonising the Mind, 67.
church seminaries on the one hand and their counterparts, the ecumenicals, who remained in citadels of learning in the public universities on the other hand.

5) Theology and religious studies were played against each other and each got compartmentalized into respective competing domains, consequently both theology and religious studies are adjudged to have no contact with each other whatsoever.8

3. The Era of the Christian University: Recession of Academic Theology

The last two decades, 1990s and 2000s, were phenomenal for the Christian university in in the majority of Africa. During this period, practically all the renowned degree granting theological colleges and seminaries in East Africa for instance, transformed themselves into private Christian universities. The table below shows some ten institutions in this category.

Note the following features:
1. the institutions listed constitute what used to be East Africa’s premier theological schools from the 1960s-1990s, then dedicated only to theological education,
2. all the listed institutions have since transformed into multi-faculty private Christian universities,
3. the institutions continue to receive financial and material support from founding missions although the bulk of their support is locally generated from tuition fees collections,
4. for all practical purposes, theology in all the new universities is no longer the institutions’ flagship program and therefore does not occupy a privileged position, other programs have taken over,
5. the phenomenon which indicates that theology is no longer a flagship program and that it is steadily diminishing in prominence in the institutions is true for the protestant universities as it is for the Anglican’s, the Catholic’s and the evangelical’s,

8 The following are the major responses to the ‘theology-religious studies’ debate:


c) Then the group which argues for both revelation and salvation in African traditional religion but also insists that the highest revelation and salvation are only in the Christian faith. The proponents of this are Patrick Kalilombe and LaurentiMagesa, “Evangelization and the Holy Spirit”, African Ecclesial Review, 18 (1976), 8-18; also his article “The Salvific Value of the African Religions”, 21 (1979), 143-156. Laurenti Magesa, “Evangelisation”, African Ecclesial Review, (1982), 354-362; also “Who are ‘the People of God’?”, African Ecclesial Review, 26 (1984), 204-212.


Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
6. Kenya seems to be most affected and more than its neighbors, as for instance, out of the ten institutions listed, eight are Kenyan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theological College/Seminary</th>
<th>University and year of change of status</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Scott Theological College</td>
<td>Scott Theological University (1997)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology</td>
<td>Africa International University (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Kenya Highlands Bible College</td>
<td>Kenya Highlands Evangelical University (2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Lutheran Theological College Makumira</td>
<td>Tumaini University (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. St Paul’s Theological College</td>
<td>St Paul’s University (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Graduate School of Theology, under the name the Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa (CHIEA).</td>
<td>Catholic University of East Africa (1992)</td>
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</table>

The shift of domicile of theology from the theological college to the university is in my opinion a boon to the discipline. For the first time, theology in Africa can be said to have attained independence from the prying eyes of the missions abroad. Here then is another unnoticed but major shift: now theology has local initiatives as its major support base. But more fundamentally, the environment in the university encourages quality assurance, inspires research and emboldens engagement with new knowledge. Indeed the fact that the theology programs in the universities are themselves accredited by the national higher education regulatory bodies is itself a statement of endorsement by society—now theology is respected as a significant contributor to the national grid and as an academic discipline in its own right.

Four conclusions, however, can be made from this shift:
1. that the African academy is experiencing a positive change of attitude towards theology and a clear break with the past thus admission of theology into its ranks.
2. It appears that this positive disposition to theology now means that the discipline is no longer functioning in a protected environment and therefore has to compete with other disciplines in the same footing.
3. But it also means that theology now has the opportunity to examine its claims and to receive criticisms and endorsement similarly on the same platform as the rest of academic disciplines.
4. For the first time, theology is really getting independence from the mission headquarters abroad and is adjusting to the dynamics of new and local forms of support.

Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa
5. Part of this adjustment has manifested in marked recession of academic theology in comparison to its global performance in previous years.

Some of the major recession indicators include decreasing numbers of students registering in programs, programs that are no longer attracting students, number of programs that have closed down entirely within the last 10 years, comparative budgetary and resources allocation to theology programs, extent of development of members of faculty, amount and quality of theological outputs and innovations (conferences, seminars, research outcomes, journals, magazines, pamphlets etc). To these we could also add the extent of interest in theology and capacity to pay by potential students, the extent and nature of support from churches and mission agencies, the number of ministers without theological training ordained or admitted to ministry within the last 10 years. There is also the number of degree granting theological colleges and seminaries operating in comparison to the same 10 years ago. This is particularly important knowing that within the last 10 years, for example, the government of Kenya has put a clamp on new registrations of theological colleges and seminaries.

4. The Problem: The Changing Demographics of Christianity

Some interesting things appear to be happening to theology:
- it has won the respect of the academia within the last decade,
- it is fighting for its own survival in its new environment in the Christian private universities,
- there has been an explosion in the growth of Christianity since the 1960s.

Indeed scholars of African Christianity appear to unanimously agree that “Africa has become, or is becoming, a Christian continent in cultural as well as numerical terms, while on the small scale the West has become, or is rapidly becoming, a post-Christian society.”9 Philip Jenkins repeats the same sentiment although with a different accent as follows: “All too often, statements about what ‘modern Christians accept’ or what ‘Catholics today believe’ refer only to what that ever-shrinking remnant of Western Christians and Catholics believe. Such assertions are outrageous today, and as time goes by they will become ever further removed from reality.”10

It is not entirely clear why Africa has recorded this massive growth of Christianity since 1960 as the graph below shows. Philip Jenkins believes that the reason is that Christianity has the “best means of explaining the world around them.”11 Lamin Sanneh gives a similar but axiom laden explanation: “Africans embraced Christianity because it resonated so well with the values of the old religions. . . People sensed in their hearts that Jesus did not mock their respect for the sacred or their clamor for an invincible Savior, so they beat their sacred drums for him until the stars skipped and danced in the skies. After that dance the stars weren’t little anymore. Christianity helped Africans to become renewed Africans, not remade Europeans.”12

The graph below shows the trends of Christianity in Africa since 1900:13

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11 Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 44.
12 Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity?*, 43.
The trend indicated by this graph implies that both the acceptability of theology by the academia on the one hand, and growth, development, and the uptake of theology in Africa on the other hand, ought to follow a similar pattern. In other words, the acceptability of theology by the academia and growth, development and uptake of theology in Africa is expected to be directly proportional to the growth of Christianity. This, however, is not happening. Instead, in Africa the two variables (growth of Christianity and acceptability of theology) are in a state of inverse relationship to growth, development, and uptake of theology. There is also another important side issue emerging from these studies: more independence of theology from the mission headquarters in the West, at least in the initial stages, appears to mean recession of theology in Africa. Put differently, at least in the interim period, theology was left to the support of tuition fees levied by the universities which manifests itself by recession of theology in the same institutions.

5. Concluding Remarks: the Future of Theology and Theological Education

It appears to me that theology in Africa must make a clean break with its past, offer a deeper reflection on the current African reality and reject the status quo and earn a new face for itself. Already the African societies, through state higher education regulatory organs, have raised the profile of theology both as national resource for the society and as an academic program in its own right. Moreover, the changing demographics of Christianity in favor of Africa in particular and the global South in general is a new opportunity for theology. What Africa thinks theologically will increasingly be of tremendous interest to the global theological situation.

The following four issues are particularly important for the future of theology and theological education in Africa:

Change of paradigm: What is the effect of availing theology to its three constituencies (the church, the academy and the society)?

Theology has always had the three constituencies (the church, the academy and society) but in Africa, it has operated as if the other two constituencies (the academy and society) did not exist. The entry of theology into the university reverses this practice, moreover civil society is today more aware of its rights. Thus the academy and the civil society must be considered as equally important stakeholders, which the implementation of any theology programs must not ignore. This proposal in my opinion must challenge the universities to change the paradigm of theology from 'faith seeking understanding' to teaching and research on questions raised within, between and about the Christian faith, other religious communities and the

Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa
pluralist civil society. Prof Ali Mazrui has characterized Africa as existing in triple heritage: Christianity, Islam and African traditional religions. Moreover, Africa has been struggling with issues of religious conflicts, fundamentalism, maladjustments, ethics, and different forms of heterodoxies for a long time. And so apart from bringing to the table the issues of content traditionally associated with theology, some of the competencies brought into focus by the new paradigm could include a deeper grasp of religious studies, greater enthusiasm for academic excellence as well as the cultivation of constructive and critical engagement skills.

Theology done from this paradigm may be wide enough and therefore structurally capable not only of dealing with the issues raised, but also able to maintain critical and constructive engagement with academia and the religious communities, including the church and the pluralist civil societies. Whereas Europe and other parts of the world are currently debating the possibility of a new paradigm, Africa despite the many aforementioned contemporary challenges and opportunities, is yet to begin even to consider the possibility of such a debate.

What motivates the contemporary student to take theology as their discipline of choice within the new university contexts?

The contemporary university in Africa offers many other options, therefore the motivation for students to opt for theological studies is crucial. The question also needs to be raised to what extent should such motives influence the structure of the theological curricula?

The question of the dwindling numbers of theology students across the new universities is really a question of what is the motivation of theology students. Theology curricula in the new universities must understand the contemporary African university student, the questions they ask and why they would still opt for theology in universities that offer so many other programs. Any new theology curriculum must understand this learner who is overwhelmed with choices, wrestles with contemporary issues that are common to any university student anywhere around the world and who specifically seeks to relate to the questions of life that are particular to Africa. Focus on curricula highlights issues of relevance and deeper understanding of this student who has preferred theology as the discipline of choice among others, not only because of career prospects but also because of one or more of the following motives: “personal faith commitment, seeking answers to questions of meaning, truth and goodness;, fascination by one or more of the many academic disciplines in the field;, and interest in the significance of religions for societies, civilizations and human existence.” Once again, this is a futuristic curriculum and what it will look like (content, method of delivery, appropriateness) will to a great extent depend on what the African theological stakeholders will think.

Financing theology programs in the new universities:

How is theology to be financed in the new universities?

Part of the challenge of theology in the new universities is funding. Running programs, whether in universities or theological colleges, is an expensive venture. Indeed the recession of theological education in Africa could be linked to the ever decreasing financial support directed to this field. The theological colleges and the predecessors of these institutions were founded by missions. As such, the missions and the churches abroad were their most loyal supporters. When missions handed these institutions over to the African churches, it was expected that the African churches were going to take up this role. This however did not happen, the African churches, besides legally owning the institutions, never really supported the theological colleges. The support base for theological education in the majority of cases remained in the mission headquarters and churches abroad. Indeed one can say, sadly, that the theological colleges dotted


across Africa are orphans of mission headquarters and churches abroad. In other words the African church has never really supported theological education. This is an issue that must be confronted. The African church must be reminded to take up its responsibility and support its own theological education. The African church needs theological education for its clergy and workers. But the universities on the other hand must also wake up to the reality that their present status as universities means that the church must be concerned as to whether their sort of theological inquiry fits the needs of the church and therefore whether the churches should indeed support theological education in universities and under what conditions. This must be an issue of negotiation between the church and the universities.

The changing demographics of Christianity and the increasing prominence of Africa in the map of world Christianity: How is theology in Africa in particular and in the global south in general to respond?

The concern here is the changing realities of world Christianity and the dominant themes that theology in the global South must explicate for the sake of relevance. For instance, Christianity in the global South has been described as “traditional on social issues, conservative in beliefs and moral issues, and interested in the supernatural and in personal salvation rather than radical politics.”16 In addition to these features, it has also been observed that Christianity in the global South is generally demographically young and youthful, largely charismatic and Pentecostal, indigenous both in its origin and theology yet, courtesy of the diaspora, scattered and significantly present in the Western centers. The definition that these parameters give to the Christianity of the global South differs significantly from that which it assigns to the brand of Christianity in the North Atlantic. This follows therefore that Christianity in our time is not only flowing along two major fault lines but more significantly is the recognition that these fault lines are increasingly moving further and further from each other with every distance covered.

Theology and theological education in Africa must therefore

1. proceed with greater awareness of the nuanced forms of Christianity around the world and the basis for such diversity, the African Christianity being one such form of Christianity,
2. in the words of Olav Fykse Tveit, it must seek to foster the unity of the Christian faith by identifying and reflecting on the things that bring Christianity together, namely “… common essential elements in the biblical foundations of our faith and in church history,”17 and
3. finally it must embrace creativity and innovativeness in theological education while avoiding the mistakes of North America and Europe and incorporating some of the best practices in modern universities.

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THE FUTURE IS NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE: 
CHANGES AND CHOICES FACING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Bill Houston

Benjamin Franklin commented wryly that the only certain things in life were death and taxes. Today we could add rapid change to his list. Change is affecting everything from geo-politics to local politics, the local economies and world economic systems, communication and information technology, denominations and local congregations. Change is becoming ever more rapid and certainly more comprehensive. Theological education is often not well placed to adapt to change because the organizations are cumbersome, complex and tradition bound. The very subject matter of theological education largely comprises studying the past – even the New Testament is 2000 years old! Our leaders are therefore not trained to analyze the present trends or to discern the future. Like the dinosaurs, the consequence of not adapting is extinction. The way we envisaged the future thirty years ago bears little resemblance to the way things are today and even less to the way they will be tomorrow.

In this article I shall outline the choices facing theological colleges today in sets of paired options. These options confront seminaries regardless of their denominational affiliation, size or age. The picture in my mind is that of a sound mixing desk, with numerous slides which can be slid up and down in different combinations to achieve various sound effects. The options set out below merely describe the boundaries in any one pairing and do not prescribe any ‘correct’ answer. There are no universally correct answers because each institution has its own history, its own strengths and weaknesses, its own values and goals. As such, each institution has to decide for itself how to respond to the sets of options outlined below. An open and enquiring mind is needed today. The fundamental questions are: Who should we be teaching? What should we be teaching? Where should the teaching take place? When should the classes be held? How should we be teaching? In fact there are two even more fundamental questions: Why are we doing this at all? and, What is the purpose? i.e. what are the desirable intended outcomes of the whole enterprise? These last two foundational questions are more philosophical in nature and have been addressed elsewhere in the writings of E Farley, D Kelsey and R Banks amongst others. The focus of this article is on the operational choices facing theological education today in the face of all the changes sweeping the continent.

Reflection.

• What are the drivers of change in your country? What trends are impacting theological education in Africa?

• Articulate a theology of theological education.

1. Viability – Dependency

Many theological colleges in Africa were started as projects from the West when there was an assured flow of resources from the West. I doubt if there is one fully self-supporting seminary in Africa. We have inherited a model of theological education that has produced dependency. The building are costly to erect, expensive to maintain and crippling to run! Every principal and board member knows this to be true because they grapple with this problem all the time. Let it be said that even in the United States the presidents of seminaries spend up to 30% of their time fundraising, despite having substantial endowments.

In Africa today the assumed ‘assured flow’ of money from overseas is no longer valid. The West, and hence the Church, is currently in a financial crisis with fewer resources to give away. Instead of automatically, and even habitually, looking overseas for help, we need first to ask “What can we do with our own resources?” This is first and foremost a matter of decolonizing the mind as the first step towards self-reliance. I am not arguing for total isolation because the beauty of the world-wide body of Christ is its inter-relatedness. In actual fact, most seminaries will need help from abroad, especially for major campus development projects. But the question of viability is still on the table and requires creative thinking with respect to new models of doing education because the old model is far too expensive for Africa to sustain.

There are really only three elements that can be juggled in order to break even. The first is to reduce costs. However the salaries of staff, which typically constitute up to 70% of the expense budget, are all too often derisorily low already. There is not much fat to be trimmed off there. The second factor is to increase the ‘price’ of the service which means increasing tuition fees. The question arises as to what level of fees the ‘market can bear’ without pricing the seminary out of the market. The third factor is to increase the income. One way is to increase the student enrolment (of students who can pay their fees!). Another way is to find supplementary forms of income. These have traditionally been gifts from abroad. Holding endowment funds is not a great option in Africa given the volatility of the stock markets. Much more could be done to generate other income streams by applying one’s mind to find creative out-of-the-box solutions. By way of illustration: One seminary rents out houses on its campus, another has an internet café at its gate, another uses its campus clinic to serve the local community and thereby earn some income, another cultivates two acres of bananas to sell at the market, another earns a good income from running a sought-after primary school and another has a contract with the government to train the chaplains in the armed forces.

Reflection

• What creative ways could your seminary find to generate extra income that is appropriate to your context?

2. Teaching – Research

Most theological colleges in Africa are faithfully teaching the knowledge that was generated in the West because we are dependent on Western textbooks for so many of the courses we teach. It is time to generate our own materials in order to address African realities. One cannot blame a western textbook for not speaking into our context – we who live here must do it. This will require of the faculty that they have higher degrees, that they have the disposition to want to do research and write for publication, and it will require from the institutions that faculty members be given a less crippling teaching load with time out for research. On a more positive note, I believe that scholarly African voices need to be heard more prominently in international academic forums and that African perspectives on Biblical Studies would enrich the world church.

Reflection

• What has been published by your school and how could this development be encouraged?

3. Teaching – Learning

There is a saying that ‘We teach as we were taught’. Where there are large classes and where the learning resources are in short supply, the easiest solution is to have one person, the lecturer, teach a class of whatever size with notes scribbled up on a chalk board so that diligent student can transcribe the same into their notebooks. Far too much activity in the classroom follows the transmission model in which the lecturer has the knowledge and transmits it in class time to the passive student who is assumed to have

Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa
learned. One skeptic has defined a lecture as ‘The transmission of the lecturer’s notes to the student’s notebook without passing through the minds of either! ’Paulo Freire² dismissively calls this a capitalist ‘banking model’. The result is that it produces another form of dependency, in this case, dependence of the students on the teacher for their learning. In order to equip today’s students with the intellectual tools to grapple with the fast changing world, we need to produce life-long learners who will take responsibility for their own learning. They need to frame their own questions, to find answers from primary and secondary sources so as not to provide yesterday’s answers to tomorrow’s problems. There needs to be a shift in the mind-set of the lecturer from that of being the lecturer to that of an educator.³ In this light then, the educator facilitates the learning of the student by setting learning tasks, asking probing questions, stimulating enquiry, pointing to new directions, engaging with the student in honest enquiry. The center of learning should move from the classroom to the library. If the old pattern is to change, sustained training in the principles and practice of adult education will have to take place. This paragraph could equally have been titled Pedagogy – Andragogy⁴ because the teacher driven transmission model fits within the model used for children (and even here, this is not entirely true of good modern classroom practice), while the principles of how adults learn belong to the field of andragogy. The principles of adult education include:

- Adult learners are not empty vessels needing to be filled because they come with life experience. New learning needs to connect with their prior learning.
- Adult learners place a premium on relevancy because they focus on real life.
- Adult learners expect to be respected by allowing their voice to be heard.
- Adult learners come with goals and want their education to help them to fulfill those goals. For them, learning is a means towards an end and not an end in itself.
- Adult learners want to take responsibility for their own learning and need actively to construct new knowledge.

Reflection
- What method of teaching was modeled to you when you were a student and are you repeating that model today? How can your school change from an instructional paradigm of education to a learning paradigm?

4. Church – Academy

For which audience or end user does the seminary exist? Or, to put it in another way, when designing a curriculum or even a degree program, who are we, perhaps unconsciously, looking over our shoulders at? Is it the Church and its needs or is it the university? A training programme that is run in a local church quite obviously exists for the sake of that church. The academic standards may not be very good but that is not a problem to them because it requires no external validation. A seminary, however, has to satisfy two disparate stakeholders.⁵ Historically, as the seminary has moved up the educational ladder, it has used the university model as its frame of reference. This is to be commended with respect to academic rigor, good assessment practices and sound academic administration.⁶ We should never settle for sloppy academic work. Ignorant zeal is no improvement over passionless knowledge. The problem arises when the course content loses touch with the needs of the faith community and results in ministers who do not have the required competencies being trained and sent out into ministry to be ineffective in their churches. Not only do we teach as we were taught, but lecturers tend to replicate what they learned in other curriculums and

⁴ Andragogy was a term coined by Malcolm Knowles for the science of adult education.
⁵ Linda Cannell, Theological Education Matters: Leadership Education for the Church (EDCOT Press, 2006).

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
other countries. If the seminary is to serve the needs of the church, a radical approach to curriculum design is called for. Ask some fundamental questions: ‘What do effective ministers actually do?’ ‘What competencies are necessary to be effective in doing those things?’ ‘What learning experiences will produce these competencies?’ Groups of alumni could be asked to say what of their seminary courses they have found valuable in ministry, what have they never used and what do they wish they had been taught! If we were to design the curriculum from the desired outcomes back into the classroom, I wonder what courses would become redundant? I wonder too, if we will produce more satisfied ‘end users’ (the Church) of our ‘product’ (the graduate seminarians)? The pedagogical point at issue here is that of content-driven education or competence-based education in relation to the apostolic mission of the church. At the end of the day ‘Theological schools are hybrid institutions – with part of their identity in the church and part of their identity in higher education.’

Educationalists speak of the three domains of education. The first is cognition; that which one must know. The second is volition; that which one must be able to do. The third is affection which encompasses our emotions, values, and the ‘who we are’. The emphasis in the academy is clearly, though not exclusively, on cognition because this is what is examined. However, when a pastor fails in ministry it is seldom because of a lack of knowledge of church history or of Greek. It is most often a failure in relationships, or a moral failure or because of an alienating style of leadership. Thus while the academic model is vitally necessary, it is not sufficient for the training of clergy. We need a model that will be intentional in the matter of personal transformation and spiritual formation.

Reflection

- What are the needs in the churches your seminary serves (as stated by them) and in the wider community? Does the current curriculum produce graduates with the required competencies to effectively minister in those situations?
- Analyze the time given in the whole curriculum to each of the three domains mentioned above. If they are disproportionate, what must be done to rectify the situation?

5. Church – Society

A significant change is currently underway in Africa as many seminaries change to become ‘Christian Universities’. The motivation appears to vary from a missional intention to serve the nation, through the need to attract more students in order to break even financially, to the snob value of being called a university. Computer courses and business studies are the favorite subject on offer. This trend raises many important questions. ‘What makes a university Christian?’ Just having the word on a letterhead does not. These seminaries need to have a clearly thought through philosophy of Christian higher education and have anticipated the many new challenges that await them. Will non-Christian students be admitted? If so, will they be expected to comply with Christian ethical standards of behavior? If there is desperate need to find a lecturer in economics for example, will a non-Christian applicant be considered? The sad fact, based on the experience in Europe and the United States, is that institutional drift occurs away from the original moral and theological values. If in this new model, the seminary, now a Christian University, grows significantly, will it loose focus on meeting the needs of the Church in Africa? And if it does, how then,

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might these training needs be met? There are thus three positions for the seminary to adopt. First is to focus entirely on the needs of the church in the traditional fashion. Second is to widen the scope to directly serve the needs of society by admitting all sorts of students and third is to broaden the curriculum to enable the church to meet the needs of society by training Christians to be agents of transformation in their communities. It is clear that there is a wide diversity of students, each with different expectations and needs on account of the diversity of ministries so that a ‘one size fits all’ pattern of theological education does not work today.

**Reflection**

- What makes a university ‘Christian’?

### 6. Clergy – Laity

Theological education is captive to the clerical paradigm of full time paid ministers/clergy. The problem with this is that the church is growing so rapidly in Africa that denominations are unable to pay for many more full time clergy. Thus one ordained person has to cover a number of congregations in order to preside over the formal components of church life such as baptisms and Communion/Eucharist, to the neglect of teaching and spiritual formation. All the while the ministry potential of the laity remains untrained and under used. Much more needs to be done to equip lay leaders at the level that is appropriate for them and in a mode that allows working people to access the training. This is not a novel idea because the worker-priest movement started in France after the Second World War some sixty years ago. Today we need to consider more seriously the bi-vocational ministry (or what is called in the Anglican Church in South Africa a ‘community priest’) and target this great need. African Initiated Churches in Southern Africa have grown rapidly based on bi-vocational ministries because they have not been encumbered by burden to pay salaries. It can be done! Another element of the clerical paradigm is related to the need to credential clergy. Some level of formal theological education is necessary to comply with denominational standards. That is right and proper of course but the negative side of this is that the qualification is seen to be a terminal qualification rather than a step along the road of lifelong learning. In this rapidly changing world it is imperative for those in the knowledge sector to keep on learning. Seminaries could do so much more by way of offering in-service refresher courses or even formal higher qualifications that are tailor-made to address the needs of those in ministry.

**Reflection**

- What paradigm of ministry, implicit or explicit, informs the training in your seminary? How effective is your seminary in producing life-long learners?

### 7. Residential – Distributed Modes

The cost of full time residential training is increasingly preventing aspirant candidates from entering seminaries, unless they are sponsored. Not only do they face the prospect of paying tuition and residence fees for a few years but they also lose the income from employment during that time. More than that, a student may have to leave the family behind to go to the seminary, which brings its own stresses and strains. It is said that the full time residential model is the ‘Rolls Royce’ of theological education because it allows for interpersonal interactions and for transformation of attitudes and values. That may well be true but I don’t own a Rolls Royce because I can’t afford one! Can the African Church afford to train its people in this full time residential mode? Newspapers disseminate information and they are in serious decline because millions of people today access information electronically. Will colleges be next to decline?9

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
There are emerging modes of distributed education today which need to be considered because they overcome the barriers set by the high cost of full time residential education. Geographically distributed education might include extension sites which require the lecturer to travel to some remote venue to teach a group of students rather than the other way around. Theological Education by Extension (TEE) is not new to Africa. In this mode, which was paper based, the notes are sent to the student who may also have the benefit of being in a group of fellow learners. The advent of the computer allows the notes today to be distributed by DVDs. Through Skype or conference video facilities one can construct a virtual classroom in real time with all the usual interaction between lecturers and students. The advent of the internet enables courses to be accessed via the internet. Even more exciting is the prospect of courses being downloaded from smart phones. The uptake of cell phones in Africa has surpassed even the most optimistic industry predictions. Even where there is no computer in the home, there is likely to be a cell phone. With tablet technology such as Kindles and iPads all the required reading could be downloaded onto them to provide the student with a virtual library. I know there are still considerable problems in many countries with bandwidth, current cost structures and with unreliable electricity supply, but despite that we need to take cognizance of this very important trend and prepare to harness its potential.

Even in the full time residential model, we need to consider the value of learning outside of the classroom through placements in a local church, or a field trip or a ministry placement in a slum. In other words, all important learning is not confined to the classroom under the watchful eye of a lecturer.

Temporal distribution suggests that the time of the class could change to suit the student. Night classes are an example as are classes during vacation times or over weekends. There is no inherently important educational reason why education should only take place in a classroom from Monday to Friday between 08 00 and 16 00hrs.

The mixed mode option has a lot to offer. By this we mean that the student would be given advance reading and assignments and then attend classes for a week or two during the year while remaining in employment. The mixed mode goes some way to develop community and to enable life-on-life mentoring to take place.

**Reflection**

- How would you answer this critical comment: ‘Seminary education requires more time than people are willing to give, more money than people are willing to pay, more disconnection from the family than people are willing to tolerate and that seems to be less than effective in equipping women and men for leadership and ministry?’

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**8. Fragmentation – Integration of Knowledge**

The encyclopedia of subjects that comprise the theological curriculum has developed slowly over the centuries. Today the fourfold division derived from Germany is; Bible, dogmatics, church history and practical theology and this forms the basic framework of our curriculums. These discreet subjects each form their separate compartments and are expressed as different ‘departments’ in the seminary. Missiology migrates around trying to find a home either as an independent subject or as a sub set of biblical theology or practical theology. Medical education has faced a similar problem over the past 40 years. The usual layered curriculum consisting of first year basic sciences, second year anatomy and physiology, third year pathology and pharmacology has been challenged. Today hundreds of medical schools have adopted an integrated model using problem based learning (PBL) that was pioneered by McMaster University in the late 1960s. So, for example, the lung is studied from the perspective of its anatomy, physics of air pressure, pathologies, and pharmacology. But it goes beyond those subjects to include the social setting of, for

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instance TB, the incidence of which correlates with poverty and overcrowding and might even extend to government neglect. Is problem based learning (and its variant of case studies, which is extensively used in MBA degrees\textsuperscript{11}), an approach to consider in theological education? The Wikipedia entry\textsuperscript{12} for Problem-based Learning reads ‘Problem-based Learning is a student centered pedagogy in which students learn about a subject in the context of complex, multifaceted and realistic problems. Working in groups, students identify what they already know, what they need to know and where to access new information that may lead to resolution of the problem. The role of the instructor is to guide the learning process rather than provide the knowledge.’ PBL serves to integrate various disciplines and overcomes the self-contained subject boxes of the current curriculum. PBL encourages adult learning because the problem is posed by the educator but the students have to solve the problem. PBL uses examples from real life and therefore bridges the gap between theory and praxis and between the seminary and ministry. In the ministry life comes as an organic whole and not as discreet packages of ‘Old Testament’ or ‘Systematic theology’ and hence there is the need when confronted by a problem, to think theologically and integratively across the whole range of theological subjects as well as using knowledge derived from other ‘secular’ disciplines.

Another important element in medical school education is the ward round when students in their clinical years learn from a consultant in the ward, on the job, so-to-speak. Too much seminary training is classroom or library bound, safely removed from real life.

Reflection

• What gives the curriculum coherence and integration in your school?


All too often boards do not add value to the leadership of seminaries. Sometimes denominational rivalries are played out in the board room. More often board members do not have the requisite skills to govern a tertiary education institution. Where a seminary is owned by a denomination, they nominate ministers to represent their interests on the board. But for complex problems to be wisely solved the board needs lawyers, finance people, human resource managers, marketing skills, knowledge of higher education issues as well as some theologians and pastors.

Boards have the following responsibilities:\textsuperscript{13}

• To appoint the CEO and monitor performance.
• To develop long range plans and the strategic vision.
• To sustain the mission and values of the institution.
• To represent the interests of all the stakeholders.
• To ensure that the resources are available to run the seminary.
• To comply with the requirements of ethics and the law.
• To develop policies that express the values of the organization and which set guidelines for its operation.

Confusion exists as to the proper role and function of the board. Is it to merely rubber stamp the decisions made by the management team in the seminary? If so, why would a competent person wish to waste their time on the board? Is it to run the seminary? If so, why pay salaries to employees to do just that and then deskill them by doing the work for them? The answer lies in the Carver model.\textsuperscript{14} In this model the

\textsuperscript{11} See www.hbs.edu/learning/case.html for case based learning in Harvard Business School.
\textsuperscript{12} Google ‘Problem-based learning’ and ‘Case Study method’ to access a mass of information on the subjects.
\textsuperscript{13} See the website of the National Center for Nonprofit Boards called BoardSource for a treasure trove of helpful books on the subject.

\textit{Handbook of Theological Education in Africa}
board exercises its governance by framing policies across a range of areas such as finance, education, staffing etc, and then monitors compliance. The responsibility for running the organization is delegated to one person, the principal, who is then held to account. This is a conceptual process which expresses the values of the institution and lifts the work of the board above the mundane operations. In this model, the board will not spend time on the trivial matters and on rehashing the past.

Reflection
- Ask the board rate themselves on their suitability and capability in order to arrive at a sense of whether the board is adding value?

10. Competition – Cooperation

Higher education is, as we have already noted, a very expensive enterprise. Yet it is sad to observe how much competition and duplication there is across the continent. This is financially wasteful and theologically sinful because it ignores the Biblical calls to demonstrate unity. One option is for there to be a united seminary such as St Paul’s in Limuru, Kenya which is an ecumenical project of some denominations. Another way is to ignore everyone else and to go it alone by emphasizing one’s distinctive differences, as is the norm. A third way is to retain separate institutions but find ways of sharing resources. The Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Institutions in South Africa is one example in which the libraries of the participating institutions are shared on-line to facilitate interlibrary loans and to avoid duplicating costly journal holdings. In this model even different theological traditions could work together on certain defined projects. Cross registration of students is possible as is joint faculty training. In Maputo in Mozambique and in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia there are examples of undergraduate colleges co-operating to pool their resources in order to jointly offer a master’s degree.

Reflection
- In what specific ways could the call to demonstrate unity as demanded of those in the Kingdom of God be better demonstrated by your school?

In Conclusion

The biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann wrote, “The case for theological education cannot be finally made once and for all. It needs to be made again and again, because what theology and theological education are called to do varies in each social setting and cultural circumstance.”

The final word goes to Dan Aleshire who is the executive director of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

Theological education is a socially constructed enterprise, and when times and issues change, the case for theological education needs to be reconsidered, if not reconstructed. The times are changing.

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Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa


Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.*


1. Introduction

The long-term sustainability of Christian churches depends greatly on the effectiveness of pastoral (and lay-leader) training. The problem faced by theological education in tropical Africa and the whole of the African continent is apparent as soon as one notes that most pastoral training has been conducted by missionaries—the majority of whom know little or nothing about the inner dynamics of the African cultural and religious heritage. This situation persists because of the high cost of residential pastoral formation and the lack of contextualization of the training curriculum. To cut costs, African bishops and churches invite foreign missionary instructors to conduct training in their pastoral institutes. As long as the syllabi of African theological colleges and seminaries are imported from elsewhere, pastoral training will continue to be out of tune with the cultural and religious dynamics of African societies among whom the trainees are expected to work after graduation.

Urgent transformation of the curriculum for theological education in Africa is a necessity, not an option. Curriculum development is a professional undertaking, which must begin from the context of the learners—from what they already know—then proceed towards helping them discern those texts and experiences that can provide relevant knowledge, skills, and expertise appropriate for each particular context. Jesus was exemplary in his pedagogical skills. He would illustrate all his teachings with parables, metaphors and idioms derived from the cultural experience of his audiences. At the beginning of this third millennium, a contextually relevant curriculum for theological education in Africa ought to effectively deal with at least two issues:

• How to prepare African pastors, priests, lay leaders, teachers and other personnel without alienating from their culture?
• How to prepare them to cope with the present split between Christian identity and practice as characterized in much of African Christianity today?

2. Cultural Identity

Inevitably every Christian mission agency from outside Africa has introduced into this continent the cultural and religious values from the home country of that agency. This cultural invasion of Africa with North Atlantic culture is particularly evident among the African elite as a result of schooling and indoctrination. The curricula in schools, colleges, seminaries, and universities have been overloaded with cultural values from Europe and North America at the expense of the African cultural and religious heritage. Christian instruction and the use of foreign languages as the medium of instruction have reinforced this alienation of African students from their culture. How can one envision a relevant effective and academically sound programme of theological education without falling into this trap of cultural alienation? This is possible, provided that the policy makers are committed to both the Gospel and cultural affirmation. The Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15 and Galatians 2-3) is instructive on this point.

1 An earlier, shorter version of this essay was published as an article in the Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity (New York: CUP, 2010).

There is nothing specifically African in the doctrines recited by African branches of various denominations—such as the Anglican, Baptist, Congregationalist, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Moravian, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Quaker, Reformed and Roman Catholic denominations. Yet in practice African Christians in these denominations remain rooted in their respective African cultural traditions. For them Christianity remains largely a Sunday affair, with little or no direct impact on the political, economic, ethical, and aesthetic norms of wider society. This inconsistency between doctrinal identity and actual daily life and conduct among African Christians brings to question the significance of the rapid numerical increase in church membership in Africa, which has no direct impact in human relations among the people in a continent burdened with civil strife, administrative inefficiency and economic failure. Apparently many Africans turn to the church for refuge, hoping that through the Church they might perhaps survive the collapse of social institutions (which fail to serve them) and the post-colonial political crises in predominantly “Christian” countries.

This lack of social engagement of many African Christians reflects the fact that, in most instances, the form of Christianity that has been introduced to the continent of Africa is a religion aimed at securing eternal life for the believers after their death. What believers do now is “insurance” for the life to come, leading to an abdication of social responsibility with regard to the current political and economic affairs. Most priests, pastors, and lay-leaders fail to provide any relevant guidance for the Christians under their care, especially during social and political crises. Prayer is important. But social analysis and relevant action is even more urgent. In practice, churches are often the focal points for fomenting social strife. Denominational rivalry often disguises ethnic tensions and vice versa. African churches, especially those that are extensions of foreign denominations, remain largely detached from the daily social concerns of the nations to which their members belong. The training and continuing education of priests, pastors, and lay-leaders tends to perpetuate this shortcoming instead of overcoming it.

4. Private Christian Universities and Christianity in Public Universities

The dissonance between theological education training and contextual relevance leads to a pastoral workforce inadequate for the delivery of relevant contextual service to the congregations in both rural and urban areas in Africa. An African theological education curriculum that effectively addresses these issues ought to be an African ecumenical undertaking (transcending the denominational rivalry and competition inherited from the mission agencies). To be contextually relevant and effective, tertiary Christian theological education will have to re-think the inherited relationships with North Atlantic Christianity, taking into serious consideration the challenges that the latter is facing in the twenty-first century as a consequence of policies formulated and implemented in the twentieth.

Whereas Tropical Africa has numerous churches without enough adequately trained theologians, churches in the North Atlantic countries have an excess of trained theologians without enough Christians to serve. How could these North Atlantic theologians support the training of African theologians within African cultural contexts, instead of the expensive model of sending Africans to train abroad out of context and out of home? What would be the ingredients of such a model of theological education? There is no easy answer to this question because cultural presuppositions and power relations (including between rich North Atlantic churches and pauperized Tropical African churches) tend to overshadow any chances of unanimity in matters of doctrine, institutional structure, pastoral care, and conceptual clarity. The dominant model of patronage and tutelage is more destructive than constructive, more retrogressive than progressive.

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2 Many Protestant and Roman Catholic churches in the North nowadays are facing a dramatic lack of ministers as well.
Africanization of Christian theological education is necessary and overdue. One model for dealing with this challenge has been the establishment of “Christian” universities. Since the 1970s several such universities have been established in various African countries, mainly as denominational and sectarian institutions. The justification for these institutions has been that public government-funded universities are secular in curriculum and management. Some of these “Christian” universities have insisted on avoiding or bypassing the accreditation requirements that are mandatory for tertiary education. Some have tried to set up their own parallel accreditation regimes. This approach is counter-productive, because the graduates of these institutions find it difficult to fit within the public job market.

In Kenya, this problem was overcome through the establishment of the Commission for Higher Education as the accrediting authority for all private universities. Every private institution offering degrees is required to apply for accreditation. The process from application to accreditation is rigorous and tedious, but it has paid high dividends for the institutions that complied. Several private universities have qualified for Charter and are contributing significantly to the national pool of human resources. In addition to “Christian” courses, each such university is required to offer courses that are relevant for general education and professional competence. The institutions are also required to ensure that the majority of teaching and administrative employees are national and properly trained. A staff development scheme is mandatory, and the Library must be adequately equipped. Internet connectivity is also required, with broadband speeds and capacity high enough to upload and download high volumes of data for large numbers of users.

Some institutions have resisted these requirements, which are taken for granted in Europe and North America. The institutions that have complied appreciate the importance of keeping abreast with technology. Some of them are preferred for the courses they offer and the ethos they uphold. It would be worthwhile for churches in the North Atlantic to seriously consider this approach to education in general, and theological education in particular.

5. Education and Theology

The expression ‘Theological Education’ presupposes a conceptual link between two processes — Education and Theological Expression. It is worthwhile to clarify the link between them. There is a tendency to consider ‘Theological Education’ as a process, distinct and separate from ‘Education’. Professionally and conceptually, however, ‘Theological Education’ is a specialised form of ‘Education’. National policies of ‘Education’ in a particular country will greatly influence ‘Theological Education’ and other aspects of specialised training. This point is illustrated below, with particular reference to Kenya and Tanzania — two neighbouring East African countries which chose very different national education policies on attainment of national sovereignty in the early 1960s. It is impossible to establish effective theological training in a social setting which lacks solid educational foundations.

a) Education and Schooling: Education is the process of socialisation through which individuals and groups are guided to become responsible members of society. There is no human society without its own process of education. When a nation is conquered by an invading power, the first social institution to be destroyed is education, which is then replaced by a new process of indoctrination by the invading power. Unfortunately, since the colonial conquest, ‘education’ in Africa has been equated with ‘schooling’, with disastrous consequences. In Africa, schools, colleges and universities became, and have remained, institutions of cultural and religious alienation, in which children and adult learners acquire new values, cultures and attitudes, often at variance with those of the families and communities in which they have

3 http://www.che.or.ke.
been brought up. The policy of boarding schools and residential colleges reinforced this process of cultural alienation. During more than four decades of my teaching at all levels of the school and university curriculum in Kenya I have repeatedly heard from pupils and students that what they learned in school and college had little or no relevance to their daily lives at home and work. My endeavour has been to make my teaching and research relevant and applicable in my own cultural context. I did not acquire the skills for this endeavour during my training, so I have had to learn as I struggled along with my pupils and students. It has been a great challenge, and great fun. Education should be a process of cultural affirmation, not cultural alienation.5

This unfortunate context was not accidental. In the colonial period it was necessary—so the masters believed—, for Africans to be alienated from their culture, religion and history. On attainment of national sovereignty, African leaders had to choose either, to overhaul the national schooling system and risk losing the patronage of the former colonial masters, or, to maintain continuity with the colonial past, and sustain the schools and colleges as instruments of cultural and religious alienation. Some countries, like Tanzania, chose ‘nationalisation’ of schools and colleges, while others, like Kenya, chose to sustain and maintain the colonial infrastructure.

Each option had heavy costs and consequences. In Tanzania a whole generation went through school without learning the English language. While national cohesion was achieved that generation lost touch with the rest of the world. Theological colleges developed the capacity to train clergy in Kiswahili so that the language of liturgy became the language of training. This legacy of Julius Nyerere still prevails today in Tanzania even though there is now an emphasis on the teaching of English in addition to Kiswahili, the national language. In Kenya English became the medium of instruction in schools, colleges and universities as a matter of national policy. International consciousness was promoted and foreign languages were taught in schools, colleges and universities. A whole Kenyan generation became globally and individualistically oriented, but national cohesion was jeopardised. Kenya is reaping the bitter fruits of that policy today. Theological training in Kenya is still conducted in English, which, for most Kenyans, is not the language of communication at home and in church. It becomes difficult, under these circumstances, to design a curriculum directly relevant and applicable to the needs and challenges of the ordinary citizens. Schooling then becomes a process of creating a small elite, which is in touch with the global information networks, while the majority remain alienated from both themselves and the world. From country to country schooling in Africa hovers between these two extremes.

b) Theological Training and Articulation: Theological articulation has to be cultivated. While the average person has the ability to make theological inferences through intuition, the conceptual refinement of those inferences requires training in both language and religious discernment. During my studies in High School, my godfather brought my attention to the vows he had made on my behalf when I was baptised as an infant. He declared to me that, as he had completed his obligations as my sponsor, I was now an adult and could make my own decisions. Respecting his elderly counsel, which as an African I took seriously, I enrolled for Confirmation classes and went through the Anglican Catechism (in the English Book of Common Prayer) in preparation for my Confirmation Test. I took my classes seriously and this became an early opportunity for me to sharpen my doctrinal awareness about Anglicanism. I am happy that I passed and was confirmed in 1964. We may infer from this personal experience that theological training should be viewed as a lifetime process, beginning in infancy and continuing throughout one's life.

The clergy and lay leaders are expected to know more than ordinary believers. It is embarrassing for them to rely only on intuition and inspiration on matters doctrinal and theological. Unfortunately, in practice many pastors and lay leaders in Protestant churches today have little or no theological and

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ministerial training. This is particularly the case in some dioceses in the Anglican Church of Kenya, where it is no longer possible to distinguish Anglican churches from other Protestant denominations, except in name. Liturgically and socially, Anglicanism seems to have lost its identity, leaning more towards charismatic and Pentecostal worship. This loss of liturgical identity can be attributed partly to the neglect of rigorous theological training for clergy and lay leaders. In contrast, the Catholic Church, Pentecostals and Baptists take training much more seriously. If African church leaders cannot provide theological and doctrinal leadership in the respective congregations and parishes where they serve, how can African Christianity be sustained?

6. Current Models of Theological Training and Ministerial Formation

In Africa theological training is almost always linked to ordination. It is unusual for a person to enrol for theological training unless he/she intends to join the clerical hierarchy. Thus the enrolment in theological institutions is almost entirely tied to the number of clergy needed in specific denominations at specific localities. Although the Church in Africa is reported to be growing rapidly in terms of numerical strength, the rate of numerical growth cannot sustain viable enrolment in Africa's theological institutions. There are about 800 theological colleges in Africa today, with an average enrolment of 45 students. From a managerial perspective, this scenario is not viable in the long term.

To meet the annual recurrent expenditure from modest fees, a tertiary institution requires a minimum enrolment of 500. Within the Anglican Communion, it is common to find in the same ecclesial province, several diocesan Bible schools and pastoral institutes, none of which are viable. Whatever the justification for such duplication, it cannot be considered responsible stewardship of the meagre resources available in a shrinking economy. Diocesan contributions from the congregations cannot sustain such expenditures. Nor can donations from abroad. I have had the privilege of interacting with many students and teachers in many of these institutions. Both the teachers and the students are generally poor owing to the fact that their institutions hardly ever raise enough revenue to meet their annual expenditure, including the staff remuneration and accommodation for students.

Theological Education by Extension (TEE) has been proposed as an alternative to residential ministerial formation. However, TEE presupposes the existence of a respectable, stable and viable institution from where theological training is 'extended' to the non-residential part-time trainees. In practice TEE programmes have tended to operate autonomously, often with little or no supervision and quality control. Again I have been privileged to interact with both teachers and students in such programmes and there is general dissatisfaction with the conduct, content and quality of the training offered through TEE.

7. The Idea of a “Christian” University

The word “University” has at least four meanings, each of which emphasizes an aspect of the activities and identities associated with universities. Ideally, a university should be strong in all these four aspects:

1. A tertiary institution where students learn knowledge and skills for award of degrees, diplomas and certificates on successful completion of their courses. Such an in institution may have “physical” or “virtual” identity.
2. A set of buildings in which knowledge and expertise is imparted from multi-disciplinary academic and professional perspectives at the highest level of competence.
3. A community of scholars dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and expertise at the highest possible levels and from the broadest possible perspectives.
4. An internationally recognized forum for sharing knowledge, experience and expertise among top scholars and experts from diverse professional and academic specializations.

Part I: History in Theological Education in Africa
When the word “University” is qualified with the adjective “Christian” it is important to clarify what the phrase “Christian University” is intended to mean. A post-secondary institution does not become a “university” when its owners change its name. It must strive to attain all the attributes of excellence at the tertiary level. It must also become competitive, with the potential to attract leading scholars and students in the academic and professional disciplines in which it specializes. Internationally it must acquire a profile to attract top students and professors. The phrase “Christian University” may mean at one or more of the following four notions:

1. **Ownership:** A tertiary institution which is owned by a church or church-related agency.

2. **Ethos:** A tertiary institution which, in its Ethos, Vision and Mission, is committed to the pursuit of ideals proclaimed by the Christian faith, irrespective of the religious affiliation of its owners.

3. **Personnel:** A tertiary institution managed by, and serving Christians, irrespective of the religious identity of its owners.

4. **Curriculum:** A tertiary institution whose curriculum is doctrinally consistent with the Christian faith, irrespective of the religious identity of its benefactors.

5. **Profile:** A tertiary institution whose public profile and visibility is identified with Christians, irrespective of the curriculum content.

In Africa, the phrase “Christian University” has often been used to mean an institution for training priests and other religious personnel. A seminary is not a university, even if it trains priests at the highest level of competence. To become a university an institution must open up to train personnel in diverse disciplines and professions. The following are some of the motivations behind the establishment of “Christian” Universities:

1. **Secularization:** With increasing secularization of public universities some churches have decided to establish universities taking religion seriously.

2. **Sectarianism:** Some denominations want to establish tertiary institutions in which their brand of religiosity is normative for all students.

3. **Entrepreneurship:** Some churches and Christian individuals take advantage of government policy where enterprises are invited to invest in various sectors of the economy.

4. **Ideology:** Some investors want to strategically indoctrinate the students through a particular curriculum orientation, with the hope of influencing leadership during the next generation.

5. **Participation:** Some churches want to participate in tertiary education alongside the government, without loss of identity.

In view of the low enrolment in public tertiary institutions, there is a proliferation of “religious” universities. Unfortunately, shame, embarrassment and ridicule befalls the religions or denominations identified with tertiary institutions that are poorly managed. For this reason, it is prudent for any religious body to plan carefully and in the long term before embarking on the challenging task of establishing a “religious” university.

**8. Options for Viable Theological Education in the Twenty-First Century**

In view of the observations made above, there are several viable options. Each of them has its advantages and shortcomings. The solution is to be found in multi-faceted approaches.

a) **Utilization of Public Tertiary Institutions:** Provide ordination courses for graduates from public universities. This option would considerably reduce the recurrent cost of theological training and ministerial formation. The main cost would then be carried by the public sector. The implication is that dioceses will have to keep track of their brilliant members during their undergraduate training, and involve...

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
them in lay activities in anticipation of ministerial formation on completion of the course. Another implication is that the remuneration of graduate clergy should, at least, be commensurate with the public salary scales. There are many advantages in this option. Most of the older Protestant churches in Africa have well trained lay people in many professions. This option makes it possible for the Church to make use of this expertise in a formal and structured way, without the necessity to invest heavily to train its own specialists. This is the way of the future.

b) Consolidation and Amalgamation of Existing Institutions: Rationalisation of theological education will require, to the extent possible, the eradication of duplication and competition, and the enhancement of mutual support and complementation. For this option to work, bishops and donors will have to be willing to take a rational, rather than political approach to theological education and ministerial formation. The option may require consolidation and amalgamation across provinces, even across continents. It is irresponsible to continue to do separately, what can be achieved much more efficiently and effectively, through joint and united initiatives.

c) Ecumenical Co-operation in Theological Education: During the 1950s and 1960s there were established in Africa and the Caribbean, what came to be called 'United Theological Colleges'. These were institutions brought into being by donors at the end of the colonial era. African leaders were not involved in the negotiations. In view of the missionary competition and rivalry that characterised the colonial period across denominations, these united theological colleges did not function as well as their promoters had anticipated. The denominational aloofness remained and was sometimes accelerated after departure of the missionaries to Europe and North America. Owing to dissatisfaction with these united theological colleges, partner churches established their own training institutes in competition with the ecumenical ones. In future, it will be necessary to review the present condition and future prospects of the united theological colleges, in the context of increasing denominational self-centredness. There is an important role for ecumenical theological training in the future, but its specific mandate and curriculum will have to be defined clearly.

d) Theological Training through Para-Church Institutions: Theological education can also be enhanced through institutions owned by Trusts independent from Dioceses and provinces, but maintaining the ethos of the Church. In this connection the initiative of the (Anglican) Church Army in Eastern Africa is illustrative. Carlile College, owned by Church Army in Eastern Africa, was established for training clergy and para-clerical personnel sent directly by dioceses in nine countries in eastern Africa. This initiative holds great promise, because it makes it possible for the institution to meet the national and international standards in tertiary education, while at the same time serving the need of the Church in human resources development. Such an institution can team up with others in different professions, and also to link up internationally.

9. Modes of Delivering Theological Education in the Future

Theological Education and Training has conventionally been conducted through the lecture method. This mode of delivery ties students physically to their lecturers. Communication Technology has advanced greatly since the 1960s. Today it is possible to deliver efficiently and effectively full examinable courses without direct physical contact between lecturers and their students. The University of South Africa (UNISA), based in Pretoria, has an enrolment of 200,000 students scattered all over the world with 456 examination centres and 65 graduations per year. It has a library of twelve million volumes.² This is just one example of the possibilities for the future. Taking these insights into consideration, it will be important for the Anglican Church to consider new and more efficient ways of delivering high quality theological training. For this to happen, the Church will have to develop and pursue a vision of theological education in the context of dynamic change in society and communication technologies.

education and training. The following are some of the options to consider in addition to the conventional lecture method:

a) **Delivery through Electronic Mail:** It is now possible for a lecturer to teach students all over the world through electronic mail. Each student is linked directly to the lecturer, while there is a possibility of the students themselves interacting electronically. This can be very efficient, because both the students and the lecturer will only communicate whatever is most essential. This mode of delivery presupposes accessibility to computers, telephone connectivity and availability of Internet services. It is essential for Africa to be enabled to join the international superhighway. The church ought to make its contribution while the bilateral and multilateral agencies make their respective contributions.

b) **Delivery through Audio Visual Media:** Audio and Video Cassettes are another medium of instruction. Though expensive at the beginning, it becomes cheaper over time, depending on the number of users. The more the users, the less the unit cost. It is an effective mode of delivery, because students can access and use the media any time at their own convenience. Preparation requires expertise, but once the experience has been gained, it becomes a great asset.

c) **Teaching Guides:** Lecturers in residential institutions can reach more students if they are encouraged to write teaching guides for use by their regular students. There has to be a system of inducement and remuneration for this mode of delivery to take off. The Open University in the UK has become one of the most successful establishments to deliver tertiary education to people who, under normal circumstances, could not go to university.

d) **Delivery through travelling seminars and Field Workshops:** This is a mode of delivery has high returns. Within short periods, spaced once, twice, thrice or quarterly every year, students can prepare to go through a programme together, in their own country or abroad, increasing cross-cultural learning, and at the same time benefit the learners according to their career goals and professional interests.

e) **Interdisciplinary, Multi-Campus and Multi-Media Delivery:** This option is a combination of all the above. It has great promise for the future. Both public and private universities in Kenya have adopted this model, reducing the overall cost of travel and accommodation for students while increasing enrolment.

10. Theological Publishing in Tertiary Institutions

Most nations of Africa are celebrating their golden Jubilee (fifty years) of sovereignty in this decade. Yet, five decades after independence, most textbooks for tertiary are still imported. Theology is not an exception. Contextual relevance and applicability are cardinal principles in tertiary education, and over-reliance on imported learning and teaching materials inevitably yields subservient mentality. If theological knowledge continues to flow one way, from the North Atlantic to Africa, how can we affirm the unity and mutuality of the Christianity as a universal faith? It is important to support theological publishing in Africa, focusing on works by African theologians for consumption primarily by African readers. Only in this way can the maturity of the African Church be ensured and manifested across cultures and generations. A few initiatives have taken a lead, though with many challenges.  

11. Associations of Colleges and Universities

The formation and promotion of associations of Colleges and Universities can greatly enhance standards and confidence. Comparability will gradually become normative if the Associations become forums for encouraging excellence in academic, professional, recreational and aesthetic activities. The Association of

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8 In this connection, I would like to refer to the African Christianity series issued by Acton Publishers, Nairobi, www.acton.co.ke. There is also Paulines Africa Publishers in Nairobi www.paulinesafrica.org, and Cluster Publishers in South Africa www.clusterpublications.co.za; and also Editions CLE in Yaounde, Cameroon, www.editionscle.com
Theological Institutions in East Africa (ATIEA) used to provide such a forum, but with declining financial resources it has declined in its fervour, influence and effectiveness.

12. Concluding Remark
In this paper I have sketched what I consider to be priorities for theological education in Tropical Africa. The Paper is not exhaustive. It only points towards new ways and means by which we might begin to conduct theological education, moving away from conventional modes of thinking and delivery. I shall be happy to discuss any aspects of the suggestions made herein.
PART II

REGIONAL SURVEYS ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA
Theological Education in the Context of the Churches

Theological education that prepares men and women for Christian ministry while living in Islamic countries is a testimony to governmental tolerance and the resourcefulness of theological educators. The ancient orthodox churches, the various catholic denominations and evangelical groupings of churches all provide means of training men and women for ministry in the churches and community.

As the title indicates “Evangelical Theological Education In Northern Africa and the Middle East: An Overview by River Valleys”, this essay surveys many of the evangelical providers of ministry education. The survey, however, is not exhaustive. While the writer has not intended to leave any evangelical institution out of the survey, some will be overlooked. At the outset I apologize to any evangelical training center that has been left out. It is hoped that in the future those institutions will be written about as well.

The reader needs to know as well that there are also many vibrant ministry training seminaries among the orthodox and catholic traditions of the region. It will be the task of others to share with evangelical audiences a survey of those institutions. Many of those institutions are part of the Association of Theological Institutions in the Middle East (ATIME).

Evangelicals at a Glance

Evangelicals are people “who believe in salvation by faith in Jesus Christ and present the gospel to others”1. Evangelicals are also “committed to the historic doctrines of the Christian faith, the supreme authority of Scripture in faith and practice, the need for personal conversion, and the imperative of world evangelization”2. Evangelicals are found in many Christian denominations and with these shared convictions, evangelical Christians in the Middle East and Northern Africa experience fellowship with one another and with millions and around the world.

Bible-based Gospel preaching is a common heritage of evangelical wherever they are located. Evangelical tradition encourages church participants to develop their faith through group and personal Bible study. Teaching founded on Biblical principles helps keep preaching consistent.

Evangelical believers are urged to model their personal lives and church practices after the first century A.D. church of Berea in Macedonia. Luke’s history of the church highlights the Scripture searching characteristic of the Bereans.

“Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men” (Acts 17:11, 12, New International Version). Christians of evangelical persuasion are people who focus their message on the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as found in the Holy Bible. The authority of the Gospel is clearly derived from the Bible, and authorization to preach and teach the Gospel comes from the Bible. The central character of the Bible, the Lord Jesus Christ, is viewed as the unique Son of God and Son of Man.

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2 Moreau, A. Scott, Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions.
Bible, containing both the Old Testament and New Testament, is viewed as God’s miraculously compiled written revelation to human kind.

The Bible is the evangelical believer’s starting point for reflection, faith, practice and preaching. The main goal of the Bible is seen to be God’s desire to make Himself known to the world. God’s self-revelation in Christ as brother, shepherd, savior, friend and ruler is the good news of the Gospel. The Bible communicates what we need to understand about God if we want to know Him as He wants to be known to us.

Historical Backgrounds

Evangelicals from Northern Europe and North America brought the evangelical perspective of Christianity to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) beginning in the early 1800s. Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed, Episcopal, Lutheran and Pietist denominations from Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America sent missionaries to evangelize the peoples there.

Because the Evangelical missionaries believed that God wanted faith to be established and nourished from Biblical precepts, it was mandatory that people be able to read and study the Bible. Bible literacy and Bible study meant that Evangelicals needed to focus on Bible education and Bible publication.

Prior to the nineteenth century, traditional Christian denominations in Mediterranean lands conducted educational classes for the members of their clergy. Byzantine Orthodox and Catholic denominations operated training programs for monks, priests and nuns. Clergy persons became familiar with the doctrines and practices of the Christian faith in these centers. While it is true that the Bible was regarded as central to Byzantine and Catholic faith, the interpretation and explanation of the Bible was assigned to the priests and other ordained clergy of the churches. Education in these church traditions was mostly education for the work of the clergy.

In the 1800s when evangelical missionaries came to the Middle East and North Africa, they brought with them the commitment to proclaiming the gospel with the hope of seeing listeners experience personal conversion and an ever-growing discipleship in their evangelical faith. They believed that in the long run the Gospel would grow in its impact if each believer could reflect on their faith by reading the Bible for themselves in their own language. Evangelicals from all denominational backgrounds preached the Gospel, opened schools, started health clinics and published Bible portions and gospel tracts. Through their schools, they declared that reading and education was for every believer, and not just the clergy. Their printed publications emphasized that reflection on the faith was the duty of and opportunity for all readers, both male and female, regardless of their occupation or social position.

Middle East and Northern Africa Theological Education Today

Twenty-first century evangelical theological education in the Middle East and Northern Africa is based on these common Gospel, cultural and educational commitments. Making the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ known through Bible-based and Biblically principled education in churches and communities remains a primary focus. Colleges, seminaries, graduate schools and programs of theological education concentrate on educating men and women who will be able to communicate the Gospel to practically and theoretically-minded Middle Eastern and Northern Africa audiences.

The Middle East Association for Theological Education researched the need for theological education in the Arab world. The research was conducted by Jiries Habash and funded by Overseas Council

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3 This is the writer’s deduction from reading a history of evangelicals in Greater Syria published by Henry H Jessup in his narrative autobiography of 53 years serving as an evangelical missionary in Greater Syria (Jessup, 1910).
4 Jessup, 1910.
International. Some of the findings of this research are included in this essay. The reader would benefit from reading the full text of the study which is available through MEATE.⁵

The population of the Arab World in 2000 was about 285.7 million. The estimated number of Christians in the Arab World is 14.1 million or about 5.5% of the total.⁶

Evangelical Christians in the Middle East and North Africa continue to increase in number. We can safely say that there may be well over three million indigenous evangelical Christians in the Middle East and Northern Africa, when we include South Sudan. The number of Christians in South Sudan is estimated to be about 3,000,000. Seven hundred thousand is a conservative estimate of the number of evangelicals in the twenty-two countries of the Arab World.⁷

These numbers do not include the number of Christians who are working as foreign workers in the countries of the Arabian Peninsula. Statisticians tell us that the number of foreign Christians from all denominations is about 3.25% of the population of the Arabian Peninsula.⁸

With these relatively large numbers of church communicants, an ever increasing number of basic and ministry education institutions and programs will be necessary throughout the Arabic speaking Islamic world. Encouragingly, ministry education in evangelical denominations continues to expand to meet the changing needs of the region.⁹

Arab and Northern Africa theological educators are meeting the challenges through promoting educational adjustments in existing institutions. Educators are also supporting non-traditional ways of extending ministry education to church leaders.

Throughout this essay, the term Northern African is used. This term is used as a distinction from North African. The term North African has come largely to mean Arabs and other peoples living in countries that border on the Mediterranean. Northern African refers to the people in the Nile River Valley that are more northern to the continent of Africa than southern. These Nilotic peoples are the ones this essay refers to as Northern Africans.

Geographical Distribution of Ministry Education

River valleys and mountain ranges are helpful ways of understanding the cultures of the Middle East and Northern Africa. In this essay, evangelical theological education in the Nile River Valley, the Jordan River Valley, the Tigris-Euphrates Valley and the Levant Range are surveyed.

Theological Education in the Sudans

From the heart of Africa to the Mediterranean, the Nile River nourishes the peoples in the cities and villages lining its banks. For thousands of years, it has been this way. Nilotic peoples share a common bond to the river and its role in shaping their lives.

In the 20 years from 1984 to 2004 because of civil war and the forced migration accompanying it, hundreds of thousands of Sudanese citizens moved downstream from the South of Sudan to the twin northern cities of Khartoum and Omdurman. Refugees brought their tribal cultures with them. In the capital evangelical church leaders actively sought to aid and comfort their displaced tribal cousins. They also shared the Gospel. Relatives and friends from Muslim, heathen and nominal Christian backgrounds freely gave their lives to Christ and His service. The Lord added to the churches daily.

⁵ http://www.meate.org/
With this migration of Sudanese to the twin cities of the North, evangelical denominations re-located their seminaries and Bible Colleges and extension centers to Khartoum and Omdurman. Presbyterian synods established three institutions in Khartoum: Greif West Bible School, Nile Christian College and a post-secondary theological education by extension program. Anglicans started a Bible Institute for training leaders. The Sudan Interior Church moved Gideon Theological College to the cities and built a new building. The Assemblies of God denomination started a four-year Bible College in Khartoum. The interdenominational Faith Bible Institute was started. Ministry education became a high priority for Sudanese evangelical leaders.

The first version of this article was originally published in 2004. The information in the article was based on personal research done by the author when he either visited the institutions or met people who were affiliated with them. This updated version is based on news heard from friends from Sudan. If I have not heard about changes in the location of the colleges, either in Sudan or South Sudan, I have left the location as the same as what I reported in 2004. I invite the reader to share any new information they have that will make future surveys more accurate.

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<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Sudan Interior Church</td>
<td><a href="mailto:keraketta@yahoo.com">keraketta@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>Greif West Bible School</td>
<td>Post Secondary 3 year Diploma</td>
<td>Presbyterian Established 1960s</td>
<td><a href="mailto:specheadoffice@yahoo.com">specheadoffice@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Khartoum, Sudan &amp; Malakal, South Sudan</td>
<td>Nile Theological College</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Presbyterian Established 1991</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nilethc@mail.com">nilethc@mail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>Sudan Bible College</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Assemblies of God</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>Faith Bible Institute</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Interdenominational.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Khartoum, Atbara, Sudan &amp; Juba, South Sudan</td>
<td>PTEE Program for Theological Education by Extension</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Interdenominational Classes begun in Sudan in 2000</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ptee.org">www.ptee.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Khartoum, Sudan</td>
<td>Giffen Bible School</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>Established 1974</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nuba Mountains Sudan</td>
<td>Heiban Bible College</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>Campus dedication 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juba, South Sudan</td>
<td>Bishop Gwynne College</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Established 1958</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Evangelical Theological Education in Sudan and South Sudan

"Handbook of Theological Education in Africa"
Since the 1950s and before, Sudanese expatriates studied in evangelical seminaries outside of Sudan in other Arab countries. The Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, Egypt probably hosted the largest number of Sudanese ministry driven students. But during the recent civil war in Sudan, many more Sudanese students sought ministry education in other Arab countries including Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. A number of these students finished their education and did not return to Sudan. Instead they immigrate to other countries where they thought they might have more economic opportunity.

Theological Education in Sudan is now being guided by Sudanese principals, administrators and faculty. These men and women either stayed in Sudan during the war years or are among the minority who has returned to Sudan after years of study outside of the country. They are committed to help train church leaders for every church. Their institutions are graduating men and women who can lead small and large churches, denominations, serve as professors and scholars and liaise with government officers.10

When there was just one Sudan, Sudanese Christians viewed themselves as citizens with the right to speak the Gospel freely to the people of the clans and tribes of their country. Christian Sudanese shared the Gospel boldly in Khartoum and throughout the states of Sudan. Their commitment to corporate worship, prayer, preaching, teaching, evangelism and encouragement was exemplary.

During those years, government officials urged leaders to stop witnessing to the salvation available free to all in Christ. The same officials threatened to harm church members for evangelizing their Muslim tribal mates. While it is true that Christians suffered much at the hands of officials, their suffering gave them a boldness to share the Gospel to friends and relatives in spite of police threats.

The cultures of Southern Sudanese people are not Arabic. However, as a result of long-term relocation from southern states to Khartoum, Arabic became the main language for Sudanese refugees living in the capital. The level of Arabic writing and speaking of non-Arab Sudanese who were originally from the south improved as families grew up in Khartoum. Some of the children of refugees who had educational opportunities achieved Arabic skill equal to other students from Arab backgrounds.

Now, once again, there are great changes in Sudan. In July 2011 the country of South Sudan was born. Two Sudans now are situated side by side. As a result of the creation of two states, Sudanese who grew up as refugees in Khartoum are being required to decide to which country they want to belong, and are migrating to either Sudan or South Sudan.

The seminaries and Bible colleges are also making decisions about their locations. Institutions that are already in South Sudan will remain there. Institutions in Sudan are the ones that are facing hard decisions about relocation. The Program for Theological Education by Extension hopes to continue to operate through local churches in both nations.

Before the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed, evangelical Sudanese ministry training centers affiliated with several international educational associations. One of these was the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa, (ACTEA). The other was the Middle East Association for Theological Education (MEATE). ACTEA provides educational services including accreditation evaluation for English speaking institutions. The MEATE serviced ministry training institutions who offered their courses in Arabic. Now with the emergence of two countries, Sudan and South Sudan, educational agencies are adjusting their services to meet the needs of their member institutions in both nations.

Theological Education in Egypt

Moving up the Nile River Valley from Sudan we enter Egypt and come to Aswan. The Aswan area where Christian Nubian kings into the 1500s ruled the Nile and controlled the north-south trade on the river.

10 Interview by the author with Rev, James Tut, then President of Greif West Bible College in March 2001 in Khartoum, Sudan.

Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
Theological education for Christian ministry has been done in Egypt for centuries. Men and women would prepare for ministry through mentoring relationships with ordained clergy persons in churches and monasteries.

Aswan is part of the traditional heartland of Christianity in Egypt and is in the area called Upper Egypt. Cairenes (i.e. the people from Cairo) think of going up the Nile to the cities of the south. Some people think of Upper Egypt as all the territory between Giza and Aswan. Christian activity in that area is substantial. Cities of special importance in Upper Egypt are Aswan, Luxor, Sohaj, Asyut, Minya and Beni Sweif.

Theological education in Upper Egypt uses traditional and non-traditional approaches. We will begin our survey of evangelical theological education in Egypt with the institutions that have their base centers in Upper Egypt.

The Middle East Evangelical Theological Seminary, (MEETS), came to Upper Egypt in the late 1970s when one of its principal leaders, the late Dr. George Assad became the Director of the Lillian Trasher Orphanage in Asyut, Egypt. With the coordinated leadership of the Assemblies of God denomination, the MEETS began study centers in many of the key cities of both Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt.

MEETS was established in 1953 by the Assemblies of God in Port Said, Egypt, at the Mediterranean entrance to the Suez Canal. Buildings were badly damaged in the 1956 Suez Crisis. After a short disruption of services, the college re-opened and continued in Port Said until the 1967 war with Israel. In 1968 the seminary moved to Beirut. In 1975 with the eruption of the Lebanese Civil War, the seminary was moved back to Egypt (MEETS, 1997).

MEETS operates study centers in several cities. Some of the cities are Sohag, Asyut, Minya and Cairo. Students come from the Assemblies of God churches and other denominations. MEETS offers a 3 year diploma and a 4 year degree programme. Applicants are accepted on the basis of their local churches’ recommendations. Students use study materials from Global University, an accredited correspondence university. Classes meet on Fridays for lectures and discussion.

Wesley College in Asyut is a Free Methodist institution founded many decades ago. A small number of residential students are continuously in training at Wesley for pastoral ministry positions in the Holiness Movement churches of Egypt.

Evangelical Theological Seminary, Cairo, (ETSC). Theological classes were established by the Egyptian Presbyterian Presbytery in 1863. (The Coptic Orthodox Church began their first theological seminary in 1893). Classes were held in both Cairo and Asyut.

In 1885 Cairo was chosen as the permanent location for the theological classes and the classes were renamed “Theological School.” In 1927 the main building of the seminary was dedicated. Today the school is called Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo.

Men and women from all over the Arab world have been trained for ministry at ETSC. It offers morning classes for full-time students and evening classes for part-time students who are employed during the day. Awards offered include Diploma, Bachelor’s Degree and Master’s Degree. Students may have pastoral ministry and Christian education majors.

In 1986 the ETSC began the Alexandria Evangelical Theological Seminary in order to better serve Nile Delta area students. The branch continued for many years. It was closed for a time and now has recently been re-opened. In 2012 the ETSC started a branch in the region of Upper Egypt.

For many years, the ETSC was the only evangelical theological education college in Cairo. As a result, students from many denominations have earned their first theological degree from the morning or evening study programs offered by the ETSC. Many educators at other evangelical institutions are ETSC graduates.

The Church of Faith Bible College in Cairo was launched in order to train leaders for the Church of Faith denomination. It is located in the Victoria Square area of the Shobra district of Cairo. Its traditional
curriculum offers an alternative to the ETSC. The Academic Dean of the FBC, however, has his Bachelor of Theology degree from the ETSC. The two institutions enjoy a good collegial relationship.

The Program for Theological Education by Extension (PTEE) also offers church leader ministerial education in Upper Egypt and throughout the country. Most students are professionals who want the opportunity to study theology in order to improve their service in their local churches. Currently, about fifty PTEE students are studying in Egypt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Highest Level</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria School of Theology</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Episcopal</td>
<td>Growing with students from several church denominations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Theological Seminary of Cairo</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>Main campus in Cairo, branches in Alexandria, and Upper Egypt, serving many churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith Bible College</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Church of Faith</td>
<td>Serving Church of Faith and other groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East Evangelical Theological Seminary</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Assemblies of God</td>
<td>Class centers in most major cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Theological College and Graduate School</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Established by Baptists</td>
<td>Student body from many groups, nine day modules twice a year in rented center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potter’s Heart</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Interdenominational</td>
<td>Not Much Known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program for Theological Education by Extension</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Interdenominational</td>
<td>Classes hosted by churches from Alexandria to Aswan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veritas College</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Interdenominational</td>
<td>Network of classes throughout Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesley College</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Free Methodist</td>
<td>Serving the denominations of the Holiness Movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Evangelical Theological Education in Egypt

PTEE courses have been held in evangelical churches in Aswan, Luxor, Sohag, Asyut, Cairo, Zakazik and Alexandria. The PTEE is registered as a ministry of the Fellowship of Evangelicals in Egypt.

All PTEE courses are Bachelor degree level. Students combine four to eight hours a week of self-study with a weekly tutor-guided seminar. Courses last twelve weeks. Students may choose to take fewer courses than are required for the Bachelor’s degree and receive a Certificate of Theology or a Diploma of Theology.

Veritas College offers ministry training for church members. Self-instructional textbooks and weekly seminars with facilitators guide the learning process. The college seeks to go where the students live in order to make Veritas College education easily available to the serious student.

National Theological College and Graduate School is one of the newer institutions in the country. The institution was established by a team of educators from the United States that was led by an Egyptian-American. It seeks to provide Master degree level study for Christian leaders in the church and market place.
Two nine day modules are held each year during which the students complete four courses towards a theological Master’s degree. The period of study is 4.5 years. Assignments in between modules complete the study program.

Professors come from the United States to teach the modules. Professors usually pay their own travel costs. Students live at the conference center where the classes are held for each module. Student tuition helps pay the costs of the module. Local Egyptian personnel assist the students and coordinate the module arrangements.

Several cohorts have graduated. New cohorts have begun. Graduates serve in church and para-church ministries. Others continue to work in the marketplace.

Alexandria School of Theology, AST, began classes in 2005. The aim was to provide comprehensive theological education preparation for church members and for those preparing for ordination for the Episcopal Church of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa.

The institution offers master degree level study. Its students are Episcopal Church members and Christians from other denominations.

Each of these institutions in Egypt has a relationship with at least one of the educational associations in Egypt for theological education. The Association of Theological Institutions in the Middle East (sponsored by the Middle East Council of Churches) and the Middle East Association for Theological Education (found online at www.meate.org) are two of the agencies that are active in helping theological education institutions in Egypt continue to improve their academic programs.

Undoubtedly there are other evangelical theological education programs operating in Egypt. It is hoped that in a later update some of these institutions will be mentioned.

Theological Education in the Jordan River Valley

Palestine, Israel, Jordan and Southern Syria are impacted by the Jordan Valley. Presently the river valley serves as a broad border between the respective countries. Jordan, however, continues to relate closely to Palestine, Israel and southern Syria. Jordan serves as a gateway for the Arab world to Palestine, Israel, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Theological Education on the Western Side of the Jordan River

The Bethlehem Bible College (BBC) in Bethlehem, Palestine was established in 1979. The college grew during two Intifadas between the Palestinians and their Israeli overlords. BBC’s Associate and Bachelor’s degrees are accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education of the Palestine National Authority and by Middle East Association for Theological Education.

BBC is committed to making theological education available to Arab evangelicals throughout Palestine. In Gaza City BBC offers extension courses. In the Galilee district of Israel, the college has established an extension under the name of Galilee Bible College.

In Bethlehem the college library is also a public library for the community. In order to help people find jobs in the tourist industry, BBC started a Bible rich tour guide training program. Graduates can take their government’s tour guide test and become a licensed tour guide. In 2010 the BBC began its Master’s Degree program, and had its first graduates in 2012. The study program is aimed at helping people think through their Christianity and then live it in context.

Israel College of the Bible (ICB) provides an educational program aimed at training leaders for Messianic congregations in Israel and around the world. Established in 1990, the college offers a Bachelor of Theology degree and Master’s degrees in Biblical Studies and Counseling. The ICB’s special emphases
include exploring Jewish roots and how these studies may contribute to their life in Christ. It is accredited by the Asia Theological Association and the European Evangelical Accrediting Association.

During the past five years the ICB moved from rented space in Jerusalem to its own facilities in Netanya, Israel. With their property, the ICB is able to plan and build for a more secure future. As an evangelical institution, the college has supporters inside Israel and around the world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Highest Level</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bethlehem Bible College</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Interdenominational <a href="http://www.bethbc.org">www.bethbc.org</a></td>
<td>One of the first evangelical colleges accredited at the Bachelor’s level by an Arab government. Branches in Gaza and Galilee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel College of the Bible</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Interdenominational <a href="http://www.israelcollege.com">www.israelcollege.com</a></td>
<td>Ministry training institution of Messianic and Arabic believers. Bible, Pastoral and Counseling studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem University College</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Interdenominational <a href="http://www.juc.edu">www.juc.edu</a></td>
<td>Immersion education in living Bible history and geography at college and graduate level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Baptist with welcoming spirit towards other evangelicals <a href="http://www.nazarethseminary.org">www.nazarethseminary.org</a></td>
<td>Master degree in English and Bachelor degree in Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program for Theological Education by Extension</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Interdenominational <a href="http://www.ptee.org">www.ptee.org</a></td>
<td>Extension sites in Bethlehem, Nazareth, Netanya, Haifa and the Galilee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of the Holy Land</td>
<td>Ph.D. Degree Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Interdenominational <a href="http://www.uhl.ac">www.uhl.ac</a></td>
<td>Research emphases in Biblical manuscripts and archaeology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Evangelical Theological Education in Palestine and Israel

Jerusalem University College (JUC) was established in 1957. It previously was known as the Institute of Holy Land Studies. In Israel it is known as the American Institute of Holy Land Studies. It moved to rented facilities on Mount Zion, and the JUC buildings are situated on a portion of the Herodian Wall of the old city of Jerusalem. It offers short courses and a Master’s degree program. It is accredited by the Asia Theological Association.

JUC helps students gain a greater understanding of the Old Testament roots of the New Testament and the history and geography of the area in the first century of the current era. It introduces students to Judaism, Islam and the various Christian traditions of the Middle East. The JUC provides opportunities for students to integrate their Biblical perspectives with their Christian faith and professional interests.

Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary (NETS) was established in 2007 in Nazareth, Israel. It is an independent and interdenominational evangelical seminary. NETS has links with the Association of Baptists in Israel. It offers Bachelor of Divinity and Master’s of Theology degrees. The degree programs are of international standard and internationally accredited.

NETS seeks to serve the Christian community in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian lands. It focuses on Biblical studies, leadership training and promoting reconciliation and unity among the churches in the area.

University of the Holy Land is based in Jerusalem. The institution seeks to provide an environment where students can explore the origins of Christianity with a special emphasis on the contribution of Jewish backgrounds. The UHL emphasizes Biblical and historical research with its Master’s degree and Ph.D. students.
The UHL was started as the Center for the Study of Early Christianity, and it was incorporated in California, USA in 1986. Its main center of operations, however, was then and still is Jerusalem. The research center developed into an academic center where master level courses were offered. In 1997, it changed its name to University of the Holy Land because of its principal focus on academic study and research. It is accredited by the Asia Theological Association.

As part of its ongoing research, it encourages study of Biblical manuscripts that have been found in Israeli caves. UHP professors have published works on the documents known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Archaeological research has led to the restoration of a farm in Nazareth from the era of the first century, and a living village has been established that shows how first century people lived and worked. This project, known as the Nazareth Village Project, has become a learning site for Bible Land tourists.

**Theological Education on the Eastern Side of the Jordan River**

On the East Bank of the Jordan River is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In the capital city of Amman several evangelical ministry training programs operate under the sponsorship of Jordanian evangelical churches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Highest Level</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biblical Theological Seminary</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>New Testament Church</td>
<td>Evening study program for men and women who wish to train as pastors and church planters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td><a href="http://www.btsjordan.org">www.btsjordan.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Mediterranean Nazarene Bible College</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Evangelical Church of the Nazarene</td>
<td>Operates a summer study program with occasional courses during the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Assemblies of God</td>
<td>Correspondence college of choice for many Bible students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td><a href="http://www.jets.edu">www.jets.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global University</td>
<td>Th.M</td>
<td>Interdenominational</td>
<td>Middle Eastern faculty for undergraduate study with Middle Eastern and International graduate study faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.Div</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ptee.org">www.ptee.org</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B.Th.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Evangelical Theological Education on the Eastern Side of the Jordan Valley

**Biblical Theological Seminary (BTS)** was started in 2002 in Amman, Jordan. By 2004 BTS was offering Associate degrees in Biblical Studies and Theology, and shortly thereafter the institution began offering the Bachelor’s Degree. Starting in 2010 it began graduate level study and now offers a Master’s Degree. Three hundred have studied with the program. A large number of these students have completed the 32 credit hour Certificate level program.

**Eastern Mediterranean Nazarene Bible College (EMNBC)** was established in 1955 in Beirut, Lebanon. The College functions as a “non-residential institution operating within the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean field with temporary offices in Amman, Jordan” (EMNBC, 2000). The college awards a Diploma of Ministries degree that enables the graduate to seek ordination within the Church of the Nazarene.

Each summer the college brings students together to take several courses. A three-year program of forty-eight study units gives the students familiarity with the whole Bible, systematic and holiness
theology, ministerial practices and church history. Men and women of various ages are enrolled from different Middle East and Northern Africa countries.

Global University (GU) is a distance education university that is accredited in the United States by the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges. Courses are conducted through correspondence with print textbooks and through the internet. Amman is the regional headquarters for GU. The office serves students from outside Jordan.

Formerly known as International Correspondence Institute (ICI), Global University continues to provide men and women the opportunity to take courses by correspondence that will educate them for ministry. Students study at their own pace, and courses are available in Arabic and English. Global University study books are high quality instructional materials, and other educational programs often use GU course books to supplement their learning strategies.

Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (JETS) began offering classes in 1991 using several evangelical churches. The seminary was registered in 1995 with a board of representatives from several evangelical groups in Jordan. JETS seeks to equip leaders for churches and church planting in the Arab world.

JETS offers theological studies at what is equivalent to undergraduate and graduate education. Today its graduates are Arabic speakers serving in churches in Sudan, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and many other countries. JETS degrees are accredited by the Middle East Association for Theological Education, the Asia Theological Association, and the European Evangelical Accrediting Association.

The Program for Theological Education by Extension (PTEE), a registered ministry of the Evangelical Free Church of Jordan, has its main office in Amman. PTEE members include evangelical denominations, organizations and institutions in the Middle East. Started in 1981, the PTEE seeks to provide theological education for evangelical church members and leaders wherever they live in the Arab world.

The PTEE offers a Bachelor’s of Theology degree. Currently, students in 10 Middle Eastern countries are studying PTEE courses in their homes and local churches. At its Ministry Center, it continues to write new Bachelor’s level courses. It has accreditation with the Asia Theological Association. It is provisionally accredited by the Middle East Association for Theological Education.

Theological Education in the Levant Range

Middle Eastern evangelicals have been active in ministry education since their faith first took root in Lebanon in the early 1800s. In 1835 Rev. William Thompson of the Presbyterian mission established the first Protestant Seminary in the Levant in Lebanon.

In 1869 the seminary moved to Abey, south of Beirut under the leadership of Dr. Cornelius Van Dyke. In addition to being principal, Van Dyke was a theologian, physician, scholar and Bible translator. At that time the seminary had both theological and general studies.

In 1866 the Syrian Protestant College was established. The Syrian Protestant College taught the general studies courses and the Abey Seminary taught just theology. Eventually the Syrian Protestant College became the American University of Beirut.

After the Armenian Holocaust (1915-1922), Armenian Protestants living in Turkey migrated to Syria, Lebanon and Greece. In 1932 the Armenian Congregationalists and the Lebanese Presbyterians merged their schools and created the Near East School of Theology. Later, Episcopalians and Lutherans joined the effort and became members of the NEST Board of Management.

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11 See: http://www.pteec.org/english/history.html

Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
The founders of what became NEST were pioneers in using the schooling method for training ministers. Most of the traditional church schools for training clergy were established later. The schooling method teaches in terms with summer and holiday breaks when students return to their home areas or are engaged in short term ministry in local churches.

The Near East School of Theology (NEST) offers undergraduate and graduate study programs. The seminary has an extensive library and encourages students to use it carefully to pursue their research topics. Courses are taught in English. The student body is made up of men and women.

Under the leadership of its full-time and adjunct faculty NEST continues to help students grow in their ministry skills. NEST graduates are active leaders in evangelical denominations throughout the Middle East.

The Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) was established on a parcel of land in Mansouriyeh, Lebanon – a suburb of Beirut – in 1960. The seminary was launched by Baptists from the United States of America. The Baptist denomination that established the Seminary transitioned out of leadership in the early 2000s, and ABTS is now owned and operated by the Lebanese Society for Education and Social Development (LSESD).

The ABTS focuses on training pastor-leaders for churches in the region. ABTS graduates serve with Baptist and many other denominations in the Middle East and North Africa. Students study for Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees.

Each course in the curriculum seeks to incorporate and integrate elements of Biblical, theological, historical, social and ministry study. The ABTS library assists in this process by providing a place where students can find tools that help them explore Biblical, theological and historical matters from local and global perspectives. Having experienced this integration as students, graduates are prepared for thinking about how best to minister in their contexts wherever they serve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Status</th>
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<td>Near East School of Theology</td>
<td>Master’s Degree Doctorate Degree</td>
<td>Interdenominational Evangelical, <a href="http://www.theonest.edu.lb">www.theonest.edu.lb</a></td>
<td>Oldest Protestant Seminary in Lebanon Graduates serve in many countries like Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Iran and Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Baptist Theological Seminary</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree Master’s Degree</td>
<td>Baptist and Interdenominational <a href="http://www.abts.org">www.abts.org</a></td>
<td>Students continue to come from North Africa for their theological studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Alliance Institute of Theology</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Christian Alliance <a href="mailto:cait@lynx.net.lb">cait@lynx.net.lb</a></td>
<td>Resourcing graduates for Christian Alliance Church planting and leadership education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediterranean Bible College</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Church of God <a href="mailto:mbcpres@cyberia.net.lb">mbcpres@cyberia.net.lb</a></td>
<td>Courses for personal and ministry formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program for Theological Education by Extension</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Interdenominational <a href="http://www.ptee.org">www.ptee.org</a></td>
<td>Opportunities for adults to study who live in remote places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East Association for Theological Education</td>
<td>Educational Association</td>
<td>Interdenominational <a href="http://www.meate.org">www.meate.org</a></td>
<td>Celebrating 20 years of service to evangelical theological education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Evangelical Theological Education in the Levant Range and Beyond
Richard Hart

The Christian Alliance Institute for Theology (CAIT) offers theological study mainly for people who will become leaders of Christian Alliance churches in the region. It began in the early 1990s with the goal of training men for pastoral ministry, first offering only courses, then a diploma, and now a Bachelor’s degree.

The course lectures are often in the evening, leaving time during the day for employment and study. CAIT provides classrooms, a library and residential facilities for its students. Opportunities to minister in churches while studying are also provided. Its graduates serve in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Sudan and many other countries.

The Mediterranean Bible College (MBC) was established by Lebanese leaders of the Church of God denomination in Lebanon in the early 1980s. Its founders hoped that the MBC would be a regional college that would bring students from the Arab world and from Mediterranean Europe.

The College provided ministry education for its students during some of the most difficult times for Lebanon, during its civil war. Even with the dangers that were apparent, it attracted students from other countries. Many of the graduates of MBC from that time are now ministry leaders in their countries.

MBC now offers specialized programs of study. Its excellent facilities are also available to other ministries for short-term use. Students who wish to take courses at MBC can also take courses from CAIT or ABTS, and students at CAIT and ABTS may also take courses at MBC.

Program for Theological Education by Extension courses have been offered in Lebanon for more than ten years. The PTEE has found that its best places to offer classes are in locations remote from Beirut. Adults from the North and Central Bekaa Valley have benefitted from PTEE courses, as well as some from the suburbs of Beirut.

The Middle East Association for Theological Education (MEATE) is an association of Bible colleges, seminaries and graduate schools with mission statements that incorporate traditional and non-conventional ways of instructional delivery. The headquarters of the MEATE is always where its executive director lives. In the past the main office was in Jordan. Now, it is in Lebanon.

The MEATE office in Beirut facilitates communications and educational services for the members of the association. Members of the MEATE provide educational services in most of the countries of the Middle East and Northern Africa. Recent services include helping to resource libraries and organizing training conferences, producing a newsletter and a scholarly journal. Another one of its services is accreditation evaluation.

TEACH-LEARN is a project of the MEATE and SAT-7 a Middle Eastern Satellite Channel that focuses on sharing Christian faith through media. The MEATE role is to provide courses that can be changed into electronic courses for internet learning. The SAT-7 role is to take the courses provided by MEATE and turn them into TV programming. The goal is to provide internet courses that will facilitate Biblical and theological leadership training for believers in North Africa. All the electronic courses that are produced are also available for free use by the member institutions of MEATE.

The project is being managed by leaders at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary. The TEACH-LEARN team revises the texts given to them by MEATE members. Then they send these revised texts to programmers who turn them into electronic courses. The finally revised texts are sent to SAT-7 for their TV programming. TEACH-LEARN is an example of what can be done by agencies when they work together for common but slightly different goals.

Asia Graduate School of Theology Alliance, (AGST-Alliance). The MEATE is also participating in a pilot project for non-residential graduate theological education with the AGST-Alliance. The AGST-Alliance is a consortium of seminaries that are part of the Asia Theological Association. Faculty members and administrators of MEATE member institutions are invited to apply for study in this graduate program. Students will travel to these South Asian countries for short-term course modules and then return home to

Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
continue their writing and research. The degrees offered through the consortium are the Th.M and the Ph.D. Several students are presently enrolled.

**Opportunities for Theological Education in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley**

Opportunities for theological education in the “Land Between the Two Rivers” has grown significantly in the past twenty years. The turmoil in the area that began with the invasion of Kuwait in August, 1990 heralded the beginning of a new era for theological education in the area.

After the first Gulf War ended, there seemed to be more of an opening to others from the countries of Syria and Iraq. Both countries sought to protect their interests while maintaining international relationships that would give them the opportunity to express their perspectives on their needs after the Gulf War ended.

**Evangelical Theological Education in Iraq**

Between 1992 and 2006, evangelical theological education brought by Arabs from other Arab countries began to take root in Iraq. Arabs from outside Iraq began to come and associate with evangelical churches. They looked for ways to establish indigenous theological education in Iraq through their existing relationships.

JETS from Jordan and CAIT from Lebanon helped their graduates from Iraq establish theological classes for Iraqi Christians. PTIE leaders from Jordan trained Iraqi tutors who started classes in churches in Basra, Baghdad and Kirkuk. Evangelical educators came from Korea to partner with Iraqi evangelicals to establish the Iraq Evangelical Seminary (IES). Evangelical Arab churches from various denominations began ministry training classes throughout Iraq.

While this was happening, an unusual and unexpected phenomenon was occurring in Northern Iraq. With the no-fly zone there, the native people of the area, the Kurds, were free to establish their own culture within the framework of a semi-autonomous government.

Along with this freedom and increasing sense of identity, many Kurdish people chose of their own free will to begin to follow Christ as their Savior and Lord. The Kurdish government did not interfere. The resistance to this change was more social, coming from family members.

Traditional and non-traditional theological education and discipleship study programs began. Adult Kurdish believers studied in Kurdish and Arabic. Kurdish believers planted churches. Kurdistan became a place of careful church growth.

Between 2005 and 2012 many of the Arabic language evangelical education efforts in Baghdad and other places in central and southern Iraq experienced setbacks. Some of the evangelical study programs in these cities left Iraq completely. Others migrated North to Kurdistan where it was safer to operate. A few remained in Baghdad and other cities.

Wherever one goes in Iraq, Christian ministry education requires creativity, much prayer, bravery and patience. We are pleased, however, to know that all over Iraq there are men and women, Arabs, Kurds, Assyrians, Armenians and Chaldeans who have had some theological training that is helping them lead their lives and Bible study groups with insight and wisdom.

**Evangelical Theological Education in Syria**

In Syria there have been great opportunities for discipleship and leadership growth. As graduates from theological education programs in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt have returned home to Syria, they have been able to teach ministry teams in their churches who are able to lead other groups in their churches, like the children, teenager and young adult groups.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Veritas College has established class centers in Syria. Under the leadership of Syrians who have studied with one of the other theological education programs in neighboring countries, Veritas classes are expanding to meet a great need.

The Program for Theological Education by Extension Syria Committee has been able to train and motivate volunteer tutors to lead PTEE courses in many parts of the country. Even during times of civil unrest, classes have continued in local churches. The adults who study seem to have a heightened desire to apply what they are learning. They look for ways to improve family living, deepen church fellowship and enhance Christian citizenship.

Theological education in Iraq and Syria succeeds as leaders from different denominations and institutions network together for common goals. The relationships that are strengthened during difficult times continue when things return to normal. Mutual acceptance will be the key that fortifies us for the work that lies ahead in discerning how God wants us to be involved in training men and women for Christian ministry.

Partnering with Evangelical Theological Education In Northern Africa and the Middle East

Wonderful things do not happen by themselves. We see great outcomes to our projects when we work in cooperation with others. Evangelical theological institutions prosper because of God’s blessing, the support of local churches, wise leaders and partners who come alongside to work together.

Three of the evangelical education associations that have helped and encouraged evangelical theological education are the Accrediting Association for Theological Education in Africa, the Asia Theological Association and the Middle East Association for Theological Education.

These associations are members of a larger body that seeks to help theological education thrive in their local contexts around the world. This association is called the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education. We are grateful for the linkages that all these associations give member institutions in their efforts to develop quality education for their stakeholders.

Several of the institutions that have been listed in these pages share a partnership relationship with Overseas Council International (OCI found online as www.overseas.org). In its efforts to help these partners develop, Overseas Council sponsors an annual Institute for Excellence in Leadership Development.

Partner institutions and some other institutions in the area are invited to attend this 4-5 day annual workshop. Each year new topics are addressed of special importance to institutional administrators. Through the workshops, college, seminary and program presidents get to know one another. During formal program times and informal discussions, leaders learn, and they try out their ideas when they return home. Relationships formed and strengthened at these events result in leaders seeking one another’s advice throughout the year.

Evangelical theological educators are grateful for the encouragement they receive from friends and supporters around the world. May I, in behalf of regional theological educators say thank you to all who pray for, advise and financially support evangelical theological education in Northern Africa and the Middle East.

Conclusion

Throughout the river valleys and ranges of Africa and the Middle East theological education is growing and serving in context. During times of peace and war, it continues. Pressures may cause the educational process to be re-shaped, but whatever innovative shape it might take, it keeps on producing pastors for churches, ministers in the marketplace, and home leaders with compassion for others.

Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
As we meet the students and graduates of the many Bible colleges, extension programs, seminaries and graduate schools, we know that God is providing spiritual men and women who will lead us and our children and grandchildren in the way of Christ and the gospel. What we see gives us assurance that God is continuing to protect and grow His church in Northern Africa and the Middle East. As a result, we look forward with hope, confident that the Lord will keep on teaching us aright as we move into the future He has prepared for us.

The wars in Sudan have brought much suffering. But in a miraculous way, the suffering has brought many Sudanese to Christ. The Sudanese church is growing faster than the rate of population increase. Sudanese churches see the need to train leaders.

Sudanese are resourceful people. Their deep desire to be trained for ministry has sent them to the Middle East and around Africa to study. Southern Sudanese students and refugees have lived in all the collar countries around Sudan. The enrichment has been mutual between the displaced Sudanese and the residents of their host countries.

When the Southern Sudanese migrated North to Khartoum, they learned to speak and read and write Arabic like the Arabs do. That level of Arabic permitted Sudanese to travel to Arab countries like Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon to get their higher education. Now there are thousands of Southern Sudanese with university and seminary degrees from Middle Eastern countries.

With the massive migration back to South Sudan, a mixing of cultures is happening. Southern Sudanese continue to speak their mother-tongue as well as Arabic and or English. We hope this mixing of Sudanese cultures will boost confidence and commitment needed to serve the churches that need to be re-established in Sudan for those who remained in the South and those who migrated everywhere.

When they studied outside of their country, Sudanese made relationships with people in the countries where they migrated. They also became aware of the theological associations that others have created for fellowship and professional development.

Sudanese graduates will likely maintain their friendships with these professional associations, like MEATE and ACTEA. It is to be expected, however, that they will develop their own Sudanese educational associations and become full partners with the associations they discovered during their absence from their home land.

It is my view that the Sudanese will be a long lasting link that will tie Sudan and the Sudanese to the Arabic world, as well as to the Anglophone and the Francophone worlds. Visiting scholars from outside Sudan will be attracted to Sudan because they want to see the social transformation that is occurring because people have the freedom to worship, and grow in their own country.

May God bring spiritual renewal to all of Africa and the Arab World through Sudanese churches.

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“Evangelical Theological Education in the Middle East and North Africa” Copyright Dr. Richard Hart, January 2, 2004, Amman, Jordan. MEATE Executive Director, richard.hart.228@gmail.com and www.meate.org
In this entry, theological education in West Africa is discussed at both the formal and informal levels. We begin with the process of Christianization through formal education in Africa. We then look at theological education in African Christian scholarship and through the establishment of Protestant seminaries like the Trinity and Emmanuel Colleges in Ghana and Nigeria. References are made to programs like the Theological Education by Extension (TEE) which has served the theological needs of the growing church in Africa. Finally, we look at contemporary African Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal modes of theological education. Historically these churches have been skeptical of formal theological education because the brand handed down by the historic mission churches did not stress the nature of the church as a community of the Holy Spirit organized around Christ as the source of life and power. A wider influence of charismatic Christianity in Africa means the trend is changing. Some pneumatic churches train their personnel in mission church related seminaries. Many others, through the shorter Bible School system seek to protect their pneumatic identities from traditional seminary-based theological education which in their judgment, tend to undermine the vibrancy of charismatic spirituality.

**Historical Developments**

In most of sub-Saharan Africa, theological education had its origins in informal training at the beginning of the missionary era when local teachers had to be trained as catechists because of the high mortality rate among missionaries. It was from the ranks of such people that initial candidates were selected for theological education with several being sent out to London and Basel, the homes of Protestant missions for such training. The pioneering candidates here would include Johannes E.J. Capitein, Philip Quaque and later Samuel A. Crowther. The teacher-catechists was trained to assist the missionary; some served as translators while others evangelized in the rural areas where the feared mosquito was most present. The missionaries remained the administrators and supervisors of the churches, which led in part to the first secessions from historic mission churches in the form of the Ethiopianist and Nationalist churches of the late 19th century. An important name here was David Vincent Brown of the Niger Delta who became Mojola Agbebi and led the Native Baptist Church in 1888. His initiative led to several others in Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone as educated Africans fought for more responsible stakes in church governance.

Formal theological education has been important but in most of sub-Saharan Africa the informal type helped the church to establish its presence in communities by democratizing access to the message. Much of the expansion of Christianity into rural Africa even during the early 19th century missionary era, was undertaken by ordinary people in the course of their daily work and activities. Hardly any Christian communities in West Africa, for example, owe their origins to direct evangelization by church authorities. Once the initial seed had been sown, ordinary members of the Christianity community took up the course of the Gospel in their work places or during rounds as petty traders, settler farmers or transferred civil and public servants to establish worshipping communities. The new communities then, with time, invited church authorities to provide the required leadership. Thus much of Christian growth in West Africa has been due to the work of lay people and the urge to spread the faith came from basic theological education received either through biblical literacy classes or formal education in which Christian education and formal daily worship remain central parts of school curricula and activities.
Christianity, Theological Education and Scholarship

A general conclusion in the writings of leading scholars paying academic attention to the patterns of growth and changes in world Christianity from the middle of the 20th century has been that the Christianity typical of the 21st century will be shaped by the events and processes that take place in non-Western contexts, especially Africa. John S. Mbiti referred to the shift of Christian heartlands from Rome, London, Geneva and Hamburg to Lagos, Accra, Harare and Abidjan. Kwame Bediako took off from observations made by Barrett in 1971 and Walls in 1976 and talked about African Christianity as “the renewal of a non-Western religion.” In the early 2000s, Ogbu U. Kalu edited a volume that credited Christian growth in Africa as an “African story” and Philip Jenkins saw a “new Christendom” in which Africa was a leading player. Mercy Oduoye has paid considerable attention to the gender implications of the growth in African Christianity. In a summary by Walls, he notes that the characteristic doctrines, liturgy, ethical codes, social applications of Christianity and new agendas for theology will increasingly be those prominent in Africa.

Questions of leadership and theological education inevitably arise when we talk about the growth in Christianity in Africa. Thus a close relationship has been maintained between the discussions on the growth in African Christianity and its implications for theological education. Those who have worked on that agenda will include John S. Pobee who served for many years as Associate Director of the Program on Theological Education at the World Council of Churches (WCC) until the early 1990s. In 1958 the WCC established a Theological Education Fund (TEF) in Accra, Ghana, through which a number of resources including textbooks and infrastructure were provided to enable the Church in Africa to meet the challenges of its extending boundaries both in numbers and influences on world Christianity. Thirty years later in 1986 an important consultation on theological education took place in Accra and the theme of which was very revealing: “Theological Education in Africa: Quo Vadimus?” According to Pobee, who co-edited the resulting volume with Joshua Kudadjie, the theme was chosen to remind us of the witness that theological education entails as a venture of faith in following Christ in the world.

In a foreword to the volume, Sam Amirtham wrote that the WCC Programme on Theological Education believed that Christian ministry belonged to all believers and therefore they needed to be equipped for their fundamental calling to share in the ministry of Christ. In the foreword to the edited volume referred to earlier, he talks about the high expectations that the ecumenical movement has of Africa “where the church

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1 Kwame Bediako, Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995).
5 For Theological Education by Extension see, for instance, Kangwa Mabuluki, “Diversified Theological Education by Extension (TEE),” in Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity: Theological Perspectives, Regional Surveys, Ecumenical Trends, 252-261.
6 “Quo Vadimus?” was the title of a popular film in which Peter, being led on mission by Christ poses the question, “Where are we going?”
8 Sam Amirtham, “Foreword” to John S. Pobee and Joshua N. Kudadjie (eds), Theological Education in Africa: Quo Vadimus?

Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
is growing fast and taking indigenous roots rapidly." It is this challenge of growth from example that drew attention to the importance of the Theological Education by Extension programs in the 1970s. The program has experienced mixed fortunes in Africa as a result of technological and other challenges but on the whole it has served the church well as a means of training personnel who are only available part of the time for any form of ministerial and lay training in theology.

**Christianization through Formal Education**

In much of West Africa evangelization was carried out in tandem with formal education. Until the 1960s when African governments took over the funding and running of schools, most basic and secondary schools belonged to the church. African universities like the University of Ghana, Legon, and the University of Ibadan also had Christian foundations and every hall of residence had a chapel attached to it. This means that, for both Protestants and Catholic missions it was through the provision of formal education that sub-Saharan Africa was Christianized. Christianization in the Western missionary era in Africa also meant the adoption of Western civil values; therefore for the average African, to be educated was to have both a Christian orientation and a Western lifestyle. The main modes of incorporation into the church were infant baptism and teenage confirmation. Some students were confirmed by secondary school chaplains who also took them through lessons in Christian education. Theological education was therefore integrated into otherwise secular forms of education that prepared people for positions in both the public and private sectors of the economy. In some countries this Christianization through formal education policy led to the boycott of education by Muslims who feared that their children would thereby be proselytized into the Christian faith. It explains why across the sub-region most senior level public servants have for decades been persons of a Christian orientation.

Church ownership of basic and secondary schools in West Africa meant that Christian education and daily worship were integral parts of everyday school life. Most of the secondary schools were of the boarding type and this gave the Christian churches the opportunity to integrate non-academic theological education into school curricula.

In Ghana students of the Wesley Girls’ High School and Mfantsipim Boys’ High School both belonging to the Methodists were trained as “local preachers” and sent out as “preaching bands” to adjoining villages to lead Sunday worship and children services to make up for the shortfalls in pastoral care. Similar projects were available in Nigeria and Sierra Leone and even in the Gambia which is a Muslim country, mission high schools were the training institutions of choice for families. The ownership of mission schools which offered the best in basic and secondary formal education meant that the churches, led by the missionaries, were able to inculcate Christian ethics into the lives of school children and students. Even though it was understood that Africans would not necessarily become Christians just because they had been to school, it also seemed clear that schooling in a Christian environment provided some of the best opportunities for people to encounter Christ, gain relevant education, and make a transformative impact on society as a result. Thus until the 1970s, it was impossible to come out of any mission school in sub-Saharan Africa without having been introduced to the Christian faith.

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9 Amirtham, “Foreword”, vi.
10 For the Gambia, see Martha T. Frederiks, *We Have Toiled all Night: Christianity in the Gambia 1456-2000* (Zoetermeer, Netherlands: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 2003), 272.
Theological Education through Teacher-Training

Formal theological education was extended to tertiary levels of schooling through the establishment of colleges of education. These were the colleges where most of the teachers were trained to serve in mission schools. The teachers were church members and being the best educated in the communities, theologically speaking, they were also the church leaders and preachers. The best examples of such mission colleges of education in Ghana are Wesley College for the Methodists in Kumasi, St. Monica’s Training College of the Anglicans in Asante-Mampong, the Holy Child Training College of the Catholics in Takoradi and the Presbyterian Training College of the Presbyterians at Akropong-Akwapim. More importantly, it is mostly from the ranks of those teaching in her schools that candidates for the ministry—caretakers, catechists and ministers and priests—were selected. In the historic mission churches in West Africa the mission school teacher who did not opt for the ordained ministry of the church remained simultaneously a caretaker or catechist for the local congregation.12

Until the post-independent days when the schools were placed under the supervision of government local councils, the educational task in West Africa was carried out within the context of the Christian community.13 In the 1970s, percentages started widening; however prior to that, most ministers and priests serving the Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican Churches had backgrounds as teachers trained through the mission schools. The Methodists and Anglicans recruited younger teachers for the ministry while for many years most Presbyterian ministers were retired basic school teachers and head-teachers.

Historically one of the most important and influential mission teacher training colleges in West Africa is the Presbyterian Training College (PTC) at Akropong-Akwapim, Ghana, founded about 1848. It started as a Seminary where candidates were given a thorough grounding in teaching, biblical studies, homiletics, music, church history and congregational care.14 PTC was the main recruitment ground for candidates for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in the then Gold Coast and beyond because until 1951, students had to do a fifth year of training to prepare them as catechists of the Church as they graduated.15 PTC produced a constant stream of teacher-catechists who formed the spearhead of mission and school expansion and were thus direct agents of social and religious change throughout the sub-region.16 This is also true of the Wesley College of the Methodists in Kumasi. The establishment of Christian teacher training colleges means that, not only was theological education part of the formation of instructors in formal education, but the school also became an extension of the teaching ministry of the church. Church catechisms that systematically explained basic Christian beliefs were taught to candidates for confirmation and helped to bring theological education to the grassroots.

In Sierra Leone the Church Missionary Society decided in 1827 to take formal education to a higher level. The resultant Christian institution, the Fourah Bay College, was the first place to offer university education in tropical Africa. One of its first students was Samuel Ajayi Crowther who led the Niger Mission in the middle of the 19th century. The Fourah Bay College is important in the history of theological education in Africa because it was there that the academic discussions of the relationship between Christianity and African religious cultures began. One of its tutors, Rev. Thomas Sylvester Johnson published a book entitled The Fear-Fetish: Its Cause and Cure, which started the discussion on the tension felt by African Christians between indigenous worldviews and the Christian faith. Harry Sawyerr, a student of Johnson, writing as an early African theologian, took up the issues raised in the book and integrated

14 Smith, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 58.
16 Smith, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 178.
them into his own research and.\textsuperscript{17} Harry Sawyerr became a member of the teaching faculty at Fourah Bay College serving the institution as tutor, lecturer, professor and head of the department of theology between 1962 and 1972. The students of Fourah Bay College were from English-speaking West Africa and beyond becoming “the center of successive visionary strategies for Christian expansion, educational development, and academic progress in West Africa.”\textsuperscript{18}

**Theological Education and Translation**

In the early missionary years projects were started across Africa to transcribe indigenous languages into writing. Thus an important factor that facilitated popular theological education was the translation of the Bible into various vernaculars. In the non-literate cultures of Africa, this transcription of the Bible into vernacular turned missionary translators into champions of non-Western cultures.\textsuperscript{19} In West Africa’s teacher-training colleges, the translated Bible was a major means of teaching vernacular languages. Through the translation of the Scriptures recipient non-Western cultures became the “valid and necessary locus of the proclamation” allowing Christianity to arrive without the requirement of deference to Western cultures and inspiring “the need for indigenous theological enquiry.”\textsuperscript{20}

It is the realization of the historical importance of the collaboration between missionaries such as Johannes Christaller and his indigenous partner Charles A. Akrofi that led Kwame Bediako to name his new center for theology mission and culture “Akrofi-Christaller.” Institutions such as the Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture have given rise to innovative forms of theological education that emphasizes on mother-tongue hermeneutics in Africa. An important consequence of translation was that the Bible and its message also became available through vernacular Gospel tracts that were important sources of non-academic theological education for non-literate Christians in particular. The materials were distributed through denominational book depots which for many years also published these works.\textsuperscript{21}

**The Theological Academy and the Growing Church in Africa**

The historic mission denominations in sub-Saharan Africa took seriously theological education beyond the undergraduate level by starting to offer brilliant indigenous ministers scholarships to study abroad. The investment has paid off in several locations with virtually all the important theological schools, seminaries and university departments for the study of religions staffed by faulty who are either members of the church or in most cases are ordained as ministers with their denominations. The historical names in this category include Christian G. Baëta, Kwesi A. Dickson, Kwame Bediako, John S. Pobee, Emmanuel Martey and Mercy Oduoyo and Tite Tienou of La Coté d’Ivoire and John S. Mbiti of Kenya. Their theological works on Christianity not only helped to “Africanize” the otherwise very Western curriculum of African theological institutions but also facilitated the process of indigenization that became part of the ecclesial discourses prior to the emergence of contemporary Pentecostalism in the late 1970s.

In addition to the facilities available in at Fourah Bay in Sierra Leone, formal theological training was institutionalized at Trinity College in Ghana and Emmanuel College in Nigeria. These were ecumenical


\textsuperscript{18} Walls, *Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, 168.


\textsuperscript{20} Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 34.

\textsuperscript{21} Arthur E. Southern, *Gold Coast Methodism* (Cape Coast: Methodist Book Depot, 1959), 139-140.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
initiatives through which candidates for the ministries of historic mission denominations—Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican and African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches—were trained through a four-year program. Others studied in departments for the study of religions in their various countries and as needed the church arranged for such persons to receive some theological supplement to their training in religion before ordination. For many years in Ghana, for example, a candidate for the ministry with a degree in religion was sent to Trinity College at Legon for a year’s program in practical and pastoral care before ordination.

Trinity College (it became the Trinity Theological Seminary in about 2004) and Emmanuel College offer important case studies on how formal theological education has developed in English-speaking sub-Saharan Africa. These seminaries are sponsored by the Protestant historic mission churches in Ghana and Nigeria. Trinity Theological Seminary was established in 1942 in Kumasi and relocated in 1964 to the same geographical area as the University of Ghana, Legon. Over time it has trained ministers for the churches in Nigeria, Sudan, Cameroon and Togo as well as Methodist ministers from the Gambia. In recent years, Trinity has also accepted ministerial candidates from independent Pentecostal/charismatic churches many of whom have now embraced formal theological education as necessary for church leadership and institutional building. Emmanuel College, Ibadan, was established in 1958 as a united college for training Methodist and Anglican ministers. As with Trinity in Ghana TEF helped to raise the funds for Emmanuel College which served the ministerial training needs of the two denominations for many years. Trinity College was affiliated to the University of Ghana and Emmanuel College to Ibadan; the two institutions benefitted immensely from the faculties in the study of religions departments of the two universities.

Theological Education and the Future of the Church in Africa

For many years scholars of Christianity in Africa lamented the fact that many West Africans who had gone to the West for advanced theological study were poorly served because they had been taken into institutions where faculty lacked the expertise to supervise work on Africa. Since the 1970s many more Africans have been trained in theology at the doctoral level in Western Theological Institutions contributing thus substantially to knowledge by research. This has changed the face of Christianity and the theological academy in Africa as well as the teaching of World Christianity in several Western institutions. This tradition of training candidates at the doctoral level has continued and today in institutions such as the Trinity Theological Seminary in Ghana and the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary at Ogbomoso in Nigeria, most of the teaching faculty are alumni who have benefited from scholarships to study abroad. Sponsoring Christian organizations such as the World Council of Churches and the Langham Research Scholarships have also contributed immensely in providing theological education at the graduate level for many Africans who have returned to serve local institutions.

Two important historical changes that have occurred in sub-Saharan African churches in relation to theological education are firstly, the gradual transformation of independent theological institutions into liberal arts universities; and secondly, the establishment of independent Bible schools by the newer Pentecostal churches. The implications of both developments for the future of theological education are profound. For those seminaries metamorphosing into universities the reason has been to overcome the economic challenges of funding theological education. In the process, theology has become a minority discipline in these schools because very few people are willing to pay for theological education. The

gradual acceptance by indigenous and Pentecostal churches that formal theological education is important for church growth is a useful development; however the many independent schools in Africa for Bible study and theology is creating accreditation problems for the leadership.

In the early 1970s, the Good News Theological Seminary in Accra, Ghana, was for example established to cater to the needs of the leadership of Spiritual and Aladura churches. The newer Pentecostal churches have also established different types of Bible Schools offering basic theological education for their pastors and leaders. The significance of these historical developments points is not only the critical importance of theological education at both the formal and informal levels for the future growth and maturity of the church in Africa but also the deep hunger and thirst that exist among Africans to be educated theologically. How this “thirst and hunger” is serviced will have much to do with the maturity of the church on the continent and its current influence on world Christianity.

Bibliography


Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Let me begin this article by making three preliminary comments:

1. To attempt to talk about training church ministers for the Great Lakes Region (further to be referred to as ‘Region’) is indeed an enormous task because, apart from being huge, the Region is by no means homogeneous. It is a place of numerous peoples belonging to different ethnic, social and economic groups. Even the natural landscape sometimes provides relatively influential cultural, social and political boundaries.

2. In this article the author assumes the training of church ministers to embrace two related aspects namely, theological education and ministerial formation. These two aspects in the training of church ministers prepare men and women for the task of enabling and building Christian communities that are capable of becoming living witnesses of the life giving power of the gospel in the Region.\(^1\)

3. The people involved in training church ministers have to bear in mind the fact that the Region of yesterday is neither the Region of today nor that of tomorrow. Why? Because there are various factors that are now forcing theological institutions in the Region to revolutionize their structures, curricula and focus.

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\(^1\) Training tends to enable people to gain skills for operating in a particular system.
God on the African religious scene and created a divided church in Africa.” At the moment, there are four major types of churches in the region and these are:

1. The mainline churches. These are churches that have evolved directly from the outreach of eighteenth and nineteenth century Western missionaries. These churches still represent the collegial traditions of the churches in Europe and North America.

2. The African Instituted Churches. These are churches begun by Africans primarily for Africans that came out of the Bible in African languages. M. L. Daneel says “AICs have consistently asserted their own leadership autonomy and religio-cultural contextuality free from the immediate control of influence of Western-oriented church leaders.”

3. The Pentecostal churches which at times prefer to call themselves as “Pentecostal Movement.”

4. The new church movement. This is a new type of church that is coming up as a result of a new wave of evangelization. The nature of this church is yet to be fully studied by theologians.

The coming of the Western missionaries to Africa coincided with the European countries' search for territories abroad. Modern church historians believe that in many ways it was the missionaries that encouraged their respective countries to colonize Africa. The colonial rulers in turn did not hesitate to use the church to help them subdue and control the colonies. There was an assumption in some post-colonial thinking that the church in Africa would die once colonial powers were gone. This, of course, did not happen. On the contrary the growth of the church at least in the Region has been extraordinary by any standards. Taking Uganda as an example, Philip Jenkins in his book, “The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity” puts the number of Christians at twenty-four million in 2025. He says:

In religious terms, Uganda represents one of the triumphs of the missionary movement, in a country where Christianity was newly planted in the mid-nineteenth century. Today, about 40 percent of the population is Protestant, 35 percent Catholic. … If we assume no further expansion by means of conversion, then the Ugandan Christian population should grow from 17 million today, to 24 million in 2025, and to 43 million by mid-century.

Unlike the church in many parts of Africa today, the church in the West (at least the Anglican Church) is deemed to have lost power and influence in society it once had. Her Christian message is that there is no such thing as universal truth. The only truth that one might experience is to be found in what society decides works for her in the present day and time. The church in the West values an over-intellectualized theological training that results in a weakened influence in society. On the other hand, the church in the Region is one of the few institutions of civil society, which are not on the decline.

**Theological Education and Ministerial Formation During and After the Missionary Era**

Churches in the Region inherited a model of theological education and ministerial formation that was based on a series of traditions from the West. During the missionary era, the training of church ministers in the Region was connected to structures whose aim was the creation of an African ministry that had a European approach to the gospel. As the number of Christians and churches increased in the Region there was need to train church ministers on a regular basis. This was done in two ways. First, there was the training of

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missionary personnel that usually took place abroad and second, the training of African church ministers that was done in the Region.

As regards the training of the African church ministers, the dominant models were apprenticeship and residential institutions. People who served as domestic workers or interpreters at the mission centers were given skills in church management for a few weeks and later ordained or commissioned as church ministers. As the literacy level of Africans improved, the missionaries decided to open residential institutions. The residential institutions that were set up for the training of African church ministers followed the curriculum that was not only designed from abroad but also ignored the African cultural values. For instance, students in theological institutions were never introduced to the African heritage that missionaries termed alien and pagan. Joshua Sempebwa says: “An African who followed his/her people’s customs was condemned as heathen and anti-Christ.”

The residential institutions model during the missionary era had many advantages namely, it:
1. Offered consistent supervision in formation of ministerial leadership.
2. Created a very good environment for academic excellence.
3. Encouraged personal and communal devotion life.
4. Helped practical work to be carried out in a consistent manner that in the end created progressive development.

Of recent it has been realized that the theological institutions’ curricula in residential institutions model never responded appropriately to the many challenges the Region was facing although a very good job was done at that time.

Due to the good job done at that time, the church in the Region is not on the decline. In terms of Christian population, there is a visible numerical growth of church membership. The church ministers are dealing with a vibrant and a well informed modern church congregation. The different theological institutions are realizing that they must train enough church ministers to pastor these churches. Although the church in the Region has realized this need, the kind of theological education and ministerial formation strategy espoused especially by the mainline churches is based on an inherited pattern from the missionary era that produces a pastor for yesterday’s congregation and not for today’s congregation. While it is very important to have as many trained church ministers as possible so as to pastor the growing number of churches in the Region, it is also important to remember that the quality of the present and the future church in the Region depends on:
1. Who is trained and by whom.
2. What is taught and how it is taught and for what purpose.

Today, Christian churches and Christian groups in the Region train their church ministers in a variety of ways. However, what is common to most of them is that the training of their church ministers takes place in some form of theological institution. The common ones are:

**Unaccredited Bible Schools**

In most cases these are in-house Bible Schools where short-term programs are conducted by an experienced pastor(s). The quality of such schools is usually too low to be accredited by a credible institution. There are many of these unaccredited Bible Schools in the Region.

**Theological colleges/seminaries**

These usually have reasonable infrastructure and well qualified staff. They are both for theological education and ministerial formation. In most cases these are residential institutions. Some of them are denominational while others are ecumenical. In the 1960s, when most of the churches in the Region

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became independent, there was an effort to create ecumenical institutions. But most of these institutions have returned to denominationalism. What one sees in the Region today are not only various church traditions going about their business of training church ministers separately but also competing with one another. Tharcisse Gatwa says, “these divisions that were exported by Europeans to Africa, a past into which Africans should no longer identify with, are being perpetrated today.”

In a Region which is characterized by divisions on so many fronts, the church has to act as a home for unity. This means that church institutions in the Region need to explore the possibility of having a method in which they can have less theological education and ministerial formation programs run denominationally and have more of those programs run ecumenically. This is because training church ministers for the Region is an act of communion rather than one of competition. No church in the Region can afford to train her ministers in isolation. I agree with Lucy K. Kithome and Kiranga Gatimu who say that “it is no longer prudent to venture alone. There is, need for denominations to collaborate and pool resources together in giving theological education.” Professors and lecturers in Theological colleges/seminaries are therefore being challenged to take a non-confessional approach in the training of church ministers.

It has been argued that theological education and ministerial formation in residence if done very well enhances spiritual development in the context of community life which is a vital component of congregational life. Students for church ministry are trained in an environment that nurtures fellowship. In the normal circumstances, residential education is believed to be balanced with ministry in the local communities during the field-placement period. Second, churches and the residential institutions take a careful selection of candidates for ministry, followed by a number of years of training, to produce a church minister.

Has the residential-only model sufficiently covered the present needs of the grassroots-level mission and ministry in the Region? The answer is no. The residential model is inappropriate in the present situation for the following reasons:

1. There are no clear means of interaction with the context in which the church ministers in training will serve when they come out of the theological college/seminary. In the last analysis, this model removes students in training from their real environment.

2. The residential institutions have become very expensive to maintain as Ogbu U. Kalu says “indeed, when Protestants decided on founding seminaries the tendency was to mobilize their resources and eschew denominational competition.” The question is how are these institutions going to survive financially in an economically depressed times when the pressures of globalization are widening the gap between the rich and the poor institutions? The way forward is perhaps theological education and ministerial formation by extension. One of the reasons for this method of theological education and ministerial formation is that “it is more economical than the traditional form of theological education and ministerial formation in the sense that it does not need many lecturers, large teaching spaces and large libraries.”

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9 Unfortunately, the church with her training institutions in the Region finds herself for the most part among the poor.

Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
Private Christian universities

In the recent past a new phenomenon has emerged in the Region namely, the growth of private Christian universities. The church has seen its involvement in university education as the way of regaining its voice in the fundamental area of national higher educational life. Most of the Christian universities in the Region have either the Faculty of Theology/School of Divinity and Theology, or the Department of Religious Studies. The church in the Region has realized that the best way of maintaining a Christian identity in an academic context is having a Faculty of Theology/School of Divinity and Theology or the Department of Religious Studies in a Christian university. For such universities, the symbol of a Christian university is the Faculty of Theology/School of Divinity and Theology or the Department of Religious Studies. Apart from being integrated to the life of the university, in some cases these theological faculties/schools or departments function as theological colleges/seminaries. The goal of these universities is to train indigenous church leadership with a Christian touch.

The advantage with this new development is that a university environment can stimulate critical thinking on theological issues as well as stimulate interdisciplinary methods of research and analysis on non-theological issues easier than in the denominational or non-denominational theological colleges/seminaries. However, Christian universities as an avenue for theological education and ministerial formation are being challenged to define themselves or justify their place in the church.

What Does it Mean to Train Church Ministers for the Region

While it is true that the quality of the church in any given region depends on the way the church ministers are trained, with the numerical growth of churches in the Region, some Christians who feel called by God to be church ministers cannot wait for many years of training before they begin to pastor a church. Confident of a spiritual experience and a divine call, some Christians start their own ministries without any formal training. Some of these untrained church ministers have prospered in their ministry while the majority of them have become a nuisance to the church in the Region. This kind of call to church ministry has coincided with some theologians in the Region asking tough questions concerning the need for theological institutions, the church’s ethos, and the curricula followed in the theological institutions while preparing men and women for church ministry.

Concerning the need for theological institutions in the Region, my view that is shared by many other theologians in the Region is that, good theological institutions will help the church in the Region:

1. To counter the brain-drain problem which will in the long run save church money from being invested in men and women who are unable to serve their people. Some of the bright students from Africa who go abroad to study theology do not return or if they return they are resented by the old colleagues in the ministry. Bev Thavers says:

   By educating committed leaders in an African context to address the needs and issues of the continent, Day Star is an important solution to Africa brain-drain...Day Star provides some of the finest Christian education available in East Africa.11

2. Again it is cheaper to study in the Region. Daystar University’s Mission Statement says “At Daystar, five African students can be educated for the cost of sending one student overseas.”12

3. It will also help in developing contextual theology. Theology programs in the West are not necessarily designed to cater for the needs of the Region and therefore are not, from the African point of view, contextual. It is true many students from the Region go to Europe and North America

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11 Part of Day Star University’s Mission Statement.
12 www.daystarus.org (accessed on 29.5.2011).

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
to pursue their basic theological education, but what they study raises serious questions pertaining to contextual appropriateness. The Region needs programs, to use Richard L. Starcher’s words, that are “(a) contextually useful (b) demonstrably achievable and (c) intentionally credible.”\(^\text{13}\) To encourage the development of contextual theology, it makes much sense to study in the Region first and go to the West for either specialized ministries study or to pursue graduate studies.

Concerning the ethos of the church in the Region, the question is how much should a theological institution view itself as an independent academic institution and how much should it view itself as part of the church and to what extent is it a preparation for church ministry? Some institutions appear to be adopting uncritically Western models of education and others are simply facilitating transplanted Western programs to thrive in an African/new context. The Western model still imitates protestant scholasticism that dichotomizes theological studies and practical application on the basis of disciplinary organization. There has been a concern in the Region for theological institutions to come up with theological education and ministerial formation programs that suit the ever rapidly changing circumstances of the area, if the church is to survive in this part of Africa. The argument that is always advanced is that the institutions that are involved in training church ministers in the Region usually do not conduct their programs in a way that is meaningful and intelligible to the members within their academic and professional culture.

Traditional theological institutions in the Region are well known for their strong loyalty to the form of training of church ministers as received from the Western missionaries. This loyalty has resulted in the form of training of church ministers that is foreign and incomprehensible to the students. For instance, a lot of time is spent on analyzing theological issues rather than putting into practice what is learnt in the lecture-rooms. In my opinion theories on theological matters are only good as far as they are turned into applied theology.

Lastly, the question of content is connected to the qualities and the competences students are supposed to acquire while in training. The question is what qualities and competences are needed in a student training for church ministry today? Are the needs of the Region different from those of other regions in Africa? In what way can the needs be addressed in the various theological institutions in the Region? What does theological education and ministerial formation program basically consists of and how can its main pedagogical fields be better integrated and more life related? Is there some truth in what scholars such as Gatwa have said that “classic disciplines and methodology in teaching of theology are no longer relevant vis-à-vis today’s complexity of problems?”\(^\text{14}\)

There are theologians, especially from the West who have convinced some of the theological institutions in the Region to believe that theology in Africa is in a state of disarray. They warn that African church ministers will be regarded as second-class church workers if they are going to have less study of Western theological thought coming from people like Karl Barth and Paul Tillich. For fear of their graduates being regarded as second-class church ministers, professors and lecturers in these institutions spend a lot of time analyzing the theological thoughts of people like Karl Barth and Paul Tillich as contemporary theologians whose theology applies to the African situation. Such professors and lecturers in the Region seem to be waiting for permission from the West in order to include the African theological thought in their curriculum. I believe that theological disciplines as we have them today became bodies of knowledge dealing with some aspects of theological reality in the West through the interaction of faith and culture of the time.

Can we, in our theological education and ministerial formation programs look at the life and teaching of people like Kwesi Dickson and Kwame Bediako who were not only university professors but also


successful church ministers? My suggestion is that in theological education and ministerial formation, more emphasis should be put on understanding the process of interaction of faith and the African culture of the present time when formulating the content of the academic theological disciplines. This is because “the sensitivity of the human problem-dimension of the disciplines that constitute the curriculum and therefore the content of theological education and ministerial formation is partly to be located in the interaction between faith and culture.”

Due to the problem of staffing in some of the theological institutions in the Region, professors and lecturers of theology from the West have taken advantage of this desire. They have at times designed programs in theological education and ministerial formation and sent them to these institutions. Those professors and lecturers from the West, who are sponsored to lecture in the theological institutions in the Region, appear in the lecture-rooms with pre-packaged courses that are delivered to the African students without careful attention to contextual issues the students grapple with in their everyday life. And yet, the perception of the church and its mission within a certain cultural setting, defines its strategy of theological education and ministerial formation.

Of recent, there has been the question of what African context means. There are people who argue that the Region’s context is neither African nor Western. The reason given by people who argue in that way is that in most of the theological institutions, one finds the 19th century Western-style curriculum. Today, more than before, Africans in the Region are proud of their heritage as God given and many of them are urging the church to come up with a model of theological education and ministerial formation that gives recognition to the central position of Christ in one’s life and at the same time expresses a genuine African Christian faith. If it is true that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the answer to the various contextual problems in the Region, then church ministers in training need to be given skills that can help them create their own theological language when responding to the needs of their parishioners.

Although the Region is largely rural and there is the harshness of life among the Christians, yet there are positive and negatives changes that are taking place in this part of Africa that church ministers in training need to be aware of if they are to re-discover their proper place in public life by moving into the centers of power and decision-making. On a positive note there is:

1. Knowledge explosion that is sweeping the Region.
2. The Region is beginning to embrace modernity.

On the negative note the Region:

1. Continues to carry the burden of denominational battles emanating from the West whose scars will take long to heal.
2. Needs to learn how to function efficiently and how to stimulate economic growth.
3. Needs to prepare a leadership that is rooted in Christian values. The problem of the Region is lack of leaders that have moral authority to deal realistically with the problem of ethnicity, tribalism, denominationalism and border line differences.
4. Is challenged by religious pluralism that has led to relativism that moves away from the search for an absolute truth to creating realities that suit some ones’ interests. This in turn questions the finality of Jesus Christ. The theological institutions are faced with the question how the theological education and ministerial formation programs can help students to think of the uniqueness of Christianity as a religion.

Unfortunately, theological education and ministerial formation curricula do not address some of the issues mentioned above. Even the lecturers and professors of theology find themselves far behind what is happening in the Region. Not surprising then the church ministers in the Region have been ineffective in persuading their congregations to be, for instance, actively involved in conflict management. Is it helpful,
therefore for these theological institutions to continue producing graduates who do not meet the needs of the people? Is the manner in which church ministers are trained defining the ministry and mission of the church or is it the ministry and mission of the church that is defining the way how church ministers should be trained? There is a growing consensus among theologians that theological education and ministerial formation oriented to the preparation of church ministers for their ministerial functions has lost its theological focus. I am of the view that the church in the Region should not only grow in terms of numbers but also in terms of influence and credibility among the people. Second, it should move into the Region’s centers of power and decision-making.

The Way Forward

If the theological institutions are to help the church not only to grow in terms of numbers but also in terms of influence and credibility among the people there are several questions to think through and some of them are:

1. How can we further strengthen our faculty, library and archive collection in our respective theological institutions?
2. Whom do we train, at what level and for what purpose?
3. What will attract students to join our theological institutions instead of choosing to study at renowned theological institutions elsewhere?
4. What to teach and how to teach it?

All the above questions and more others are crucial in theological education and ministerial formation process. May I suggest that professors and lecturers in these institutions come up with programs in which students will engage in research not only on issues that are relevant to the Region but also in research that demonstrates scholarship and originality of academic thought. This approach to theological education and ministerial formation is likely to result in a meaningful program of study that focuses on intellectual resourcefulness, sensitivity to human problems, appropriate skills, exemplary spirituality and commitment to serving society.

In their method of transmitting knowledge, many professors and lecturers in theological institutions in the Region have been criticized for using the theoretical application rather than the adaptation method. It has been argued that the theoretical method tends to hinder the promotion of the students’ ability to think critically and creatively. The issue here is not competency, important as it is, but relevancy. For too long, theological education and ministerial formation programs in the Region have concentrated on creating specialized kind of church ministers. Specialized church ministers are usually far removed from their congregations. The Region, complex as it is, demands a new perspective to theological education and ministerial formation that will produce theological thinkers rather than mere ritual performers.

This is the time when theological institutions in the Region should adopt a realistic and radical approach to theological education and ministerial formation. The realistic and radical approach to theological education and ministerial formation requires an agenda that takes the pulpit very seriously as the arena for transformation rather than merely a stage for performance by the church ministers. In order to be transformational, the theological education and ministerial formation programs have to be accountable to people without ever compromising standards of excellence and quality. The theological institutions should produce church ministers who are specialists as well as practitioners. This idea is supported by Ashish Chrispal who says:
Theological education must not create individuals who are conformists, but individuals who are committed to change – transformation – firstly in their own lives by Biblical values, and subsequently in the world around them. There is a challenge for personal accountability both in spiritual as well as personal life.\textsuperscript{16}

Therefore one of the major aims of theological institutions in the Region should be to develop the attitude of the students in training so that they may see church ministry not in a narrow perspective but rather in its wider perspective. The wider perspective is where the church minister plays the role of a facilitator in the acquisition of relational and leadership skills needed in influencing the lives of those who are at the cutting-age of the gospel and the world.

**Conclusion**

In order to have theological competence rather than mere ministerial competence, the content and methodology of theological education and ministerial formation programs must be integral to each other. By doing this, theological institutions will be moving toward the adaptation of an academic as well as a highly practical model of training church ministers. This approach is likely to help the next generation in the Region find the gospel of Jesus Christ both relevant and life transforming.

Is the future of theological education and ministerial formation program in the Region bleak? The answer is no. However, theological education and ministerial formation process has to interpret correctly the signs of the times and produce church ministers who can relate the gospel to the Region’s present and past realities.

If what I have suggested in this paper is honored by the theological institutions, it will be a demonstration that the church in the Region has matured in its theological understanding and has reached a stage of being ready to “drink from its own well.”

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THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA

Desta Heliso

Introduction

Not very long ago, theological education in some Christian circles in Ethiopia was deemed to be dangerous for Christian life and church growth. But, happily, all that has changed nowadays and theological education has become part of the Church life in Ethiopia. Theological institutions are believed to be the main catalysts in affecting the quality and depth of Christian religious life in Ethiopia through producing women and men who possess ministerial, teaching and leadership qualities. They are also believed increasingly (albeit in Christian circles) to be fields in which people who, through their academic thinking and research, can affect the socio-cultural and political life of the country are produced. Consequently, almost all mainline churches have one or more theological institutions. Many young people are going to a theological institution even after university. In the past, theological education was regarded as a lesser alternative, fit only for those who have failed to go to university. But all that has changed, presenting church leaders with exciting opportunities and challenges.

In this short article, I shall overview the past and present scenes of theological education in the Ethiopian Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant-Evangelical churches in Ethiopia. I will then conclude by making brief remarks regarding the challenges and opportunities that face theological education in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC)

Traditional Scene of Theological Education

Theological education in EOTC in the past could be described only in terms of the traditional church school system in which novices would start by learning Ge’ez – the ancient Ethiopian language that is currently used only in liturgical services – which takes several years. After that, the novices will learn religious music and religious poetry in different periods. That will lead them to the study of Old and New Testaments along with commentaries. They also learn the rules and spiritual disciplines that define the life of a monk as well as learning the history of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Church calendar and various arts and crafts, including calligraphy and manuscript making. The number of years in which to complete all this cannot be known with absolute certainty but the whole process could take from 20 to 30 years. Sergew and Tadesse categorise the schools in which this is achieved as Nebab Bet (‘House of Reading’), Qedasse Bet (‘House of Liturgy’) and Higher Schools, which are called Zema Bet (‘House of Music’), Qene Bet (‘House of Poetry’) and Metsehaf Bet (‘House of Literature’). 1 The last one is the most relevant to theological education.

It is in the Metsehaf Bet that all commentaries, which are composed of four branches, are studied. The four branches are called Beluy (‘old’), Haddis (‘new’), Ligawent (‘scholars’) and Menekosat (‘monks’). In Beluy, forty-six books, which, according to the EOTC tradition, make up the Old Testament canon, are studied. The students should also comment on the books. In Haddis, thirty-five books, which, according to EOTC, make up the New Testament canon and their commentaries, are studied. In Ligawent, studies and

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commentaries on the various writings of the Church Fathers such as John Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria are studied. Under this, the canon law (Fetha Negest) and the calendarical calculation (Bahre Hasab) are studied as well. In Menekosat, commentaries on monastic literature are studied.  

The central method of study in the Metsehaf Bet is memorization. That is, the student (along with his group) is required to memorize the set texts along with the teachers’ comments on them. Those who complete this process are qualified to hold high offices in the hierarchy of EOTC. But Sergew and Tadesse note that “the student is not allowed to have a critical opinion about any text to be commented upon, since it is believed that God revealed the content to the Fathers through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, these patristic writings are not to be considered critically, but simply learnt by heart. The habit of memorization and the uncritical acceptance of the commentary condition the mode of thinking of the student”. Even these days, such an approach generally characterises the ways in which biblical texts, ancient commentaries and hagiographies are handled, but one should ask whether the emergence of modern theological institutions is having any impact on this centuries old ecclesiastical educational method. We now turn to the brief overview of the modern scene of theological education in EOTC.

Modern Scene of Theological Education in EOTC
For more than half a century, EOTC has been attempting to modernise its system of theological education by introducing theological colleges. EOTC has three main theological colleges: St Paul’s College in Addis Ababa, St Frumentius Abba Selama Kessate Berhan Theological College in Mekele, Northern Ethiopia, and Holy Trinity Theological College (HTTC) in Addis Ababa.

St Paul’s College
St Paul’s College was started about sixty years ago with the purpose of providing both traditional and modern theological education for young people who were affected by the Ethio-Italian war during 1930s, but who were interested in joining priestly and teaching services within EOTC. The curriculum included interpretations of the Old and New Testaments, Ge’ez poetry, singing and chanting, liturgy and homiletics. The students were also trained in areas of handcraft and poultry farming. This is closely linked with the College’s strong tradition of self-sustainability.

In the 1960s, those with highest grades at St Paul’s College used to join a programme at HTTC. However, for long there has not been any noticeable attempt to improve St Paul’s’ curriculum and link its programmes with that of Holy Trinity Theological College (or any other theological institution within or outside EOTC) in order to coordinate courses offered in both institutions, facilitate credit transfer system, exchange experience and expertise and, consequently, raise the quality and standards of education. The belief amongst EOTC leadership and academics appears to be that what St Paul’s is not able to achieve, Holy Trinity Theological College (HTTC) can.

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2 Sergew and Tadesse, “Ethiopian Orthodox Church School System”; see their article on http://www.ethiopianorthodox.org/english/ethiopian/school.html.
3 One important reason for the fact that memorization is so stressed all through the Church Schools is that writing materials were traditionally not well developed. The few handwritten manuscripts on parchments were, and still are, very expensive. Sergew and Tadesse, “Ethiopian Orthodox Church School System.”
4 Sergew and Tadesse, “Ethiopian Orthodox Church School System.”
5 St Frumentius Theological College was established in 1976 by Abune Yohannes, Archbishop of Tigray and Axum. The naming of the College after St Frumentius has a symbolic reason because St Frumentius was the first Archbishop of the Ethiopian Church.
Holy Trinity Theological College

HTTC was started in 1942 by Emperor Haile Selassie as a modernised version of the church school system. It gradually evolved into a theological college whose purpose was to provide religious and secular education to those who wished to be involved in clerical or non-clerical services within EOTC. While the Emperor was the Head of EOTC, the college was situated in the vicinity of the then newly founded National University of Ethiopia, and the graduates were thought to have better job prospects. This led to HTTC to become one of the units of the University. That, of course, enabled it to have a curriculum prescribed by the Faculty of the University and hence provide a college level theological education with its graduates able to serve in both government and ecclesiastical sectors. However, this otherwise wonderful arrangement unfortunately resulted in the college’s closure in the 1970s as a result of the policies of and political pressure from the then military-communist regime, which had deposed Emperor Haile Selassie, and the lack of commitment from the leadership of EOTC.

Following the fall of the military-communist regime in 1991, the new Ethiopian government agreed to restore the ownership of the college to EOTC. Subsequently, HTTC was reopened in 1994 and now has Diploma of Theology, Bachelor of Theology and a Post-Graduate Diploma programmes. Since 1995, it is claimed to have graduated 500 people, of which 222 are serving Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo churches in the diaspora and the rest within the country. HTTC aims to develop “mature and conscientious servants who will make significant contributions as witnesses to the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian faith and source of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian knowledge at the college level against the background of Ethiopia’s spiritual and theological knowledge.”

The significance of HTTC is enormous, but the fulfilment of this vision and HTTC’s influence within and outside EOTC will depend largely on its deliberate plan to develop strong faculty, and its openness to critical scholarship and ecumenical engagement with institutions of other confessional backgrounds within and outside Ethiopia.

St Frumentius Abba Selama Kessate Berhan Theological College

St Frumentius Abba Selama Kessate Berhan Theological College was established in 1976 by Abune Yohannes, the Archbishop of Tigray and Axum. According to his vision, the college was to offer English and Biblical languages, theological courses, the history of EOTC, modern hermeneutics and traditional interpretations of the two Testaments, Metshafe Leqaunt (‘writings of scholars [Church Fathers]’) and Metshafe Meneqosat (‘writings of monks’). The number of students was going to be 200, of which fifty would be involved in teaching in various churches and monasteries; fifty would assume administrative responsibilities in churches, monasteries and other ecclesiastical institutions; fifty would be sent abroad for further studies; and fifty would become competent and effective preachers. This plan was dependent on

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7 Holy Trinity Theological College, 50 Years of Academic Journey, 2010 (Brochure). According to the website of HTTC (www/holytri.ethionet.et), its purpose statements are:
- To be a witness to the Christian faith and a source of Christian knowledge at the College level against the background of Ethiopian's Spiritual and Theological Heritage.
- To train young people for the service of God in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and the Ethiopian Nations, as clergymen; religious and moral teachers, theologians, missionaries, national leaders imbued with an intelligent understanding of the Christian faith and the foundation of morals.
- To provide refresher courses in religious knowledge for clergy and other religious employees.
- To prepare selected graduates for higher studies in theological fields, both in Ethiopia and abroad.
- To be a center of research and advanced theological and ecclesiastical learning of the Oriental Orthodox churches.

8 The naming of the College after St Frumentius has a symbolic reason because St Frumentius was the first Archbishop of the Ethiopian Church.

9 Yared Kassa, Hiyaw Kal (Amharic publication; publisher unspecified, 2001), 62-63. Hiyaw Kal (‘Living Word’) is an
having building facilities and securing at least start-up fund from Emperor Haile Selassie’s office. The former was achieved through the contributions of the faithful within the Church but the latter was not. Although the plan was somehow salvaged by the diligence of Abune Yoannes, the arrival of the communist-military regime in the 1970s meant that a large part of the College’s facilities was confiscated by the regime and, hence, the original vision of Abune Yohannes for the College and all that it could do for the whole country was not fully realised until the turn of this century.  

After various factors led to the closure of the College for a period of time, it was reopened in 2002. Currently, the College has the Departments of Theology and Leadership. Under the Department of Theology, the College runs diploma and degree programmes in theology. It also has a Master’s level programme in leadership that provides a foundation for holistic community development in the country. The goal of this programme is to equip leaders who will go on to train and guide future priests and the Church as a whole. The College also has a vision to equip as many clergy as possible in Orthodox Community Health Education (OCHE). Further, it offers training to priests and Sunday school teachers as well as teaching Ge’ez for up to six months.

St Frumentius College, in my view, is as significant as HTTC. And the College’s international outlook, its scheme to offer short-term in-ministry training programmes and its attempt to develop practical studies are admirable. However, from my conversation with the current and former leadership of the College, one should wonder whether the College has not got a very long way still to go in terms of the breadth and depth of its theological programmes, the capacity of its faculty, and the sufficiency of its library facilities.

**The Ethiopian Catholic Church**

There are two main theological institutions within the Ethiopian Catholic Church: the Capuchin Franciscan Institute of Philosophy and Theology (CFIPT) in Addis Ababa and Adigrat Major Seminary in Tigray, Northern Ethiopia. I shall discuss both of them in turn.

**Adigrat Major Seminary**

Adigrat Major Seminary, which exists in the Adigrat Diocese, is the oldest of the two, being the first Catholic Seminary of Ethiopia, founded by the Lazarist missionary St Justin de Jacobis in 1844. Justin’s main purpose was forming priests by enabling them to become well-versed in Catholic beliefs. After realising that his commitment to this purpose had born fruit, he said: “A priest from Abyssinia, deeply Catholic and sufficiently trained, thanks to his perfect knowledge of the language, customs and prejudices of his countrymen – knowledge that a European is not likely to have – works with much higher success than that of a European.”

Although Justin’s original vision seemed to continue to sustain the Seminary, it took more than a century for Adigrat Major Seminary to be modernised and structured in its present form. Indeed in its present shape and structure, Adigrat Major Seminary began in 1970. The Seminary is said to be one of the most efficient seminaries in Ethiopia in terms of providing academic studies, forming Catholic priests and promoting Christian culture and values. The academic part of the formation programme comprises three
years of philosophical studies, a year of pastoral service, and four years of theological training. Adigrat Major Seminary has been affiliated to the Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana since 1983. Urbaniana supervises and guarantees the academic standard of the Seminary’s programmes and, on proper completion of the full course, allows students to obtain a degree of the University, “The Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology”.

**Capuchin Franciscan Institute of Philosophy and Theology**

Another very important centre of study in the Ethiopian Catholic Church is the Institute of Philosophy and Theology at St. Francis’ Friary, Addis Ababa. It was opened in 1970 as a Franciscan Capuchin Friars’ House of Philosophy. Until 1979, the Institute provided a three-year philosophy course for only Franciscan Capuchin candidates in Italian. After 1979, however, the Institute was open to any diocese or vicariate or order to send its candidates initially for a two-year philosophical training and then for a four-year theological studies. This resulted in a spirit of cooperation and partnership between the Archdiocese of Addis Ababa, the Vicariate of Nekemte, the Lazarist Fathers and the Capuchins. As this spirit of cooperation and partnership grew stronger, the House of Philosophy has become a Centre of Philosophical and Theological Studies by introducing a four-year theological programme. The Institute has also become a centre of studies for all ecclesiastical circumscriptions in Ethiopia except Adigrat Diocese, which, as discussed above, has its own major seminary. In connection with this, Abba Musie Ghebreghiorgis, who at one point led the Institute, in his message on the occasion of the Silver anniversary of the Institute, says this:

The Institute’s future depends very much on the will and determination of the Capuchins and Associate members to work together. Unity is strength. The Twenty-Five Years of life of the Institute have clearly shown that whatever achievement has been registered by the Institute so far is to be attributed to the fine spirit of cooperation among the Capuchins and Associate Members. If this spirit of cooperation and unity continues we can hope that the Institute will go on improving its academic performance and, who knows, one day offer specialized courses in theology and philosophy like any other Institution of Higher Learning.

Now the Institute is known as the Capuchin Franciscan Institute of Philosophy and Theology. Like Adigrat Major Seminary, the Capuchin Franciscan Institute is an associated institution of Pontifical Urbaniana University. It has four different programmes: a seven-year Bachelor Degree in Theology, which is awarded by Urbaniana. A seven-year Diploma in Theology (which includes the Diploma in Philosophy), three-year Diploma in Philosophy and three-year Diploma in Religious Studies are all awarded by the Capuchin Franciscan Institute of Philosophy and Theology.

As indicated above, one main task of the Institute is training people for ecclesiastical ministries. But the Institute also takes seriously the task of enabling students to develop critical judgement through understanding ancient and modern literature, history and ideas. In this process, students are taught to appreciate Ethiopian culture and tradition. Furthermore, the Institute is committed to fostering ecumenism.

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14 University of Urbaniana is an academic institution belonging to the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples and provides for research and teaching within the framework of the Holy See’s educational system regulated by the Congregation for Catholic Education. For further information, see the website of Pontifical Urbaniana University.

15 At the moment, sixteen groups send their candidates to be trained for priesthood and the religious life. See the Academic Handbook of Capuchin Franciscan Institute of Philosophy and Theology (2009/10).

16 From a copy of the message sent to the author of this article.

17 The purpose of the Institute reads as follows:

- To form the students as human beings by sharpening their judgment and refining their appreciation of the wisdom of the ancients and moderns (Ratio 70) with particular reference to Ethiopia.

_Handbook of Theological Education in Africa_
Protestant Evangelical Churches

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) is the oldest Protestant Evangelical church in Ethiopia. The Lutheran and Presbyterian mission organisations from North America, Germany and Scandinavia that contributed to the establishment of EECMY also contributed to the establishment of EECMY’s theological institutions in different parts of the country. The church has several regional theological colleges, particularly in southern and western parts of Ethiopia, but the core theological institution of EECMY is Mekane Yesus Seminary (MYS) in Addis Ababa.

The genesis of MYS has a long history, but it is an institution that grew out of a vision to establish a theological training centre that would serve both the Mekane Yesus Church and other evangelical churches. This vision did not fully materialise, but a Joint Theological Seminary, which was later named as Mekane Yesus Seminarium, was started in 1960. The Seminary graduated twenty-four people in the first ten years but EECMY faced challenges because some graduates would not go back to their home churches in the countryside and some would even take government jobs in Addis Ababa. Notwithstanding these challenges, the Seminary continued to flourish in terms of producing future leaders and its institutional organisation. After the failed attempt in 1974 to have the Seminary recognised by the Theological Faculty of the then Haile Selassie I University, due to the anti-religious ideology of the military-communist regime, MYS became a member of the Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa (ATIEA) and received accreditation from the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA).

Subsequent to appointing the Seminary’s first Ethiopian Principal in 1992, the MYS and EECMY leadership had a plan to start a Master of Theology programme in addition to the already existing BTh programme. But this plan was abandoned as a result of the new vision of starting a joint graduate theological institution, which, as will be discussed later, was also conceived in MYS and the Evangelical Theological College. This vision materialised and the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST), of which EECMY is a major owner, came into being in 1997. In addition to the regular BTh programme, MYS has been running the Theological Education by Extension programme, and also introduced evening

- To lead the students to the acquisition of a solid and coherent understanding of man, the world and God (Ratio 71).
- To help the students discern the truth, detect error, and refute it (Ratio 72).
- To form true pastors of souls after the model of our Lord Jesus Christ, teacher, priest and shepherd (OT 4).
- To cater for the Spiritual formation of the candidates (OT 9).
- To foster a spirit of ecumenism.
- To help the candidates deepen their knowledge and appreciation of Ethiopian Culture and Tradition.
- To promote study, research and publications of Christian and Cultural literature in Ethiopia.

18 The regional colleges were created as a result of the decentralisation scheme of the MYS by devolving the Diploma in Theology to four regional seminaries. See Maagarsaa Guutaa, From a Humble Beginning to Advanced Standing: A History of Mekane Yesus Seminary (1960-2010) (publisher unspecified), 179.
19 See extensive discussion on the history of all this in Magarsaa, From a Humble Beginning, 179.
20 See Magarsaa, From a Humble Beginning, 55ff. See also J. Bakke, Christian Ministry: Patterns and Functions within the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (Oslo: Solam Forlag, 1987).
21 Magarsaa, From a Humble Beginning, 35-49.
22 Magarsaa, From a Humble Beginning, 54-55.
23 Magarsaa, From a Humble Beginning, 94, 195.
24 Before that, all the principles were expatriates.
25 Magarsaa, From a Humble Beginning, 177-185.
classes, Christian Muslim Relations and two different non-theological departments: Leadership and Music.26

There have been probably three significant developments in the history of the Seminary over the last decade. The first development is the Leadership department becoming a Management and Leadership College and receiving accreditation from the Ministry of Education in 2007.27 Another development is the proposal to establish Mekane Yesus University.28 The third development is the beginning of a Master of Arts in Practical Theology.29 The ways in which these developments are handled, in my view, will determine the place of theological education within the Seminary (or within future ‘Mekane Yesus University’), the academic standards of theological education programmes at MYS and regional seminars, the role theological education will play within the ecclesiastical and organisational fabric of EECMY, and the quality of the spirit of partnership and cooperation of ecclesiastical bodies upon which EGST was established.

The Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church

The Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church (EKHC) is the largest Protestant evangelical denomination in Ethiopia. It was founded in 1927 by the then Sudan Interior Mission (SIM – now Serving in Mission). EKHC, like EECMY, has theological programmes in both the lingua franca and the vernacular. EKHC’s focus on theological and ministerial training owes largely to the work of early missionaries, who provided literacy and biblical training side by side, leading to the introduction of formal education through church-led schools in the most remote parts of southern Ethiopia in the early twentieth century.

In addition to formal Bible training in Amharic, a diploma level theological institution called Grace Bible Institute (GBI) was started in the western part of Ethiopia in the late 1960s. Due to the anti-religious policies of the military-communist regime, GBI was closed down in 1977. Ten years later, despite all the threats, a similar institution called Ethiopian Kale Heywet Ministry Training College (EKMTC) was started in the southern part of Ethiopia. Using the opportunity of the constitutional right to freedom of religious expressions that came with the change of government in the early 1990s, EKHC founded five more theological colleges including the Evangelical Theological College (ETC).

ETC is the nucleus of EKHC’s theological education because it is the one that has been producing pastors for urban churches and teachers for diploma level colleges. But it is also interdenominational in its nature. Since its inception, it has produced more than 600 people for all churches in Ethiopia. Its contribution to the growth and strengthening of churches in Ethiopia and abroad has been very significant. Through creating stronger partnerships within and outside the country, finding ways in which it can be financially viable, improving academic standards, having a robust faculty development plan, and creating an academically and materially attractive environment, ETC could go from strength to strength.

In conclusion, EKHC’s formal theological education programmes have made vital contributions in terms of providing access to theological studies in both Amharic and English at different levels, producing people for various ministries, and acting as centres that preserve and pass on ecclesiastical traditions. However, the following remain challenges that need to be addressed by the leadership of EKHC: shortage of faculty, lack of internationally acceptable academic standards, poor sense of ownership, lack of partnership (amongst institutions) exemplified by mutual recognition and sharing of expertise, experience and resources, poor or inadequate facilities, and lack of clear scheme to ensure self-sustainability.30

26 Magarsaa, From a Humble Beginning, 172, 185-191, 227-229.
27 Magarsaa, From a Humble Beginning, 211-221.
28 Magarsaa, From a Humble Beginning, 262-264.
29 Magarsaa, From a Humble Beginning, 265.
30 See Peter Cotterell, Born at Midnight (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993).
EGST was jointly founded in 1997 by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church (EKHC) and the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE). The founding vision was born within the Mekane Yesus Seminary (MYS) of EECMY and the Evangelical Theological College (ETC) of EKHC, but the growing need for contextually relevant and affordable graduate level theological education in Ethiopia was perceived within all evangelical churches in the country. So the involvement of the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE) was deemed essential in order to facilitate the sharing of the School by the other evangelical churches of Ethiopia. EGST serves as the leading and arguably the only post-graduate theological institution of its kind in the Horn of Africa.

EGST is a very important institution in this part of the region for the following reasons. First, until EGST was started fourteen years ago, Ethiopia did not have any post-graduate level theological institutions. Despite the long history of Christianity, Christianity in Ethiopia needs more depth and strength. Only academic study of Christian ideas and biblical and related ancient literature at a higher level will deepen and strengthen Christian faith in Ethiopia. Second, Protestant evangelical churches have grown tremendously over the last three decades. This growth has presented the churches of Ethiopia with massive challenges, which can only be addressed through quality theological training. EGST, through its graduates, is now providing qualified teaching staff to strengthen existing theological institutions in Ethiopia. EGST graduates also serve as pastors in different ecclesiastical contexts, particularly in urban settings, as leaders of national, synod and district church offices, and in various capacities in non-governmental and governmental organisations. Third, as an institution owned by different denominations and open to students from any Christian background, EGST is in a strategic position to promote ecumenism. Finally, the joint ownership of EGST by EECMY, EKHC and ECFE is an excellent example of the kind of spirit of partnership and cooperation that can be fostered by Christian denominations in other parts of the world.

Association of Evangelical Theological Institutions in Ethiopia (AETIE)
The Association of Evangelical Theological Institutions in Ethiopia was founded on 8 July 2010 under the auspices of the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE). The founding vision was born out of an acute realisation that theological institutions in Ethiopia need to cooperate with one another in order to become stronger entities that produce people of high academic and spiritual quality and of the highest Christian ethical standards. As agreement for cooperation requires practical mechanisms to ensure accountability and coordination of common concerns and goals, establishing the Association of Theological Institutions in Ethiopia became necessary. The founding institutions are as follows:

1. Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology: owned by Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church and Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia.
2. Mekane Yesus Seminary: owned by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.
3. Evangelical Theological College: owned by the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church.
4. Addis Ababa Bible College: owned by the Assemblies of God Church.
5. Meserete Kristos College: owned by the Ethiopian Meserete Kristos Church.
6. Mulu-Wongel Bible College: owned by the Ethiopian Mulu-Wongel Believers Church.
7. Pentecostal Theological College: owned by the Ethiopian Hiwot Birhan Church.

AETIE is in its infancy, but it is making every possible effort to achieve its purpose and objectives. Its purpose statement reads: “AETIE exists to facilitate a platform for theological institutions in Ethiopia in

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31 One of the core values of EGST is “to promote ecumenical relationships amongst churches in Ethiopia in order to enhance mutual understanding and appreciation”.
32 From the preamble of the AETIE Constitution.
order to enable reciprocal sharing of expertise, experience and resources, stimulate research, and assure quality in theological education." In order to achieve this purpose, AETIE needs to forge partnerships with institutions and organisations within and outside Ethiopia.

**Government Policy and Theological Education in Ethiopia**

The Ethiopian government believes that one of the means through which economic development can be achieved and values essential for moral progress be produced is education. However, theological education is not part of the categories of disciplines that make up education. This is not to say that the government is against any religious body establishing its own theological institution. But such an institution is not recognised by the Ministry of Education on the basis of the argument that the Constitution does not provide for this. Article 27:2 in the Constitution reads: “Without prejudice to the provisions of sub-Article 2 of Article 90, believers may establish institutions of religious education and administration in order to propagate and organize their religion.” One could argue that this article should lead the government to consider recognising institutions of religious education through creating certain legal procedures and mechanisms in order to assess the standards of those institutions. The argument put forward against this has been what is stated in Article 90.

The English translation of Article 90:2 reads: “Education shall be provided in a manner that is free from any religious influence, political partisanship or cultural prejudices.” This is not an accurate translation, because the Amharic does not link ‘influences’ only to ‘religion’, nor does it have the terms ‘partisanship’ and ‘prejudices’. The English translation also changes ‘and’ to ‘or’. Thankfully, the “Amharic version of [the] Constitution shall have final legal authority” (Article 106), so one might say the English translation does not have any bearing on legal decisions. But the translation is at best misleading and at worst ideologically biased. The Amharic could be translated in two ways. 1. ‘Education shall be provided in a manner that is free from any religious, political and cultural influences’. 2. ‘Education shall be provided in a manner that is free from any religion, political outlooks and cultural influences’. Whichever translation is adopted, this Article has been used to argue against religious and theological education being provided in state and privately owned schools and universities, which are recognised by the Ministry of Education. However, Article 90:2 could be interpreted as saying education in general and specific programmes or courses in particular should be provided in a manner that is free from the influence of religious, political and cultural biases and prejudices. This means that a certain course should not be offered in a manner that is influenced by a particular thinking framework, whether it is Christian or Muslim, conservative or social democratic.

One might wonder why we should be so concerned about offering theological studies in University and wanting to gain government recognition for theological institutions. The simple reason is that Ethiopia is a deeply religious country with 97.3% of the population claiming to have a religious affiliation of some sort. Indeed, for the vast majority of Ethiopians (like in all African countries), the idea that they are believers is centre stage. But African society needs both believing and thinking communities. It is the task of theological institutions and departments to help create thinking communities. The context in which this task is to be carried out, I would argue, should be both Church and the Academy. In order to bring faith to bear in the world of politics, there is also a need to develop a public theology that is credible enough to influence public policies. The obvious result would be promotion of values that are essential for moral as well as economic progress.

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33 From AETIE Constitution.
Concluding Remarks

Theological education faces external challenges such as an unstable national educational system, secular forces, constitutional issues and anti-intellectualism and religious extremism. It also faces internal challenges because of a lack of coordinated schemes, limited human and financial resources, lack of adequate library facilities and so on. However, I believe that these are pivotal moments in the history of Ethiopia in terms of the enterprise of production of both academic and practical knowledge in theological and related fields.

What has been done so far is woefully inadequate, in terms both of quality and quantity, for a country of more than 80 million people, of which almost 65% are Christian. Despite the almost 1700 years of Christian heritage, Christian faith in Ethiopia desperately needs more depth and strength. Only more serious academic studies of Christian and non-Christian ideas, biblical and extra-biblical literature and other ancient sacred writings will deepen and strengthen Christian faith in Ethiopia. This academic enterprise will create a new generation of Ethiopians who will be able to think critically and analytically, develop theological frameworks through which existing wisdom can be critiqued, explained and articulated in a more robust and enduring but constructive manner. All this could also have a practical result for our country: many of the problems and hardships that the country has long suffered can be better understood and, consequently, context-bound, reasonable and realistic (rather than incredible) solutions can be worked towards. Therefore, theological education in the Ethiopian context not only plays the role of strengthening churches through producing a set of people who are academically well-trained, it also makes a meaningful contribution towards betterment of society.

One other important role that theological education should play in Ethiopia is to help initiate and sustain ecumenism. Ecumenism in any meaningful and organised form is non-existent in Ethiopia. Theological education should help create an ecumenical community that is led by an ecumenical doctrine. I believe theological institutions in Ethiopia can be helped to foster ecumenical relationships amongst the churches of Ethiopia. Theological institutions can also be helped to become places in which people of diverse theological and ecclesiastical backgrounds can gather around the apostolic table and dialogue with one another. One task of theological institutions, therefore, is generating ideas and getting the debate and dialogue started and sustained in an honest but sensitive, critical but constructive manner in the context of mutual respect and Christian love.

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Theological education in francophone Africa, like its counterparts in the anglophone world, underwent rapid and profound transformation particularly during the last decade of the 20th century. It moved from mere training of evangelists and catechists in biblical and catechist schools during the missionary era of colonial horizons to the formation of ministers in schools and seminaries and is now upgrading to higher and university level, interconnecting with both religious studies and other social sciences. This move was facilitated by the people’s demands for political change and better general education that ended the monopoly of the States in all domains.

However, Christian mission in tropical Africa, particularly in Francophone countries, faces a multiplicity of challenges, including schooling and indoctrination in North Atlantic religious history and cultural heritage; lack of contextualisation with imported syllabi out of touch with the social, cultural, political, religious and economical reality of the people; higher costs of residential models, etc. At the same time, a long history of isolation of the theological institutions in remote villages and many other factors annihilated all forms of creativity thus making Protestants second class Christians on the continent. If, as many scholars including the Scottish missiologist, Andrew Walls, argue, African Christianity has become the standard of World Christianity, then for Christian doctrine to be in the hands of the Africans, the theology taught in francophone Africa today must be relevant and apt to face the challenges ahead.

Training Ministers: The Need to go Beyond Mere Biblical Exposure

Key questions for theological education include: how do Africans learn and teach theology? Where is the most important place and context for theological education? For whom and with whom is learning and reflecting theologically done in francophone Africa?

Theology is taught and learnt in various contexts and is shaped not only by students, teachers and institutions but also by its content and subsequently church related ministry. In francophone African countries marked by socio-economical and political crises in addition to armed conflicts, it is relevant to consider which tools and systems of theological education are used to train future pastors and theologians.

A missionary teacher in DRC said: “I have the fantastic opportunity to work here in this metropolis as Professor of theology. Without doubt my background as a pastor having been trained in the West and with 6 years of work in the South impacts my teaching at this institution. But what is most important is the constant lack of educational material. Whether regarding Protestant or Catholic institutions, the lack of material is our biggest concern. Not only have the libraries repeatedly been looted or the offices burnt. At present the world’s financial crisis results in diminishing subsidies from various Mission organizations or supporting institutions. The library of the University is a splendid example: I have gone through the entire library in my search for appropriate course literature. Approximately 80% of the literature is in English and some 20% only is in French. Most of the French literature is written before the midst 60s. Of the English literature most is of ultra-evangelical origin and consists of “Give-away books”.

2 The fellow in an answer to the enquiry from ETE-WCC introduces himself as, “A former doctorate student in Missiology of Professor Dr. Aasulv Lande and, after his retirement, a student of the late Prof. Dr. David Kerr with a dissertation entitled ‘Conversion and Contextual Conceptions of Christ – a missiological study among young, urban
This minister also said that there were no more than 300-500 pages of fairly relevant texts in the library. When he asks his students to read what is at hand they respond that they are not accustomed to reading more than the syllabus. This, in the long run, means that a student leaves the University with a Master’s degree in Theology having read at best some 1500 – 3000 pages of text, most of which had been written by local teachers of which not all are doctors in their fields.

A 1950s survey by the International Missionary Council conducted in theological institutions in Anglophone Africa concluded that the institutions where most of the ministers and theologians were trained were poor and lacked the minimum resources required to offer a proper formation and training to prepare God's workers for the imagination and creativity needed to face challenging issues in mission, whether in local congregations in the midst of a population that expects more from the church or whether in society at large.

Fifty years later some of these findings have changed in the intended philosophy and theoretical framework but not yet in substance. From 2003 to 2009 and then in 2011, we surveyed 17 theological institutions (including 3 Roman Catholic institutions) in francophone Africa. Unlike the Catholic institutions, the Protestant one are marked by abject poverty in key domains: infrastructures, academic staff, libraries, research and publication. With a few exceptions (Kinshasa, Yaoundé, Porto-Novo, Butare), the majority are denominational, suffer intellectual and pastoral ostracism and live in continual financial dependency. The situation is gradually changing for some: Yaoundé has become the Protestant University for Central Africa (2007) imitating its counterparts in Kinshasa, the Protestant University of Congo (1994); Porto-Novo, though small, has become the Protestant University for West Africa; Butare transformed into the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences. New universities have emerged including the Free University of the Great Lakes countries in Goma (ULPGL, DRC), the Evangelical University of Africa in Bukavu (UEA, DRC) and several other universities in DRC; the Light University and Hope University in Bujumbura, Burundi.

Pioneering University Theological Education: Kinshasa and Yaoundé

The Protestant University of Congo. For more than half a century now, two institutions have been at the forefront of francophone theological education in Africa, the Protestant Faculty of Theology in Kinshasa, presently the Protestant University of Congo, DRC (UPC), and the Protestant Faculty of Theology in Yaoundé, presently the Protestant University for Central Africa (UPAC).

During the transition of the Africa continent from colonialism to autonomy, many of the missionary catechist and Bible training centres were transformed into Theology schools. However, the levels of education of the graduates were no longer relevant in a changing cultural, political, social and economical context. It was in that context that two major centres were created, one in Kinshasa and one in Yaoundé.

The Protestant faculty of Theology of the Belgian Congo and Rwanda-Urundi was founded in 1959 in Kinshasa. In 1963 it was integrated into the Free University of Congo up to 1974, the year that the University of Zaire was nationalised by the Mobutu regime. Today, the Faculty of Theology is part of the Protestant University of Congo (UPC), which was created in 1994. In 2010-2011, the Faculty enrolled 222 students in three levels (LMD) with programmes including the Old Testament, the New Testament, History, Ecumenism, Science of religions. Of 30 academic staff, 12 are full time. The library has some 60,000 titles.


3 Idem.


5 Professor, David Francois Ekofo Bunyeku, Dean of the Faculty of Theology at UPC. Reporting during the Association of theological institutions, ASTHEOL, Brazzaville, 22-24 August 2011.
An Institution of the same calibre is the *Protestant University in Central Africa* (UPAC) which arose from the upgrading of the Faculty of Theology of Yaoundé founded in 1962. Its membership are 13 churches in French-speaking and lusophone countries (Cote d’Ivoire, Togo, Benin, Cameroon, Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville, Central Africa Republic, Tchad, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar; Equatorial Guinea, Angola). The university offers programs in social sciences and international relations; medicine; technologies and courses on Information Technology and Communication (ITC).

The faculty of Theology offers Bachelor’s (3 years), Master's (2 years), and Doctoral (5 years) programmes. A two-year program for lay formation is offered as well as a women’s leadership programme. During the 2010-2011 academic year the Faculty enrolled 400 students for 11 permanent Professors and lecturers. The library is equipped with 30,000 volumes.

*The Protestant Institute of Theology in Porto-Novos* which began in 1920s as a school for catechists of the Methodist Mission, has now become the protestant University for West Africa. In 2010-2011 UPAO enrolled 24 Theology students. Its library has 6064 volumes of which 283 are dissertations and thesis papers. Its programmes extend over 3 years (Licentiate) and 3 years for a Masters. Five of the academic staff are permanent.

*The Lutheran school of Meiganga* was founded as an Institute in 1995; in 2003 it had two overlapping programs with 16 students in the older pastoral training, and 14 students for the Bachelor’s's program. It has 9300 books for an annual budget of $1300.

*The Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Kumba* (English-speaking Cameroon) became part of the African francophone world by necessity due to its geo-political location: it opened its doors in 1898 in Douala as a training centre for catechists of the Basel Mission. Then, it moved to Buea and finally found its base in Kumba (South West Cameroon). Upgraded to a theological seminary for training ministers in 1962, it became a theological Institute in 1994-1995 offering Bachelor’s’s and Master degrees. In 1999-2000 it had 70 students in two overlapping programmes with ten teaching staff. The Kumba library has some 5950 books.

*The Baptist Theological Seminary of Ndikinimeki* was founded as an Institute in 1997, offering a Bachelor’s degree. In 1999 it had two interrelated programmes, 17 students on the evangelist level and 14 on pastoral level (4 years). Its library has some 4,000 volumes.

*The Theological Institute of Ndoungue*, Cameroon, an ecumenical seminary for the Evangelical Church of Cameroon (ECC), the Presbyterian of Cameroon (EPC) and the Union of Baptist Churches in Cameroon (UEBC). Created in 1947, the School of theology was influential in other French-speaking African countries, including Gabon, Tchad, Republic of Central Africa (RCA), Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Equatorial Guinea (Spanish) for which it trained pastors long before the independence of these countries. The Institute collaborates with the UPAC. It has 20 academic staff (12 PhD) of whom 8 are residential. With only 43 students in 2001-2002, the Institute enrolled 120 students in 2010-2011. Its library has 10,000 volumes.

*The Theological Institute of Bibia* (Presbyterian), formerly a Bible school had a counterpart in Foulassi in the late 1980s in a historical eastern missionary station, the result of the persistent frictions within the EPC. Bibia, which claims to be a Higher education institution presently going beyond theological education, inaugurated a new system of theological institutes (BA degree) in 1999. There were interrelated programmes in 2003, one at pastoral level, another one on Bachelor’s degree (4 years). Despite its

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6 Dr Priscille Djomhoue, Academic Secretary, the Faculty of Theology, UPAC, reporting at the ASTHEOL, Brazzaville, 22-24 August 2011.
7 Dr Nicodeme Alagbada, Rector a.i, UPAO, Proto Novo. Reporting, Astheol meeting, Brazzaville.
8 Dr Emmanuel Bissu, Dean Institut de Theologie de Ndoungue, Reporting, meeting Astheol, Brazzaville 22-24 August 2011.

*Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa*
confessional character, the institute was open to students from other churches. The Institution has less than 30 students and has 5000 books for an annual budget of $US 950. On its site, the Institut supérieur Presbytérien Camille Chazeaud, at Fouassi has 85 students, 5 permanent lecturers with PhDs and a library with 2500 titles.

The Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences of Butare (PIASS), Rwanda, started as a school of theology in 1970 offering a 4-year training programme for Ministry. It was transformed into a Faculty of Theology in 1990 offering a 4 years Bachelor’s degree accredited by the Protestant University Faculty of Theology of Brussels. The Butare faculty was hit by the 1994 genocide which took away its Dean, Dr Faustin Rwagacuzi and his family, some lecturers and students. It reopened in September 1995 with a two-year special programme to respond to various urgent needs of the Churches. The Bachelor’s degree programme resumed in 1996. In 2003 it had 70 students with 4 permanent teaching staff. In 2008 Butare enrolled 85 students; the following year, it became the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS), adding a Department of Religious Studies and opening two new faculties, Education and Development Studies. Between 1970 and 1992 (the period of the Theology school) and between 1990 and 2007 (the Faculty of Theology), the institution graduated 310 laureates. In 2010-2011 the faculty of Theology had 48 students. The young PIASS has 19 residential and 20 part-time academic staff. A well organised library is equipped with more than 20,000 volumes.

The Protestant Faculty of the Great Lakes Free University at Goma (ULPGL), RDC started in the early 1980s supported by 6 churches in DRC and a financial accompaniment from the churches in Germany. Beginning with the Faculty of Theology, the University gradually opened new faculties (Law, Social Science, Business and Management; Pedagogy; Heath and Development; applied sciences; theology). In 2010-2011 it had 2500 students on the major campus in Goma and 1000 on two other campuses. The Faculty of Theology has some 150 students for 9 permanent professors and lecturers. The library has some 11000 titles.

The Faculty of Theology of the Université Evangélique d’Afrique (UEA), Bukavu, DRC was born in 1997 out of a merger of the Institut Superieur de Theologie Evangelique (ISTEKI, 1981) and the “Faculte de théologie et sciences religieuses de l’Universite Evangelique (1991)”. The University itself was initiated by four churches, which are all members of the Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC). The faculty organises programmes on two levels, a BA (3 years) and a licence (2 more years). From 2008, the faculty runs a program on Peace and development.

In 2010-2011, the University enrolled 2863 students. The Faculty of Theology alone registered 131 students, including 51 in theology and 80 in the department of Peace and Development. Since its creation in 1981, the ISTEKI has graduated 491 laureates (370 degrees) and 124 licentiates. The Faculty of Theology has developed cooperation with the Free University of the Countries of Great Lakes (ULPGL) and the Protestant University of Central Africa (UPAC, Cameroon). The Faculty of Theology does not have its proper library; it is affiliated to the library of the UEA. As such the needs in theological books remain the faculty’s greatest challenge.

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10 Dr Viateur Ndikumana, Vice-Rector Academic, Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences, PIASS, Butare. Reporting Astheol Meeting Brazzaville.
11 Dr Levi Ngangura Manyanya, Secretary General and Vice-Rector Academic, ULPGL, reporting, Astheol meeting, Brazzaville.
12 These include the community of the Pentecostal churches in central Africa (CEPAC, 8th community), the community of the Pentecostal churches in Africa (CLEPA, 5th community), the community of Christian churches in Africa (CECA) 40th community) later joined by the community of free Methodist churches in Congo (CELMC, 26th community).
13 Dr Kitoko Moke, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Theology UEA, Reporting Astheol meeting, Brazzaville.
The Protestant Faculty of Theology, Mansimou, Congo-Brazzaville, formerly a Bible school, which started in 1928, was transformed into a faculty in 1998 to offer a Bachelor’s degree with generous assistance from UPC Kinshasa and UPAC, Yaoundé. At that time, the institution had only one person with a doctoral degree and offered many various administrative and teaching degrees. With less than 30 students at the time, today the Faculty of Theology of Brazzaville at Mansimou has 60 students for 8 permanent academic staff and 15 visiting lecturers. It offers a licentiate in Theology and has started a Master degree in leadership.

The Evangelical Faculty of Theology, Cameroon, belongs to the Evangelical Church of Koreans missions in Cameroon (MEEC). The faculty was hosted in the headquarters of the Church, with the Korean president of the Church assuming additional administrative roles (Dean) and teaching several disciplines. In 2001-2002 it had 16 students for a four years Bachelor’s degree. Its library had less than 500 volumes.

The Evangelical Faculty of Theology in Bangui (FATEB), RCA was created in 1977 by the association of the Evangelicals of Africa and is part of a network of evangelical institutions in the world including the Faculty of Evangelical Theology of the Christian Alliance, FATEAC, Abidjan, Ivory Coast; The School of Evangelical Theology Shalom (ESTES, Chad), The Baptist school of Theology in West Africa (ESBTO, Togo), and in the Anglophone side, the Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (EGST), Nairobi, Kenya. During the academic year 2001-2002, the faculty of Bangui enrolled 96 students for Bachelor’s and master programmes. It had 8 permanent teaching staff five of whom have a Ph.D. The Faculty claims to have more than 196 people graduated in the master programme and religious science, 49 graduates of Bachelor’s degree. Its library has 17,000 volumes and 80 periodicals, and also has a research centre, CERTA (Gatwa, 2010).

14 Dr Joseph SITA, Dean Faculty of Theology of Brazzaville-Mansimou, reporting, Astheol meeting.
15 Addendum to the presentation of institutions from DRC. The DRC is a huge country with huge influence from churches both of Protestant and Roman Catholic denomination and is now developing as a world of education at university level promoted mostly from the following theological schools:

- Institut supérieur théologique d’Idiofa (Bakongo). Was created in 1989. offers programs for 3 years. 5 associated professors, 35 students and a library of 1500 volumes. (Matthieu Kwalongo Milkan, representing the institution at Astheol Meeting Brazzaville 22-24 August 2010).
- Université méthodiste au Katanga. Offers licence, master degree in leadership. The Faculty of Theology has 55 students, 8000 volumes in library (Professor Kasap’Owan. Recteur in Brazzaville).
- Université anglicane du Congo. Basically theology ; it has 33 étudiants. and 3500 books (Dr Kahwa Njonjo in Brazzaville).
- Université Protestante de l’Equateur. This is the prolongation of the existing Faculty of Theology, transformed into university in 1994. Today, the only created faculty is theology with 53 students ( two more to open next year in management and agronomy). It has 2 professors and 6 assistants. The library is wealth 2404 books (Dr Kondemo Mum’Epond, in Brazzaville).
- Institut supérieur de théologie Booth de Kinshasa, presbyterian. Exists since 1992 and sponsored by a Presbyterian community and Mr Alex Booth from the USA; 50 students ; 2 professors and assistants. 5000 volumes in library (Tshiamala Kande in Brazzaville).
- Université Protestante de l’Ubangi, Gemena. Started from the Faculty of Theology, now 3 faculties: agronomy, economics and theology. 68 students in theology ; 3500 titles in library ; 3 permanent professors plus visitors from Norfack et UPC. (Dr Robert Kibani Masasu in Brazzaville).
- Fac évangélique de Boma, Bas-Congo. 67 students ; 16 lecturers with 4 resident, 6 associated. A fully digitalised library of 6000 volumes (Dr Anastasie Masanga Maponda).
- Institut supérieur de théologie et de développement communautaire (ISTDC) de Yakusu, 25 km from Kisangani. Created in 1945 on an old baptist station. 23 students in theology recruited once in 2 years. No professors but 3 assistants; 2050 titles and 53 titres journals. Programme for women (Samuel Lotika Bangala).
- Université Presbytérienne Sheppard et Lapsley du Congo (UPRECO). Created in 1998 from the older school of theology (1960), a joint initiative of the american presbyterians, Disciples of Christ, methodists and Mennonites. Two
In a study conducted in 2003, the present author noticed that the Catholic theological education and thought developed according to three major pillars: the Catholic Faculties of Kinshasa (FCK from 1954), the Catholic Institute of West Africa (ICAO, Abidjan, 1975), then the Catholic University for Central Africa (UCAC, 1991). This later emerged as a project presented by the African intellectuals to Pope John Paul II during the pontifical visit to Cameroon, 1985; it has campuses in Yaoundé and Douala (Cameroon), Pointe – Noire (Congo-Brazzaville) and planned campuses in Libreville (Gabon) and Bangui (RCA).

These universities are all members of the international federation of more than 220 Catholic Universities and Superior Institutions of education in the world. In 2001, Kinshasa Catholic University with its 4 faculties had 110 teaching staff, 41 of whom are permanent, who are taking care of 991 students; its library has 31000 volumes and 706 periodicals. ICAO has 5 faculties and institutes and a lay training centre, 51 teaching staff members, 23 of whom are permanent, for 630 students. Its library has more than 60,000 volumes and 370 periodicals. In the 2001/2002 academic year, the UCAC had 190 teaching staff members of whom 56 are resident for 1300 students. Its library had 39,000 volumes, 19,420 articles in the catalogue and 592 periodicals (Gatwa, 2010).

University Lumiere de Bujumbura was created in the 1990s by a group of Christian leaders who recognized that the Church was growing while little was being done to meet the needs of Christian communities and society. Burundi, like many other countries in Africa, was undergoing civil conflict – it is now recovering – which at various periods of its recent history wiped away most of its best educated people. More than half a million were slaughtered in staged ethnic cleansing processes.

These leaders decided to create the university with an ethos of witnessing Christ and His presence in the world for the transformation of society. From a mere 250 students at the start, the university enrolled 2000 students in 2008; it has graduated 4000 laureates from five faculties: Theology; Communications; Business and Management sciences; Law; Computer Science. In 2008, some 2000 students were enrolled and the university had 127 academic staff of which 20 were permanent. The University library has some 10,000 volumes.

The income is mostly from student contributions (about 300,000 FB per student per year more or less $3000). Two guest houses were part of the sources of income. Clearly the university acknowledged the need to elaborate its long term strategic plan to face the challenge of the future (Gatwa, 2010).

Its neighbour, University Espoir d’Afrique (University Hope of Africa) started in 1992 in Nairobi, then moved to Bujumbura in 2000. The university offers higher education up to Masters degrees in its 6 faculties (Theology and Biblical studies, Science of education, Law, Business and professional management; Medicine and Civil Engineering and Urbanism); the University had 1800 students in 2008 with 100 teaching staff of whom were 30 permanent. At the time of the survey in October 2009, the library had some 15000 volumes with a small reading room of more or less 100 places (Gatwa, Cross-cultural, 2010). Since then, the institution has inaugurated a larger complex that hosts the Faculty of Medicine, a much bigger library, laboratories and the offices.

faculties, theology with 108 étudiants and Law with 296 students. 6 professors in theology (Dr Philippe Kanku Tuzengele).

• Université Shalom de Bunia. Created in 1961 by 5 churches, which has 5 faculties: Theology, Développement ; sciences ; agronomy sciences ; administration and management. Offers Graduate and licenciate; DEA (theology). Library: 31, 200 titres of which 28000 in theology; 785 students (72 in theology) ; 6 permanent professors ; 5 assistants; site: www.unishabunia.org (Dr Bungishabaku Katho).

16 Since the survey was done, Rwanda alone has had five new catholic universities opening, two of them hosting faculties of theology (Kabgayi and Butare).

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Research Tools

Publishing institutions

Theological institutions were supposed to benefit from the Centre for evangelical literature, in French Editions CLE, Yaoundé, which was owned by the All Africa Conference of Churches and churches in DRC, Rwanda, Congo-Brazzaville, Cameroun, Benin, Togo, Ivory Cost. This publishing house was created in 1963, being a product of the 1961 Kitwe (Zambia) Conference on the production and distribution of theological literature. Since then, the Editions CLE became more or less a right hand of the AACC in promoting theological thought in francophone Africa. When the AACC launched the idea of promoting African Theology and organised the 1966 Ibadan conference, it was the Editions CLE that published an influential volume from important theologians of that day, including Sawyer, Idowu, Kwesi Dickson, Masamba ma Mpolo, John Mbiti, Fashole-Luke, and others.

From the 1980s onwards the publishing company faced leadership and managerial problems that were resolved in the last decade with the arrival of Dr Comlan Deh from Togo (1991-1999) followed by Dr. Tharcisse Gatwa, the author, from Rwanda (1999-2007). The latter set up a long term vision, strategy and investment plan that brought financial stability to the company.

Journals

Journals are the first tool for the production and distribution of knowledge, research and excellence in higher education. Yet this has been lacking in francophone Africa. The Association of Theological Institutions in Francophone Africa (ASTHEOL) was instrumental in setting up goals for accreditation, harmonising the programs and continued to publish the Journal Flambeau. However, when the association became dormant, their theological link, Flambeau was put on hold. The attempt to reinvigorate ASTHEOL as well as Flambeau was done in the 1980s by Professor Michael Bame Bame, then Dean of the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Yaoundé. The enterprise failed after only a couple of more issues were published. In retrospective, the failure was unavoidable for it could not happen without first having a proper renaissance of ASTHEOL.

A joint initiative was launched in 2000 in a joint effort between the Dean of the Faculty of Protestant Theology and the present author, then general manager of the Editions CLE publishing company, which led to a widely approved process of publications of theological literature. A good number of scholars from francophone Africa have met under the sponsorship of Editions CLE for seminars that resulted in the production of a good number of theological books.

At that time, there was a sense of defeatism on both sides, on the side of ecumenical partners as well as with many African theologians. We must admit that some of the first publications of Edition Cle were a compilation of information about Western Theology. Basically, contributors ignored the existence of other African theologies from either francophone Catholic or Anglophone milieus. Many were out of date with regard to women’s issues, which have been persistently raised in the Circle for Concerned women, in particular by the “mother of the movement”, one of the best ecumenists, Mercy Oduyoye17. Some of the new generation of theological writers which came forward included Priscille Djomhoue (Cameroun), Helene Yinda (Cameroun), Nathanael Ohouo (Ivory Cost), Simon Dossou (Benin), Marcelin Setondji Dossou (Benin), Isaac Zokoue (Central Africa Republic), Solomon Andria (Madagascar), Elisee Musemakweli (Rwanda), Simon Njami (Cameroun), Thimothee Njoya (Kenyan, anglophone), as well as older authors like Masamba ma Mpolo and Michael Bame Bame which contributed to some collective books.

Another structure that needs to be mentioned is the Centre de Literature Chrétienne Francophone (CLCF) initiated by a French pastor and former lecturer in Yaoundé, Cameroun, Daniel Bach. Under a plethoric sponsorship of churches and missionary organisations (Cevaa, DM – échange en mission, CELF, EPAL, ERF, FPF, UNEREI), the CLCF, the Centre collects used books from Europe for distribution; it organises training for librarians for theological institutions. Despite its distance from local publishers and the tendency to promote literature from Europe, this structure helped the institutions acquire a good number of volumes in their library.

Libraries

In Francophone Africa, the state of the libraries in faculties and schools of Theology leaves much to be desired. The quantity of books available is far below the minimum required to meet the needs of the education these institutions claim to be providing. With a few exceptions, the libraries do not have budgets; they would be managed either by a professor or by a student who works when s/he has time. This is not a favourable environment for quality academic work.

Irrespective of the fragility and unsuitability of much of the library infrastructure, there are today advanced tools of research and learning made available by the new information and communication technologies. Many ecumenical and academic institutions provide enormous resources online and through other means. Unfortunately, due to lack of training, and difficulties in connection, many smaller African institutions cannot access electronic resources; it is an area where capacity building is urgently needed. The institutions should aim at training the librarians to better organise and manage a University (theological Seminar) library; connecting to research engines; equipping participants with the skills to design, create and manage a website of their institutions; design and produce a periodical (Magazine) and a University Library Catalogue, etc.

Models of Evangelical Theological Institutions in Francophone Africa

For a long period Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) from the World Council of Churches was the major source of funding for both the Anglophone and francophone institutions of theological education. Yet compared with rapid changes and needs in African societies today, what is clear is that there are also signs of an ecumenical fatigue, a sort of defeatism in some areas of western Christianity which are overwhelmed by all sorts of confusions and politico-economical liberal ideologies that are no longer interested in the proclamation of the kingdom of God.

It is against such a background that evangelicals and newly mushrooming forms of Christianity have emerged to fill in the gap by producing new theologies, initiating and running biblical seminaries and theological schools. The oldest faculty of evangelical Theology in Bangui (FATEB) was created in the 1970s and it has a counterpart in the Anglophone world, the SEGAST in Nairobi, Kenya. In cooperation with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), the Development associates international (DAI), the Free Theology, Faculty of Theology at Vaux-sur-Seine, the Free Reformed Faculty in Aix-en-Provence, the FATEB offers programs of a Bible school and the promotion of women; a BA in Bible translation, a BA in Theology, a master in leadership and management and Doctoral program in systematic Theology. The institution has 9 full time doctors and lesson fewer than 15 visiting professors. Its library has some 19,000 volumes, 70 journals and a collection of CD Roms.

Other theological institutions from the evangelical tendency include the RIET, FATEM, FATER, the faculty of evangelical Theology of the evangelical alliance (FATEA) in Abidjan, Ivory Cost, the N’Djamena School of evangelical Theology. These institutions claim to be “evangelical because of their anti-ecumenism” (FATER).
The association established a doctoral program (ACTEA) and was run in the 1980/90s by the former Dean of the Faculty of Evangelical Theology in Bangui, Dr Isaac Zokoue. The major aim of the program was to provide a home based post-graduate program to help churches and Christian communities to meet growing challenges.

To summarize there are still major challenges for theological education in francophone Africa. They can be spelled out like the following:

**Ostracism as a Result of Isolationism**

The great majority of Christians and the general public in Africa today expect the Christian theologians to go further, i.e. to be able to interact with other faiths and religions including African traditional religions and cultures, and at the same time to really strategise to elevate the Christian education of their communities. However, many of the institutions in francophone Africa suffer manifold difficulties including: the denominationalism syndrome and the distance from ecumenical dialogue. Hence, many have remained “Baptist Institute of A, Lutheran Institute of B, Presbyterian seminary of C, Methodist Seminary of X, the Anglican Institute of Y, etc.

Intellectual and pastoral ostracism are dangers that continue to affect theological education in francophone Africa. As a result of isolation theological institutions in Francophone Africa have remained distant to academic activities, have developed little interaction and exposure to general and broad world knowledge. Reading, writing and articulating the social and theological discourse has thus strongly suffered from this context of isolation of Christian Theology.

Apart from occasional private encounters, many theologians and Church leaders do not communicate or dialogue with one another at an inter-denominational level. This lack of dialogue can also affect the pastor in his ministry, because of his/her incapacity to listen to his congregations. If this is the case, the theologian speaks only to him or herself, neither knowing nor sharing with others more deeply about the problems of the society.

Under these conditions, proper education of Christians who are not only Christians by name, nor only on Sundays, calls for investment in a new and broad vision of Christianity, a type of Christianity which goes beyond what the Cameroon theologian Jean Marc Ela calls parroting (psittacism). Unless the curricula of theological education are reformed and reformulated theological education will continue to suffer from intellectual, ecumenical, theological and pastoral ostracism.

**Reflections: Change or You Die!**

According to JNK Mugambi\(^\text{18}\) long term sustainability of Christian mission depends on the effectiveness of pastoral and lay leaders training. However, as seen above, theological education in tropical Africa, particularly in the francophone countries, has remained fairly denominational, having been shaped as an extension of North Atlantic religious and cultural heritage, and has mainly remained rooted in the fundamental denominational sources of the Baptist, Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and Pentecostal traditions rather than by a ecumenical and contextual training.

Because church-related institutions in francophone African countries developed in such a framework of narrow-minded denominationalism, isolationism and ghetto, they can hardly capture the reality of the context let alone engage in a Theology of solidarity with the most vulnerable sectors of the society. In as

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*Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa*
much this type of Christianity generally took its inspiration from the Greek philosophy which was concerned with the separation of soul and body, it is also detrimental to the daily life of the African people.

The lack of proper social engagement to confront the multiple crises, civil strife, administration ineffectiveness and economical failures in predominantly Christian countries like DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Congo-Brazzaville, Ivory Cost and Cameroon, urges us to work for a transformed curriculum that integrates skills, knowledge and experience as well as cultural and religious heritage. The curriculum should include the people’s language into which the gospel is preached instead of remaining imprisoned in the colonial languages that continue to be the major communication tool in francophone Africa. To become catalysts for the transformation of African societies, African Christianity has to break with “conformism and opportunism”. Yet, as JNK Mugambi says, such a transformation in an environment dominated by the power of money from the North Atlantic will not be an easy task.

A tentative answer to this concern is the step taken by some theological schools to transform into universities integrating more disciplines conceived in Africa. These are generally adapting well, moving towards self-reliance, raising funds locally, computerizing and linking to ITC, adopting the marketing model, having success in the university environment and gaining experience in areas like standardisation and accreditation through working with national and international ad-hoc bodies.

The more these institutions put graduates on the market, the greater their impact and the more they attract demands within the youths. While some ecumenical partners are withdrawing their financial support, highly needed capacity building in overcoming foreign financial dependency for a much more mature viability and sustainability has gradually begun.

Here theologians can realise that there is not such a great distance between them and the other disciplines, nor between the future leaders of the churches and future business managers and political decision-makers, in the one nation which they are all called to serve. 19

**Revitalisation of Associations of Theological Schools as Tools for Education**

Ministering in societies that are fractured by civil and ethnic conflicts from the West to East, and training God's workers in communities and churches divided by conflicts and affected by poverty and governance issues need careful consideration.

The revitalisation of the associations of theological institutions in Africa has been one of the priorities of AACC in the last couple of years. The processes envisaged concern all geographical and linguistic contexts. In francophone Africa, it started with a consultation held in Yaoundé, Cameroun hosted by the Protestant University of Central Africa from 12-14 February 2010. The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Communauté Evangelique d’Action Apostolique (CEVAA) jointly organised the consultation.

Attending were theological institutions from Rwanda, Burundi, Cameroun, Benin, Ivory Cost. The absence of DRC institutions prompted the participants to recommend a post-consultation in Kinshasa to allow the Theology Department to bring the Report of the Yaoundé Consultation as a working document to the second conference in Kinshasa.

Among other outcomes, the revitalisation of the Flambeau Journal was recommended by the consultation and a relevant committee was appointed. Furthermore, the institutionalisation of a Scientific Council for Christian universities in Africa was suggested alongside the revitalisation of ASTHEOL, the association of francophone theological institutions. The consensus reached was an agreement between the

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19 Gatwa, “Theological Education in Africa”, 204-5.
institutions with the aim of harmonising the educational systems to face a new reality in many universities which is to offer LMD (Licentiate, Master and Doctorate).

Another consultation brought together theological Institutions from Burundi, East DRC, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania in Butare, 3-5 May 2010. Three days of deliberations resulted in the adoption of a partnership plan in capacity building of the leadership; the review of western models in theological education; pursuit of further reflection on Theology in relation to social, political, cultural and economic violence; recruitment, preparation and training of church leaders; Theology in relation to new religious movements; producing theological literature; Students and faculty exchange.

The same vivid effort was pursued in 2011: all four regions held their consultation in a form of institute under a different theme. The two branches of the Francophone association, ASTHEOL met in Brazzaville, Congo, 22-24 August 2011 under the theme: “Church and State Relations in Africa”. Eighteen contributions were presented on the theme including 4 from the Old Testament perspective, 3 in NET Testament, 1 in Systematics, 4 from History and ecclesiology; 2 from missiology and 5 contributions from an ethical perspective.

The participants discussed in plenaries and in groups and took important decisions to support the proposition from the AACC Advisory Committee to create an All African Academy of Theology and Religion, as well as a Theological Education Fund for theological faculty development.

Theological Education: Models and Theological Thoughts

Whether a theological education system is the most appropriate to nurture and inspire a missionary church and be engaged in social and spiritual transformation, depends on the existence of possibilities to promote theological thought. This cannot happen without theological books and journals, publishing resources and other media. Catholic Francophone Africa was far better organised than the Protestants, as evidenced by the two schools of theological thought, Kinshasa and Yaoundé.

The Kinshasa School

Theologians like Fathers Vincent Mulaga, Ngindu Mushete, Oscar Bimwenyi-Kweshi, Mgr Tharcisse Tshibangu or Cardinal Joseph Malula were among the prominent figures who developed a school of thought aiming at rooting Christianity in African cultures.

As early as 1938 Father Alexis Kagame from Rwanda started the inculturation movement, producing a monumental work and adapting from his vast scholarship in literature and linguistics, Theology and Bible translation in addition to ethno-history. One of his publications was the Divine Pastorale, an adaptation of the Rwandan pastoral poetry to the Psalms. In 1955, Kagame defended his Ph.D. in Rome, La Philosophie Bantu-Rwandaise de l’Etre (1956). This was followed by la Philosophie Bantu comparee (1976) in which he acknowledges the influence of Father Tempels, although he criticised his parochial approach generalising a research which in fact was restricted to the Baluba people of Congo. He extended his study to a vast geographical area of Bantu civilisation; and in 1969 in “The Place of God and man in Bantu Religion”, Father Kagame showed that human being is the centre of the universe, not as an individual, but as a humanity.

20 The heads of the following institutions met: The Universite Evangelique en Afrique, Bukavu (Depeartment Paix et Developpement), DRC; the Universite libre des pays des grands lacs (ULPGL), DRC; Institut Protestant des Arts et Sciences sociales, Butare; Faculte de theologie Evangelique de Kigali, Rwanda (FATEK, Association des eglise de Pentecote); The Rwandan Institute of Evangelical Theology (RIET); Universite Lumiere de Bujumbura; Universite Espeir d’Afrique, Bujumbura; the Uganda Christian University, Bishop Baram College, Kabale; St Paul’s University, Limuru, Kenya.
Father Vincent Mulago, a young Congolese priest, joined Kagame in 1956 in the struggle for an inculturated Christianity. Mulago from the Bashi culture, in the Eastern Congo culturally linked to Rwanda and Burundi, first drew attention by speaking out against colonial injustices; he then was recruited in theological education in Kinshasa and became a key figure in the inculturation movement. In 1966 he founded the Centre for Research on African Religions (CERA) and published the Journal “Les Cahiers du CERA” that became a pivotal tool for African theological thought in Catholic faculties of Theology.

In the mid 1960s Father Ngindu Mushete was appointed to head the branch of CERA in Lubumbashi, bringing new blood to this struggle for a truly African Christianity and Theology. Ngindu-Mushete presented a historical and thematic synthesis of the identity of African Theology in francophone Africa; he showed the importance of African traditional religions which he considered a powerful source of values in Africa. Valuing the return to authenticity and the Kimbanguism approach to the Bible, Ngindu Mushete says that African theologians are aware that each theology is culturally and socially contextual; and that it is best to acknowledge that there is a huge difference between the word of God and human society and between theological elaboration and social analysis.

Mushete defends the idea that both western and African churches can work hand in hand towards a mature and responsible dialogue that do not attempt to bury the atrocities of colonialism. Joining Ngindu Mushete, Hebga and Eboussi Boulaga denounced the fact that missionary Christianity appointed itself as the African’s heralds.

Father Oscar Bimwenyi-Kweshi produced a hugely influential innovative research in which he poses the epistemological foundations of a truly African theological discourse. He framed a phenomenological language through African storytelling, fables, myths, proverbs, songs, prayers and heroic epopees. This was an epistemological rupture with the missionary theology of adaptation from Western Christianity and the African culture that was considered “the waiting stones” (pierres d’attente) of early inculturation. Theologians, including Kagame, Mulago, Nothomb and others defended the idea that, for African culture to be fit for Christian Theology, it must be purified of its scurries.

Bimwenyi-Kweshi acknowledges the heroic contribution of the missionaries who evangelised Africa in difficult conditions. And yet, like John Gatu, the Kenyan father of the Moratorium, and Meinrad Hebga, he calls upon the churches in the West to give to Africans time and space to develop the gospel of Jesus Christ from the ontological resources proper to African culture.

Francois Kabasele Lumbala went in the same direction saying that Christianity can be a chance for Africa and the later a chance for Christianity in as much as the Africans are allowed to live in liberty and responsibility their encounter with Christ who died, was risen for the salvation of all. When Kabasele Lumbala considers “a Theology of encounter and dialogue between western culture and the Negro-African”, we can see similarities with Leopold Sedar Senghor’s famous idea of the dialogue of civilisations, a source of the “giving and receiving” partnership (le rendez-vous du donner et du recevoir).

Kamana emerged from the Kinshasa school with a Jesuit background. Later he became a herald of the theologies of reconstruction in francophone Africa when he converted to Protestantism. His theological thought are syntheses of the theologies of identity, liberation, selfhood, and even the moratorium. According to Kamana, African Christianity needs to be freed from the chains of darkness and obscurantism of the past against which such prominent African renegades of colonial Christianity as Simon Kimbangu, William Harris and Beatrice Kimpa Vita had fought. Yet, despite the presence of huge crowds and

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24 Lumbala Francois Kabasele, Celebrating Jesus Christ in Africa, Foreword by David N. Palmer, Heritage Books, IN, USA. 2001, 267
folkloric celebrations, empty declarations like “Africans have religion in their blood”, Africans and African Christianity continue to be imprisoned in religiosities that degrade and harden them; they are incapable of reflecting on themselves and on the destiny of their continent. It is unlikely that they will develop the self-criticism needed to reach the self-transformation that is required to challenge a liberal world led by “no sense”.

For him three challenges are to be met for African Christianity to build an alternative model: a. A renaissance, i.e. to reinvent the historic memory and recreate the genius of Africans; b. Opposition to social violence and its volcanic eruptions; c. Education for a new destiny. According to Kamana African Christianity must conduct self-criticism, self-transformation and a determination to conquer the world and overcome the multi-dimensional crises that paralyse the African continent, including pandemic illnesses. We must revisit the work of the Senegalese scholar, Cheik Anta Diop, who demonstrated the similarities between the Egyptian civilisations and Black Africans and recreate the myth of the African renaissance.

Reconstruction requires a “screening of the founding myth of the African cultural identity in relation to the myth that structures the socio-economic-political imaginary. This is the only way to transform the problems that lead dreams into opportunities for reflection; convert the reflections into “energies that lead to act”; and change energies that inhibit and kill into new hope for change”. Against a total paralysis of the African church, the Theology of reconstruction offers the way of Jesus Christ on the cross who denounces the idolatry of inhuman power, race, money, and ethnic belonging. Only this will offer a chance for total liberation of Africans from the resignation and fatalism that particularly affects the francophone world.

Joining Jean Marc Ela and Kabasele, Kamana says that African Christianity can save African society from collapsing by becoming an evangelising force to the world and thereby demonstrating that the neo-liberal globalisation is not the only option; alternatives should be to mobilise francophone, anglophone and lusophone Africans to invest in social innovations from which a new economical society, community spirituality and a people’s solidarity can emerge.

The School of Kinshasa was morally supported by the Catholic hierarchy particularly Cardinal Joseph Malula. Appointed Archbishop of Kinshasa in 1964, Malula made a powerful plea for the inculturation during the Synod of the bishops in Rome: “The missionaries have Christianised Africa; Africans must Africanise Christianity” he said. Then he invested huge resources together with his authority and leadership both in the defence of the poor and the Catholic principles against a dictatorial regime but also a powerful defence of the expressions of his people in liturgy and celebration which resulted in the recognition by the Vatican of the “Congolese Rite”.

**The Yaounde school**

Engelbert Mveng, Jean Marc Ela, Eboussi Boulaga, Meinrad Hebga, Achille Mbembe, who are all Cameroonians with different tunes, have emphasised the responsibility of western Christianity for the destruction and deconstruction of the African personality and society. Here we concentrate on the first three.

**Father E.Mveng**, the late Cameroonian Jesuit theologian and historian, reflected on poverty in Africa with a strong feeling that operated an epistemological shift. He demonstrated that Africans were victims of an “anthropological pauperisation”, imposed on the church by the West at the centre of the dominant systems. By anthropological pauperisation, Mveng suggests that Africans were denied not only the right to

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27 His murder in 1995 in his residence, Yaoundé, was never elucidated.
live but more: slavery was a destructive tragedy for four centuries, a complete denial of dignity and humanity, although all its deeds were blessed by the church.

For him the most fundamental and ardent cry is that during the period of slavery and colonialism, Africans were denied their soul, identity and humanity; the poverty that hit Africans according to him was first of all anthropological. The African crisis is fundamentally due to the “anthropological annihilation” which lasted during four centuries of slavery and one century of colonisation and neo-colonisation. The Code Noir of Colbert, the Louis XIV Minister of Trade that considers Blacks objects with no rights whatsoever is an example of the inhumanity that affected the human existence of Africans, disarticulated and disorganised them mentally and socially as L.S. Senghor, Mudimbe and many others have recalled.

One of the dramatic identifications of the church with the structures of sin found its expressions in the catastrophe which amounted to a major anthropological annihilation in Africa, which started with Slavery and was continued during the period of colonialism and its extensions. For five centuries of Slavery, Africans were not only denied human rights but even humanity. African men and women, because of the colour of their skin, were refused the right to be themselves, free, sovereign, and creators of their destiny, all in the name of a civilization “founded on Christianity”. This pretentious attitude was adopted by the Europeans to dominate the rest of the world to judge coach and become masters and executers with absolute powers over other peoples under a jungle law.

There is no rule without exceptions. Some missionaries opposed colonial officials and tried to side with the poor and oppressed, devoting energy and faithfulness, sacrifice and heroism planting, building, liberating slaves, creating schools and clinics, orphanages and leprosies, and confronting the tyranny of colonial officials and traditional powers.

Against the afro-pessimism propagated by the West and neo-colonial forces, Mveng sees the reconstruction of Africa beyond the social and economical aspects but through a gospel that is a power to the transfiguration and resurrection, a force that helps African Christianity resist like a rock against all negative forces.

Eboussi Boulaga denounces the structural violence that accompanies the colonial ecclesial structures. He vehemently criticised the missionary discourse which was inhibiting and arrogant because it proceeded by deconstruction. His strong intellectual background and audacity led him to confront the total failure of the Muntu during their encounter between Europe and Africa. In 1974, Eboussi Boulaga echoed the Moratorium, saying that as long as churches in Africa passively accept subsidies from the West they would never be free, because begging churches at the periphery cannot stand in “a brotherly interaction” with others. These practices and attitudes never changed in the post-colonial era, leading to situations like the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, a metaphor of the African State. Eboussi persistently criticises the “bourgeois Christianity” suggesting that to appropriate Christianity Africans must take Christ as a model because of his way of respecting his interlocutors through out the Gospel.

Father Jean Marc Ela, a Cameroonian theologian and sociologist persistently raised his “cry as an African” demonstrating that Africans must be liberated totally from the yoke of colonial Christianity, by cutting of the bounds of its shameful financial dependency and confront the European churches to working

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30 E. Mveng rightly argues that the slavery phenomenon was triggered by a man the west considers to be a Saint, Bartolomeo de Las Casas in his mission to rescue the Indians of the Americas from the deadly overexploitation imposed by the European settlers.
33 Eboussi Boulaga & Alain Didier Olinga, Genocide Rwandais: Les intellectuels africains s’interrogent (CLE, Yaounde, 2004), 12.
hard towards a socio-political ethics that stirs up the Africans’ responsibility for the destiny of their societies34.

In his prolific writings Ela emphasised the liberation of the masses from all forms of structural violence coming from the centre of Christianity, Rome35. Ela challenges the African churches to distance themselves from the “exploitation of Africans through collaboration with the multinationals” who sponsor every sort of marketing of the western liberal economy. Like his contemporary and fellow countryman novelist, Mongo Beti, Ela says that the African masses remain as they were during the colonial paternalism which instrumentalised the African elites; the situation of the masses never changed during the era of political independences where they suffer the colonisation of a “brother by his brother”.36

Towards the end of his life (+ 2007), Ela who had been exiled to Canada following the murder of Engelbert Mveng, defended the idea that the poor in Africa have resilience and resistance manifested in social innovations, opposing the top down State models of development. He calls these mechanisms invented by the people, the “revenge of the excluded”37.

Ela defends the idea that the defeat of poverty passes through valuing the rural spirit of solidarity and self-confidence, promoting the participation of the populations in their own development with initiatives like rural villages associations run by the poor. The only way out is to put forward relevant solutions given by the poor to their problems, a “grass-roots world” as opposed to the existing order.39

To sum up this section, both Kinshasa and Yaoundé benefited from the possibilities of publishing in Paris, Brussels, Rome and through the Journal Presence Africaine (1947) and the Editions CLE, Yaoundé (1963). They benefited from an education for excellence offered by the Roman Catholic Church either in Rome or in Theological seminaries, (example of the Jesuit tradition). The possibility of grouping and interacting even at the time ICT was not even a dream helped immensely. When les Pretres Noirs s’interrogent was published, most of the future great names, Kagame, Mulago, Mveng, Hebga, Eboussi Boulaga, Malula signed contributions which underlined fundamental issues facing African Christianity.

**Francophone West Africa**

In West Africa the school of thought was basically inspired by the ISCR, a catholic body concerned with catechism, pastoral and ministerial formation, sometimes with the issues of inculturation and never on specific political and social problems. The context of West Africa though, is different from Central Africa because there Christianity lives as a minority in an Islamic environment. There were a few individuals who would engage in every single issue regarding the life of the Church, and it was often that in a context of minority, the missionary power was higher than ever. Here the missionary presence came from the Missionary Society of Lyon which did not have a strong intellectual orientation. This said there have been high calibre personalities in Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso even Senegal, among them Cardinal Yago, Archbishop of Abidjan and his Auxiliary, Mgr Dacoury-Tabley. These two initiated actions for human rights and justice for the poor. During the political turmoil they stood beside the students who were being attacked by the police. They were both opposed to President Houphouet Boigny's monumental and costly construction, the Basilica Notre Dame de La Paix in Yamousoukro. They perceived it as arrogance in a

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country where people die from poverty and disease. Mgr Dacoury-Tabley refused to attend the ceremony in which Pope Jean Paul II consecrated the Basilica.40

On the opposite, the recent crisis in Ivory Cost where politicians exacerbated tensions between communities on religious and ethnic grounds, the prominent Protestant Church compromised its critical and prophetic role by siding with the forces that were opposed to democratic change.

### Issues Raised by Young Theologians

Maurice Cheza and Gerard Van’t Spijker41 provided a space for new, mostly francophone, voices to emerge. The syntheses move towards a Theology of rupture with western theological models that never recognises the religious, cultural, historical and political heritage of Africa as being positive or negative in the shaping of an African Christianity that is more relevant to the people.

Pascal Fossouo, a student of Kwame Bediako, produced a reflection on the West African monarchies (Cameroon and Ghana) showing that they were founded on a religious background, always taking into consideration the religious, political and spiritual aspirations of the people. He raised the ideas of the presence of the Verb that supports and sustains the possibility of the existence of saints. Ukweji meditates on the role of an African theologian saying that s/he must help to make sense of the faith of the community, Christian and non-Christian alike. Joining Kamana, Bede, Vibila and Togboga he rejects every approach that would extract God from the control of western ideologies to let Him become a victim of the African cultures themselves stuck in multiform crises.

Challenging violence against women, the mother of the African women theologians, Mercy Amba Oduyoye, has been a vocal force. Tegboga argues that the African church has become the amplification of the “inferiorisation” systems that have targeted women and of non-North Atlantic peoples. Alphonse Quenum defends the idea of a new ecclesiology that is life – giving, receptive to the people and not savant; an ecclesiology that challenges the teachings and practices the notions of paternity and maternity as opposed to male domination and reproduction, rather as Old Testament images of rock, tenderness, love, the church as virgin, young spouse and mother. These are to be the values of simplicity, joy, evangelical, freshness. The church is called to rehabilitate and keep social harmony and ethics for the promotion of a new alliance of correctness, forgiveness and fraternity hence challenging the power exercise as it stands today in Church and the States.42

### Fathering Theological Thought: The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)

From its inception (1963) the AACC has been concerned by the elaboration and promotion of African Theology. It was from the Kampala assembly that the Ibadan in 1966 consultation was conceived. This resulted in the still relevant book *Pour une Théologie Africaine (1969)* edited by Dicknson and Ellingworth.

An innovative idea, the Moratorium, was launched in early 1970s by the Kenyan theologian John Gatu, and relayed over by the then General Secretary of the AACC, Canon Burgess Carr. The concept aimed at interacting with the so called “mother churches” and missionary bodies to stop for a while from sending money and resources so as to allow local churches assume more missionary and theological responsibilities. But these efforts were not thoroughly pursued. More ideas have emerged, for example the debate about the “theologies of selfhood”, the “theologies of Reconstruction” (Villa-Vicencio, Mugambi, ...

41 Maurice Cheza & Gerard van’t Spijker (eds), *Théologiens et théologiennes dans l’Afrique d’Aujourd’hui* (Karthala, 2007).
42 Gatwa in Cheza and Spijker, 7.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Kamana, Chipenda, Karamaga) but they were also running short of energy before any proper connection with previous thoughts was established. Equally, out of contemporary Africa torn apart by wars and conflicts, AACC continually mediated in countries like Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, Sudan, the horn of Africa, Ivory Cost, Gabon and Togo. Though it is too early to express these efforts into a theological expression, nevertheless, it is biblically right to remind the church that it was given a reconciliation mission in society.

**Theological Education in Francophone Africa and Public Issues**

The church in Africa has become the largest and longest serving institutions, gathering millions of crowds every day in masses at Sunday services, even given the situation of the continent, which is the richest in natural resources yet the poorest economically and culturally.

African society opened up to two world religions, Christianity and Islam. The encounter of these two religions with African traditional religions, cultures and civilisations continues to occur while Europe and North America undergo secularisation leading to de-Christianisation, the exclusion of God from social life and the imagery of the people. Whilst Islam is growing fast in countries like DRC, Rwanda and Burundi, the reasons behind are many. Yet one can single out the failure of Christianity to always stand on the side of the poor against the repressive regimes. This has instigated Islamic strategists to develop a campaign against the churches, setting up plans and taking means for urban and rural “evangelisation” that have no parallel in Christianity.

The time has come for theological education in Francophone Africa to listen to the cry of the people. Time is running out for theological educators and sponsors to reflect on its identity and strategize on interfaith relations, ways and means for the production of a contextual Theology that sustains such a rapid growth in a challenging interfaith context. In that regard, the institutionalisation of an All Academy of Theology and Religions, the creation of a Theological education Fund are tools that, if sustained by churches and ecumenical partners, will provide an education that is relevant to church and society in Africa today.

**Bibliography**


1. La Faculté de théologie de l’Université Protestante au Congo (UPC)\(^1\)

François-David Ekofo Bonyeku (Doyen de la Faculté de théologie)

1.1 Introduction

On ne peut pas parler de la faculté de théologie sans parler de l’université à laquelle elle est comme une unité dans un grand ensemble qui assure l’éducation. Notre faculté appartient donc à l’Université Protestante au Congo dont la devise est: « Vérité, foi et liberté ». Nous allons essayer dans la mesure du possible de parler de l’histoire de la faculté qui est également liée à celle de notre Université. On se demande parfois entre l’Université et la Faculté de théologie si elles ne sont pas comme la poule et l’œuf et qui d’entre elles vient avant l’autre.

1.2 Historique

La faculté de théologie a été créée le 19 février 1959 au lac Munkamba, dans l’actuelle province administrative du Kasaï Occidental, par l’initiative de quelques missions qui voulaient avoir un cadre de formation de futurs leaders de l’Église au moment où se profilaient les indépendances de nos pays africains encore colonisés. Ce sont les cinq missions protestantes suivantes qui se sont mises ensemble pour créer une seule faculté afin de donner à l’Église protestante du Congo des cadres et pasteurs ayant reçu une solide formation universitaire. Il s’agit de: American Baptist Foreigner Missionary Society (ABFMS), Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), Disciples of Christ Congo Mission (DCCM), American Presbyterian Congo Mission (APCM) et Methodist Mission in Central Congo\(^2\). Il y avait donc quatre missions d’origine américaine (ABFMS, APCM, DCCM et MMCC) et une mission d’origine anglaise (BMS). Les cinq missions pourtant avaient un lien commun, la langue. Elles étaient toutes anglophones et leurs missionnaires communiquaient entre eux en anglais.

A sa fondation, la faculté portait le nom de « Faculté de Théologie Protestante du Congo belge et du Rwanda-Urundi ». Elle devint plus tard en 1963 la « Faculté de Théologie Protestante de l’Université Libre du Congo ». Cette faculté autonome devint pour la première fois une unité d’enseignement incorporé au sein d’une université ; l’Université Libre du Congo (ULC) d’obédience protestante et fonctionnant à Kisangani.

En 1971, suite à la restructuration de l’enseignement supérieur et universitaire de notre pays, la Faculté s’est vue incorporée au sein de l’Université Nationale du Zaïre et devait quitter Kisangani pour venir à Kinshasa. Elle devait ainsi rejoindre la Faculté de théologie catholique au campus universitaire de Kinshasa. Son séjour au sein de ce campus ne sera pas long car le même État qui a restructuré l’enseignement supérieur va trouver qu’il ne peut plus dépenser son argent en supportant les études théologiques qui n’ont rien à avoir avec la révolution qui était en cours dans le pays. C’est ainsi qu’en 1974 elle fut expulsée de l’Université Nationale du Zaïre (UNAZA) par le pouvoi de l’époque et revint encore une fois dans les mains de l’Église qui l’a créée.

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\(^1\) See for further details: http://www.upc-rdc.cd/historique.php.

\(^2\) La traduction en français est Mission Méthodiste au Congo Central (dans tous les deux cas ça donnerait en abrégé MMCC)

La Faculté de Théologie évolue à présent dans un grand ensemble appelé Université Protestante au Congo qui est composée de quatre facultés : celle de théologie étant considérée comme faculté mère est les trois autres sont ses filles. En plus donc de la Faculté de Théologie, l’Université Protestante a, par ordre de création, la Faculté d’Administration des Affaires et Sciences Economiques, la Faculté de Droit et la toute nouvelle mais dynamique Faculté de Médecine.

1.3 Objectifs

Les créateurs de la Faculté de Théologie voulaient avoir une école pour produire des leaders de l’Eglise bien formés et compétents. Cet objectif reste toujours de mise au sein de la Faculté. En plus de cela nous avons adopté les objectifs de l’université dans laquelle nous évoluons.

L’Université Protestante au Congo a pour objectif de dispenser des enseignements de niveau supérieur en vue de former des cadres concepteurs, une élite nationale capable de répondre aux besoins de la société et de l’Eglise. Consciente du fait que la crise dans notre pays est essentiellement d’ordre moral, l’Université Protestante au Congo met un accent particulier sur la dimension de l’éthique chrétienne afin de produire des opérateurs scientifiques compétents, inspirés de la crainte de Dieu et prêts à servir la Communauté dans la foi et la vérité.

Ce n’est pas pour rien que l’UPC a pour devise la vérité, la foi et la liberté. Nous essayons dans la mesure de nos moyens de former les futurs cadres de l’Eglise et même de la nation en faisant en sorte que nous ayons des hommes et des femmes qui pourront se battre pour la vérité, avoir foi en Dieu notre Père et en Jésus-Christ son Fils et notre Seigneur. Nous voulons également former des hommes et femmes qui auront la liberté de faire un bon choix et de parler sans honneur et sans complexe des choses qui découleraient de leur foi en Dieu, de leur éthique chrétienne et de leurs convictions profondes. On peut alors comprendre pourquoi l’UPC se définit également comme étant « une éducation qui construit une nation ».

1.4 Structures

Nous allons tout d’abord donner les structures de l’Université avant de donner celles de la Faculté de Théologie. Les organes de l’Université Protestante au Congo sont les suivants:

- Conseil d’administration: organe de conception, de décision et de contrôle.
- Conseil de l’Université: organe de délibération sur toutes les questions intéressant la formation des étudiants, l’organisation des jurys d’examens et l’administration.
- Comité de gestion: organe d’exécution ; il s’occupe de la gestion quotidienne de l’Université.
- Recteur: assure la direction de l’Université dont il prend les intérêts en charge.
- Conseils des facultés: s’occupent de l’organisation des enseignements et de la recherche au niveau de chaque faculté.

Ce qui vient d’être dit au niveau de l’Université est relayé de la manière suivante au niveau de la Faculté de Théologie. Le Doyen dirige la faculté et préside les réunions du Conseil de la faculté. Il est secondé au niveau du bureau par le Secrétaire Académique.
La Faculté est divisée en Départements qui sont des véritables unités d’enseignements qui gèrent au quotidien non seulement les professeurs, mais aussi leurs enseignements dans le domaine et la spécialité qui sont les leurs. La Faculté de Théologie compte six Départements que voici:

- Théologie pratique
- Théologie systématique
- Histoire de l’Eglise ou histoire ecclésiastique
- Sciences de la mission, œcuménisme et science des religions
- Ancien Testament
- Nouveau Testament

Chaque Département est dirigé par un Chef de département. En plus des Départements, la Faculté a un responsable qui s’occupe uniquement de troisième cycle. Il porte le titre de Coordonnateur de DEA (Diplôme d’Études Approfondies) et Doctorat et a rang de Chef de département. Nous avons également le Rédacteur en chef de notre revue, la Revue Congolaise de Théologie Protestante (RCTP) qui a également rang de Chef de département. Ainsi le bureau facultaire est composé de Doyen, de Secrétaire académique, de tous les Chefs des départements, plus le Coordonnateur de DEA et Doctorat, et le Rédacteur en chef de notre revue.

1.5 Organisation des études


La Faculté de Théologie organise trois cycles de formation:

- Cycle de graduat en trois ans
- Cycle de licence en deux ans
- Doctorat (au moins quatre ans dont deux ans obligatoires de DEA)

Quand un élève termine ses études secondaires, il s’inscrit au cycle de graduat qui dure trois ans. Il commence par le premier graduat, ensuite passe en deuxième et termine en troisième. L’étudiant suit une formation générale en théologie. Cette formation se termine entre autres par la rédaction d’une monographie que nous appelons « Travail de Fin de Cycle » (TFC). La fin de ce cycle est sanctionnée par un diplôme de « Graduat en théologie » et son porteur est appelé « gradué en théologie ».

Après ces trois ans de formation l’étudiant a le choix de s’arrêter à ce niveau qui constitue un diplôme universitaire reconnu ou de continuer ses études en allant au deuxième cycle. C’est le cycle de licence et ça dure deux ans. C’est dans ce cycle où l’étudiant commence à faire son choix sur le domaine qu’il voudrait se spécialiser en théologie. Il a le choix à faire parmi les six Départements. Ces deux années se terminent également par la rédaction d’un travail scientifique appelé « Mémoire » (de licence). La fin est sanctionnée par un diplôme de « Licence en théologie » et son porteur est appelé « licencié en théologie ».

Ceux qui veulent aller plus loin peuvent s’inscrire alors, moyennant un certain nombre de conditions, au programme de doctorat. C’est dans ce programme qu’on se spécialise réellement dans un domaine précis de théologie. Ce programme est conçu premièrement pour former les futurs enseignants pour les institutions supérieures de formation théologique. C’est pourquoi on est très regardant et méticuleux dans ce cycle de formation ; le troisième et dernier cycle.

Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
1.6 L’école de femmes

Une des préoccupations de la Faculté de théologie depuis sa création est de penser à la femme comme un futur cadre de l’Église. A une époque, lors de sa création, les études de la femme n’étant pas une question mise à l’ordre du jour, la Faculté de théologie se demandait quelle sorte de femme serait placée à côté de serviteur de Dieu bien formé dans notre Institution. Si le mari doit être bien formé qu’en serait-il de son épouse après tout ?

C’est alors qu’on a pensé à avoir une école de mise à niveau des femmes des étudiants en théologie dont la plupart ne savaient ni lire ni écrire. C’est ainsi qu’a été créé l’école de femmes.

Son but est d’encadrer les compagnes de futurs pasteurs et cadres de l’Église en vue de faire d’elles des épouses et mères responsables. Outre son programme traditionnel axé sur les leçons de formation biblique, de couture, de tricotage, de ménage et d’hygiène, elle organise un programme d’alphabétisation et de secrétariat informatique destiné aux mamans et jeunes filles de la capitale congolaise sans distinction.

Nous devons comprendre par là que cette école de femmes a beaucoup évolué. A sa création, elle était gérée par la Faculté de théologie. Maintenant avec la création de l’Université, elle est gérée par celle-ci qui garde cependant son but traditionnel et continue à respecter la pensée de ses créateurs. Bien qu’on ait ouvert ses portes aux autres mamans et jeunes filles que les femmes des pasteurs, celles-ci sont prioritaires. C’est seulement dans la mesure où il y a plus de places qui restent qu’on ajoute d’autres femmes. L’école de femmes est devenue un lieu de récupération de la femme et la jeune fille.

Nous voulons à présent parler de la contribution de la Faculté de théologie dans différents domaines de la vie de l’Église et même de notre pays. Nous allons aussi essayer de parler de certaines autres contributions. C’est pour cela que nous avons éclaté ce grand point en plusieurs petits points.

1.7 L’unité de l’Église

La Faculté de théologie, jusqu’à une certaine époque, était la seule faculté de l’Église protestante dans notre pays. Ses étudiants venaient de toutes les tendances possibles. Beaucoup de ses étudiants ont appris à vivre réellement à la Faculté à côté de quelqu’un d’autre qui ne venait pas de sa tradition.

Il y a eu par exemple des gens venant de la tradition baptiste qui disaient que le baptême par aspersion était catholique et que les protestants ne baptisaient que par immersion. C’est au sein de la faculté et en côtoyant certaines autres dénominations qu’ils ont fini par apprendre qu’il y avait aussi d’autres communautés protestantes telles que les presbytériens et méthodistes qui pratiquaient le baptême par aspersion.

Il y a eu également le problème de baptême d’enfants. Ceux de la tradition baptiste ne connaissaient que le baptême d’adultes et pensaient que c’était là la seule pratique protestante. C’est à la faculté, en côtoyant les autres, qu’ils apprendront que les presbytériens et les méthodistes baptisaient les enfants. Quand ils seront grands ils vont confirmer ce baptême en recevant « la confirmation ».

C’est au sein de la faculté que les étudiants venus de différents horizons théologiques et ecclésiastiques apprennent à vivre et travailler ensemble. Ils apprennent à s’apprécier mutuellement, à devenir amis et à former une même famille d’enfants de Dieu et ressortissants d’une même faculté. C’est notre joie de trouver partout dans notre pays et même en dehors de celui-ci les anciens étudiants de la faculté qui nous accueillent avec joie et honneur.

La Faculté a ainsi aidé à développer le sens de l’unité de l’Église d’une manière pratique. La vie passée ensemble dans une salle de cours, dans la bibliothèque et dans le campus universitaire laissera quelqu’un avec des traces profondes. La personne concernée est influencée et commence à supporter ou même à tolérer certaines choses que quelqu’un d’autre de sa tradition resté dans son environnement et n’ayant jamais quitté chez lui ne saurait supporter et tolérer.

Certaines idées et diabolisations changent pour laisser la place au profit d’une cohabitation pacifique. L’esprit acquis lors de son passage à la faculté continuera à influencer ces anciens étudiants. Quand ils se
retrouvent dans les Synodes nationaux ou provinciaux, on lit cet esprit de rapprochement parmi ces ressortissants d’une même faculté. La faculté contribue donc à resserrer l’unité de l’Eglise.

La Faculté a également formé les cadres de cette Eglise. Certains anciens étudiants de cette faculté ont exercé des hautes fonctions au sein de l’Eglise du Christ au Congo tant au niveau communautaire et national.3

On voit bien que la Faculté a produit des cadres de l’Eglise qui aident et continuent à aider l’Eglise à maintenir son unité. Une autre chose que nous voulons signaler c’est le fait que la plupart des professeurs de théologie qui donnent cours au sein de la Faculté ont fait leurs études dans la même faculté.4

1.8 Les cadres nationaux
La Faculté a été créée pour former les cadres de l’Eglise et elle l’a fait. Mais on ne contrôle pas la vie d’un homme. Après sa formation cet homme devient un cadre de l’Eglise ou de l’Etat que personne ne peut maîtriser. C’est ainsi que certains de nos anciens étudiants se sont engagés dans d’autres domaines au niveau national en dehors de l’Eglise.5 Il y en a d’autres qui sont devenus hauts cadres ailleurs dans

3 Nous pouvons citer quelques noms et les fonctions qu’ils ont occupées.
- Le recteur actuel de l’Université Protestant au Congo, Professeur Monseigneur Ngoy Boliya a fini ses études en 1974.
- Avant lui, le président de la même Communauté des Disciples du Christ au Congo, le Révérend Docteur et Professeur Ngili Bofeko Batsu, a terminé ses études à la faculté en 1979 également.
- Le président communautaire des Mennonites, Révérend Docteur Komuesa Kalunga, a terminé en 1983.

4 Nous allons juste énumérer quelques uns et l’année où ils ont terminé.
- Prof. Ngoy Boliya (1974)
- Prof. Marini Bodho (1970)
- Prof. Munduku Ngamayamu Dagoga (1973)
- Prof. Mengi Kilandamoko (1973)
- Prof. Komy Nsilu Diakubikwa (1974)
- Prof. Mushila Nyamankank (1975)
- Prof. Afumba Wandja (1976)
- Prof. Ekofo Bonyeku (1979)
- Prof. Nkulu Kankote Kisula (1983)

5 Nous allons citer quelques uns parmi eux.
- Evêque Marini Bodho est devenu président de l’Assemblée nationale de notre pays pendant quelques années. Actuellement il est sénateur de la République.
- Monseigneur Kuye Ndondo qui a terminé à la Faculté en 1981 fut pendant quelques années président de la Commission nationale consacrée à la réconciliation. Il est actuellement sénateur de la République.
- Monseigneur Ngoy Boliya fut pendant un temps Vice président de la Commission électorale indépendante de notre pays.
- Révérend Docteur Kakule Molo de la promotion de 1976 est actuellement Député national.

Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
l’enseignement universitaire et d’autres encore ont occupé des fonctions au niveau international. Les noms de personnes figurant sur cette liste ont occupé de hautes positions tant au niveau national et international.

1.9 Cadres féminins

La faculté de théologie de l’Université Protestante au Congo a largement contribué à la formation pastorale des cadres féminins de l’Eglise. Les toutes premières promotions de la Faculté n’étaient composées que de cadres masculins. De la première promotion sortie en 1969 jusqu’à celle de 1975, soit sept promotions, aucune femme n’a figuré pour avoir fait la théologie.

Depuis lors, la population féminine ne cesse d’augmenter au sein de la Faculté. L’année académique passée, 2010-2011, par exemple sur un total de 222 étudiants (toutes promotions confondues) il y avait 33 filles soit 15% de la population estudiantine de la Faculté. Cette année académique 2011-2012 elles sont au total 34 reparties de la manière suivante: 1ère graduat 8, 2ème graduat 7, 3ème graduat 6, 1ère licence 9 et 2ème licence 4. La grande question est de savoir ce que deviennent ces étudiantes après leurs études.

Nous sommes le propre produit que la Faculté de théologie est en train de consommer. Nous avons déjà formé une femme professeur de théologie en la personne de Madame la Révérende Professeur Vibila Vuadi. Elle avait terminé à la Faculté; elle a été retenue Assistante et a été envoyée en Allemagne pour faire son Doctorat. Elle est rentrée au pays et est entrain de travailler comme professeur au sein de la faculté il y a quelques années écoulées. Elle avait même occupé les fonctions administratives en devenant Secrétaire académique de la Faculté. Actuellement elle travaille en dehors du pays, récupérée par l’Eglise universelle. Mais elle continue à venir donner des cours comme professeur visiteur.

Nous avons également des femmes retenues Assistantes au sein de notre Faculté. L’Eglise elle-même qui nous envoie ces femmes les récupère à la fin de leurs études pour en faire des pasteurs des paroisses ou des professeurs des différents instituts que les Communautés créent par-ci par-là. Il y a d’autres qui font la politique et sont devenues, comme Révérende Munzombo Mujinga, bourgmestre de sa Commune.

- Révérend Docteur Komuesa Kalunga est actuellement Député national après avoir été Vice gouverneur de la province de Kasaï Occidental.
- Révérende Munzombo Mujinga est actuellement Bourgmestre d’une des communes de la ville province de Kinshasa la capitale de notre pays.

6 C’est le cas de:
- Professeur Docteur Masu-ga-Rugamika qui a été à la base de l’Université des Pays des Grands Lacs, qui en fut recteur pendant plusieurs années et professeur.
- Professeur Ngayihembako Mutahinga de la promotion de 1982 qui fut lui aussi recteur de l’Université des Pays des Grands Lacs et qui continue à être professeur au sein de cette même Université a terminé ses études à la Faculté.
- Professeur Evêque Yemba Kekumba a dirigé pendant quelques années l’Université méthodiste de Zimbabwe.
- Professeur Kasonga wa Kasonga de la promotion de 1976 a travaillé pendant quelques années au staff de la Conférence des Eglises de toute l’Afrique (CETA) à Nairobi au Kenya.


Madame Nzeba sera suivie par Madame Yowa Kabengu qui sera la deuxième femme à suivre les études de théologie à la Faculté. Elle qui était presbytérienne au départ est devenue disciple par son mariage. Elle a été ordonnée pasteur et est devenue Révérende Yowa. Elle fut la première femme à être pasteur titulaire de la plus grande paroisse des Disciples dans la ville de Kinshasa, la paroisse de la Commune de Lemba. Actuellement elle est pasteur titulaire d’une petite paroisse qu’elle est en train de développer dans la Commune de Bandal toujours à Kinshasa.

8 Elles sont à quatre: Madame Alenge, Madame Makuta, Madame Malonda et Madame N’landu

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
1.10 Conclusion
Nous pensons avons décrit en bref ce que la Faculté de théologie de l’Université Protestante au Congo est et ce qu’elle fait. Nous avons également essayé de montrer son impact sur l’Église du Congo, sur le pays et sur le monde. Elle est vraiment importante pour l’Église et pour notre pays. Que Dieu continue à la bénir.

2. L ’Université Protestant D’Afrique Centrale de Yaoundé (UPAC)

(BOUBA MBIMA Timothée, Recteur UPAC)
Crée en 1959, l’Université Protestant d’Afrique Centrale (UPAC) hier Faculté de Théologie Protestant de Yaoundé est une institution universitaire ouverte à la modernité et attentive aux sollicitations de la société. Par sa vocation internationale et œcuménique, l’UPAC est ouverte à un public varié, sans exclusivité préalable. Située au cœur de l’Afrique et de la capitale politique du Cameroun, elle occupe un site magnifique sur la colline de Djoungolo où un climat typiquement Yaoundé accueille agréablement ses visiteurs, étudiants et chercheurs.

Privilégiée par sa position centrale au Cameroun, et à Yaoundé, l’UPAC adhère à un esprit de collaboration et d’ouverture avec les autres universités confessionnelles et d’État qui l’entourent et avec lesquelles elle s’échange des expériences et des enseignants. Sur le plan international les échanges fructueux avec les universités européennes et les solides partenariats établis avec les organismes de coopération variés renforcent la crédibilité de cette Institution universitaire.

Aujourd’hui en pleine croissance et ouverte à l’avenir avec la construction d’infrastructure nouvelle en vue de répondre à de nouveaux défis, l’UPAC porte en elle les atouts d’un véritable instrument de formation et d’échange engagé et participant pleinement au développement scientifique, intellectuel, moral, spirituel, politique et économique du Cameroun et de la sous région Afrique Centrale.

2.1. La Faculte De Theologie (1959-2006)
La décision de créer la Faculté de Théologie Protestant de Yaoundé (FTPY) remonte à l’année 1959 à Brazzaville. En effet, au cours de cette année, onze Eglises Protestantes d’Afrique et les Sociétés de Missions Américaines et Européennes ont jugé nécessaire de créer dans un premier temps une Faculté de Théologie Protestant à Yaoundé au Cameroun avec une mission spécifique et des objectifs bien précis s’inscrivant dans la durée. Cette Faculté a été inaugurée le 17 février 1962 par le Président Amadou Ahidjo, comme première Institution Universitaire au Cameroun.

Sa création a été ratifiée par la loi n°67/LF/19 du 12 juin 1967 (cf. journal officiel du 1er mars 1970). La Faculté de Théologie Protestant de Yaoundé a pour but l’enseignement des disciplines théologiques et bien d’autres à la formation des cadres de l’Église, dans la soumission à la Parole de Dieu et à l’esprit de foi et de liberté, qui est celui de la Réforme. Elle ne se rattache à aucune dénomination en particulier.

2.1.1 STATUT DE L’ETABLISSEMENT

Les Eglises et Missions fondateurs qui constituèrent le Conseil d’Administration sont:
- Eglise Evangélique du Togo
- Eglise Méthodiste d’Afrique Occidentale
- Union des Eglise Baptistes du Cameroun
- Eglise Evangélique du Cameroun
- Eglise Presbytérienne du Cameroun

9 See for other informations: http://www.upac-edu.org.
Outre les caractères international et œcuménique de la Faculté, il est également affirmé son caractère universitaire, (cf. les statuts adoptés lors de la réunion du Conseil d’Administration des 18 et 19 février 1961 en son préambule).

2.1.2 LA DIRECTION
Depuis sa création, la Faculté de Théologie Protestante a été toujours dirigée par les organes suivants:
- Le Conseil d’Administration (CA)
- Le Conseil de Faculté (CF)
- Le Comité de Gestion (CG)
- Le Conseil de Professeurs (CP)

2.1.3 ADMISSION

2.1.4 EXAMEN SPECIALE
C’est à la réunion du CA du 1er et 2 juillet 1964 qu’il a été décidé de permettre aux étudiants détenteurs d’un diplôme d’école de théologie de présenter un concours à la FTPY ; C’est à la réunion du Conseil d’Administration des 26 et 27 juin 1968 que la décision définitive a été prise d’admettre les non bacheliers à la FTPY.

2.2 De La Faculte De Theologie Protestante De Yaounde A L’universite Protestante D’africe Centrale (2007-2012)
Opérée par la session ordinaire du Conseil d’Administration de 2006, la mutation de la Faculté de Théologie en une Université complète a été entérinée par la reconnaissance de l’UPAC par le gouvernement de la République du Cameroun à travers l’arrêté N° 07/0139 du MINESUP du 21 septembre 2007 et qui donnait également le droit à l’Université Protestante d’Afrique Centrale de former dans les trois cycles du système LMD: Licence, Master et Doctorat.

La mission principale de l’UPAC est de contribuer par une pensée d’avant-garde à l’amélioration des conditions de vie de l’humain, a lutter contre la pauvreté et les injustices sociales et a introduire la transformation sociale en Afrique et dans le monde. C’est dans cet ordre d’idées qu’aujourd’hui comme hier, l’UPAC a pour but de dispenser un enseignement supérieur de qualité tant sur le plan spirituel, moral, intellectuel, pratique que technologique ; ceci, en vue de former des cadres compétents et intègres des Eglises et de la société, dans la soumission à la Parole de Dieu et à l’esprit de foi de liberté caractéristiques des Eglises issues de la Réforme.

Des Eglises Membres
- Union des Eglises Baptistes du Cameroun
- Eglise Evangélique du Gabon
- Eglise Evangélique Luthérienne du Cameroun
- Eglise Evangélique du Congo
- Eglise Protestante Méthodiste du Bénin
- Eglise Evangélique Presbytérienne du Togo
- Eglise Méthodiste du Togo

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
2.2.1 DES PARTENAIRES
L’UPAC est soutenue dans sa lourde mission de formation pluridisciplinaire par plusieurs partenaires. Il y a aussi des Partenaires Académique.

2.2.2 DES ÉTUDES À L’UPAC
L’UPAC opte pour le système LMD dont il intègre progressivement les principes en vue d’atteindre les objectifs et les finalités qui lui sont liés. Les enseignements à l’UPAC sont organisés en semestres de 14 à 16 semaines. L’année académique qui commence en septembre- octobre et s’achève en juillet est constituée de deux semestres. La semestrialisation de l’année académique implique la validation individuelle du semestre. Aussi, chaque semestre est validé dès lors que les unités d’enseignement (UE) le constituant sont validées individuellement.

Les grades décernés sont respectivement
- Le Certificat d’Etudes Théologiques pour les étudiants laïcs de la Faculté de Théologie
- La Licence selon la faculté et l’option
- Le Master selon la faculté et l’option
- Le Doctorat selon la faculté et l’option

2.2.3 RECHERCHE, FORMATION CONTINUE, ET ASSURANCE QUALITÉ
La recherche est encouragée dans tous les niveaux d’étude à l’UPAC.
- A travers les travaux de recherche des étudiants (devoirs et travaux personnel, les travaux de mémoires et thèses).
- L’UPAC soutient et stimule les travaux de recherche des professeurs par l’organisation des conférences, des colloques, des séminaires au tour des thèmes d’actualité et d’intérêt théologique et scientifique avérés.
- C’est dans cette même perspective que sont créées les institutions et centres de recherche au sein de l’UPAC.

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11 L’Université de Genève (Suisse); L’Université de Lausanne (Suisse); L’Université de Strasbourg (France); La Faculté Libre de Théologie de Montpellier (France); La Faculté de Théologie Libre de Paris (France); La Faculté de Théologie de Neuchâtel (Suisse); L’Université Evangélique d’Afrique à Bukavu (RDC); L’Université Protestante au Congo à Kinshasa (RDC); L’Université de Yaoundé II-SOA (Cameroun); L’Université de Yaoundé I (Cameroun); L’Université de Douala (Cameroun); L’Université de Dschang (Cameroun)
2.2.4 FORMATION CONTINUE ET RECYCLAGES
Dans les préoccupations présentes de l’UPAC, la formation continue figure en bonne place. Ainsi, pour répondre à l’exigence scientifique de la performance et de l’efficacité aussi bien le corps enseignant que les autres professionnels sont encouragés et bien accueillis pour la formation continue dans diverses structures de l’UPAC.

Du côté des enseignants de l’UPAC, en plus des enseignements spécialisés qui leur sont donnés périodiquement dans la perspective de l’organisation des méthodes pédagogiques efficaces et adaptées, l’UPAC encourage ses enseignants à approfondir leurs connaissances tant dans leurs domaines de spécialisation que sur les recherches que dans d’autres champs de recherche.

En direction du public et face aux structures spécialisées qui fonctionnent en son sein, l’UPAC offre au public l’opportunité de suivre des cours appropriés dans le domaine de la paix, de développement, des règlements des conflits ou de l’éthique à côté de leurs activités professionnelles.

Par des structures spécialisées de formation continue qui sont progressivement mise en place en son sein, l’UPAC s’apprête chaque jour davantage à répondre à des demandes spécifiques des services publics ou associations des professionnels par la création des programmes sur mesure.

2.2.5 ASSURANCE QUALITÉ ET EVALUATION DES ENSEIGNANTS
La qualité de l’enseignement est un objectif fondamental de l’UPAC conformément à la préoccupation du système LMD.
L’application du principe de l’assurance qualité passe par l’institution à l’UPAC d’un système d’évaluation des enseignants lequel prévoit:
- des instances ou organes d’évaluation internes d’une part et
- des critères matériels d’évaluation d’autre part
S’agissant des instances d’évaluation interne il est prévu:
- une organisation interne d’évaluation des enseignants par chaque département;
- une organisation interne d’évaluation des enseignants faisant participer les étudiants.
S’agissant des critères matériels d’évaluation les enseignants sont évalués:
- sur le plan pédagogique;
- sur le plan scientifique,
- sur le plan professionnel et humain.

Un rapport d’évaluation est publié et porté à la connaissance de chaque professeur et du grand public pour une éventuelle évaluation externe à l’institution.

2.2.6 BIBLIOTHÈQUE
La bibliothèque de l’UPAC met près de 100000 volumes à la disposition de la communauté universitaire: enseignants et étudiants; des institutions et du grand public de Yaoundé et d’ailleurs.
Les usagers ont plus de 100 places assises pour des consultations sur place.
En appui aux services de la bibliothèque, le RIDOC (Réseau International de Documentation et de Communication) développe un vaste réseau de documentation et de communication pour la consultation et la commande des livres des divers domaines scientifiques.

2.2.7 L’INFORMATIQUE
Une salle équipée d’ordinateurs est mise à la disposition des étudiants. Les cours d’informatique sont dispensés à tous les étudiants régulièrement inscrits et immatriculés. Et l’accès à l’Internet est gratuit pour tous les professeurs et étudiants qui disposent d’ordinateurs opérationnels dans un réseau sans fil.
3. Le Séminaire théologique à l’Université Protestante de Brazzaville (1928-2012). Joseph SITA (Doyen de la FTPB)

Parmi les activités qui peuvent porter des fruits, il faut aligner la formation pastorale et théologique. L’œuvre abattue par une maison de formation pastorale et théologique n’a pas qu’un impact spirituel. Cette réflexion qui suit va retracer succinctement le parcours effectué par une institution de formation de serviteurs de Dieu grâce aux efforts de l’Église Evangélique du Congo.


Les ambitions de la FTPB, en tant que solution aux problèmes de la société.


Le protestantisme commence au Congo Brazzaville en 1909 avec le Missionnaire John Hammard qui est venu de la Suède. La Svenska Missionförbundet (SMF) qui a ainsi commencé avec comme point d’arrivée Madzia en 1909, ensuite il a vu venir d’autres missions comme l’Örebro Missionen en 1921, la DetNorskeMissionforbund (DNM) en 1947, la FrieEvangeliskeForsamling (DFEF) en 1956 et la SuomenVapaakirko (SVK) en 1957. Toutes ces missions laisseront leur héritage à l’Église Evangélique du Congo, en tant que première Église protestante. Cependant, si certaines missions comme la DNM, l’Örebro Missionen ont mené leurs activités dans le nord, la SMK a évangélisé le sud. L’œuvre accomplie dans le sud du Congo a beaucoup prospéré. C’est dans cette région du sud où furent ouvertes les portes de la première grande institution de formation pour les serviteurs de Dieu.


De 1931 à 1961, on compte 10 directeurs du séminaire théologique, tous des occidentaux dont la plupart venaient de la Suède.

Le travail fait par ces formateurs, a eu un grand impact dans la vie des gens évangélisés. Les témoignages pour le cas du centre de formation de Ngouédi sont très éloquents. Alors qu’ils venaient de s’installer à Ngouédi le 30 novembre 1930, les missionnaires ont au cours de cette même année fait la dédicace de leur chapelle. Et à la Noël avant la fin de la même année, 77 personnes furent baptisées. Comme le message évangélique a été holistique, les missionnaires ont pris soins de s’occuper tant bien de l’âme que du corps. Un dispensaire était aussi installé à côté du centre de formation afin d’entretenir le corps. A côté de la santé, de règles d’hygiène étaient véhiculées par les enseignants ; et il y avait aussi une incitation au travail rémunérateur. Déjà à cette période, les missionnaires ont su introduire des produits médicaux comme des ambitions.

12 Patrice Nsouami, Sala Sambila, ou la dénonciation de la théologie désincarnée, Editions Le Chemin, non daté, 3.

La culture congolaise en général et les langues congolaises en particulier ont été soutenues. D’ailleurs, les missionnaires ont eux-mêmes appris les langues congolaises pour bien faire passer leur message. Notons que les premiers pasteurs et évangélistes étaient formés en langue kikongo. De l’oralité, on est aussi passé à la culture d’écriture. Aujourd’hui, nous avons la grande œuvre de K.E.Laman. C’est une œuvre colossale qui a beaucoup apporté à la Société au Congo.

Selon les annales de l’histoire, Ngouédi a formé des cadres de divers ordres ; voici le témoignage de la revue VUELA: « Pour mieux préparer un nombre important des collaborateurs, les missionnaires développèrent l’enseignement en deux directions différentes: une formation théologique pour les évangélistes et Pasteurs et une formation générale pour les moniteurs et instituteurs »17. A ce niveau, on peut se poser la question de savoir si en ayant les deux branches de formation à la station missionnaire de Ngouédi, on ne peut pas lire les signes d’un embryon de l’Université Protestante dont nous allons parler plus loin.

En effet, de Ngouédi sont sortis des cadres très appréciés à tous les niveaux et dans tous les secteurs de la vie nationale. Si plusieurs ont commencé par l’enseignement, il est établi que nombreux ont fini par devenir des pasteurs et d’autres ont quitté l’enseignement pour d’autres carrières. La bonne réputation de la majorité des cadres sortis de Ngouédi est restée jusqu’à ce jour. Par ailleurs, il y a des pasteurs destitués qui ont intégré d’autres professions ; ceux là ont aussi fait montrer d’une bonne conduite, se faisant distinguer positivement dans leurs milieux de travail.

Les enseignants et les infirmiers, membres de la mission Evangélique suédoise ont été à l’origine de l’implantation de nouvelles communautés dans le pays. C’est ainsi que beaucoup de zones restées encore non évangélisées ont connu l’implantation du protestantisme.

Sur le plan international, on peut comprendre que certains africains comme Raymond Buana Kibongi, Paul Nguimbi, Hilaire Nkounkou, Lévy Makany et bien d’autres sont allés au Cameroun, en France ou en Suède pour la poursuite des études. Leur témoignage peut constituer le capital qu’ils ont partagé avec les autres.

La période missionnaire reste marquée d’une pierre blanche, bien que les limites n’aient pas manqué. Les critiques peuvent concerner beaucoup d’aspects: Les Scandinaives n’étant pas francophones, ils ont eu beaucoup de problèmes avec la langue française qu’ils devaient utiliser pour l’enseignement. Les colons étant pour la majorité constitués par des catholiques, le protestantisme avait connu de difficulté pour se faire une place au sein de la Colonie. Et pourtant, ils ont gagné le pari, puisque l’œuvre a réussi.

Une autre difficulté a été celle de la compréhension de certaines données culturelles. Ils ont par exemple interdit l’utilisation des instruments de la musique congolaise à l’église.

17 Hilaire Nkonkou, in Revue Vuela, N° spécial, Au revoir NGOUEDI, Imprimerie Communauté Evangélique du Zaïre ; 1972, 12.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Voici la liste et les périodes des directeurs du Séminaire de 1931 à 1961, année de l’autonomie de l’Eglise Evangélique du Congo:


Comme déjà dit plus haut, il faut noter jusqu’en 1963, la direction du séminaire théologique a été tenue par des missionnaires. Cela a été dû à une transition toute à fait compréhensible, la jeune église autonome n’ayant pas eu des cadres pour occuper la tête de cette institution de formation des serviteurs de Dieu. Pour l’essentiel, cette période a eu un impact évident pour la société congolaise et pour le monde extérieur.

3.2 Du Séminaire théologique à l’ouverture de la Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Brazzaville (1961-1998).

Comme nous l’avons constaté, le Séminaire théologique a été dirigé par un missionnaire suédois jusqu’en 1963. Le Pasteur Raymond BUANA KIBONGI sera donc le premier Directeur congolais du Séminaire théologique de l’Eglise Evangélique du Congo. Voici de façon générale, la liste et les périodes des directeurs qui ont dirigé le Séminaire théologique de l’Eglise Evangélique du Congo:


Les directeurs congolais ont tous fait leur formation théologique supérieure à l’étranger ; Le Pasteur Raymond BUANA KIBONGI a fait sa formation en France à Montpellier, le Pasteur Hilaire NKOUNKOU a fait son cycle en Suède, le Dr Paul NGUIMBI a fait son doctorat en France, le Dr Fidèle LOUBELO a étudié la linguistique au Sénégal, et le Dr Joseph SITA a fait son doctorat en théologie au Cameroun, avec un séjour des recherches à Strasbourg en France. Nous allons distinguer trois moments au cours de cette période: De 1961 à 1971, de 1971 à 1995 et de 1995 à 1998.

3.2.1 PÉRIODE DE 1961 À 1971: AU REVOIR NGOUÉDI.

Notons que cette période-ci est une transition, c’est-à dire le temps de la mission et celui de l’église autonome.

L’apport du Séminaire à l’Eglise et à la Société est évident au delà de la problématique soulevée sur l’utilisation des instruments de la musique congolaise à l’Eglise. En 1968, un article portant sur « La place des instruments congolais de musique dans l’Eglise Evangélique du Congo » a été rapporté dans la revue du Séminaire VUELA. Voici un extrait de cet article: « A vrai dire, le problème des instruments congolais de musique est une vielle question dans l’EEC. Il date l’époque des missionnaires. Pendant cette période, la position de la majorité était restée intransigeante. La décision prise, par exemple, à la Conférence missionnaire 1948, renforcée en 1954 nous le montre. « L’usage de ‘bibandi et bisasa’ devenu populaire et plus frénétique, la Conférence a décidé de l’interdire dans nos paroisses...L’emploi des instruments européens a pris place ».

Il sied de signaler que ce problème a été débattu pendant plusieurs années au sein de l’église.

La commission synodale en charge de cette question a demandé au Séminaire de s’occuper de l’expérimentation de l’utilisation des instruments de musique en ces termes: « La commission charge le Séminaire de Ngouédi d’expérimenter certains instruments congolais, afin d’en proposer ceux que l’on pourrait utiliser dans les cultes. » C’est donc à partir de ce moment que la vision a commencé de changer, concernant l’utilisation des instruments congolais de musique.

Le Séminaire a joué un grand rôle dans la réflexion concernant certaines questions de l’Eglise et même celles de la Société. Sur le plan linguistique, le Séminaire a valorisé les langues africaines. Notons à cet effet que chaque numéro de la revue était trilingue. L’impact du travail produit par le Séminaire de Ngouédi est résumé par le Directeur Hilaire NKOUNKOU en ces termes: « ...Ngouédi a joué son rôle dans la vie de l’Eglise comme dans la Société congolaise. Devant les autres Écoles de même envergure, Ngouédi n’a pas fléchi le cou: la formation théologique qu’il a donnée n’a pas pratiquement parlant manqué d’échos. De même dans la formation des Moniteurs, des Instituteurs ou Institutrices.Ngouédi s’est placé parmi les meilleures écoles. »20


Au Séminaire de Ngouédi, on inculquait la notion du développement aux séminaristes. Le travail manuel était valorisé. Tous les ressortissants de Ngouédi sont unanimes sur la reconnaissance qu’ils doivent au Séminaire sur ce point. La paresse n’était pas tolérée. On exigeait le travail bien fait. Cela a eu une répercussion dans les lieux d’affectation des finalistes. En effet, le pasteur était un exemple suivi par les fidèles. Ces derniers venaient au siège de la paroisse pour le bien spirituel, mais ils étaient là aussi pour apprendre d’autres valeurs vitales.

Dans le rapport de la Conférence Mondiale Eglise et Société de Genève 1966, on peut lire entre autres: « Dans un monde en transformation, les chrétiens sont appelés à témoigner de leur foi en Jésus. Ils sont appelés à témoigner sur le plan individuel, personnel, et à manifester par des actes, au niveau de la société, qu’ils sont responsables de la vie de leurs frères. »21

En effet, en tant que sel de la terre et lumière du monde, peut-on imaginer que cela soit autrement ? Il faut quand même penser que le travail est fait au lieu de formation. Dans ce même rapport du Conseil œcuménique, on peut noter ce qui suit: « C’est dans le domaine de l’éducation que les églises peuvent jouer le rôle le plus important par rapport au problème du développement économique en général.... L’enseignement théologique doit faire apparaître le lien qui unit la foi chrétienne et l’éthique aux problèmes économiques ainsi que cela ressort de ce rapport. »22

L’Eglise Evangélique du Congo, en tant que membre du Conseil œcuménique des Eglises ne pouvait ne pas prendre ces orientations au sérieux. C’est au niveau du Séminaire théologique de Ngouédi que cela dût influencer les programmes de formation afin d’atteindre la base. Le Séminaire est un puissant instrument

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3.2.2 PÉRIODE DE 1971 À 1995: LE SÉMINAIRE THÉOLOGIQUE À MANSIMOU/BRAZZAVILLE.

Une colline située entre le Djoué, une grande rivière et le fleuve Congo, le deuxième fleuve du monde, abritera désormais le Séminaire théologique, c’est le Séminaire théologique de Mansimou. La vue y est très belle. De là, on aperçoit le fleuve Congo dont entend d’ailleurs le mugissement, surtout la nuit. Au-delà du fleuve Congo se trouve Kinshasa, la Capitale de la République Démocratique du Congo, longtemps appelée Zaïre.

Le Directeur Hilaire NKOUNKOU sera le leader charismatique qui aura conduit pendant longtemps la vie de cette institution. Evidemment, après lui, viendront les Pasteurs Raymond BUANA KIBONGI, Paul NGUIMBI, Fidèle LOUBELO et Joseph SITA.

Le Séminaire théologique a continué d’avoir des enseignants étrangers, suédois et français surtout. La coopération internationale a beaucoup participé dans la formation des serviteurs de Dieu. Notons que les étudiants sont venus aussi, par moment, du Zaïre, actuelle RDC, et de l’Angola, pour ne citer que ces pays. Les relations internationales du Séminaire théologique de Mansimou ont existé de tout temps, pour une école fondée par la mission.

Alors, il convient d’affirmer que, sur le plan international, il y a eu un apport, quoique pas spectaculaire. Nous avons dit plus haut que les directeurs africains avaient été formés à l’étranger. Certes, ce contact avec les autres a beaucoup apporté aux étudiants congolais, mais aux dires des ceux-ci, ils ont apporté quelque chose aux milieux d’accueil. L’un d’entre eux a raconté une histoire : lorsqu’il est arrivé dans son internat, les étudiants, pour la plupart n’avaient pas d’outil informatique, d’ailleurs, nombreux d’entre eux n’avaient jamais utilisé l’ordinateur. Cependant, le congolais avait son portatif qu’il emmenait à l’université pour la prise de notes. Il l’avait à la bibliothèque pour relever directement le résultat de ses recherches. Plus d’un collègue était émerveillé ; Avant deux mois depuis son arrivée, il a été décidé d’organiser des cours d’informatique sur le campus en faveur des étudiants. Le matériel était acheté, une salle était bien aménagée. Faisant ce constat, le congolais s’était bien demandé si son matériel informatique n’avait pas influencé la décision de l’organisation de cette formation en informatique. Ici, il convient de noter qu’à partir de 1987, le séminaire a eu des docteurs à sa tête. Ainsi, du coup, le problème de niveau de formation s’est posé. Pourtant, c’est dans cette période qu’on a senti le besoin de former des pasteurs d’un cours abrégé, question de combler certains vides. Même si on a constaté quelque rares pasteurs de ces cours abrégés qui ont émergé, la faiblesse de cette expérience a été notable.

Les relations avec la Faculté de théologie Protestante de Yaoundé se sont intensifiées. Le Directeur a participé annuellement au Conseil d’Administration de cette dernière.

L’Asthéol, Association des institutions bibliques et théologiques de l’Afrique francophone a été intégré par le Séminaire de Mansimou. Beaucoup de rencontres ont été tenues à Yaoundé. Notons qu’il y a eu aussi le pôle de Bangui. La Faculté de théologie Evangélique de Bangui a organisé beaucoup de rencontres des écoles bibliques et des facultés de théologie évangéliques. Le Séminaire théologique de Mansimou, a beaucoup participé à ces rencontres à travers son directeur qui était toujours invité dès 1995. Les assises ont eu lieu à Bangui (République Centrafricaine), Lomé (République du Togo), Bouaké (République de Côte d’Ivoire). Le partage sur le plan international a produit un enrichissement mutuel Sud-Sud. On est arrivé jusqu’à produire ce que nous avons appelé un « Programme Minimum Commun(PMC).

L’Asthéol qui est dirigé par l’Université Protestante au Congo, a aussi donné au Séminaire théologique de Mansimou un lieu de réflexion et de renforcement de capacité mutuel. Des séminaires portant sur le VIH/SIDA par exemple ont été organisés. Les échanges d’expériences ont profité à toutes les institutions.

Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
Dès 1995, le Directeur financier de l’Université Protestante au Congo en la personne de Monsieur NGOUALA Rey a donné un Conseil au Directeur du Séminaire de Mansimou: « Il vous sera profitable d’ouvrir d’autres filières pour assurer la survie de la Faculté de théologie ». A cette période, la Faculté de théologie Protestante de Yaoundé qui a permis le développement de certaines institutions gravitant autour d’elle a donné la possibilité de leur transformation en Instituts de théologie. Le Dr Paul NGUIMBI a beaucoup travaillé dans ce sens, mais l’institut n’a pas vu le jour en son temps. On peut se permettre de dire que pendant cette période, on a géré la routine.

3.2.3 PÉRIODE DE 1995 À 1998: LE SÉMINAIRE THÉOLOGIQUE À MANSIMOU/BRAZZAVILLE.


Dans le livre ‘Collaboration en des temps nouveaux’, dans le cadre de la réflexion portant sur la formation il est dit entre autre: «...le Séminaire théologique ou l’institut Pluridisciplinaire et le Département de l’Education chrétienne pourront les systematiser….En attendant la création de l’Institut Pluridisciplinaire, le Séminaire Théologique pourra organiser des cours de recyclage ou de perfectionnement des cadres paroissiaux et consistoriaux…. »

Ici, on peut noter la mention de l’Institut Pluridisciplinaire qui, en fait, cache l’idée de l’Université dont on va encore parler. La vérité est que cet Institut n’a jamais vu le jour. Les recyclages en faveur des pasteurs ont été organisés par le Séminaire Théologique.

« Au premier regard, la création de l’Institut Pluridisciplinaire au sein de l’EEC paraît un luxe quand on observe l’importance numérique de cette communauté et les moyens financiers dont elle dispose. La nouvelle orientation de la Faculté théologique de Yaoundé, à laquelle est associée l’EEC, que cette institution ne recevra plus à terme que des candidats s’inscrivant pour le troisième cycle universitaire d’une part et d’autre part la situation géographique de la République du Congo et de Brazzaville dans la configuration historique de l’Afrique centrale, militent en faveur de l’implantation d’un tel établissement. »

A côté de ce projet concernant l’Institut Pluridisciplinaire, on a aussi pensé à la création d’un Centre Polytechnique. Dans tout cela, on sait que la première institution d’enseignement bien organisée et nantie d’une longue expérience était le Séminaire Théologique. Dans la réflexion qui a donné comme fruit le livre « Collaboration en des temps nouveaux » il y a eu beaucoup d’enseignants du Séminaire Théologique.

Dans cette période, dès Octobre 1995, on a commencé à parler d’une vision ayant deux axes:

• Faire du Séminaire un lieu où l’on forme des Serviteurs de Dieu qui soient en même temps des agents de développement: La Bible dans une main, et un outil de travail manuel dans l’autre main.


Pour matérialiser cette vision, le Séminaire a initié un projet intitulé: « Unité agro-pastorale à caractère pédagogique ». Sachant que, plus de 80% des finalistes vont en milieu rural, et sachant qu’ils sont une référence, cette initiative a voulu les outiller pour mieux influencer positivement les membres des communautés ecclésiales et par conséquence, toucher la Société. Dans le cadre de l’Unité agro pastorale à caractère pédagogique, le Séminaire Théologique a fait le maraîchage ; il a planté 200 palmiers en bordures des allées. Ici, il y a eu à lier l’utile à l’agréable. En effet, cela a rendu la concession très belle, mais en

24 Collectif, Collaboration en des temps nouveaux, op. cit., 1994, 76.
25 Collectif, Collaboration en des temps nouveaux, ibid.
apportant aussi un plus à l’environnement. Dans le cadre de ce même projet, des arbres fruitiers, 150 plants environ ont été plantés. Notons aussi que, 5.000 dragéons d’ananas ont été plantés. L’Ambassade des Etats-Unis a apprécié positivement ce projet ; elle nous a appuyés financièrement.

Par ailleurs, il convient de noter un fait banal : juste après la guerre de 1993, après le départ des missionnaires de la colline de Mansimou du fait des problèmes sociopolitiques, il n’y avait plus des fleurs dans la concession du Séminaire, et même dans le quartier environnant. En octobre 1995, lorsqu’une opération d’embellissement de la concession du Séminaire Théologique a été lancée en plantant des fleurs, combien n’étions nous pas heureux de voir que les étudiants ont recommencé à fleurir leurs cours ; dans le quartier, on a aussi constaté que les gens reprenaient avec le planting des fleurs. Signalons que c’est entre autres, l’impact de cette activité qui a convaincu les autorités du Séminaire Théologique sur son rôle dans l’Eglise et dans la société. Les étudiants ont vu tout cela et sont allés faire ce qu’ils ont vu dans leurs lieux d’affectation. Certains sont allés faire des palmeraies, et d’autres ont développé même les activités de l’élevage etc.

L’idée de la création de l’Institut a préoccupé le Séminaire. En même temps, les relations avec les autres institutions sœurs se sont intensifiées. Il y a eu une forte participation aux rencontres internationales. Le partage d’expérience et d’idée a continué. Une guerre civile a, une fois de plus, secoué le Congo Brazzaville. Les dégâts ont été très importants. Monsieur Gabriel NGANGA NZONZI, l’a exprimé en ces termes: « Le Congo est détruit dans toutes ses dimensions. Les ecclésiastiques qui ont un contact quasi permanent avec bon nombre de Congolais, le savent mieux que quiconque. Ils doivent donc mesurer leur responsabilité d’éveilleurs de conscience tant individuelle que collective, cela sous tous les angles de la vie ».26

On va donc, après les événements, chercher les voies et moyens pour refaire le pays sur tous les plans. Le Séminaire Théologique va organiser une Semaine Interdisciplinaire avec un thème portant sur la reconstruction. Ouverte au grand public, ce haut moment a connu un grand succès. Comme si cela ne suffisait pas, ensemble avec SUECO, une structure de formation et d’information de l’Eglise Evangélique du Congo, le Séminaire Théologique de Mansimou a organisé une formation décentralisée des leaders dans quatre lieux différents (Pointe-Noire, Dolisie, Gamboma et Brazzaville) pour toucher tout le Congo et participer ainsi à la réparation du tissu social qui s’était profondément détérioré. La clôture de ces sessions est intervenue le 24 mai 1998.27 A l’issue de ces conférences un livre a été publié: « La reconstruction du Congo, un défi pour l’Eglise Evangélique du Congo ».


L’idée de la création d’un Institut va finir par céder la place à celle de l’ouverture de la Faculté de Théologie Protestant de Brazzaville. Cette création aura beaucoup de raisons. En effet, jusque là, les cadres supérieurs travaillant dans l’EEC ont été formés à l’étranger. Pour de raisons financières, l’Eglise Evangélique du Congo n’a pas pu former beaucoup de licenciés en théologie.

3.3 De la FTPB à l’ouverture de l’Université Protestantte de Brazzaville: 1998-2012
Dans cette période, nous allons distinguer deux moments:

- 1998-2004
- 2004-2012

27 Collectif, La reconstruction du Congo, un défi pour l’Eglise Evangélique du Congo, op.cit., 123.
3.3.1 LA PÉRIODE 1998-2004.

La création de la Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Brazzaville a entraîné une intensification dans les relations internationales de la FTPB Nord-Sud et Sud-Sud. Dès octobre 1998, on a commencé à recevoir des professeurs venant d’Europe et ceux arrivant des pays voisins. En effet, la Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Brazzaville a ouvert ses portes avec un seul Professeur titulaire de chaire permanent, c’était le Doyen. Ce soutien a été renforcé par l’Université Protestante au Congo qui nous a envoyé régulièrement des professeurs ; cette dernière a cédé un de ses professeurs à la jeune Faculté pendant quelques années ; il s’agit du Professeur ZOLA MU LULENGO LUA NZAMBI.

Avec l’ouverture de la Faculté de théologie, les autres communautés ecclésiales ont commencé à y envoyer leurs pasteurs pour la formation théologique universitaire.


Les Semaines Interdisciplinaires et d’autres séminaires ont reconnu l’organisation, la Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Brazzaville.

Dans le cadre de l’œcuménisme, la Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Brazzaville a initié l’organisation des week end œcuméniques. A ces occasions, les institutions de formation théologiques Catholique, Salutiste et la FTPB développent des thèmes d’intérêt évident pour la société. Après le lancement du DEA décentralisé, le projet de l’Université qui a été débattu depuis des années a été adopté par le Synode de l’Eglise Evangélique du Congo de 2004. Dès ce temps, il s’ouvrit le temps de l’étude du projet pour l’ouverture de l’Université Protestante de Brazzaville.

3.3.2 LA PÉRIODE DE 2004-2012.

Après le synode, le Conseil synodal a donné des orientations pour la mise en marche de l’Université Protestantte de Brazzaville. C’est en 2008 que le document quasi exhaustif des textes fondamentaux de ladite Université a été adopté. Pendant ce temps d’attente d’ouverture effective de l’Université, en partenariat avec l’organisme Américain « Development Associate International » (DAI), un cycle de Master en Leadership Organisationnel et Management (MLOM) a été lancé.

3.3.3 L’OUVERTURE DE L’INSTITUT D’AGRONOMIE

On se rappellera qu’au temps du Séminaire théologique, on a eu un projet intitulé « Unité agropastorale à caractère pédagogique ». Cette activité avait comme objectif de préparer la création d’un Institut d’agronomie ; cela allant aussi dans l’idée de la création d’un Institut pluridisciplinaire évoquée dans « Collaboration dans des temps nouveaux ». Ainsi, sans précipitation, on peut parler avec assurance de l’Université Protestantte de Brazzaville.

L’impact de la Faculté de Théologie Protestantte de Brazzaville peut se constater à travers plusieurs faits, mais nous relevons particulièrement la participation officielle du Doyen de la FTPB à la Session inaugurale de l’Enseignement Supérieur au Congo. La présentation du Doyen a été suivie avec attention par le Ministre de l’Enseignement Supérieur, au point où il lui a envoyé une lettre de félicitation. Ceci a été une façon de reconnaître l’apport de la FTPB sur le plan national. Il convient de signaler qu’à l’occasion de chaque rentrée solennelle, le Ministère de l’Enseignement Supérieur est invité. Le Ministre ou son représentant a toujours exprimé l’attention de l’Etat vers la FTPB, vu son apport à la Société.
En conclusion, nous rendons infiniment grâce à Dieu qui a donné cette institution qui vient de loin, et qui trouve aujourd’hui une raison d’être dans le protestantisme congolais, et dans l’Église Evangélique du Congo d’une part, et qui a marqué tant soit peu la Société d’autre part. À cette occasion, nous présentons nos hommages à tous ceux qui ont conduit cette école, depuis sa création jusqu’à ce jour, mais nous restons aussi très reconnaissants aux décideurs de l’Église Evangélique du Congo qui, du temps de la mission à l’Église autonome, ont accepté l’élan de développement de cette maison de formation théologique. En attendant un travail plus approfondi sur ce long parcours de 84 ans, nous réitérons notre gratitude à Dieu à qui seul soit l’honneur et la gloire.

4. L’ Université Protestante de l’Afrique de l’Ouest (UPAO) – Campus de Porto-Novo (République du Bénin)

(Timothée A. GANDONOU, Directeur des Services Académiques UPAO)
La formation des cadres de l’Église a été la préoccupation majeure de la MISSION METHODISTE WESLEYIENNE dès ses premiers pas au Dahomey (actuelle République du Bénin). La biographie de l’institution de formation qui a connu sa dernière mutation en 2003 pour devenir l’Université Protestante de l’Afrique de l’Ouest (UPAO) est très longue.

4.1 Les dates repères

4.1.1 DE 1920 À 2002
En Novembre 1920 une structure de formation a été créée à Porto-Novo au quartier Adjarra Docodji. Baptisée <<École Catéchétique>>, elle est destinée à la formation des élèves catéchistes. Ces catéchistes ont pour tâche, d’aider les pasteurs dans leur mission. La direction de cette école était confiée au pasteur David LOKO. En dehors des études portant sur la Bible, un atelier de menuiserie a été ouvert dans le but de stimuler chez les apprenants un intérêt pour le travail manuel.


Mais en dehors des Églises citées, l’École est restée ouverte, à toutes les dénominations qui se retrouvaient dans son orientation. La formation théologique s’arrêtait au niveau baccalauréat en Théologie. Pour la formation supérieure, il fallait remonter au Cameroun ou en Europe (surtout en France). L’accès à cette formation supérieure était à l’époque conditionné par la réussite du candidat à un Examen Spécial organisé chaque année par les autorités académiques de la Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Yaoundé au

Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
Cameroun. Ladite Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Yaoundé commençant à être engorgée, son Doyen d’alors le Révérend Docteur Michael BAME BAME adressa le 17 octobre 1989 une lettre d’invitation aux chefs d’Églises et Responsables d’Institution de Formation pour réfléchir sur la situation.


4.1.2 DE 2002 À 2012
En août 2002, les responsables des églises et des institutions de formation théologique réunis à la Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Yaoundé au Cameroun décidèrent de la création de trois universités protestantes: une (01) à Porto-Novo au Bénin, une (01) à Yaoundé au Cameroun et une (01) à Butaré au Rwanda.

Le 17 novembre 2003 à Lomé, les responsables des églises fondatrices ont décidé d’ériger l’Institut Protestant de Théologie de Porto-Novo en Université Protestant de l’Afrique de l’Ouest (UPAO). En effet, presque toutes les Églises ont des écoles et collèges confessionnels et suivent les élèves de ces établissements jusqu’à l’obtention du baccalauréat. Les Églises ont pensé que leur responsabilité dans le cursus académique des chrétiens ne doit pas s’arrêter au niveau du secondaire. C’est la raison fondamentale qui justifie la création de ces trois Universités. Une autre raison qui n’était pas clairement exprimée et qui avait déjà trouvé sa solution par la création des différents Instituts de formation théologique était le désengorgement de la Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Yaoundé, devenue aujourd’hui: Université Protestant de l’Afrique Centrale (UPAC).


L’UPAO a solennellement ouvert ses portes le 05 octobre 2004 à Porto-Novo qui en est le siège.


Toute cette référence à l’histoire de l’UPAO permet d’affirmer que nous avons affaire à un vieux site. C’est d’ailleurs pourquoi l’Institution est classée parmi les patrimoines de l’UNESCO.

4.2 L’UPAO, ses filières, ses étudiants, ses enseignants

4.2.1 LES FILIÈRES
L’UPAO héberge actuellement quatre (04) filières
- Comptabilité Gestion,
- Management des Ressources Humaines,

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Sciences de l'Education,
Faculté de Théologie et des Sciences Religieuses.

Le projet de création d’autres filières comme Banque et Finance, Informatique de Gestion pour l’année académique 2011-2012 a été validé par le Conseil d’Administration.


Elle est en partenariat depuis deux ans, avec le Réseau Ecole et Développement (RED) dont le siège est à Abidjan (République de Côte d’Ivoire) pour la formation des Conseillers Pédagogiques (CP) de certaines écoles confessionnelles du Cameroun, de la Côte d’Ivoire, de la Centrafrique, du Togo et du Bénin.

4.2.2 LA PROVENANCE DES ÉTUDIANTS DES ORIGINES À NOS JOURS

L’accent était mis ici sur les étudiants de la Faculté de Théologie et des Sciences Religieuses. Depuis l’ouverture de l’« École Pastorale Évangélique » en date du 05 Octobre 1962 jusqu’à nos jours, Porto-Novo a accueilli les candidats venus de plusieurs Églises.28

Les étudiants de la Faculté de Théologie sont presque toujours envoyés par les Églises membres de l’UPAO qui prennent entièrement en charge la formation de ceux-ci, soit sur fonds propres, soit avec l’aide des partenaires ecuméniques par l’octroi des bourses d’étude. Il arrive donc que par manque de moyens propres et à l’absence de bourse d’étude, les Églises ont d’énormes difficultés à envoyer des candidats en formation.

Ces dernières années, quelques pasteurs d’autres Églises du Bénin (Évangéliques, Assemblées de Dieu, Méthodiste Africaine Elédja) viennent discrètement se faire formés à leur propre frais. Ces derniers ne sont pas officiellement autorisés par leurs églises qui ont leurs propres Ecoles de formation pastorale. Mais grâce à la qualité de la formation reçue et selon les témoignages des candidats déjà formés, un travail est en train d’être fait au niveau des autorités afin qu’à défaut de payer les frais de formation des candidats, on puisse les autoriser de façon officielle à se faire former à l’UPAO.


Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
Depuis sa création, en 2003, l’UPAO, a accueilli et accueille dans les filières non théologiques les étudiants de toutes les confessions religieuses (Protestants Méthodistes, Evangéliques, Catholiques, Musulmans, Christianistes Célestes et adeptes de la Religion du terroir) et de certaines institutions comme la Mairie de Porto-Nov, le Ministère de l’Enseignement Maternel et Primaire, le CAEB, la radio Ave Maria d’Allada, etc.

L’UPAO est un centre de formation et de recherche scientifique ouvert à toutes les sensibilités religieuses. Il n’y a aucune discrimination sous quelque forme que ce soit. Elle a maintenu son caractère international, ecuménique et interconfessionnel.


L’étudiant dont le dossier est accepté à l’UPAO peut, s’il le veut, louer une cabine d’étudiant dans l’enceinte de l’Institution selon les dispositions prévues à cet effet.

Le centre de formation dispose d’une bibliothèque universitaire équipée dans laquelle les étudiants de toutes les filières (qu’ils soient internes ou externes à l’UPAO) peuvent faire leur recherche en toute liberté, mais en respectant le règlement intérieur de cette bibliothèque.

L’étudiant admis à l’UPAO n’est pas seulement soumis aux activités intellectuelles. Il y a également les activités sportives. Le sport préféré à l’UPAO est le volley-ball. Un professeur de sport intervient tous les mardis et vendredis pour coordonner cette activité. L’équipe de volley-ball de l’UPAO a participé à plusieurs championnats départementaux et nationaux.

Un Bureau Exécutif des étudiants est élu chaque année pour gérer les affaires courantes au sein des étudiants et au besoin les porter devant l’Administration de l’UPAO. Il sert de courroie de transmission entre les étudiants et l’administration.

4.2.3 LA FORMATION FÉMININE

4.2.4 LES DIPLOôMES DÉLIVRÉS

4.2.5 LES ENSEIGNANTS
La Faculté de Théologie et des Sciences Religieuses de Porto-Nov bénéficient des services de cinq (05) docteurs en Théologie et de trois doctorants dont les soutenances auront lieu en 2012 et 2013. Parmi ceux-ci nous comptons actuellement trois (03) permanents. Ils interviennent en Hébreu et Grec biblique, en
Ancien et Nouveau Testament, en Théologie Pratique et en Histoire du Christianisme. La Faculté bénéficie également des services de certains pasteurs de paroisse qui après leur maîtrise en théologie ont fait des formations complémentaires dans d’autres domaines comme la musicologie, la communication, la diplomatie, etc.

Elle a reçu et continue de recevoir des professeurs visitateurs qui viennent du Togo, de la Côte d’Ivoire, de la France, de la Suisse et de la Grande Bretagne, pour les disciplines telles que: la Missiologie, l’Islamologie, la Sociologie des Religions, le Nouveau Testament, le Développement Holistique, la Psychodynamique et le Psychodrame. Ces cours durent au maximum une (01) à deux (02) semaines et sont pris financièrement en charge par les partenaires œcuméniques.

Les professeurs des filières non théologiques dans leur grande majorité, viennent des Universités publiques et privées de la République du Bénin et sont tous titulaires au minimum d’un DEA ou d’un DESS. Chaque filière a un professeur responsable non permanent et employé à titre bénévole. Certains de ces professeurs interviennent au niveau de la Faculté de Théologie et des Sciences Religieuses dans des matières comme la Psychologie, les Religions Africaines, la Philosophie, l’Anglais, la Technique d’Expression Ecrite et Orale, le Management Général, la Sociologie, la Méthodologie, etc.

4.2.6 L’ADMINISTRATION DE L’UPAO ET LES ACTIVITÉS SPIRITUELLES ET CULTURELLES

- L’administration


En dehors du CA, il y a des directions notamment: le Rectorat, la Direction des Services Académiques, la Direction des Affaires Administratives et financières et la Bibliothèque. La bibliothèque compte 6064 monographies dont une dizaine de périodiques et environ 310 titres de mémoires. Des efforts restent à faire en matière d’acquisition de nouveaux ouvrages.

- La vie spirituelle et culturelle

Un comité de vie spirituel s’occupe des activités telles que: les prières matinales et intercession, les cultes hebdomadaires et dominicaux et certaines célébrations spéciales comme les mariages et anniversaires.

Une retraite spirituelle de deux à trois jours a lieu chaque année autour d’un thème qui est abordé sous un angle pluridisciplinaire. Elle regroupe les enseignants et les étudiants de la filière Théologie et Sciences Religieuses.

Une journée œcuménique entre les Grands Séminaires (Saint Gall de Ouidah et Monseigneur Parisot de Tchanvèdji) de l’Eglise Catholique Romaine et la Faculté de Théologie et Sciences Religieuses de l’UPAO a lieu chaque année de façon rotative. Chaque journée est placée sous un thème développé par les comités des trois institutions. Ce thème travaillé est mis en plaquette par un comité dit œcuménique. Ladite plaquette est déposée dans les bibliothèques de ces institutions et peuvent être consultées lors des travaux de recherches. Une semaine interdisciplinaire est organisée chaque année. Le thème pour l’année 2011-2012 est « Leadership féminin et VIH et SIDA au 21ème siècle ».

4.3 La vie à l’UPAO

Au début de chaque année, une commission académique se réunit pour étudier le dossier des nouveaux étudiants. La commission rencontre par la suite chaque étudiant et l’informe de ses forces et faiblesses. Il est encouragé à faire des efforts supplémentaires pour la transformation de ces faiblesses en force.

Une rencontre est enfin organiser avec tous les étudiants autour d’un document intitulé: Modus Vivendi. Ce document est en réalité le règlement intérieur de l’UPAO. Il met surtout l’accent sur la vie en communauté dans l’institution. Toute vie en communauté a des avantages et des contraintes. Les étudiants sont inscrits à l’UPAO pour acquérir une formation choisie par eux-mêmes ou la structure à laquelle ils
appartiennent. Le modus vivendi insiste sur le fait qu’un comportement irréprochable est indispensable non seulement pour un succès dans un travail sérieux, mais aussi pour le cadre dans lequel ils sont venus se former. Le modus vivendi a donc pour but d’assurer sur le campus un ordre matériel et propice aux études. Il précise les modalités de la vie sur le campus et il est demandé aux enseignants, aux étudiants et au personnel en service de les observer pour que soit assuré le bon déroulement des activités pédagogiques. Les étudiants en théologie sont dans leur majorité logés sur le campus.

4. 4 Relations avec les organismes partenaires
En dehors des Eglises membres, l’UPAO entretient de très bonnes relations avec les organismes œcuméniques.29

4. 5 Défis à relever
Les défis de l’UPAO en général et de la Faculté de Théologie et des Sciences Religieuses en particulier sont ceux de toute institution.

PAR LES EGLISES FONDATRICES
• Avoir de la volonté politique, c’est-à-dire éviter de démissionner devant le Seigneur en ce qui concerne l’œuvre prophétique de la formation du peuple de Dieu qui leur a été confiée. Il s’agit pour elles de rechercher l’unité autour de cette institution de formation qui leur est commune.
• Envoyer régulièrement les étudiants en théologie pour la survie de l’institution qu’est la Faculté de Théologie et des Sciences Religieuses.

PAR L’UPAO
• Se faire connaître au public béninois et surtout aux autres Eglises pour l’inscription d’un nombre plus élevé d’étudiants en théologie et dans les autres filières, car un effectif élevé permettra d’améliorer le confort financier de l’institution.
• Renforcer le partenariat - gagnant gagnant - avec la Mairie de la ville de Porto-Novo dans son programme de prise en charge de la formation des meilleurs bacheliers de la Capitale.
• Elargir ce partenariat aux autres Conseils Municipaux des Départements de l’Ouémé et du Plateau.
• Entrer dans la logique du Master après la formation effective de tous les enseignants de l’UPAO.
• Poursuivre les préparatifs afin de faire admettre l’UPAO au Conseil Africain et Malgache de l’Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES).
• Trouver des fonds pour la construction des deux niveaux des nouvelles salles de classes, la réfection des anciennes salles de cours qui sont dans un état de délabrement et l’exploitation du domaine se trouvant le long de la clôture de l’institution.
• Rendre l’infirmerie opérationnelle par les travaux de finition et d’équipement pour une amélioration des recettes de l’UPAO.

La Liste des premiers responsables (Directeurs ou Recteurs et Président du Conseil d’Administration) de 1964 à nos jours et la source de cet article30 disponible.31

29 le World Church Relationship (WCR) basé en Grande Bretagne, la Communauté d’Eglises en Mission (Cevaa) à Montpellier en France, le DM Echange et Mission à Lausanne en Suisse, le Defap à Paris en France, le Conseil Œcuménique des Eglises (COE), Ecumenical HIV Aids Initiative for Africa (EHAIA) et le WARC à Genève en Suisse, l’Alliance Biblique du Bénin.


Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE

Luciano Chianeque

Introduction

Angola is located on the western Atlantic Coast of southern Africa between Namibia and the Republic of the Congo. It also is bordered in the North East by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the East by Zambia and to the South by the Republic of Namibia. The country consists of a sparsely watered and somewhat sterile coastal plain extending inland for a distance varying from 30 to 100 miles (48 to 160 km). Slightly inland and parallel to the coast is a belt of hills and mountains and behind those a large plateau.

Mozambique lies beside the Indian Ocean in Southern Africa. On its borders lie South Africa and Zimbabwe in the South, and Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania in the North. Heading inland, the land rises and high plateau and mountains run along the western and northern borders. Mozambique has a tropical climate, which is hot and humid. The wet season is from November to March, when about 80 per cent of the annual rainfall is taking place.

Angola and Mozambique were both colonies of Portugal which colonized them for over 500 years. They adopted Portuguese as their official language although other Bantu languages are still spoken. Both countries are members of SADEC, the Southern African Development Community,1 the African Union2, the Community of Portuguese speaking African Countries3 as well as the United Nations. In both countries there are experiences with other faiths, but the majority of their populations are Christian.

This does not mean that traditional African religions or practices have completely disappeared. On the contrary, in both countries there are still strong links to African roots, beliefs and rituals. Christianity came to Angola and Mozambique as a result of colonization. Portugal had a special Concordat with the Holy See regarding the evangelization of other nations. Thus, in their search for the proper travel route to India from which spices were transported via many coastal lands of Africa, Angola and Mozambique developed strategic importance for the Portuguese colonial powers.

Political Situation after Independence

In Mozambique the combination of political upheavals which followed its independence from Portugal in 1975, as well as natural disasters such as severe droughts, devastating cyclones and floods, have made it one of the world's poorest countries. Mozambique still remains dependent on international financial backing. Its large cities have high rates of violence and crime, and the majority of the population suffers from poverty, malnutrition, disease, hunger and high rates of illiteracy. Mozambicans have one of the world’s lowest average life expectancies.

In Angola the process of independence created three guerilla movements, the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA.4 In 1975, before the official Portuguese withdrawal, the civil war intensified fighting for control of the capital city, Luanda. The MPLA5 succeeded in driving out both its rivals. UNITA, which claimed to

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1 http://www.sadc.int/.
2 http://www.au.int/en/.
enjoy wider popular support than the other groups, argued that Portugal must fulfill its last colonial duty and supervise elections. But there were foreign interests in Angola.

The conflict in Angola thus became an extension of the Cold War. The United States sent funds to UNITA and encouraged South African involvement. The USSR provided similar support to the MPLA, while President Fidel de Castro was eager to spread communism in Africa and therefore sent large contingents of Cuban troops to Angola. As early as November 1975 South African and Cuban troops clashed in a battle at Ebo, where the victory at this occasion went decisively to the Cubans.

The elections duly took place in 1992 with the result that the MPLA has pushed UNITA into the second place of the political power struggle. Savimbi refused to accept this result. Unfortunately civil war broke out again, even more violently than before. During two years of fighting, it is calculated that some two million people were driven away from their homes. Over 20 million land mines were planted by the warring factions endangering thousands of children and rural agricultural workers. In November 1994, under UN mediation in Lusaka, a somewhat shaky peace was agreed on. It involved the gradual demobilization of UNITA's forces and the participation of UNITA in the government as a political party with Savimbi as vice-president of the nation. But fighting stopped in Angola only when Savimbi died in a battle in 2002.

No country in the world has had such a continuously appalling start to independence as Angola, which has the potential to be so prosperous from its natural resources but at the same time suffering from lethal self-inflicted wounds.

**Creation of Theological Institutions**

In Mozambique the United Seminary of Ricatla is an ecumenical theological institution in Maputo, Mozambique’s capital. It was founded in 1958 by a group of Protestant churches committed to creating a school where ministers can receive cross-denominational training in an ecumenical setting. For many years, the school was not recognized by the government, but it has now become an accredited institution. Students study the Bible, theology, history, and pastoral care, as well as agricultural development, preparing them to serve the spiritual and physical needs of communities, both urban and rural.

The United Seminary of Ricatla has seven member churches – United Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, Presbyterian, Evangelical Church of Christ, the United Congregational Church of Mozambique, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa – Mozambique Synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

In Angola the Evangelical Congregational Church, the country's largest Protestant denomination (founded by the United Church of Canada and the United Church of Christ, 1880), founded Emmanuel Seminary of Dondi in the Dondi’s mission station in 1941. Later in 1957 the United Methodist Church in Angola joined the Congregational Church in her efforts for training theologians. Thus the name of the seminary changed to become the United Emmanuel Seminary of Huambo, (a united theological school in Dondi in the town of Kachiungo, in Huambo Province). In 1975, when independence was gained from repressive Portuguese control, the number of United Methodist students increased five-fold in comparison with previous year. Since then the number of women students enrolled has also increased and several have subsequently been ordained as pastors. There are also some courses for pastors’ wives. In 1977 the Evangelical Reformed Church of Angola joined the United Emmanuel Seminary.

The seminary has an excellent department of Christian education, which instructs students in organizing Sunday schools and trains Sunday school teachers throughout the area.

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6 Jonas Malheiro Savimbi (August 3, 1934 – February 22, 2002) was an Angolan political leader. He founded and led UNITA.

**Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa**
There was a strong movement towards unity and ecumenical cooperation among the church leaders committed to strengthening the Seminary. Today the seminary unfortunately is a dying monument, as it has been handed to the Angolan National Council of Churches. Its staff is demotivated and without students. Its founders have created their own (denominational) theological institutions. Thus ecumenism in Angola is in danger.

**New Paradigm for Theological Education**

Firstly, Angola is currently experiencing an exciting moment of its history, which in a similar manner was experienced by Mozambique after the end of war. This end of war is bringing both opportunities and challenges for church leaders.

During the colonial period the main Protestant churches were simply tolerated by the Portuguese authorities, as most were from America and the United Kingdom. The only church supported by the Portuguese authorities, therefore, was the Roman Catholic Church. This has been a moment of transition. To those church leaders that identify themselves with the government, the government is offering a variety of incentives. Thus the “poor churches are fighting each other” for power recognition and leaving behind the key responsibilities of what it means to stand together as the church of Jesus Christ. It is getting even worse as the third general elections are just around the corner (in the case of Angola). In the meantime the Roman Catholic Church is slowly regaining its previous position.

Secondly, we know that Protestantism is the result of missionary efforts made by people from the northern hemisphere who accepted the challenge to come to the unknown with different set ups and mindsets. In the Lusophone context, therefore, we have a type of Christianity that was in a way imposed on the local populations, as acceptance of Catholic faith was going hand in hand with enforced acceptance of colonialism.

Thirdly, one can also find a striking distance in terms of educational levels between church leaders and those they have to lead. In practical terms, there is a need to update the theological discourse as the two countries are being invaded by Pentecostalism or neo-Pentecostalism theologies which are highly regarding miracles and the so-called Gospel of Posterity. These approaches need a strong theological reflection regarding how theologians (in the so-called mainline churches) do theology. Angola, for instance, is a very rich country with plentiful resources, but her populations are very poor, while Mozambique is on the way to starting to explore her wealth. Here the author sees that there should be cooperation in terms of theological education so that denominationalism does not become a burden.

Fourthly, theological education in both countries should be seen as God’s tools to peace and reconciliation among the people, and not an instrument which perpetuates suffering. It is true that in the course of history the church has been instrumentalised in many ways for different reasons. What is certain is that every time it was instrumentalised it failed. Theology, in the authors view, is a stone thrown in the apparently calm waters of a lake. It has to bring change. Theological education should stay and help people to find and serve God within their culture and understanding. In the colonial period theological education served as an appeasing balm or ideological instrument for human minds and attitudes so that they would remain humble and obedient. Today theological education should instead be an instrument of liberation and emancipation, including by those without power, so that they may see their culture, praxis and social life reflected and taken up in the curriculum of theological institutions.

**Structure and Methodology for Theological Education**

Academic theological discipline is not merely about a neutral methodological approach. In this regard much more attention should be paid to the social structures and conditions of a given country. Everybody
knows that social selection occurs in determining the content of the school curriculum. Much attention is needed to determine the proper philosophy, pedagogy and sociology of theological education. In doing so several of the often answered theological questions finally are going to be more properly reflected on. What is at stake is what Nyambura Njoroge has referred to as the need to “ask the right questions”7 in theology today.

It is true that in both Angola and Mozambique there is no great need for a formalized Truth and Reconciliation Commission like the ones in South Africa and other countries, but a widespread need for the people in both countries to know about the truth of past injustice and crimes. “The wounds of my people,” as Jeremiah says “were not honestly cured”. “Woe to the shepherds of Israel...” says the Lord. The urgently needed message of repentance, reconciliation, responsibility, accountability, love, forgiveness, mercy as a way forward for the wounded people has not been properly deepened, reflected on and brought forward by contextual theological education in these countries, but has simply been replaced by cheap rhetorical religious propaganda, coming not only from politicians but even from the churches’ pulpits of. This is an unhealthy situation which demands more thorough efforts in theological education.

In the words of the African scholar John Mbiti: “The church has now come into existence evangelistically but not theologically... thus the church in Africa as the body of Christ must be its major theological theme, in all situations, in all places and at all time, otherwise it ceases to exist, it ceases to make its presence and message relevant and it runs a ground in the stream of history”8. Thus it can also happen that theological education becomes completely irrelevant and not listened to if it fails to properly pay the necessary attention to the demands of these urgent contextual challenges.

Theological education, and the structures in which several of the present leaders have received theological training, need major re-adjustment in all dimensions, as our world has changed so much in recent years. There is a need for a relevant theology which would engage with and to relate to today’s youth, African minds which are open to the Internet and other forms of new information technologies.

**Challenges for Theological Education**

I believe that theological education in Angola and Mozambique is experiencing incommensurable challenges. Some are of a physical nature; others are more of a moral, intellectual as well as spiritual nature, as in the case of missions’ theological education in these African countries of the nineteenth century, when missiologists like Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn developed what became known as the “Three Selfs” of indigenous churches: self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. Over the years other missiologists have included other characteristics in this list of the ‘three Selfs’. For example, a self-identifying church also should have its own identity as the local church in its area. Charles Brock9 wrote about churches being self-teaching and self-expressing. Brock also noted that indigenous churches have the freedom to express themselves through their worship style according to the guidelines of the Scriptures.

If these Selfs would be more observed, in place, given shape and lived out as the way of expressing our deepest beliefs, I am sure that our countries and faithful church members will be praising God, the Lord, in Spirit and Truth.

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7 EHAIA publications.
Conclusion

To summarize we can state as observed above that: in order to achieve profound and permanent objectives and results in theological education, theological education processes which have been developed over the years need to be thoroughly revised, improved and evaluated. For theological education to become effective it needs to be contextual and relevant to today’s minds and hearers of the Gospel. In order words, there is a need for a new methodology for theology education. God and the Scriptures are still the same in substance and comment, but the social, cultural and political context faces different challenges today. Therefore I recommend:

1. A new model of theological education which is at the same time proactive, preventive and curative: one that redefines and rediscovers according to the perspective of the Kingdom of God.
2. A new orientation of theological education which better empowers the gifts and ministries of fellow Christians to serve as agents for the Kingdom of God, which can be seen in their daily life, and in the propagation and teaching the Word of God.
3. A theological education that is closer to the people, empowering them so that they may be less vulnerable and susceptible to all sorts of distorted and false doctrines and teachings.
4. Recalling that doing quality theological education was and always has been a major responsibility of the churches themselves. It is possible to get churches recommitted to higher quality in theological education and our responsibility is to make it better every day. This is why the WCC has encouraged this process for an African Handbook on Theological Education.

The author acknowledges the challenges on church leaders that we have to face together. We must face these challenges together with courage, humbleness and determination. We are conscious that we ought to do the best we can for the glory of Jesus Christ and of the Kingdom of God. We are not alone. He promised to “be with us always up to the end of time”.

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
(18) THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

James Amanze

Introduction

This paper critically examines the nature of theological education in Southern Africa and its role in the mission of the Church. It is argued in this paper that theological education in Southern Africa is as old as the Church itself and that it is an integral part of the mission of the Church and without which the Church would have been severely impaired in its work of proclaiming the Kingdom of God here and now. It is further argued that because we live today in a world which is experiencing intense and rapid change—religious, social, economic, political and cultural—there is a need to adopt new approaches in theological education that can enable theological educators to design relevant theological curricula that can promote and enhance the mission of the Church in the 21st century. This is necessary in order to ensure that theological education is not out of touch with concrete situations on the ground. Issues such as the need to focus on the mission of God, interdisciplinarity, hands-on-learning experience, ecumenicity, contextuality, gender sensitivity, and outcome based-curriculum will be discussed.

The Church in Southern Africa and Theological Education for Ministerial Formation

The Church in Southern Africa constitutes one of the fastest growing points of Christianity in the world. It has been in existence for more than three centuries and it is still growing in leaps and bounds. Historians trace the presence of Christianity in Southern Africa back to 1652 when Jan van Riebeeck established a Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope. This venture opened the path for political occupation for much of Southern Africa and the Christianisation of the region by various missionary societies. The establishment of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) was followed by the establishment of other churches such as the Anglican, Congregational, Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist and Pentecostal churches. With the arrival of the African Independent Churches in the missionary field in the second half of the 19th century as a religious protest against the missionary churches and, in more recent years, the vigorous televangelism of the Charismatic Churches has turned Southern Africa into a highly competitive Christian theatre where different churches are vying for membership. Current figures show the number of Christians growing steadily than ever before as follows: South Africa (79.8%), Lesotho (90%), Swaziland (80%), Botswana (71%), Angola (90%); Zimbabwe (85%) and Namibia (90%).

It is important to note that this tremendous growth has been possible, to a certain extent, as a result of theological education, which is taking place in different churches at different levels. It is a well-known fact that many people become members of a particular church after being exposed to the teachings and belief systems of that particular church. Such teaching is given in the form of sermons, workshops, seminars and

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1 These figures are based on different Internet sources and they are difficult to prove their credibility. The following sources were consulted: Namibia (http://www.sim.org/index.php/country/NA on 23/1/12); Zimbabwe http://www.zimbabwe.cc/html/Christianity-in-zimbabwe.html, on 23/1/12); Botswana http://www.thuto.org/ubb/bw/society/relstat.htm on 23/1/12); Angola http://www.christianpost.com/news/angola-visit-the-task-of-healing-2109/ on 23/1/12; Lesotho http://www.mapsofworld.com/lesotho/information/facts.html on 23/1/12); South Africa http://www.safirca.info/aboutfacts.htm#ixzzIklxjKue, on 23/1/12); Swaziland http://www.orvillejenkins.com/profiles/swazi.html, on 23/1/12).
conferences on various aspects of the Christian life and the ministry of the Church. Such type of theological education, however, takes the form of indoctrination since it is intended to inculcate and strengthen the faith of the Christians in a given church community or denomination. This kind of theological education is designed to promote the interests of a given church as churches in the region compete for membership and the preservation of their own identity and religious ideology. Theological education given in order to nurture the faith of the community may be informal or formal, structured or unstructured depending on the needs of a particular church. Such education may also lead to ministerial formation in line with the philosophy of the church in question.

While the author recognises the importance and significance of this type of theological education by the churches, which is purely denominational and confessional, this paper focuses primarily on critical, objective and formal theological education which takes place in theological colleges, and departments of Theology and Religious Studies at universities and other institutions of higher learning in the region. Since a great deal has already been written about this form of theological education in Southern Africa, the task of this paper will be to provide a critical assessment of its relevance today. This being the case, this paper does not claim originality in terms of unearthing new material but provides a new insight on how theological education can be transformed in order to meet the spiritual needs of societies in the grip of tremendous social change.

The Importance of Theological Education in Southern Africa

The history of theological education and ministerial formation in Southern Africa can be traced back to 1859 when the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) established a Theological Seminary in Stellenbosch designed to train church ministers. Following the footsteps of the DRC, other churches in the region established their own theological seminaries such as John Wesley, 1886 (Methodist); St. Bede’s, 1879 (Anglican), St. Peter’s (Anglican); Morija Seminary, 1882 (Lesotho Evangelical Church); S. Paul’s Seminary, 1902 (Anglican); John Vianney, 1948 (Roman Catholic); Baptist Seminary, 1951 (Baptist); Umphumulo, 1912 (Lutheran) to name but a few. This move was taken after realising that if the mission of the Church was to continue in time and space, it needed well trained and qualified personnel to proclaim the good news of salvation to the world.

It is important to note that right from the beginning, Christian churches did not take theological education lightly. They considered it central to the entire ministry of the Church. As a result, churches of different persuasions embarked on an unprecedented venture of establishing, at a great expense, a chain of theological colleges, seminaries and bible centres in order to meet the need for well trained and well qualified church ministers. This trend of affairs has continued to the present day. Consequently, this move has put theological education at the centre of the mission of the Church which is, in effect, Mission Dei. In addition to these, a number of universities in the region have established departments of Theology and Religious Studies where theological education is taking place in earnest both for purely academic purposes and for ministerial formation. Jesse N. K. Mugambi, emphasizing the importance of theological education in Africa, has noted that the long term sustainability of Christian churches in the region depends greatly on the effectiveness of pastoral (and lay leader) training. This is true in Southern Africa where the tempo of providing and improving theological education continues unabated in order to ensure that the mission of the Church continues unhindered. However, recent scholarship has shown that there are a number of inherent weaknesses in the system, which makes theological education less effective. These are the issues that this paper seeks to address.

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Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Threats to Theological Education in Southern Africa

It is important to note that Southern Africa is a very dynamic region. It has never remained static. This is true of Africa as a whole. A number of countries gained their independence between 1957 and late 1960s and again between 1980 and 1990s. With the coming of political independence things began to change rapidly in the social, economic, religious and cultural spheres. Social mobility and advances in the education systems of many African countries, have given people a new outlook to life. These facts have impacted in the spirituality and religiosity of people in different ways which demand a new approach in theological education in order to meet their new dreams and aspirations thereby making the mission of the Church effective.

It is true that the new changes taking place in Africa generally and Southern Africa in particular are beneficial to the people in many ways. However, some of them have become threats to theological education, which threaten the very survival of the mission of the Church. Paradoxically, one of these threats is the African peoples’ quest for economic prosperity and the need to eradicate poverty. This quest has been caused primarily by secularisation tendencies that are visible almost everywhere in Africa. From the perspective of the secularisation thesis, after independence, the new African leadership has been more interested in the economic growth and development of their people rather than their spiritual development. As a result, they have set in motion economic development plans which focus on improving the socio-economic status of the people. After independence many African leaders began to perceive that economic prosperity could not be achieved through the Word of God but through science and technology. This perception has denigrated the value of theological education in the eyes of many people in the region, who are now opting for academic disciplines that can bring wealth into their lives. This has raised the stakes of science and technology rather than theology and religious studies.

Again, because of perceived benefits of science and technology many African governments are exerting great efforts to promote these disciplines in their education systems rather than theology and religious studies. This is seen in the fact that national spending on science and technology education by African governments has increased. In promoting these disciplines it is always argued that these disciplines have brought about increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and creation of new jobs leading to the eradication of poverty in Africa. Their contribution to economic empowerment is seen in a number of areas which include, among others, agriculture, transport and communications, energy, animal and human health, education and the environment. Consequently, at present, a number of African governments and technocrats responsible for developing economic policies do not factor theology and religion in their planning under the impression that they have nothing to do with economic development. They only see them as a burden on national budgets.

In this regard, in recent years, we have witnessed the decline of theological studies at a number of institutions in Southern Africa particularly so in South Africa where some universities were forced to close theological faculties because of dwindling budgets for universities and a shortage of students to enrol for theological courses. Academic theology is struggling along with people losing interest to enrol in theological studies because of changing circumstances and a disinterested government. Klaus Nurnberger has noted that after independence, “while the State continued to appeal to religious bodies to address the moral decline of the nation, the future of religious instructions at schools was in the balance. A number of

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4 *The contribution of science and technology*, 8.

departments of religious studies or biblical studies lost their economic viability. Even old established institutions were closed down”. It should be noted that the marginalisation of theological education is not peculiar to South Africa. A number of Southern African countries see theological education as a burden to their national budgets and so consider it as an enriching subject.

The Pitfalls of Traditional Theological Education and the Need for New Approaches

It should be noted at this point that though theological seminaries, university departments of Theology and Religious Studies have been very successful in their undertaking in the field of theological education in Southern Africa, the system has been bedevilled with a number of inherent weaknesses that have rendered the delivery of theological education in theological institutions less effective. Since it is impossible to deal with all the weaknesses inherent in the system, we shall select here a few of these and make suggestions on how the situation can be improved.

(a) The need to make Missio Dei the core business of theological education

Recent scholarship has revealed that one of the chief weaknesses of traditional theological education is its lack of mission studies. Michael McCoy, citing David Bosch, has noted that when theological studies were introduced in Africa from Europe, they were arranged into four streams namely, biblical studies, Church history, systematic theology and practical theology. This model became the standard of theological education in Southern Africa. Its chief weakness was lack of emphasis on the missionary nature of theological education. It is held that “if mission was studied……it was usually as part of practical theology, as if it were largely a matter of technique or practical application, or it was an optional subject, competing with preaching, pastoral counselling, or liturgics for the leaner’s attention”. This state of affairs weakened the effectiveness of theological education in relation to Missio Dei. While this can be said of the past, there is also a general concern today that theological education that is offered in seminaries and university Departments of Theology and Religious Studies is disengaged from its core business which is to promote the mission of the Church which is in effect Mission Dei. Using psychological categories, it can be argued that theological education has become inward looking rather than outward looking. In other words, it has become an introvert rather than an extrovert affair existing for its own sake rather than for the mission of the Church in the world. This, in itself, is a recipe for disaster. Steve de Gruchy has argued that the future of theological education depends on its ability to turn itself inside-out. It must be outward looking, that is to say, it must give a focus to the world rather than the church or the academy.

According to de Gruchy, this need is based on the fact that God is at work in the world rather than just the Church and that the Church exists on the basis of its willingness to respond to what God is doing in the world. Writing in the context of Southern Africa, de Gruchy is of the view that if theological education is to be truly missiological, then to the classical model of theological education, which is dominated by biblical studies, biblical languages, systematic theology, ethics and practical theology, must be added a strong component of missiology. This is because to teach theology involves the affirmation of the missionary imperative of the Church. De Gruchy argues that if there is no missiological orientation in theological education towards the world in response to the gospel imperative, then theological education

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8 Steve de Gruchy, “Theological education and missional practice” in Dietrich Werner et al (eds.), *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity* (Oxford: Regnum, 2010), 42.
becomes meaningless.⁹ Fergus King, in agreement with de Gruchy, has noted that churches engage in mission because God is a God of mission.¹⁰ According to King, God has a mission to the world which is to seek human beings. De Gruchy puts it succinctly thus:

...mission is not something that belongs to the Church. It belongs to God. God is a missionary, a sending God. This *mission Dei* configures the *missiones ecclesiae* in that the Triune God calls and sends the people into the world, to live and work amongst all God’s people. The practice of mission is therefore fundamental to what it means to be Christian and to be church.¹¹

In relation to the above text, Michael McCoy, for one, has argued convincingly that missiology should be the touchstone of all theology. According to McCoy, an ideal model of theological education must be genuinely transformational, equipping people in Southern Africa for forms of ministry that make the good news of God’s reign more of a reality. To this end, there is a need to bring passion for serving God’s transforming mission and for it to be given its rightful place in theological education.¹²

King has observed that God’s mission to the world is best exemplified in the sending of Jesus in the incarnation and the sending of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.¹³ In this regard, King has noted that one of the questions that need to be asked is whether theological subjects are taught in order to enhance the missionary nature of the Church in the world. King has intimated that theological education must embrace the idea of training the whole person, which is intended to produce well-rounded citizens whose education and practical skills can integrate them fully into their society and also to impart an orderly, critical and disciplined search for knowledge, which demands objective attitudes to the subject under search and freedom to criticise.¹⁴ I am in full agreement that if theological education is to make a permanent mark in modern societies in Southern Africa, it must recover its birth right of being truly missiological so that it can meaningfully bring the Kingdom of God to bear upon the people in accordance with God’s mission in the world.

**(b) Ecumenicity: The need to embrace a more comprehensive concept of salvation**

Another weakness that has been identified in traditional theological education in Southern Africa is its denominationalism. The model of a denominational theological college, which has been replicated in all countries in Southern Africa, has a number of advantages. One of these is that it helps the churches to preserve their identities and ideologies through the process of indoctrination. This has worked very well for the churches as they struggle to compete for converts. This, however, has been achieved at a very high coast to the churches, locally, regionally and internationally. In recent years there has also been a tendency of developing universities along denominational lines at the exclusion of others. This is the case in Zimbabwe where denominational universities have been established by the Roman Catholics and the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

It appears to me that though individual efforts at establishing denominational seminaries is highly commendable, I am convinced that these efforts are based on our limited understanding of the concept of salvation. I am of the view that theological education of the twenty first century can be cost-effective if the colonial legacies of the past can be re-visited and corrected. One of the ways in which this can be done is

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⁹ Steve de Gruchy, “Theological education and missional practice”, 43
¹¹ Steve de Gruchy, “Theological education and missional practice”, 42.
¹³ Fergus King, “Theological education and mission”, 78-79.
by critiquing and rejecting the narrow view of salvation dominant in many denominations which does not offer any form of flexibility to the views of others. Churches and theological institutions must embrace a comprehensive view of the concept of salvation. Such a concept should be broader than that held in denominational churches and even larger to the point of going beyond the borders of the traditional concepts of ecumenism among the Christian churches today. It should include the whole Southern African society with its cultural, political, economic and religious diversity. As Klaus Nurnberger has pointed out, the point of departure in theological education today should not be on how our dogmatic tradition can best be preserved, how the spiritual needs of our congregations can be catered for, or how our rich liturgical heritage can be fostered but how we can promote God’s redeeming love for a world in a crisis. According to Nurnberger, what this means is that the different concepts of salvation found in the different Christian denominations should be viewed and understood in the context of the all-embracing love of God as found in the biblical witness.\textsuperscript{15}

It is sad to note that in a number of Southern African countries, the ecumenical movement is in a state of malaise and while in the past ecumenical theological education was deemed desirable, in recent years, this vision has been lost.\textsuperscript{16} It is true that there was a time in the history of theological education in Southern Africa when there was a glimmer of hope that ecumenical theological education in the region was possible. This hope came with the establishment of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa (FEDSEM) in Alice, Eastern Cape, in 1963. FEDSEM, however, was doomed to failure from the start because it was formed as a result of the apartheid policies prevalent at the time. Once the apartheid system crumbled, FEDSEM also collapsed. G. A. Duncan has put it this way:

To a large degree the formation of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa was a direct response to various pieces of legislation introduced by the Nationalist government which was elected in 1948. Foremost among these was the Group Areas Acts, the Bantu Education Act, the Extension of Universities Act and the Fort Hare Transfer Act....However, there was an ecumenical spirit at work which originated in the formation of the General Missionary Conference of South Africa in 1904....and the Edinburgh Conference in 1910.\textsuperscript{17}

According to Duncan, one of the chief weaknesses of this ecumenical arrangement, which was based primarily on political expediency, was that “there was no programme of implementation of full unity at FEDSEM and the subsequent history of FEDSEM demonstrated that the churches, by and large, wanted to maintain the status quo, with few exceptions”.\textsuperscript{18} FEDSEM was disbanded in 1993.\textsuperscript{19}

In spite of this structural weakness, it should be noted that the set up at FEDSEM benefited students greatly by sharing a faculty that provided a broad and more comprehensive training that any one church could not give on its own. This is because one of the principles of FEDSEM’s foundation was to establish cooperation in the training of ministers. This proved to be both desirable and realisable. In this context, it has been observed, FEDSEM represented a shining witness to ecumenical commitment in the task of theological education and ministerial formation in Southern Africa.\textsuperscript{20}

In this light, it has been observed that ecumenical theological education has a number of advantages which include, among others, the pulling together of resources to buy property for use by students, the pulling together of money to develop viable libraries, to attract well qualified and well-paid staff, establish

\textsuperscript{15} Klaus Nurnberger, “Ministerial training for the 21st century: A South African case study”, 75.

\textsuperscript{16} See Gundani et al, “The state of theological education”, 68.


\textsuperscript{18} G. A. Duncan, “Notes on the foundation”, 852.


connectivity with Internet services and the like. In contrast, denominationalism in theological education has a number of negative elements such as difficulties in raising enough funds to pay staff, acquire and maintain property, develop libraries, development of curriculum and a host of other things. These negative elements, it has been concluded, only shows that ecumenical theological education is the best in this era of globalisation and the right way to achieve viable theological education and ministerial formation for churches in Southern Africa.\(^{21}\)

Though the spirit of ecumenical theological education seems to be dead and buried, as a result of the collapse of FEDSEM, it would be fallacious to assume that it has been destroyed altogether. There is hope that the ecumenical fire can be reignited. There are indications that the ecumenical spirit still lingers on in the minds of many Christians. For example, a survey that was carried out among Lutherans in Southern Africa by the Joint Committee for Lutheran Theological Training (JCLTT) in the early 2000s revealed that there was considerable openness for ecumenical cooperation in the training of ministers in the Lutheran Church. Most people indicated that Lutherans can learn a lot from other church traditions. In this regard, it was clear to the JCLTT that Lutherans had to pull together with other churches to establish a viable and sustainable theological institution.\(^{22}\) It seems to me that what is true of the Lutheran Church is also true of other churches in the region whose ecumenical spirit is alive and well.

\[(d)\text{ Hands-on learning experience the way to go}\]

Having discussed the need for ecumenical theological education, there is also a general concern among scholars that another weakness of traditional theological education is its failure to include hands-on-learning experience. Much of the learning is done in the abstract consequently, students lack practical experience. Judo Puerwowidagdo has pointed out that one of the problems facing theology is its failure to relate to the daily experiences of the people. She has argued that, unlike the study of natural sciences, which puts a great deal of emphasis experimental testing both in the laboratory and in the field, and which highly values empirical verifications, theological education puts less emphasis on hands-on-learning experience. Rather, it places its focus on the study of theological and biblical literature, where the library is the most important source of knowledge rather than practical engagement with people in their daily lives. In this context, theological praxis is hardly known. According to Puerwowidagdo, in most of the contexts in which theological education takes place, students and their teachers are not involved in the congregational or community life as part of their theological study and education, or as part of their teaching-learning process. As a result, theological education is divorced from the needs of the world and, consequently, it becomes remote, loses its contextual value and therefore irrelevant.\(^{23}\)

De Gruchy in agreement with Puerwowidagdo has noted that there is a need for theological education to learn from engaged praxis. According to de Gruchy, there are a number of people who are already working with the poor, healing the sick, working with the marginalised, refugees and orphans in the name of Christ. De Gruchy has postulated that this missional praxis is an ideal laboratory of theological reflection. It is a theatre from which theologians can ground their theories through a constant hermeneutical engagement. This will enable theologians to construct a theology which emerges from the ground up.\(^{24}\)

In order for this method to be effective, there is a need to design programmes which require practical attachment. It has been observed that practical attachment can help students to acquire knowledge concerning the day to day lives of ordinary men, women, and children thereby acquiring practical


\(^{22}\) Klaus Nurnberger, “Ministerial training for the 21\textsuperscript{st} century: A South African case study”, 77.

\(^{23}\) Judo Puerwowidagdo, “Towards the 21\textsuperscript{st} century: Challenges and opportunities for theological education” Ministerial Formation (Geneva: Ecumenical Theological Education, Ecumenical Institute, 2008), 62.

\(^{24}\) Steve de Gruchy, “Theological education and missional practice”, 44
experience. De Gruchy is of the view that learning from missional practice generates new ideas and new frontiers for theology. In other words, it enables theologians to go beyond borders. De Gruchy argues that if theological education is to prepare students adequately for an engagement with the world, then there is a need to be constantly learning from missional practice. In view of the above discussion, this paper makes a passionate appeal to theological educators to come up with programmes that can enable students to engage themselves in practical work that may give them the necessary experience required in the job market.

(e) Interdisciplinarity as an antidote to isolation

Another element that has been of some concern in theological education in Africa generally and Southern Africa in particular is the isolationist nature of theological education. Such isolation makes theological education less effective. It is in this context that de Gruchy argues that theological education can be meaningful in the contemporary world if it is intentionally interdisciplinary in nature. Interdisciplinarity has been defined as a process of combining components of two or more disciplines in the search for new knowledge. It is a process of answering a question, solving a problem or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline or profession. It has been observed that many complex or practical problems can only be understood by pulling together insights and methodologies from a variety of disciplines. One of the advantages of interdisciplinarity is that it enables students to move from specialisation to holistic thinking bearing in mind the fact that the world is one.

In his attempt to address this problem, Tharcisse Gatwa has contended that there is a need for theology to interact with other disciplines. Theologians need to know that there are other branches of knowledge out there that can enrich their own subject. Interdisciplinarity means that theologians would benefit from cross border knowledge in other disciplines rather than operate in isolation. It would also increase the number of students enrolling in theology and religious studies thereby ensuring that their voice is heard loud and clear.

Similarly, de Gruchy has observed that if theological education is to be effective in the contemporary world, it requires an understanding of the world. Interdisciplinarity enables students to understand the world from different angles. Missionary work should involve more than just knowing the Bible and Christian doctrines. According to de Gruchy, missional practice asks of theological education to offer space for other disciplines in the curriculum such as sociology, psychology, philosophy, economics, anthropology, and studies pertaining to gender, religion, ecology, health and governance.

(f) Contextuality: The importance of cultural considerations in theological education

Gundani et al, have argued that one of the distinctive marks of theological education in Southern Africa is its foreignness in terms of its content, method and language which they consider as unsuitable. This has rendered theological reflection rather irrelevant. For as Mugambi has noted “as long as the syllabi of African theological colleges and seminaries are imported from elsewhere, pastoral training will continue to be out of tune with cultural and religious dynamics of African societies among whom the trainers are expected to work after graduation”.

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27 See Michael Seipei, Interdisciplinarity: An Introduction (Truman State University, Kirksville, Missouri, 24/5/2005), 1.
32 Mugambi, “Theological Education in Africa”, 1222
The need for contextualisation is also necessitated by the fact that theology should be understood as by nature a human undertaking in which the human element is always present. If the major texts of the World Christianity are to make sense in the context of Africa generally and Southern Africa in particular, then contextualisation is a matter of necessity and not of choice. In this regard Douglas John Hull has documented as follows:

As finite (and sinful) creatures theologians see through a glass darkly ...and the lens through which they look at reality is shaped by concrete factors in their own personal and societal situations. They contemplate the meaning of the Christian faith as persons who live at particular moments in history and specific geographical situations and who bring to this vocation assumptions values and concerns they have acquired as persons of those times and places.33

It should be noted that one of the important elements of contextualisation is the culture of a given society in which theological education is taking place. In this regard, cultural studies should form a very important element of theological education in Southern Africa. Of primary importance in this case should be the study of African Traditional Religions which constitute a significant element of the African people’s cultural heritage. It appears that while the teaching of African Traditional Religions has been going on in the departments of Theology and Religious Studies at the universities of Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe for a long time, ATR has been generally sidelined in South African theological institutions. This has a negative consequence in the sense that its exclusion in the curriculum disempowers students who after graduating will serve their own people who continue to operate within the African religious worldview despite their conversion either to Christianity or any other world religion.34

(g) Outcome Based curriculum a preferred option

In view of the changes that are taking place in the Southern African missionary field, it is important for theological educators to learn what is going on in other sectors of education. McCoy, writing about the new trends in education in South Africa after the apartheid era, has underlined the introduction of a new philosophy in education that has permeated the entire spectrum of the education system. The new philosophy revolves around the concept of “Outcome Based Education”. This philosophy focuses on expected outcomes of the learning process. It is contrasted with the old philosophy commonly known as “Knowledge Centred Education” in which the aim is to help students to acquire knowledge delivered through lectures and written texts. The Outcome Based Education aims at equipping students with competencies and skills that will assist learners to accomplish certain tasks, jobs or vocations.35

It appears to me that if theological education has to have an impact on the mission of the Church in the world, then it must also place considerable emphasis on equipping theological students with competencies that will enable them to participate fully in the mission of the Church in Southern Africa. One of the advantages of the “Outcome Based Theological Education” is that it is transformational. It can effectively equip theological education students with competencies and skills necessary for carrying out the ministry of the Church in the region today.36 It is therefore, imperative that at this point in time theological educators should embrace this philosophy when designing theological curricula in order to make theological education truly relevant to the needs of the Church in today’s world.

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Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
(h) The urgency for a gender sensitive curriculum

Finally, it should be noted that there is also a general concern that while a number of governments in Southern Africa have policies designed to empower women and specific quotas of women in positions of highest level of decision making have been created, such policies do not exist in theological education institutions.37 This situation is not only worrisome but disappointing. It is now more than two decades since the Circle for African Women Theologians was formed in order to conscientize the churches and the general public about the need to uplift the status of women in Church and society. There is already voluminous literature in this regard pioneered by women theologians such as Amba Mercy Oduyoye, Isabel Phiri, Musa Dube, Sarojini Nadar, Madipoane Masenya, Elizabeth Amoa to name but a few. The movement of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians is not only confined to women but there are men theologians who have also produced a lot of literature in support of the womenfolk’s fight against the oppressive nature of patriarchy in Southern Africa the evils of which have been more visible in the era of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. This paper, therefore, calls for an urgent reversal of this trend of affairs. I am in full agreement with Gundani et al, that there is an urgent need to come up with programmes that are designed to empower women in church, theological institutions and society at large.38 Theological institutions need to come up with curricula that will promote and enhance the dignity of women in church, government, theological colleges, university departments, economic institutions, the family and legal institutions both modern and traditional. In my view, it is only a radical approach to this problem that will pull women out of the present abyss to a level where their human dignity as people created in the image and likeness of God can truly be realised.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has examined the nature of theological education in Southern Africa. It has been argued in this paper that though traditional forms of theological education have served the church and society very well, there are a number of weaknesses in the system, which needs to be dealt with, if theological education is to have a future in modern societies. Issues such as the need to focus on Mission Dei, ecumenicity, interdisciplinarity, hands-on-learning experience, outcomes based curricula, contextuality, gender sensitive curricula to name but a few have been discussed. The paper notes that theological education needs to keep pace with the rapid and intense changes taking place in Southern Africa today before it becomes irrelevant and loses its effectiveness in society.

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Part II: Regional Surveys on Theological Education in Africa
Laurent W. Ramambason

The history of theological education is inextricably interwoven with the history of written culture, schooling and college education in Madagascar. The development of the protestant pioneering education was hampered by the intrusion of colonialism. However, Catholic education and seminaries flourished under the French colonial administration.

How has the teaching of theology and the formation of pastors and priests evolved in Madagascar? What are the contents of theological education, formation and training? How has ecumenism affected theological education and how did ecumenical education foster unity among the churches? What is the future of ecumenism and ecumenical education? Is the traditional model of studying theology, which goes back to Schleiermacher, still viable?

I. Historical Overview

The pioneer protestant missionaries, Thomas Bevan and David Jones, arrived at Toamasina on the East coast of Madagascar in 1818 where they founded the first European-style school institution of the country. They were sent by the London Missionary Society (LMS).

In 1820, after the deaths of Bevan and his whole family, Jones moved to the capital city, Antananarivo. He founded the Royal School that very year. On March 23, 1823 King Radama I accepted the Latin alphabet proposed by Jones and his colleagues. When the missionaries met Radama I only six people were able to read Malagasy in Arabic scripts in Imerina. By the time the king died in 1827 the number of Latin script literates amounted to 4,000. Hebrew and Greek were taught to the Malagasy youngsters, who helped the missionaries translate the Bible into their language. The whole Bible had been just translated when persecution broke out in 1835.

A Central School was created to provide for secondary education for those who could manage to finish the primary one. It later became a Normal School designed to train teachers. The LMS sent a Dr Davidson to start a Medical School along with a hospital at Analakely. It was opened two years later than the government Official Medical School and died out on the departure of the founder in 1876. The accession of a militant christian Queen, Ranavalona II, (crowned in 1868) facilitated the inauguration of the first protestant theological school by the LMS in Madagascar in 1869. It was known as the Theological Academy, a copy of the Academy model of non conformists in England.

In 1873 the foreign secretary of the LMS Dr Mullens and one of his colleagues arrived in Madagascar. They called a conference of all the missionaries of the LMS and the FFMA. Among other things they decided to transform the theological institution into a General College "which, whilst continuing its special mission of training evangelists and pastors, should also provide a higher education for young men of the better class." It meant that the college was going to train ministerial and 'secular' students. Furthermore, the conference decided to invite native assistants "so as to relieve the tutors of part of their duties with the junior students." The year 1874 marked the foundation of the LMS General College.

The building of the LMS General College was seized by the French colonial authorities in 1897. Its activities changed considerably. The secular wing of the College was lost. The church confined herself to

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the training of pastors. The *Institut Protestant de Théologie* was opened under the leadership of Rev Michel Fety in 1979. It became the *Faculté de Théologie* subsequently.

The *School of Theology* spearheaded the emergence of the *Reformed University of Madagascar* in 2008. The Master of Theology programme was launched that year. The University belongs to the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar.

The school is involved in four kinds of programme. There is the more than centenary programme of training students to become pastors. The ministerial formation is sanctioned by the degrees of Bachelor of Theology and Master of Divinity.


The centres and institutes help facilitate the graduate and postgraduate programmes (MTh, PhD, ThD). However, the programmes of the school have not been designed to cater only the needs of the elite. There are also short courses, open to all.

### The Development of Ecumenical Theological Education

The ecumenical capacity of churches depends much on the ecumenical nature of their theological education. The reverse is also true: the ecumenical nature of theological education depends largely on the ecumenical readiness of the church leadership. We can observe three kinds of development in the history of ministerial formation in Madagascar. They can be classified in line of the ecumenical aim of the policy, whether it is the corporate union of churches, their reconciled diversity or just peaceful cohabitation.

#### Corporate union of churches

In 1956 Charles Ranson, the general secretary of the International Missionary Conference, lead a survey team to Madagascar. At that time, “the rapid growth of the church and relative backwardness of theological education led to a series of studies in Africa”. They published a *Survey of the Training of the Ministry in Madagascar* in 1957. It was inspired by the study Ranson had already produced in India. He then recommended that “a united school should be established in each of twelve main language areas”; moreover “pooling and augmenting the existing reserves in each area, these schools should offer ministerial training, with the regional language as the medium of instruction”.

That policy was applied *stricto sensu* in Madagascar. A United Theological College was built at Ivato in 1966 in implementation of one major recommendation of the report. Even the name of the new denomination, ‘Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar’ (FJKM), which came into being in 1968, was taken word for word from the report.

The case was original and puzzling for some observers because it was the only known scheme in which the sacraments were optional. This was due to the involvement of Quakers who rejected the sacraments. Yet the union of three different churches succeeded; and until recently, ministers from Quaker background administer communion without taking the elements. In other words, the corporate union of the churches was very much facilitated by the united college movement.

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2 Ranson 1988, 133.
3 Ranson 1988, 100.
4 See Report, 50.
5 *Ecumenical Review*, 3 (April 1954), 304.
Reconciled diversity of churches

The united college movement was meant to concern all protestant denominational theological schools. However, the movement stalled in the 1980ies. The project of training Lutheran and other protestant pastors at the same institutions failed. “Is organic church union an ‘endangered species’?” was the kind of question that people at the world centre of the ecumenical movement asked in the second half of the eighties. The case of Madagascar would confirm their suspicion. The process of uniting the Lutheran and the FJKM has been increasingly under strain since July 1987 when the Lutheran General Synod officially rejected the goal of organic unity and opted for ‘reconciled diversity’.

The most important Lutheran theological school is the Lutheran Graduate School of Theology located at Ivory Avaratra, Fianarantsoa. It is the highest level of a three tiered ministerial formation. Another level consists of the Biblical Schools, meant to train people to be evangelists. Evangelists are lay people who are sent to minister in unreached areas. They are not ordained. The Lutheran Church also runs Lutheran Regional Theological Schools (LRTS). There are now five of them, located in Atsimoniavoko, Marovoay, Ambatofinandrahana, Beza, and Morondava. They are places where young people, with the qualification to enter university, are formed to become ordained pastors. The four year training includes the classical disciplines of Old Testament, New Testament, Greek, Dogmatics, Ethics, Philosophy, Church History and Practical Theology. French and English are also taught. Pastoral Diploma is the name of the degree conferred. The Bachelor of Theology (BTh) is awarded after one additional year of study. The aim of the additional year of training is to train students for research and academic writing. Most diploma graduates are expected to work for one year before going on for the BTh.

Peaceful cohabitation of churches

The attempts made by the Roman Catholic Church to get implanted in Madagascar goes back as early as the 16th century in the south eastern part of the island. They succeeded to establish a base in the geographical and political center of the island in 1841, decades after the pioneer Protestants. When the French colonial power took over Madagascar in 1896, the Catholics developed themselves from strength to strength. The heyday of colonial rule saw Catholics grabbing protestant church buildings and forcing people to convert to Catholicism. At the dawn of political independence they managed to convert the first president of the country. As recently as the end of the first decade of the 21st century they still tried to convert the protestant president, failed and sided with the one who succeeded him after a coup.

In other words, the relationships of the Catholic leadership with Protestant churches still leave much to be desired. However, Madagascar is among the countries where the Catholic Church is a full member of the National Council of Churches. Since Vatican II, tensions have eased. The students of the main catholic seminary of the capital shared a theology day with other theological students. Some protestant professors had access to teaching mission and ecumenism at the seminary. However, with the advent of the present pope, things have changed: protestants are no more allowed to take the elements in catholic communion, interaction between catholic and protestant students have ceased.

There is little difference between the formation of priests in Madagascar and elsewhere. It is done in seminaries. In Madagascar we have minor seminaries and major seminaries. The former ones function as secondary schooling for youngsters aspiring to become priests. The major seminary is a school where students are trained for the priesthood in three steps called cycles. The first cycle takes two years for the study of philosophy and the Bible. The three-year second cycle includes fundamental, pastoral and moral theologies as well as Bible studies. Students have their placement in parishes on weekends. The last cycle concerns insertion in the pastorate.

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6 Best, 1989, 281.
The Catholic major seminary of Antananarivo was founded in 1916 and moved to its present location at Ambatoroka in 1930. In 1960 the *Institut Supérieur de Théologie et de Philosophie de Madagascar* was formed and awarded its first canonical diploma in 1961. The diploma was earned after the equivalence of seven years of university study. In 1973 the I.S.T.P.M. became the *Institut Supérieur de Théologie* of Ambatoroka. In 1997, the I.S.T.A. was changed into the *Institut Catholique de Madagascar*. The leadership of the I.C.M. played a key role in founding the *Faculté des Sciences Sociales*, which spearheaded the emergence of a full-fledged university, the *Université Catholique de Madagascar*.

### 3. A Critical Look at Seminary Curricula and Innovative Ventures of Ministerial Formation in Madagascar

We usually form and train students for church ministry by the division of labor into Bible studies, history, practical theology, and systematic theology. This way of doing things evolved from the tripartite division of theology (historical, philosophical, and practical) proposed by Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) in his *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology*. The latent functions of this paradigm are well known. In what follows I attempt to trace the ways the church and the faculty have tried to redress the drawbacks of the paradigm and identify the present concerns and questioning.

To address the issues of unity and issues of pluralism the church and the faculty have focused on ‘the end of theological education, not on its methods or structure.’ In the nineteenth and the sixties, the focus was the local church and ecumenism. In the seventies and the eighties it was shifted to the larger community. Now the end of theological education is seen primarily as God’s mission. The first period was characterized by the emphasis on indigenous identity, the second by the massive inclusion of the social sciences in the curricula and the third period is characterized by an emphasis on inter-disciplinarity.

Despite the innovations intriguing issues persist. One of them is, “how come that some of the best students at college demonstrate poor performance in the field whereas some students of poor marks excel in the ministry?” Fingers have been pointed to two directions.

First, suspicion arose toward the western training of the teaching staff. There is in the church the dread of going the shrinking way of parent western churches. Is the western way of training pastors an asset or a liability?

In Madagascar, there used to be a stark contrast between a typical western educated pastor and an indigenous mission-doer. Whereas exorcism, for example, was scorned by some influential missionaries, it has been along with healing the core ministry of the *mpiandry* (shepherds) from the beginning. Healing and exorcism have not generally figured in the curriculum of theological schools; but they are among the central foci of the training done in the setting of *toby* (villages or quarters where Christian believers live in communion for prayers, education, healing and economic production). A student remarked that, ‘church minister or pastor’ comes from abroad while *mpiandry* comes ‘from above’; *mpiandry*, according to him, come more immediately from God.

Second, the urban location of ministerial formation was agreed to have too much unwanted consequences. More than 75% of the population is consisting of rural people. Yet the students are uprooted from the country by five years of urban life. The decision taken was to make the venues of the programme of ministerial formation flexible, urban and rural with more years in rural settings.

Another intriguing question consists related to the identity of the church. The church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar is a united church. It has been moving to a post-denominational character. However, that

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7 See for example David Kelsey’s *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate* (www.religion-online.org/showbook.asp?title=437).
movement has been stopped by the general assembly of the church taking the decision of reverting to the identity of a Reformed Church. This according to the views of the author is a case of ecclesiophagy (denominational cannibalism) as the churches which originally came into the union were French Reformed, British Congregational, Scottish Presbyterian Churches and Quakers (!). Moreover the contribution of the indigenous wing, which contributes much to the growth of the church, is ignored. The theological faculty shares responsibility in this. The difficulty of constructing a proper identity seems very obvious.

Finally there is the soul searching concern about whether the ministerial formation, as we know it, can produce the type of mission-doers the changing society longs for. History shows that it is a theological problem that only God can solve and that mainly the members of the larger community, not necessarily the church, can assess.

For illustration we can refer to the case of the crisis of the dancing mania during the reign of Radama II in the 1860ies which can be taken as an example. That king was very sympathetic to anything western, including Christianity, in a largely non Christian society. He frustrated the custodians of tradition and a political revolution was looming. One day, a contagious dancing mania erupted. Crowds acting in irrational ways marched growingly to the royal palace. At that time the foreign secretary of the London Missionary Society as well as a catholic prominent envoy visited the king. The king was also advised by an expatriate medical doctor. These people were totally unhelpful in explaining what was going on and what action to take. In fact, the dancing mania stopped only after the king was strangled to death. It was only thirty years later, in 1895, that a new type of Christian mission-doers, able to solve the problems associated with the dancing mania, appeared. They were the agents of a new indigenous Christian movement.

Can our graduates face the challenges of present society? Or is it the mission of a different type of mission-doers? To move forward, the church encouraged the faculty of theology to spearhead the construction of a new university. The time cannot be more opportune.

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(20) Theological Education in South Africa

Christina Landmann

Introduction

Over the past thirty years, theological education in South Africa has developed from being white, male and/or denominational to liberational, ecumenical and inclusive of gender, race and belief. However, this goes mainly for theological training at universities which have, at the same time, come under criticism from seminaries, bible schools and a fundamentalist public for being too liberal.

As an overview of theological education in South Africa, its varieties and complexities, this paper consists of three parts. In the first part contemporary themes and tendencies in theological training and their origins in South Africa will be explored. In the second part the challenges for theological training will be expressed in terms of the present lacunae in training. Finally, references will be made to a variety of theological institutions – state universities, private universities and colleges – and to the focus of their courses. This is done in order to stimulate affiliation and networking.

Contemporary themes and tendencies in theological training in South Africa

The following shifts can be identified in theological training in South Africa:

First, from white and male to Black Theology and Feminist Theology. During the 19th and more than half of the 20th centuries the Dutch Reformed Church was the largest church in South Africa. Included under its white leadership were its “daughter churches”, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa for black people, and the Dutch Reformed Mission Church for brown people. The church sent its white (male) candidates for training in the Netherlands where, at the turn of the (19th to the 20th) century, they strongly came under the influence of the Dutch statesman-cum-theologian, Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) who with his ideas on “sovereignty in one’s own circle” strengthened the foundations of apartheid which were already laid down by British colonialism. In 1859, then, roughly 150 years ago, a Faculty of Theology was established at the University of Stellenbosch in the Cape to train ministers for the white Dutch Reformed Church locally, as was the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria in 1938. For decades theology was taught there as “objective” while, indeed, it was racist and sexist, with the (exclusively male) Professors belonging to the Afrikaner Broederbond (Brotherhood) and supporting the apartheid government.

An ecumenical Faculty of Theology was established at the University of South Africa in 1964, and in 1980 two black Professors were appointed here. They were Bonganjalo Goba and Simon Maimela, both of whom had recently finished their doctoral studies in the USA. Both were instrumental in establishing Black Theology in South Africa. In 1982, Maimela introduced Feminist Theology in an honours course, training one of South Africa’s first feminist theologians, Denise Ackermann. Eventually Feminist Theology was replaced by African Women’s Theologies after the establishment of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians in 1989 in Accra, Ghana, a movement that gained great momentum in South Africa and at South African universities through women lecturers in Theology.

However, it was only in the next century that black and women’s theologies, once known as liberation theologies, became part of mainline theology taught at South African universities. At present all university courses in theology contain some information on black and women’s theologies, presented by black and female lecturers. The University of KwaZulu-Natal takes a lead in educating theological students in
women’s theologies, especially on postgraduate level, while the University of South Africa is known for its many Masters and Doctoral students finishing on themes from African theologies, especially in the discipline of Missiology.

Second, from biblical hermeneutics and dogmatic thinking to pastoral and community care. The discipline of Practical Theology is the fastest growing discipline in all South African universities that offer theological training. Particularly popular amongst postgraduates is Pastoral Therapy, as the Masters in Pastoral Therapy introduced recently at the University of South Africa testifies. Another discipline gaining prominent is Religion and development. The University of Cape Town, for instance, does not only explore this theme in research and training, but also through their Religious Health Assets Programme (IRHAP) which explores religious communities as assets to society for enhancing development and improving health. This does not mean that Biblical Hermeneutics have become a neglected subject in theological training. The Bible remains a book of authority and wisdom in Africa, and its secrets are enthusiastically explored by undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Third, from private faith to public theology. Public Theology has become big business at South African universities. The University of Stellenbosch boasts with the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology and the University of Pretoria with the Centre for Public Theology, to name but two. The research done at centres like these is reflected in undergraduate courses at almost all South African universities, and forms the topic of many Masters Dissertations and Doctoral theses. Public Theology has a special place in post-apartheid South Africa to put both the growth and the decline of public morality and practices on the table, and to reflect on the ability of theology to guide religious communities towards a better society.

Fourth, from Western and denominational to contextual and ecumenical. There are no universities in South Africa left that exclusively teach Western theologies, neither are there any that have remained fully denominational in their training. Theological faculties at Pretoria and Stellenbosch University, for instance, still focus on ministerial training for students of the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church. Yet they have opened their training spaces to students of all denominations and especially for students from the rest of Africa. The teaching of contextual theologies abound at the universities, some more than other, of course. The KwaZulu-Natal School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics may, again, be cited as an example of relentless commitment to contextuality and ecumenicity in theological training.

Fifth, from orthodoxy to Christian Spirituality. Departments and sub-departments of Christian Spirituality have shot up at a number of universities in South Africa. The University of the Free State is offering a strong and fast growing Masters programme in Christian Spirituality. Unisa and KwaZulu-Natal present training in this regard on both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This is a moving away from orthodox and prescribed ways of religious experience to exploring alternative forms of spirituality.

Sixth, developing African Leadership. One of the most significant developments in theological training in South Africa is the training of theological students to be leaders in Africa. Very significantly, universities are offering short learning courses, also referred to as certificate courses, for leaders in independent African churches who do not have matric exemption. These courses usually last for a year and earn the student an official certificate from a university. This is particularly empowering for students, some rather advanced in age, who do not have any access to theological training.

Seventh, from frozen to oral: retrieving and healing memories. An exciting development is happening in the field of oral history. South Africa has histories of untold trauma, and a serious need for the healing of memories. KwaZulu-Natal took a lead in this by training theological students both on undergraduate and post-graduate level in oral history techniques, sending them into communities to practically engage in the retrieving and healing of memories. At the Sinomlando Centre at KwaZulu-Natal under the directorship of Prof Philippe Denis projects are launched such as the Memory Box Project where children, whose parents have died of AIDS, retrieve and heal their memories by making boxes which they fill with memorabilia of their parents, thereby enhancing their resilience. At the Research Institute for Theology and Religion at
Unisa huge oral history projects are run and a variety of disciplines, eg Missiology, are incorporating oral history skills in the training of their students.

Eighth, other themes: ecology, human rights, conflict resolution. A couple of other themes are taking dominance in theological training in South Africa. One of them is ecology in which the University of the Western Cape takes a lead through the work of Prof Ernst Conradie. At Unisa Rev David Olivier expands on this theme. It is important to accommodate ecology as a theological theme and subject also because of the role nature and natural objects play in the healing rituals of indigenous churches. Religion and its role in human rights and conflict resolution is a theme explored and taught at the University of Cape Town. The importance of students to be trained in conflict resolution brings us to the next section of the paper which will point out the lacunae in present theological education in South Africa.

Challenges to and lacunae in theological training in South Africa

Skills training: Theological training in South Africa may still be too far removed from actual life-situation. In this regard theological students still need skills, academically founded, in at least the following areas: first, conflict resolution and anger management: South African communities – and specifically religious communities – are communities in conflict. There is conflict between races, classes and genders. Second, congregational management: It has become complicated to deal with the finances of a congregation and to manage its property amidst secular legislation. During apartheid black people were not allowed to own land, and many churches still stand on municipal ground. Third, applying church law in the midst of secular law - this point is related to the previous one. The relationship between state law and church law in South Africa is no longer innocent. In apartheid years the government and the Dutch Reformed Church supported each other. Students should be trained to know their church order, to apply it wisely and in a life-giving way in their future congregations, and to understand its relationship with secular law, especially with regards to labour issues. Four, servant leadership: South Africa lacks good leaders, and church leadership is particularly bankrupt.

Dealing with change: African forms of Christianity that are not fundamentalist. South Africa is a society in transition. This is also the case with religious communities and religious thinking and praxis. During the past decades theologies have emerged that try to deal with these changes, such as contextual theologies and public theologies. What is needed now is theologies of healing that rely on indigenous wisdom for theology to remain relevant and potent in the national search for healthy co-existence amongst people and systems. Theological training should empower students to be leaders in this regard.

Theological institutions in South Africa: Course contents and networking Universities

This section discusses nine universities, and to a lesser extent, that of eight colleges:

Faculty of Theology, University of Stellenbosch: A Faculty of Theology was established at the University of Stellenbosch in 1859 as the first local training centre for ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church. During the 20th century it stood accused of being male and racist, but has in the meantime shed that image. From 2000 ministers of both the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa are trained here under the supervision of white, black and brown lecturers of both genders. While the former is still a white church, the latter is the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (formerly for Black people) and the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (formerly for Brown people) united. A variety of other denominations also train their ministers through the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University. Students of all races and genders are here in training.1 The University offered Bachelors of theology in

Ministry and Leadership and Youth work, Bachelors of Divinity degree for students without Greek and Hebrew, Baccalaureus in Theological Studies (BTS). At post-graduate programmes the University offers post-graduate Diploma in Theology, MDiv (Ministry/Leadership) Licensiate in Theology (Ministerial practice), MTh programmes, DTh programmes, and MPhil in Chaplaincy Studies, presented in collaboration with the Military Academy in Saldanha.

Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria: The Faculty of Theology was established at the University of Pretoria in 1938, soon to split into a Faculty A for the Nederduits Hervormde Kerk van Afrika and a Faculty B for its larger sister, the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk. During the 1990s the two sisters combined into one Faculty, with ecumenical partners. In terms of departments, this Faculty too follows the classical divisions into six theological disciplines, that is, Church History and Polity, Dogmatics and Christian Ethics, New Testament, Old Testament, Practical Theology, and finally, Science of Religion and Missiology. The Department of Practical Theology is the largest department in the Faculty, and is in keeping with a growing point in pastoral care skills and insights in theological training nationwide.

It also houses an Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research, as well as two Centres, one for Contextual Ministry and one for Public Theology. Hereby three main concepts in recent theology talk are confirmed: ecumenical orientation, contextual relevance, and public theology.

The University of Pretoria is commonly known as “Tukkies”. When it was established, it was known as the “Transvaal Universiteits Kollege” (The Transvaal University College). Today its Faculty of Theology, like that of Stellenbosch, still focuses on training ministers for the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, with lecturers from these churches as well as from the Presbyterian Church which also has a vested interest in training their students there. Lecturers represent all races and genders, as do students. Teaching is predominantly in Afrikaans, but classes are available in English. The degrees offered at the Faculty range from Diploma in Theology to Doctorates (PhD, DDiv).

Faculty of Theology, University of the Free State: Traditionally the Faculties of Theology at Stellenbosch, Pretoria and the Free State were the three locations for providing training for ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church. The Theological Faculty at the University of the Free State was established rather late, in 1980, when the number of young white men reporting for ministry training in the DRC was at a zenith. The Faculty offers Advanced Diploma in Theology: Adv Dip (Theology), Postgraduate Diploma in Theology: PG Dip (Theology), Baccalaureus Divinitatis: B Div, honours level there is a Baccalaureus Artium: BA Hons (Theology), Master’s level there is a MDiv and a MA (Theology) as well as a MTh and doctoral level there is a DTh and a PhD.

Faculty of Theology, North-West University: The North-West University houses both the Theological School of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (founded in 1869) where in-house training is done for seminary students, and a Faculty of Theology (founded in 1930) where more than 600 post-graduate students from all over Africa are enrolled. Actually, the University originally developed out of the Theological School as the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education. The PU for CHE (or “Pukke” as it is popularly known) became the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) in 2004. A close relationship therefore exists between the North-West University, the Theological School and the Faculty of Theology, based on a shared commitment to Christian values. The Faculty runs two community outreach programmes, the one being a pastoral counseling project providing free counseling to people in the surrounding communities; the other is an HIV and AIDS awareness and counseling project directed towards churches and schools in the North West Province. However, the influence of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RSA/GKSA) - which does not ordain women - is apparent in the teaching and staff profile of both the Theological School and the Theological Faculty. The Faculty of Theology offers a

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2 Tukkies, too, houses three accredited journals under the editorship of members of the Faculty of Theology. They are HTS Theological Studies, Verbum et Ecclesia, and Practical Theology of South Africa.

3 This Faculty houses the editorship of an accredited journal, Acta Theologica.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
BTh degree as well as a BA in Pastoral Counseling and Psychology, at honours level a Hons BTh is offered, as well as a Hons BA in Theology. A Master of Arts (MA) is offered, as well as a Master of Divinity (MDiv), the latter admitting the student to enroll for a Master of Theology (MTh) and The MA (Theology) and the MTh admit the student to a PhD study.4

School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal: We now move from the four universities of Stellenbosch, Pretoria, the Free State and North-West where the theological training has been predominantly – but not exclusively – Reformed and Afrikaans, to the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal which is ruthlessly ecumenical and Africa-centred. The 200 post-graduate students enrolled in the Religion Department of this School come from twenty-two different African countries. Historically the School has a Lutheran connection. In the 1980s the Lutheran World Federation funded a chair in Theology at the UKZN from which the Theological Studies Department ensued, which eventually became the School of Religion and Theology. This School was a 2005 merger of the School of Theology at Natal University and the School of Religion and Culture at the University of Durban-Westville. In 2012 it amalgamated with other departments to form the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics (SRPC). No posts are anymore funded by the LWF. Apart from this, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) has established the Lutheran Theological Institute in the School with an agreement with the UKZN to second three lecturers to the University on a part-time basis, with Lutheran students benefitting from a remission of fees.5 On undergraduate the School offers two degrees, a BA with a multi-religious focus, and a BTh on Christian Theology, BTh Honours and BA Honours, MTh and MA in Religion and PhD in Theology and a PhD in Religion.6

Centre of Theology and Religion, University of Fort Hare: This Centre of Theology and Religion at the University of Fort Hare has a restricted number of students and a total of three lecturers. It offers a Diploma in Theology, BTh, BTh (Hons) and MTh. The course contents seem to be rather traditional but boast with innovative fields of learning such as African Theology and Religion and Empowerment.7

Department of Religion and Theology, University of the Western Cape: The Department of Religion and Theology at the University of the Western Cape too is a small department. At first it was a Faculty of Theology (founded in 1972) which focused exclusively on training ministers in the former Dutch Reformed Mission Church that was reserved for Brown people. This training has since shifted to the Faculty of Theology at the University of Stellenbosch. At present the Department of Religion and Theology at the UWC, that came into being in 2000, offers theological training to a wide variety of denominations. The Department offers a BTh and a BA with theological subjects, as well as a BA Honours in Religion and Theology, MTh and a DTh.

Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town: Religion has been taught at the University of Cape Town since 1967. The Department of Religious Studies at UCT offers a 3-year BA or BSc degree, Honours/Masters programme in Religious Studies, Research Masters in Religious Studies and PhD in Religious Studies.8
There are two institutes in this Department, the Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa (ICRSA) and the Research Institute for Christianity and Society in Southern Africa (RICS). Themes within postcolonialism and social history are researched here in novel ways. However, it is the International Religious Health Assets Programme (IRHAP) that captures the attention. It explores religious communities as assets to society for improving holistic health. This is also the single most important contribution of this Department to the renewal of religious thought and praxis.9

The University of South Africa: Theology has been taught at the University of South Africa since 1968. In 1980 the first black lecturers were appointed in the then Faculty of Theology, Simon Maimela and Bonganjalo Goba, as well as the first women lecturers, Marie-Henry Keane and Christina Landman, way ahead of other universities nationally. The training is fully ecumenical. It is the largest distance teaching university in the southern hemisphere, is done in three departments within the College of Human Sciences, offering BTh, BTh Honours, MTh and DTh degrees.10

Also in the College of Human Sciences is the Research Institute for Theology and Religion (RITR) that accommodates the Science and Religion Forum, exploring the interface between the natural sciences and religion, as well as the Forum for Religious Dialogue which pushes the boundaries beyond ecumenicity to interfaith dialogue. The RITR also offers short learning programmes for students with matric but without university exemption. The courses are directed towards developing leadership.11

Colleges and private universities

Since colleges and private universities that offer theological training are usually focused on ministerial training to a specific denomination, they will be discussed here more briefly than the above. All of them are registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training as private higher education institutions. Many of them offer degrees and are affiliated to one of the universities discussed in the previous section.

St Augustine College of South Africa is a private Catholic University. It was opened in July 1999 and is situated in Johannesburg. It consists of three schools, of which the School of Theology is one. Apart from degrees in education and commerce, this College offers a BTh (Theology), Bed Honours in Religious and Values Education, Masters Degrees in Applied Ethics, Theology and Philosophy, and Doctoral Degrees in Theology and Philosophy. Catholic membership is not a prerequisite for studying at this College.

The Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa, and the Cape Town Baptist Seminary (Baptist Church) was established in 1951 by the Baptist Union of Southern Africa. It, too, has broadened it narrow denominational focus to welcoming students from all denominational and church backgrounds willing to accept their statement of faith. Its courses are offered both full-time and through distance education. The following courses are presented: Certificate in Theology (1 year full-time, 2 years distance), Certificate in Ministry Studies (1 year full-time, 2 years distance), Diploma in Theology (3 years full-time, 6 years distance) AND Bachelor of Theology (4 years full-time, 8 years distance).12

The Cape Town Baptist Seminary is affiliated to the University of Pretoria, and offers a 4-year Bachelor of Ministry for students with matric but without university exemption, and a 4-year Bachelor of Theology for students with exemption. It offers the following postgraduate degrees: BA (Honours) (Theology), Master of Philosophy in Applied Theology MPhil), MA (Theology), and a Doctorate in Philosophy (PhD

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9 The accredited Journal for the Study of Religion is based in this Department.

10 www.unisa.ac.za/practicaltheology.

11 Of the 20 accredited theological journals in South Africa, seven (that is, more than a third) find their editorship at the University of South Africa. They are Old Testament Essays, Neotestamentica, Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae, Religion and Theology, Missionalia, Journal of Semitics and Acta Patristica et Byzantina.

12 http://www.btc.co.za.
in Theology). It has a special BA (Hons) and MA in Practical Theology. A Short Course in Christian Work and a Short Course in Pastoral Ministry are also available. The Seminary teaches full-time and distance, and also presents night classes.\textsuperscript{13}

\textit{George Whitefield College} (Church of England in Southern Africa) aims at training Christian Leaders of Africa. Situated in Cape Town, it was established in 1989. Since 1997 it is affiliated to the North-West University. This College offers a Certificate in Theology (CTh), a Bachelor of Theology (BTh), as well as Honours, MTh and PhD. A one-year Certificate in Theology is also presented. Training by correspondence is available.\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary} (The Methodist Church of Southern Africa) in Pietermaritzburg opened in September 2010 with 31 seminarians. The seminary offers BTh and BTh Honours in affiliation with the University of KwaZulu-Natal.\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{Theological Education by Extension College} in Johannesburg offers a Higher Certificate in Theology, as well as a Diploma in Theology. Students do not qualify through these courses to be ordained or licensed in any church. Students without university exemption often use the TEEC programmes as bridging courses for university admission.\textsuperscript{16}

\textit{Doxa Deo} is a large, independent charismatic church with 16 campuses in six cities in South Africa, namely Pretoria (10 campuses), Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, Durban, Port Elizabeth (2 campuses) and Cape Town. There are also campuses in London and in Auckland, New Zealand. Apart from a variety of short courses presented throughout the year, a three-year City Changers Ministry program is offered which focuses on ministry, leadership and life skills.\textsuperscript{17}

\textit{Christian Reformed Theological Seminary} in Bronkhorstspruit, 50 km east of Pretoria on Gauteng’s border with Mpumalanga, has the following four branches: Timothy Academy, offering short certificate programmes, Andrew Murray Bible School, presenting a two-year Diploma in Pastoral Theology, School of World Mission, offering short, diploma and degree courses in Missiology, School of Theology, that presents a three-year BTh and BTh Honours degree in Pastoral Theology and Ministry Formation.\textsuperscript{18}

\textit{Cornerstone Christian Institute} is situated in Claremont, a suburb to the south of Cape Town. It specializes in training lay people as counselors, community developers, and community and church leaders. It offers \textit{inter alia} (1) a two-year Certificate in Community Counseling, (2) a one-year Certificate in Christian Ministry, and (3) a three-year Bachelor of Theology (BTh) in Community Leadership.\textsuperscript{19}

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\textsuperscript{13} http://www.ctbs.org.za.
\textsuperscript{14} www.gwc.ac.za.
\textsuperscript{15} www.smms.ac.za.
\textsuperscript{16} www.tee.ac.za.
\textsuperscript{17} www.doxadeo.co.za.
\textsuperscript{18} www.cgts.co.za.
\textsuperscript{19} www.cornerstone.ac.za.
Introduction
Since the last few decades, a huge repertoire of new African Initiated Churches and Pentecostal/charismatic churches, are increasingly inserting and asserting themselves in the diaspora, particularly Europe and North America, as new abodes and promising mission fields. Their incursion is significant as constituents of the religious mosaic of these geo-cultural contexts, but also in contributing to their religious diversification. This chapter explores the proliferation, demographic spread and complex diversity of African Christian communities in Europe. It focuses on how and to what extent local, contextual factors are integral to the evolving processes that characterize their ‘budding theologies’. The texture of ‘emergent’ theologies among African Christian communities needs to be understood against the backdrop of the long durée of migration; the specific socio-economic and political conditions of the host societies; and the complex pluriformity of African Christianities vis-a-vis their interaction with the host religio-cultural milieu. Emerging theological discourses within African Christian communities in Europe are shaped by their constant negotiation between resilience, transformation and change¹.

Theological Perspectives of Migration: The Long Dureé Process
Much scholarship on migration often focuses on the salience of religion among immigrants in the new host society to the extent that it side-steps the place of religion and spirituality through the long dureé of the migration process. Narratives of African migration are weaved around the different kinds of people that move; the intentionality and stimulus to migrate; the realities of the local context from which they move; the anxieties of the journey to the unknown Eldorado (land); the dicey expectations of moving to a new cultural context; the realised or dashed hopes upon arrival at the temporary/permanent destination; contextual factors in the new abode of sojourn; and the global factors that shape international migratory processes in different historical epochs. The narratives of one phase or within one space/time are integral to and contingent upon our understanding of the entire migratory story. Thus, the emerging theologies, religious attitudes and motivations of African immigrants in the context of temporary/permanent sojourn is also often a reflection of religious/spiritual experiences and resources employed and deployed during the decision-making, preparatory stages of the journey and the liminal trajectories of the journey. Scholars need to pay more attention to individual life stories and institutional narratives that shape and mirror migratory processes.

The narratives of migration take due cognisance of documented and undocumented migrants; voluntary and involuntary migration. Some decisions to migrate are spontaneous while others are planned in and through a long time. In spite of the wide-ranging explanations for why Africans migrate out of their continent, the decision and preparation for ‘take-off’ hardly occur outside a socio-historical vacuum. The economic, political, social realities of a specific local context are quintessential for understanding the shape, volume and flow of migration in historical epochs. It helps to put in proper perspective why there is

more emigration from one region or among specific ethnic groups within a particular year than another or in one decade than another. It makes clear why some ethnic groups are dominant in the stream of migration than others. For instance, there are more West African (Nigerian, Ghanaian) immigrants in Great Britain than South Africans and North Africans. North Africans and Francophone-Africans (Algerian, Senegalese, Congolese, Zairean immigrants) are in their large numbers in France/Belgium. Lusophone-Africans prefer to live in Portugal. Somali, Ethiopian/Eritrean immigrants are in their large numbers in Sweden. The highest African national’s numbers in Germany are Tunisians, Algerians and Moroccans. It also partly explains the puzzle why Nigerians from the southern, eastern and western zones are more likely to migrate outside Nigeria than those from the north. Nigerian youth who undertake regular and irregular international migration are Yoruba, Igbo, Edo migrants, with their numbers far ahead of Hausa, Fulani and other stocks in northern Nigeria. Social (education) heritage, access to gainful employment, job opportunities and the structure of the political economy are partly accountable for this lopsidedness.

The socio-economic and political context for understanding the migration from Lagos and Accra to London, Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, Dublin and other European cities can be categorized under different historical phases depending on the colonial historical and linguistic connections, but also the local socio-economic and political realities of the African country in question. For lack of space I cannot provide a general historical, socio-economic and political background of Africa owing to the complex diversities of the context and its peoples. Nonetheless, such a backcloth provides insight for mapping the history of migration in and from Africa and the internal/external dynamics that shape the process in time and space. The geographical distribution of African immigrants in European cities on the basis of historical connections, national/ethnic configuration, socioeconomic and political exigencies, also shapes the demographic composition of African Christian communities in Europe.

The discourse on home of origin as the first point of departure in the migration process often undermines the rural-urban matrix. Most people who migrate or travel abroad do that from the town/city/urban context and rarely from the village/rural context. The urban space is rich with the infrastructure for travel by air, sea, and land. This is where the embassies/consulates are usually located. It is within the city/urban spaces that the networks, contacts with the migration industry, media information about the journey and the prospective abode of sojourn are brokered, circulated and consumed. In a sense, just as the urban centre serve as a magnet for rural migrants, so does it represent the springboard for prospective migration across national and intercontinental levels. However, the volume of migration flow within the African continent far exceeds that from Africa to any context beyond it.

The social contacts with migration ‘brokers’, the fear and frustration in leaving family and acquaintances behind, the huge ordeals in raising funds to travel and the uncertainties that characterize passport and visa processes, the religious impulse and experiences encountered in the preparation and take-off stage of the potential immigrant or traveller has dire consequences for the journey itself, but also implications for latter stages of the immigration process as well as the settlement and return migration. The transitory journey to Eldorado is itself characterized by its own ambivalences of liminality depending on the track or route that is followed. Transients are ‘betwixt and between’, in limbo, having left home but have not arrived their temporary or permanent destination country. As the liminal phase of the migratory process, immediate travel can be contrasted with long, transient movement. While ‘regular’ migrants may have a smooth sail/travel through airports and seaports, ‘irregular/undocumented’ migrants often undergo grave, harrowing experiences. Truncated journeys are often a common denominator of irregular migration. Such journeys are not always successful; migrants could be redirected, duped and repatriated. Both tracks however are unsafe and unpredictable, thus making migrants vulnerable. Irregular migrants in particular are vulnerable to inhuman treatment by both law enforcement agencies as well as organised criminal networks.
Some destination countries in Europe are more receptive to African immigrants than others, owing to their respective immigration policies and the facilities in place to accommodate them. Many Africans experience poor, inhumane, degrading treatment in the hands of border control agencies. Generally, European countries often criminalize and control migration flow when cracks began to be witnessed in their economies. The increasing politicization and criminalization of immigration often blurs the eyes of police/immigration personnel from easily distinguishing the ‘documented’ from the ‘undocumented’. As far as they are concerned, every African undertaking international travel is a potential ‘criminal’ or ‘irregular migrant’ until he/she is proven innocent. Several African immigrants recount woeful tales and experiences of being given shabby, inhumane treatment, singled-out for unnecessary random checks amongst multitudes of travellers, often stop-searched by police and security agents, unwarranted delays by immigration/police offices under the guise of thorough scrutiny of travel documents, and even sometimes ‘rude’ interrogation, intimidation and man-handling by some ‘notorious’ immigration personnel and police at international entry points (air and seaports). In this way, regular African migrants/travellers also become increasingly vulnerable in the hopeless search to impede the mobility of irregular immigrants/travellers. Many travellers dread such unwanton scenarios. As the European Union, through its harmonized immigration policies, team up across borders to crack down on people-smuggling, migrants chart new avenues to elude them. Thus, to avert any potential embarrassment and vicious ‘checks’, many African Christian immigrants embark on prayer rituals and tap on spiritual resources, patronise pastors, prophets, diviners, to ensure a smooth ‘sail’ and problem-free transit/journey to the chosen destination.

The final arrival at any destination in Europe will depend on the migratory track that was charted by the migrant. Regular migrants may arrive at destination point in no time, with just a direct flight or a transit through one or more countries. For irregular migrants, a few may beat immigration checks and make it through direct flights to destination. Quite typically, for others the travel may take some days to several years to arrive at the final destination. The volume of immigrants who arrive at a particular destination country, and how long they remain there, is contingent upon the prevailing immigration policies at the time, the nature of welcome and reception by the host country, perceived opportunities available, and the real situation faced by the migrants upon arrival.

Several African immigrants I encountered in the course of my extensive field research among African Christian communities in Europe and North America often recount their personal ordeals, experiences at various stages of the migration and settlement process. These peculiar encounters and experiences that African Christian immigrants undergo and gather through this transitory process are very instrumental and crucial to the kind of theology that is invented, constructed and maintained by immigrants who make up the majority membership of African Christian communities in diaspora. This coupled with the context of reception – the host immigration policies, the matrix of public perception, attitude of the host churches, and ways in which the religious communities demonstrate social relevance – partly explains the proliferation of African Christian initiatives and gives added texture to their emerging theologies. It is within these ecologies of migration that we can better understand the relevance and resilience of religion within African diaspora communities. First, I shall provide a brief glimpse of social, economic and political realities of the European context that has bearing on how these theologies evolve; and show how African Christians interpret the circumstances they are confronted with within these theologies, but also utilize their theologies as a coping, surviving and empowering mechanism.

EU Changing Immigration Policies: The Fate of African-Led Churches in Europe

Immigration laws, policies and strategies of destination contexts, such as EU countries, are hardly static or fixed. Policies on immigration mutate depending on the prevailing socio-political problems; national security question; and most importantly economic needs and emergencies, especially the quest for
sustained high-skilled manpower from foreign countries to complement an ageing, dwindling work force. As refugees are integral to international migration processes, legal rules on refugees constitute a significant part in the regulation of international migration.

Any claimed vibrancy of EU economies has been relatively short-lived against the backdrop of uncertainties and lingering crises. EU unemployment rates started to soar in the mid-1970s, hitting 10% by the mid-1980s. Since the mid-1980s, with few exceptions, the average EU rate has maintained its long time high level. Although some European countries such as Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria, Norway and the United Kingdom have experienced relatively low unemployment in the mid-1990s, unemployment and inflation rates in EU countries both have remained generally significantly higher than in the United States. The unemployment rate, representing unemployed persons as a percentage of the economically active population (employed persons and the unemployed), stood at 7.7% in the former EU-15 Member States, at 14.9% in the new Member States, at 18.2% in Bulgaria and at 8.4% in Romania. In December 2004, the EU25 unemployment rate stood at 8.9%. Unemployment rates were highest in Germany (10.0%), Spain (10.4%), Greece (10.5%), Slovakia (16.9%) and Poland (18.3%). Countries such as Germany and Sweden which experienced relatively low unemployment in the 1960s and 1970s are now high unemployment countries. The Euro Area (EA17) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 10.2% in September 2011. Eurostat estimates that 23.264 million men and women in the EU27, of whom 16.198 million were in the EA, were unemployed in September 2011. 5.308 million young persons (under-25s) were unemployed in the EU27, of whom 3.290 million were in the EA. The youth unemployment rate was 21.4% in the EU27 and 21.2% in the EA.

These staggering unemployment figures, coupled with the proliferation of public strikes and demonstrations in Greece, UK, Portugal, France, Italy, and Spain buttress the fact that the economic situation in many EU countries is very dire. The politics of ‘bail out’ of countries such as Greece, Ireland, and Portugal from enormous financial debts has drawn several EU countries towards the frontline of economic survival or abyss. Economic uncertainties provide legitimacy for governments to further tighten immigration laws which restrict the in-flow of immigrants. They also politicize the allocation of scarce jobs on the basis of citizen versus non-citizen, indigene versus foreigner. The public visibility and vocality of the ‘far right’, anti-immigrant groups is reshaping the political landscape of several European countries considerably.

The high rate of unemployment has dire implications for immigrants and foreigners, particularly the undocumented immigrants. Where job vacancies are available, discretionary preferences are employed. The prioritization of job places, which has become a fairly uniform process across EU countries, is to the disadvantage of African immigrants as they are ranked at the lower spine. A few highly skilled immigrants compete for jobs in the now very competitive market, with few hired to work within specific professions. Others access low-paid employment in the sub-economic sectors, menial jobs that are left fallow by indigenes and EU citizens. They hustle for jobs as cleaners, labourers, security attendants, taxi drivers, harvesting grapes and apples in farms, looking after aged people, house-helps, drug peddlers, street vendors. Many female migrants are introduced into transnational sex trade, nude and pornographic

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2 For unemployment rates statistics in the EU regions, see http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment/unemployment/.
4 Eurostat Euro-Indicators News Release, ‘Euro-zone unemployment up to 8.9 % (16/2005). Eurostat estimates that, in December 2004, 12.6 million men and women were unemployed in the Euro-zone and 19.0 million in the EU25.
business. Cities in Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, and Belgium represent the hotspots of these illicit business activities.

The vulnerability of African immigrants becomes more complex as they are on the receiving end of two enigmas. Within Europe, they are most vulnerable to unemployment while at the same time the locus of public vendetta and animosity. Shrewd European politicians engage anti-immigrant rhetoric to garner public votes especially from the ‘right wing’ and ranks of the unemployed. African immigrants are more vulnerable to random police checks, brutality and surveillance. This gory scenario is however not a totally hopeless one for all African immigrants in Europe. Pockets of African immigrants experience relative upward social mobility and can boast of good professional jobs. Some are integrating into European societies through naturalization processes. Nevertheless, a large cross-section of African migrants is less-opportune and remains perpetually in limbo.

This lingering socioeconomic and political climate in many EU countries has consequences for the proliferation and mobility of African-led churches in Europe. The physical, emotional and psychological trauma that many African immigrants undergo under these dastardly circumstances partly explains why African-led churches have assumed an abode of identity, security and community. It is within this and other similar scenarios of uncertainty, insecurity, shattered hopes and forlorn dreams of migrants that the church appears to fill a vacuum. As an informant remarks:

My best day of the week is Sunday when I am not on duty. The church is the place where you can forget these worries and problems. You are forced to dance away your sorrows and wipe your tears. They (members) are really good and friendly people who are always ready to help and assist you…I know one day these problems will become history because the God I serve is a faithful One […]

The role and place of African-led churches as spiritual vacuum-fillers, as spaces for socialization, and as engines for social, cultural and religious (spiritual) capital formation is important. In a limited sense, African-led churches in Europe assist to cushion pains and strains of unemployment by serving both as employers and as channels of information for job opportunities at both formal and informal economic subsectors of the society. Some are involved in the provision of spiritual and social services, thus transforming church vicinities as both religious (spiritual) and social centres, where religious rituals and extra-religious activities take place contemporaneously. It is against this backdrop that we can understand how theologies are forming and shaping within African Christian communities in Europe. I shall return to this question shortly.

**Typology of African-Led Churches in Diaspora**

African-led churches in Europe reveal a complex variety in terms of their historical origins, demographic spread, social composition, polity, ethics, and liturgical orientation. This religious repertoire can be distinguished under broad categories, that is, religious communities existing solely as branches or mission posts of mother churches headquartered in Africa; and those which were established independently by Africans living in diaspora. Through their outlets in Europe and North America, the latter are expanding to Africa and other parts of the world. In terms of their histories of emergence, belief systems and ritual traditions, a working typology that aggregates these genres can be outlined as: Mission churches (Methodist, Anglican, Catholic, Coptic, Orthodox); African Instituted Churches (such as the Aladura, Kimbanguism); Pentecostal/charismatic such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) and the

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6 Personal Interview with James Balogun (pseudonym) in Berlin-Mitte, Germany. 21 March 2001.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Church of Pentecost International (CPI) with headquarters in Nigeria and Ghana respectively. There are also several African-led churches which started in Europe including the Christian Church Outreach Mission International (CCOMI) in Hamburg; the Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) in East London; and the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations (formerly known as the Word of Faith Bible Church) in Kiev, Ukraine. There are also groups existing within European-led churches (such as the African Christian Church, Hamburg under the Nordelbian Kirche in Germany); and an increasing number of African clergy within or outside mainstream churches ministering solely to African groups. Supportive or inter-denominational ministries, para-churches, fellowship groups and house cells are also common. Freelance evangelists and short-term missionaries from Africa embark on frequent visits to a network of churches overseas.

Social-Ethnic Configuration

Most African-led churches, which came to be established in Europe from the 60s, were initially the initiative of individual students, or people on business and official assignments without intention of residing permanently abroad. This group made up of few members meet and worship together in ‘house cells or fellowships’ and later transformed into full-fledged branches, with some obtaining official recognition or affiliation with headquarters in Africa. The arrival of migrant families and the birth of children (first and second generation) has led to a major shift to long-term migrants. This no doubt has far-reaching implications on the status and growth of some African Christian communities. The social anatomy of the churches is complex and variegated. Majority of members are not illiterates, but elites of their countries or those who have ventured out in search for the ‘golden fleece’. In most recent times, the membership has being characterized by skilled and unskilled workers, the unemployed, asylum seekers and refugees. In terms of membership, African-led churches are yet to make remarkable incursions into the white European population. Many churches seem to lack a cross-cultural appeal thus leaving their membership predominantly African immigrants. That explains why some of them are labelled simply as ethnic or national churches. A few others have transcended racial-ethnic precincts to include non-Africans in their membership, owing to bi-racial couples, friendship and sometimes as a dividend of personal/impersonal evangelism. With such a socio-ethnic structure, African-led churches in Europe largely remain the locus of identity, community and security primarily for African immigrants.

The God of Immigrants or Immigrant God? Emergent African Theologies in Europe

African Christian communities present a robust religious demography as they continue to proliferate across Europe. The explanations for their emergence and expansion are quintessential in understanding their spiritual worldviews and emerging theologies. While their complex pluriformity, socio-cultural identities and fluid membership structures render the task of exploring their theologies very tenuous, it is useful nonetheless, to isolate some ingredients that shape these emergent theologies. Since most of these religious communities are relatively new in Europe, especially in the last three decades, their evolving theologies emerge out of ongoing contestation between resilience, transformation and change. A grasp of the action-orientatedness of African religions will provide a window for understanding the shape and texture of their cosmologies and theologies, especially when transmuted into new socio-cultural contexts. Most often, defining African religions from its belief system is akin to putting it upside down. Religion is usually not thought out in the agora of theology, but lived out in the marketplace of Africa.

In the diaspora, there is a certain resilience of the action-orientatedness of African Christianities that should not be misconstrued. The oft-depiction of African Christianities as ‘this worldly’, ‘conservative’, and as providing literal translations of the Bible is rather simplistic and fails to capture the internal
religious dynamic of the phenomenon. Scholars need to examine their belief paradigms and ritual worlds more closely to be able to unpack their particularities rather than relying on grandiose, external considerations.

Theologies are emerging from and built around the long durée of migration – the home of origin as a point of departure, the transitory journey to Eldorado, the arrival at temporary and final destinations, the circumstances shaping their lived experience of adaptation or resistance to integration, and even the imagination and illusory thoughts of return migration. Several African immigrants often take ‘their religion or aspects of it’ as hand luggage to the new cultural context. Thus, religious worldviews and ritual enactments of African Christian communities need to be understood against the backdrop of the particular life circumstances of immigrants; the specific social, cultural, economic, political and religious realities of the host context that shape their existence and life-worlds; and how and to what extent these has enabled them to contemplate, write, sing, eat, dance and do their theologies. Their theology is often not in the books but on their heads, thoughts, utterances and day-to-day actions and life modes. In actual fact, theologies are acted out from simple exchange of pleasantries ‘How are you?’ and the response it evokes among Ghanaians, such as ‘By God’s grace’; or Nigerians replying: ‘We thank God’, ‘God dey’, ‘E go better’, ‘We go survive’, ‘To God be the Glory’; or further as some Kenya-led churches are accustomed to responding: ‘I am blessed and mightily favoured’, ‘God is good’, etc. Such wide-ranging responses elicit narratives woven around day-to-day life experiences. That is why a casual, flying greeting such as ‘Hi’ or ‘Hello’ is often frowned at and not well appreciated as concern about a person’s welfare. It is indeed a matter of conjecture how and in what ways such theologies of ‘everyday life’, partly verbalised by African Christians, can enrich ‘classroom’ theologies often common among some western Christians.

What makes African Christians ‘thick’, or what shapes their theology of hope, empowerment and survival is not simply the ordeals in the host context, but also the incessant pressures from the home of origin. These ordeals can be of varying kinds and scope. These may include social and economic strains, the pursuit of legal documentation (visas, residence permits), hostility of neighbours, xenophobic tendencies within the host context, social and familial pressures from nuclear and extended family members and friends back home for ‘favours’, to send money (remittances) or other forms of assistance through unexpected phone calls and emails, the fear of witchcraft, suspicion of envious or jealous family members, friends, and neighbours, and the struggle to ‘succeed’ while away from home.

The ways in which immigrant’s experiences shape their religious lives, and in which their spiritualities speak to and condition their day-to-day experiences and expressions is illuminated by their narratives partly woven ‘between and betwixt’ themes of survival and security, adaptation and mobility. Such narratives are verbal contestations of a growing fortressization of Europe, characterized by the adoption of stringent immigration policies. The immigrant is not concerned at first hand with adaptation and integration but with economic, social, cultural and psychological survival. Thus, religion can be a significant part of a ‘survival-security’ strategy followed by an ‘adaptation’ strategy. Religion can reflect the suffering and the problems of the immigrants, and in some cases offering them an escape route and or a ghetto island.

Immigrants’ actions are to be understood in terms of their own goals, strategies established first in order to survive, and after that, to adapt or not to adapt to the new social milieu. There is a certain link between theology of hope and theology of empowerment in the diaspora. This brings to the fore the symbolic significance of a song/chorus that most African Christians hold dear to their hearts during worship services. By rendering the song below, the church vicinity becomes a space in which the theology of hope and security is sung to visibility.

Because He Lives, I can face tomorrow  
Because He Lives, All fear is gone  
Because I know oh, oh, He holds my future  
And life is worth the living

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Just because He Lives!
Because He Lives, We can face tomorrow
Because He Lives, All fear is gone
Because We know oh, oh, He holds our future
And life is worth the living
Just because He Lives!

The tensile atmosphere to which many Africans are exposed in Europe is one in which, real or imagined, individual and disguised forms of institutional xenophobia thrive. In the growing multiculturalisms of various European societies, Africans, particularly asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migrants become more and more vulnerable. Coupled with the prevailing expressions of dashed or rekindled hopes, frustration and disillusionment, there remains the consciousness that was best summarized by an informant ‘Witches do not require any visas to come to Europe from Africa’. The latter expression underscores the fact that indigenous epistemologies, such as the belief in the reality of malevolent spiritual forces, are rarely discarded. Rather, such beliefs and the ritual attitudes and sensibilities that accompany them are retained, reinterpreted in the face of new challenges. Immigrants are confronted with similar, sometimes more devastating, life vicissitudes as in their original home contexts. Thus, this ambivalent sense of hope, on the one hand, of self-discovery, empowerment, and social-economic mobility is juxtaposed with a robust feeling of hopelessness, frustration, and uncertainty, thus creating an enabling environment in which several immigrants reproduce beliefs, recreate socio-religious identities, and re-enact rituals. The lived experiences of African immigrant Christians shape their spiritual lives, just as theologies are constructed from these experiences and the reservoir of indigenous worldviews retained by them in their ‘new homes’. Thus, to have a firm grasp of how they are led, ways they govern themselves, parameters for day-to-day living and interactions with members and the wider society, it is important to see how and to what extent ‘religion matters’ but also how the local contexts shape processes of theologizing their life-worlds.

African Christian communities assimilate notions of the global; they make conscious and concerted attempts to reinterpret, reconstruct the cosmos that surrounds them via religious ideologies, symbols and praxis. They are conduits for the self-insertion and integration of members into the new environment. They also represent channels for reinventing and maintaining local, religio-cultural identities. I shall briefly examine this negotiation process through the prism of religious cosmology and ritual praxis.

AICs and Pentecostal/charismatic churches engage in self-description as bona fide Christian churches supplanting the lukewarm religiosity of mission-related Christianity. The Bible is accorded supremacy in matters of doctrine, faith, ritual and conduct. The bedrock of their belief system is the pre-eminence of benevolent powers – God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the legion of angels. At the same time, the stark reality of numerous malevolent spiritual powers is not of any contention. They renounce any rapprochement with occultism and traditional religion. Basically, many African-led churches share a similar mentality in their belief tradition, employing an indigenous hermeneutic of spiritual power but casting it within new conceptual frames of reference. In spite of claims to primacy of the Bible, the ritual cosmos of these new Christianities are evidently suffused with features that demonstrate some affinity with indigenous religious worldviews.

One index of affinity and continuity between African-led churches in diaspora and indigenous cosmologies is the belief in the reality of supramundane forces – benevolent and malevolent – on the other hand, and the ritual orientation towards these paranormal entities. There is the stark recognition of a dual cosmic space, although as intricately intertwined domains. This frame of thought is resilient in the ritual sensibilities of AICs and African Pentecostal/charismatics within and beyond their immediate context of
emergence\(^8\). However, a remarkable change lies in the constitution of this spiritual repertoire, as well as the agency and strategies through which ritual enactments are authenticated. The medium of and ritual strategy for control is what has changed. They continue to wage ‘spiritual warfare’ on the enigmatic forces through elaborate prayer rituals, prophecy, trance, visions and dreams. Although they vary on specific ritual emphases, most African-led churches are perpetually awash with ritual enactments.

Most African Christians, (un-)consciously, retain the belief in indigenous etiologies of diseases, illnesses and evil, although may have been enlarged through biblical and other frames of reference. Nothing is given off to chance or taken for granted, be it child birth, naming, marriage, infertility, academic examination, promotion, unemployment, acquiring visas and residence permits, xenophobia, death, dreams, accidents, sickness, poverty, loss of property, and homelessness. Virtually all events or actions perceived as ‘unnatural’ and ‘abnormal’ are often subjected to spiritual scrutiny. Illnesses that defy medical prognosis are easily interpreted as ‘spiritual attack’. As far as they are concerned, natural problems can be resolved through natural and spiritual means, but ‘spiritual’ problems can be diagnosed and solved only through ‘spiritual’ means. Barrenness or premature death is usually not treated as a natural occurrence. A person who experiences a prolonged state of unemployment reads spiritual meanings into it. In all circumstances, they hold fervently that an afflicted person must be healed, and the beleaguering malevolent powers invalidated at the same time. The emphasis given to ‘spiritual warfare’ makes their liturgical tradition a highly expressive action characterized by a heavy dose of rituals enacted to resolve individual and collective existential problems. Each segment of the ritual worship is full of religious symbolism and meaning. A few examples will suffice here.

The Living Faith Church (a.k.a) Winners Chapel, a Nigerian-led Pentecostal church package rituals to subvert spiritual ‘terrorist’ attacks such as sickness, unemployment, social insecurity, death, emotional stress, hunger, poverty, barrenness and virtually all life vicissitudes. They wage war against the ‘terror’, Satan and his cohorts through elaborate prayer rites, rituals of healing, deliverance, fasting, anointing, spiritual baptism and night vigils. As Bishop Oyedepo, the founder and leader of Winners Chapel remarks:

Many people hate to hear the word ‘battle’ mentioned for any reason. Whether you like it or not, whether you are conscious of it or not, battles are a part of our existence. We are all involved in warfare; we are born into it […] our victory in every battle is guaranteed in all ways and in every place. Interestingly, we are not the force behind this victory; God is. He causes the triumph. So, we are only instruments in His hands that He uses to fight against His arch-enemy. We are called into warfare, and thank God, we are at the same time, called into triumph […] Battles are real to life, salvation notwithstanding. That you have battles does not mean that you have missed God, it only means you are on the path of destiny\(^9\).

Oyedepo notes elsewhere, ‘The devil is a mind-blocker. He organizes programmes to blind your mind, because he knows that when your mind is blinded, your destiny is blocked and your future becomes uncertain […] the devil is very crafty! You can’t catch him easily, except you are spiritually smart\(^10\) […] Sickness and disease will be so far from their dwelling places. They won’t know the meaning of pain at all, but will enjoy heavy immunity by the presence of the Holy Ghost\(^11\). Many people are drawn to the Winners Chapel in their quest for answers to various existential problems believed to have been caused by the devil. This explains why the church is so much engaged in spiritual warfare.


The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) members also engage in deliverance, healing, thanksgiving, prayer, fasting rituals, and night vigils to counteract Satan’s evil machination. They claim that the Biblical warfare motif provides humans with ample instruments with which to thwart the enemy’s plans. Prayer, fasting, repentance, forgiveness, righteousness, and every other human behaviour that stands in obedience to God can be seen as acts of war and means of enabling God to accomplish his plans. This spiritual engagement and warfare motif is legitimized with biblical credence in Ephesians 6: 10-17 and II Cor. 10: 3-4. Enoch Adeboye, the RCCG General Overseer, isolates ten methods of spiritual warfare12. For the RCCG, this military-cum-spiritual offensive and strategy can only be achieved through total dependence in God by faith. It is a spiritual warfare that can only be fought spiritually and not through any mundane means. Adeboye recommends:

Do not wait for the enemy to hit you first; hit the enemy first. Every true child of God must be a terror to the devil and his agents. You must learn to take an offensive stance. If you don’t get rid of the agents of the devil in your life, they are likely to get rid of you […] You are to resist the devil steadfastly in the faith. Go on the offensive as soon as you know the enemy is around. God says our defense is sure. This defense is impregnable, so we are supposed to be aggressive […] Demons recognize and tremble at the name of Jesus Christ13.

The quest for spiritual fervour leads to the personification of certain illnesses as the outright manifestation of Satan. There are frequent references to the spirit or demon of disease, illness, barrenness, death, doubt, adultery, poverty, lying, and drunkenness. Jesus becomes personified as ‘Dr. Jesus’, a ‘divine medical doctor’ who is able to heal all ailments. Adeboye writes:

Everyone has enemies. The enemy can be sickness, sorrow, failure, poverty, death, other people or whatever is warring against you. The enemy tries to put the cuffs on you and rob you of the joyful life God has intended for all His children to live…Money is a defense. I pity those who say they don’t want to hear about prosperity. I pity anyone who preaches everything but prosperity. I am going to prosper. Poverty is a terrible thing. Your prayer should be that poverty should be a stranger to you14.

The paraphernalia of the devil is enlarged to include just anything that poses a roadblock to the attainment of good health and wealth. This lends credence to the multiple understanding and translations of poverty. It is also against this backdrop that prosperity gospel can be better understood and interpreted. Thus, there is a remarkable difference in this conceptualization as compared to understandings of prosperity gospel within American and European Pentecostalism.

The Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM), a church founded in Lagos in the late 1980s, has made a significant mark in global Christian circles through its ritual emphasis on deliverance, healing, and spiritual warfare. MFM’s demonology and deliverance rhetoric foregrounds the prevalence and continuity of local epistemologies of spiritual constitution and agency in MFM’s ritual cosmology, thus accounting for its popularity within Nigeria and the diaspora15. MFM represents a typical example of a Pentecostal movement that has its epistemological thrust and doctrinal emphasis on deliverance, holiness, miracle, and

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12 Enoch A. Adeboye, Arresting the Arrester – Catching the Enemy in His Own Trap (Largo, MD: Christian Living Books, 2002), 76-78.
13 Adeboye, Arresting the Arrester, 68ff.
14 Adeboye, Arresting the Arrester, 65 & 93.
healing. MFM’s self-recognition best eulogizes the tendency of engaging rituals as a ‘military strategy’ in which ‘an army of aggressive prayer warriors are being prepared in this end time’. Olukoya affirms,

As God’s children, we are supposed to do all our things militantly. We read the Bible militantly, speak militantly, evangelize militantly and pray militantly because God is not a civilian but a soldier […] The Lord Himself is a man of war. So when you pray, you are employing a very powerful military strategy […] Militant prayer must have power and fire in it.

Church literature and sermon genres are replete with an extensive appropriation of warfare rhetoric such as ‘warfare prayers’, ‘battle cry’, ‘bullets of fire’, ‘spiritual terrorists’, ‘deliverance by fire’, ‘sword of deliverance’, ‘prayer warriors’, ‘divine revolution’, ‘military strategy’, and ‘militant prayers’. Such phrases are suggestive of how beliefs impact their ritual system.

In spiritual warfare, African pentecostals generally engage the spiritual mapping technique in discerning cosmic-level spirits and the geographical areas, institutions, vices and objects that they are over as a step toward developing strategies to defeat them. The power encounter concept that is central to the spiritual warfare discourse is reminiscent of scriptural encounters such as that between Moses and Pharaoh (Exodus 7-12) and between Elijah and the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18). Healing and deliverance from demons are perceived as power encounters. While African Pentecostal/charismatics belief in the reality of these enigmatic forces that constitute terror, most western Christians would be skeptical not only about their reality of existence but most importantly what to do about them.

The resilience of indigenous cosmologies and ritual praxis is evident in the new African Christian diaspora where the churches mentioned above have numerous branches. Efforts are made to ensure continuity, and church members retain several practices as they face the same dangers. Witches, wizards and sorcerers are believed to shuttle across geographical boundaries unrestrained. As an informant remarked, ‘Witches and sorcerers do not require any visas to come to Europe from Africa. Some reside here, and others can come over as frequently as they have nocturnal assignments to accomplish […]’

Institutional racism and other xenophobic tendencies experienced by migrants are located under the portfolio of Satan. In fact, the ‘secularizing’ Europe becomes personified as Satan’s stronghold and the ‘Dark Continent’ in dire need of spiritual regeneration. Some Africans find their sojourn in Europe rather more complicated than they had envisaged. Prior high hopes of ‘survival’ on arrival in Europe are dashed. Under these conditions, many Africans find spiritual, psychological and material succour in African Christian communities. The prevalence of this- and other-worldly orientations in their ritual world renders the emerging theology experiential in many respects.

In some contexts, African (black) youth are most vulnerable to racial injustice and its violent attacks. They seem also to be the most volatile sector of African immigrant communities. In the face of this crisis that confronts young people with African descent, Ronald Nathan advocates for a black church with a pan-African orientation, in which its philosophical assumptions are Afrocentric, which would in turn affirm the primary African and Caribbean cultures of the said young people. As he opines:

Its theology would further liberate the black churches in the United Kingdom, at least from its obsession of wishing to please and be admitted to the mainstream, which normally is understood as white and Eurocentric. Such a theology will be contextual and will respond fully to the cultural issues of African-Caribbean youth in Britain. It will see art, drama, music, dance, and history as vehicles for reinforcing cultural orientation, and

18 A. Adogame, Engaging the Rhetoric of Spiritual Warfare, 505.
utilize these tools for spiritual, social, educational, political and economic change and transformation […] This would create a strong identification with black street culture, which is the most visible aspect of black youth in British multiculturalism19.

This tendency by some African-led churches in Europe of ‘wishing to please and be recognised or admitted to the mainstream’ is not unconnected with what I have described as the politics of religious networking20, a development which has partly resulted in the establishment of theological training institutions and Bible schools to train African pastors and church leaders. In the face of contemporary religious, political and socio-cultural realities, African-led churches in Europe are increasingly engaged in charting local-global religious networks to further their self-insertion and self-assertion in the host religious landscape. Networks among several churches exert an enduring impact both by engendering a sense of identity and security in these communities, they also facilitate African immigrants’ quest for legitimation within western societies.

Nathan’s clamour for a black church with an Afrocentric focus and pan-African theology was not intended to insulate it from the rest of the British society. As he remarks, ‘this pan-African and Afrocentric black church would develop long-term strategies with various black (African) communities for the leadership and development of their local communities. They can then act as buffers and mediators between governmental authorities on behalf of their members and their local communities’. In actual fact, he links this with the missiological principle of identifying people groups and then developing strategies for ‘inculturation’ and ‘cultural saturation’. As he remarks further, ‘missionaries have used such means of reaching other groups in the two-thirds world for decades. What is different is that it is now taking place upon European soil, and by people who are considered to be resistant to the assimilationist policies of European states’. One backlash, however, is the extent to which such an African-centred institution would go to facilitate the evangelization of white Europeans for which many mission statements of African-led churches have been carefully carved out.

Nathan’s model, coupled with the indigenous cosmologies that is described above are indeed dominant factors in explaining why most African-led churches have not made significant inroads into the minds and psyches of their western neighbours. Owing to long duration of services, loudness of services, language barrier and other cultural factors, some white European Christians, find unease in staying in churches that are African-led or where Africans stood in the majority. The stark reality of witches, the devil, sorcery and evil they often express in these communities do not seem to attract many Europeans. African-led churches have been criticized in some circles to dilute their cultural distinctiveness in order to accommodate western converts. Most churches are therefore split between assimilating notions of the global but at the same time maintaining aspects of their religio-cultural identities. A large cross-section of the European public often perceive African-led churches as conservative in a sense in which they are seen to uphold a literal, uncritical translation of the Bible. In reality this may not be the case. For instance, most African-led churches on the continent and in diaspora have a similar resolve on the issue of gay priesthood, gay marriages, homosexuality, cross-dressing, smoking and alcohol. As far as they are concerned, these issues are non-negotiable in that the Bible was very clear about them. It is against this backdrop that their stand in current global debates on gay priesthood can be better understood.

An important element of ‘doing theology’ is dialogue that is not confined to the seminary or the academy. Spaces of dialogue are empowering in themselves both in the varied levels of intra-religious networking, but also through weekly church programmes where they engage in theological reflection with

grassroots men, women, and even children through Bible studies group, house-cell fellowships, seminars and workshops. Most African-led churches ensure that theological ideas, values and beliefs are sustained and rehearsed in their branches universally through the appropriation of bible study manuals, Sunday school devotional materials, prayer books, hymn/song books, holy water, incense, anointing oil, annual ritual calendars, liturgical order of service and other religious paraphernalia. Most churches have appropriated electronic and print mediums in the transmission and propagation of their religious messages. Special programmes are transmitted online and can be viewed instantaneously. Recorded audio and video tapes of leader’s sermons and church programmes, Christian home videos are popular and circulate within African diaspora communities. Theological resources filtered through these mediums are accepted, critiqued and negotiated with existing theological ideas and values in Europe.

Besides the theological ‘laboratories’ mentioned above, some African Christian communities appropriate ‘classroom theology’ and institute theological training programmes through Bible schools and seminaries of their own. Several African-led churches in Europe have founded Bible schools or theological training centres. Also witnessed is the shifting interest towards participating in ecumenical theological and bible training programmes set up outside their churches. Two such forums in Germany where African and German pastors/leaders undertake theological training are the Missionsakademie (Academy of Mission at the University of Hamburg); and the independent theological programme in Essen coordinated by Claudia Währisch-Oblau and Gotthard Oblau. African participants in these programmes are drawn from the AICs, Pentecostal, mainline church backgrounds.

In Hamburg the Certificate programme of the African Theological Training in Germany (ATTiG) is one programme designed for African pastors and church leaders. Coordinated by Werner Kahl, the ATTiG programme ‘offers to ministers, men and women, and those who have other functions in African congregations and churches in Northern Germany – Hamburg, Bremen, Berlin – a curriculum of two years. The programme is organised as an ecumenical dialogue […] and is meant to support an interdenominational theological exchange. The Academy of Mission offers this programme, with sessions in English language, in cooperation with various mainline churches and the Department of Protestant Theology at the University of Hamburg. According to Kahl, in 2001 a unique program was inaugurated at the Academy of Mission at the University of Hamburg designed to provide theological training for African migrant-church leaders in Northern Germany. The program was the outcome of deliberations between African migrant pastors in Northern Germany and German theologians at the Academy of Mission, held in the second half of the 1990s. While some African Christians have benefited from this initiative, the programme is perceived by others as ideologically driven and not a bottom-up approach. ATTiG is sponsored mainly by the Evangelische Missionswerk (EMW), the Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany, virtually all instructors are theology professors of the University of Hamburg, none of which is African. Thus, the programme has been criticized as a paternalistic initiative that did not emanate from Africans themselves and so fraught with contradictions and an unclear agenda.

Through these and the other unofficial forums of theological education, some youth and women are becoming empowered in the new context as they name their world themselves, tell their own stories,
express their anger and hurt, and grapple with their thoughts and understanding. In this way African-led churches, through their numerous programmes and based on the specific socio-cultural and political contexts in which they operate, are evolving, writing and accessing a theology of their own. They train one another to write and contribute to such a theology. These developments need to be understood against the backdrop of the ‘conventional’ non-theological, educational background of many leaders of African churches in diaspora today, although a handful of them have studied theology in the very normative sense. With the growing proliferation of African Christian communities in Europe, the urgent need for contextually relevant theological education has become crucial. It is so far unclear whether the theological education required for African Christian leaders in Europe will simply be functional, holistic or one that is fused with ‘classroom theology’. The formulation, shape, content and impact of this theological education will remain for the moment a matter of conjecture.

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PART III

DENOMINATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH
(THE CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA)

Wedad Tawfik

1. An Introductory Word on Egypt and Christianity

In order to speak about Theological Education in the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, a detailed description of the background and roots of Theology and Theological Education in the history of this Church should be given. In actuality, the present Theological Education cannot be separated from the history of the Church, her theology, and her prominent fathers who played and still play a great role the formation of the church theology. This has to be preceded with an introduction on Egypt, the nature of the Egyptians, and how Christianity started in Egypt.

Egypt is identified in the Bible as the place of refuge that the Holy Family sought in its flight from Judea (Matthew 2:12-23). From that time, Egypt became the source of Christendom as prophecies say (Isaiah 19:19): “In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord at its border.”


This fact is recorded in history:

There were preliminaries to the preaching of the Gospel to mankind, and to the composition of the New Testament of our Lord and Savior. He Himself had prophetically visited Egypt, and the idols were now to be removed before His presence. There a powerful Christian School was to make itself felt for ever in the definitions of Orthodoxy; and in a new sense was that prophecy to be understood, “Out of Egypt have I called My Son.”

The Christians of Egypt are known as “Copts” and are considered to be the successors of the ancient Egyptians (the Pharaohs). They were known for being religiously-minded, a fact that later helped them to accept Christianity and satisfy their eagerness to know the true God.

2. The Coptic Orthodox Church (The See of Alexandria)

A Historical Background

The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria is an Apostolic Church founded by St. Mark the Evangelist and Beholder of the Lord “Theoremus”. St. Mark, as known from the Gospel, is one of the seventy Apostles (Mk 10:10), and one of the four Evangelists who wrote the first Gospel. He became the first of the unbroken Coptic hierarchy of 117 Patriarchs that extends to present day. The first of a stream of Egyptian martyrs, he was martyred in A.D. 68. The first church in Egypt therefore was named after him, and in it his holy body was buried. His relics, after being restored, in 1986, to Egypt from Rome, are kept in the New Cathedral bearing his name. The first thing a new patriarch of the Coptic Church has to do is to take the blessing of his tomb, embrace his head and clothe it with a new cover.


2 Copt is a word derived from the Greek word ‘Aibyptos’, derived from the word ‘Hutkaptah’ meaning ‘the temple of the spirit of god Ptah’ at Memphis, the first capital of Ancient Egypt.
St. Mark is highly honored by the Egyptians for many reasons. His family was highly religious and in close relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. His cousin was St. Barnabas, and his father's cousin was St. Peter. His mother, Mary, played an important part in the early days of the church in Jerusalem. The upper room of her house was the first Christian Church in the world, and is the place where the Lord afterwards instituted the Holy Eucharist (Mk 14:12-26). There also the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples. St. Mark was associated with the Lord in a number of events. It is not strange then that this great saint became the founder of the first church in the holy land of Egypt which was blessed by the visit of the Holy Family.

After a long missionary journey, accompanying St. Peter the Apostle, St. Paul and St. Barnabas in many places, St. Mark finally came to Alexandria in Egypt through the desert of Libya in A.D. 61. His ministry in Egypt was very fruitful: he ordained bishops, priests and deacons and he established the School of Alexandria which brought forth a large number of the great fathers of the church. He was the compiler of the Liturgy, which St. Cyril later added to, and which became known by the name of the latter, “The Liturgy of St. Cyril”. It was handed down orally until it was written down for the first time in A.D. 330 by St. Athanasius and handed to the early bishops of Ethiopia. Fragments of this Liturgy were discovered in Strasburg Papyri dating back to the fourth and fifth centuries. On it was written: “the Coptic Liturgy of St. Mark, or St. Cyril”. The same script was found in the Ethiopian language. Three manuscripts for this Liturgy can be found in the Vatican.

Before St. Mark, Christianity had been introduced to Egypt on a very small scale, through the Egyptian Jews who were present at the Pentecost (Acts 2:20), who, on returning home, conveyed what they had seen and heard about Jesus Christ to their relatives. Among those were the Alexandrian Theophilus, whom St. Luke addressed in his gospel, and Apollos of Alexandria who arrived at Ephesus and was described as an eloquent man with sound knowledge of the Holy Scriptures (Acts 18:24-28). Then when St. Mark came to Alexandria during the reign of the Roman emperor Nero, a great multitude of native Egyptians embraced the Christian faith.

Features of the Coptic Orthodox Church

The Coptic Orthodox Church therefore is one of the most ancient Churches in the world. It is over twenty centuries old, known for its spirituality, asceticism, and theology. Besides being an Apostolic Church, it is a Traditional Church that has carefully preserved the Orthodox Christian Faith in its earliest and purest form, and has been a strong defender of the Nicene-Constantinople Statement of Faith (Creed), handing it down unaltered from generation to generation. It is a Scriptural Church, deriving its teachings from the Holy Scriptures, and a Sacramental Church built on the seven sacraments, namely, Baptism, Chrismation (Confirmation), Repentance and Confession, Eucharist (Communion), Matrimony, Priesthood, and Unction of the Sick. It is also an Ascetic Church, as witnessed to by the early historians and in the works of Philo, as Eusebius attests: “The multitudes of believers, both men and women, that were collected there at the very outset, and lived lives of the most philosophical and excessive asceticism, was so great, that Philo

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3 Douglas, Dictionary of the Christian Church, 632.
4 His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, St. Mark the Apostle, Saint and Martyr (2nd ed; Anba Rueiss Print House, 1975), 9-50.
6 “The Liturgy of St. Cyril”, an authentic text of which is found in the Strassburg papyrus from the fourth/fifth century (Dix 1952: 217-222). Also introduced as a valuable relic found in a single codex of the twelfth century found at Rossano, in Calabria deposited in the Basilian Monastery at Rome, first published A.D. 1583 at Paris (in Ante Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, 551).
7 Oxford Dictionary, 860, in His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, St. Mark the Apostle, Saint and Martyr.
8 Father Tadros Y. Malaty, Introduction to the Coptic Orthodox Church (Alexandria, 1993), 16.
thought it worth while to describe their pursuits, their meetings, their entertainments, and their whole manner of life.”

The Coptic Church is also a suffering church that has experienced persecution and martyrdom over several generations. The Coptic calendar commences at the beginning of the reign of Roman Emperor Diocletian, at whose hands thousands of Christians died. Not only under Diocletian did Egypt suffer, but under ten other Roman emperors as well. In Eusebius’ history of the Church, we read in detail about torments under Severus, as well as many other examples.

When Severus began to persecute the churches, glorious testimonies were given everywhere by the athletes of religion. This was especially the case in Alexandria, to which city, as to a most prominent theater, athletes of God were brought from Egypt and all Thebais according to their merit, and won crowns from God through their great patience under many tortures and every mode of death.

Many more examples of Martyrs’ names and the details of their torture in the third century are recorded by St. Dionysius.

The Coptic Orthodox Church as the Cradle of Monasticism

Monasticism had a role in laying the bases for the Christian Theology. Christian Monasticism was born in Egypt and was instrumental in the formation of the Coptic Orthodox Church character, thanks to the teachings and writings of the Great Fathers of Egypt's Deserts. Many Egyptian Christians went to the desert during the third century, and remained there to pray and work and dedicate their lives to seclusion and worship of God. This was the beginning of the monastic movement, which was organized by St. Anthony the Great, Saint Paul the world's first anchorite, Saint Macarius the Great, and Saint Pachomius the Cenobite in the fourth century. We also hear about young women leading a life of virginity.

By the end of the fifth century, there were hundreds of monasteries, and thousands of cells and caves scattered throughout the Egyptian desert. A great number of these monasteries are still flourishing and have new vocations to this day. Thus the tradition of Coptic monasteries had quite a remarkable missionary influence.

All Christian monasticism stems, either directly or indirectly, from the Egyptian example. Great names in monasticism began in Egypt, such as Palladius who went to Egypt in 388, “to drink in the spirit of monasticism at the fountainhead”. St. Hilarion, disciple of St. Anthony, propagated monasticism first in Gaza then in Cyprus. St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Cesarea of Cappadocia, founder and organizer of the monastic movement in Asia Minor, had visited Egypt around A.D. 357. St. Jerome who translated the Bible into Latin, came to Egypt, while en route to Jerusalem around A.D. 400 and left details of his experiences in his letters. Benedict founded the Benedictine Order in the sixth century on the model of Saint Pachomius, but in a stricter form. Countless pilgrims have visited the “Desert Fathers” to emulate their spiritual, disciplined lives.

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10 Eusebius, *Church History, Book V, Chapter I*, 249 (other more detailed tortures in the same reference 329-30).
HER ROLE IN THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA
In A.D. 325, this ecumenical council was convened to resolve the dispute of the Arian heresy concerning the nature of Christ. Long discussions took place in which the young deacon Athanasius (afterwards Pope Athanasius the Apostolic) played a great part. The council ended with the formulation of the Statement of Faith (the Nicene Creed). St. Athanasius was afterwards known as the main opponent of Arius, and among the many invaluable books he compiled was a book entitled “Contra Arius”.

HER ROLE IN THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE
In the year A.D. 381, Pope Timothy I of Alexandria presided over the second ecumenical council – the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople – to judge Macedonius who denied the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. This council completed the Nicene Creed with the confirmation of the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

HER ROLE IN THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS
Another theological dispute in the fifth century occurred over the teachings of Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople. When reports of this reached the Apostolic Throne of Saint Mark, Holy Pope Cyril I of Alexandria acted quickly to correct this breach with orthodoxy, requesting that Nestorius repent. When he would not, the Synod of Alexandria met in an emergency session, and a unanimous agreement was reached. Pope Cyril I of Alexandria, supported by the entire See, sent a letter to Nestorius known as “The Third Epistle of Saint Cyril to Nestorius”. This epistle drew heavily on the established Patristic Constitutions and contained the most famous article of Alexandrian Orthodoxy: “The Twelve Anathemas of Saint Cyril”. In these anathemas, St. Cyril excommunicated anyone who followed the teachings of Nestorius, including for instance his teaching about the holy virgin that she is not the mother of God, and about the hypostatic union of Christ (Mia Physis tou Theou Loghou Sesarkomeni). As Nestorius would not repent, this led to the convening of the First Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431), over which St. Cyril presided. The Council confirmed the teachings of Saint Athanasius and confirmed the title of Mary as “Mother of God” Also, the introduction to the creed was formulated as follows: “We magnify you O Mother of the True Light and we glorify you O Saint and Mother of God (Theotokos) for you have borne unto us the Savior of the world …”

The Council of Chalcedon, and the Beginning of the Great Schism:
The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria regards itself as having been misunderstood by the Council, when it was afterwards accused of believing in one nature of Christ; as being “monophysites”. This was a wrong accusation which is refuted by the church in the exact words of Pope Cyril and Pope Athanasius. In actuality, the Copts believe in two natures, “human” and “divine”, which are united in one hypostasis “without mingling, without confusion, and without alteration”. These two natures “did not separate for a moment or a twinkling of an eye” (Coptic Liturgy of Saint Basil of Caesarea).

However, the Council's findings separated the Oriental Orthodox Church from the Eastern Orthodox Church because many of the Christians on the fringes of the Byzantine Empire, including Egyptians, Syrians, Armenians, and others rejected the terms of the Council of Chalcedon.

From that point onwards, Alexandria would have two patriarchs: the non-Chalcedonian native Egyptian one, now known as the Coptic Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of All Africa on the Holy Apostolic See of St. Mark (an oriental orthodox patriarch), and the Greek Orthodox Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of All Africa (an eastern orthodox patriarch).

Since the eighties, theologians from the Oriental (Non-Chalcedonian) Orthodox and Eastern (Chalcedonian) Orthodox churches have been meeting in an attempt to resolve theological differences, and
have concluded that many of the differences were caused by the two groups using different terminologies for the same theological content.

3. The Historical Roots of Theological Education in the Coptic Orthodox Church

The contribution of the Coptic Orthodox Church to the foundation of worldwide Christian Theology is very great and established by strong evidence. This contribution begins with the Theological Catechetical School of Alexandria founded by St. Mark.

The Alexandria of Apollos and of St. Mark has become the earliest seat of Christian learning. There, already, have the Catechetical Schools gathered in the finest intellectual trophies of the cross; and under the aliment of its library springs up something like a Christian University.

Alexandria becomes the brain of Christendom …… From the East it has obtained the Scriptures & their authentication and from the same source was deriving the canons, the liturgies, and the creed of Christendom.13

The Theological Catechetical School of Alexandria (the First Seminary)

This School has always been vibrant and can be regarded as the missionary heart of the church in which it opened itself to the whole world. St. Mark established this School in Alexandria, Egypt, as the earliest and most important institution of theological education in Christian antiquity. It encouraged the spirit of research and religious studies, and contributed to establishing the first system of theological studies in the whole world. It was indeed the cradle of the Christian Theology which brought forth great men who resisted the heresies of their age and dazzled the world with their deep faith and eloquence.

After the Roman Empire officially accepted Christianity in A.D. 313, Alexandria became a renowned center of learning, especially in theology. The School was essential in the education of both recent converts and future patriarchs of Christianity throughout the world. It had a very simple beginning, with informal circles or groups of mentors and catechumens who had to acquire religious knowledge as a precondition for admission to Baptism. This took place in two stages: the first was open to everybody as listeners, as we read in the writings of Tertullian and Cyprian. When advanced in religious knowledge, students were baptized as competent. Those catechumens were allowed to attend only the initial part of the Liturgy known by this name (Liturgy of the Catechumens). After this stage, they were admitted to the second phase, i.e., the Liturgy of the Faithful, held for the baptized congregation.

After some time, the initial phase disappeared and the whole educational process was transformed into regular classes with a prescribed study program, taking the shape of a school. It was parallel to the pagan institution of the Ptoleonic Museion with its famous library, from where almost all the scholars and philosophers from all over the world graduated. With the progress of the Theological School, the Museion began to dwindle until its liquidation in 415. The Theological School then grew tremendously in the first four centuries. Therefore, St. Mark had to compete with the scholastic studies of the pagan school by setting up similar scholastic studies of Christianity. That was possible to him because he was well learned, and knew at least the three most famous tongues at that time: Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.

The first Head of the Theological School appointed by St. Mark was the Scholar Yostos, who shaped the study process in the form of question and answer (Catechism). But as the program provided by the School was to serve the society, the School offered courses in religious studies, but also provided studies in philosophy, logic, medicine, engineering, hymnology, music and art. Its studies lit the way through the

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darkness of the pagan world. It attracted even the pagan leading philosophers who longed to listen to the lectures delivered there, and to discuss with its students.

An advantage of this School of the first apostolic era was that it accepted all students, whether they were masters or slaves, males or females, provided that they were known to be of good character and conduct, as the basis of their belief was the conviction that all are one in Christ Jesus. Thus, a good number of scholars and philosophers graduated from that school. Its distinguished deans and scholars were ecumenical figures who formed the Alexandrian theology and laid down the principle that the life of a seminarian is but a candle giving light to the others.

Some distinguished figures in history included the following (related and limited to the second and third centuries):

1. **Athenagoras the Apologist**
   
   He was a prominent pagan philosopher of the second century and author of many apologetic books. Thanks to the Christian Theological School, he came to love research on Christianity after having been keen on criticizing it and revealing its defects! Attracted by its mystery, he believed and loved the Christian faith, and was baptized in A.D. 176. He was the first pagan philosopher who became a dean of a Christian Theological School. He gave attention to the Coptic language, and added many physical sciences to the program of the School to attract the versed of paganism. “Athenagoras advocated the idea that the subtle, mysterious references uttered by the ancient high priests concerning the breaking forth of the light had at last been fully realized.”

2. **St. Pantaenius**
   
   St. Pantaenius was another dean of the School, a native of Alexandria, who was concerned about teaching his people and working for their salvation. He preached in India, upon their request to Pope Demetrius I of Alexandria, and there many believed through him. He was appointed by the patriarch as dean of the School before A.D. 180. He is known to have reformed and organized its curriculum by extending its program beyond purely theological subjects to most branches of the humanities. He has been credited with the promotion of the use of the Greek alphabet, instead of the difficult and antiquated demotic characters, which ultimately led to the establishment of the new Coptic language as the last phase of ancient Egyptian.

3. **St. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150 – 254)**
   
   A gifted author and a prominent disciple of St. Pantaenius, who succeeded him as dean of the School in A.D. 190 to 203, was St. Clement. According to historians such as Eusebius, he was known as the father of the Alexandrian Christian Philosophy, being experienced in education and in Greek history, and he became a zealous Christian theologian. St. Jerome described him as the most learned scholar of his time, who spared no effort in establishing the Christian Church on sure foundations. Socrates described him as full of wisdom. He was also famous for teaching and preaching. The volumes he wrote were very well known and full of knowledge and eloquence, the most important of which is a series of three books:

   1. Exhortation to the Greeks, an apologetic tractate, representing a call to leave paganism and embrace the Christian faith.
   2. The Instructor (or Pedagogue), on Christian life and ethics, comprising a call to turn Christian faith into practice.

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14 His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, *St. Mark the Apostle, Saint and Martyr*, 104-106. Father Tadros Yacoub, *The Coptic Orthodox Church as a Church of Erudition and Theology* (Alexandria: St. George Coptic Orthodox Church, 1986).

3. Stromata, which comprises a series of varied discourses containing a call to enjoy the supreme spiritual knowledge.

4. **Origen (A.D. 185 – 264)**
Origen was a brilliant scholar, an Egyptian, and the most illustrious of the pupils of Clement through whom his education was enriched. Under his presidency, the school reached the peak of its efflorescence. He also studied pagan philosophy and literature, and became acquainted with most of the eminent scholars of his day, such as St. Hippolytus. His works represent a unique and unparalleled attempt in the study of the Scriptures by one man. His amazing critical edition of the Old Testament, the Hexapla, in six parallel columns combines all the available texts in both Greek and Hebrew scripts. In theology, his most important work was *De Principiis*.

5. **Dionysius of Alexandria (Later Surnamed the Great)**
He headed the School after Origen until he became patriarch (A.D. 247- 264). In spite of the hard times he faced, he would compose a number of theological works.

6. **St. Didymus the Blind**
He formed a system of engraved writing for the blind fifteen centuries before Braille. He left us many books in theology, dogma and exegesis. He was praised by St. Anthony the Great and St. Jerome who translated his book on “the Holy Spirit” into Latin.

As evident from the above, Alexandria continued in the third century to be the head of Christian learning for the continuation and perpetuation of Christian faith.16

**Great Figures from the Fourth and Fifth Centuries**

Entering upon the fourth century, we may well pause to reflect upon what Alexandria has been to the Church of Christ, – the mother of churches, the mother of saints, maintaining always the intellectual and even the ecclesiastical primacy of Christendom.17

1. **St. Athanasius the Apostolic, the Twentieth Patriarch of Alexandria**
Athanasius was the Pope of Alexandria from A.D. 327 to 373, and the hero of the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325), which caused him many sufferings, including being exiled five times for false accusations.18 While still a young deacon, he had a deep influence on the church teaching and on the refutation of heresies. He defended the Divinity of Christ and was one of the writers of the Christian Creed which is followed by most Christians today. He asserted the equality of the Son and the Father “homoousios”, a term which was certainly a work of providential genius. From this time on, Alexandria vigorously emphasized the identity in being of the Father and the Son. Athanasius left a large number of works, including for example:

1. Apologetic and dogmatic writings, such as “Against the Heathen”, and “On the Incarnation of the Word” in which St. Athanasius presented the indispensability of the union of true God with true Man for the salvation of humanity through the life and death of Christ.
2. Letters, including Festal Letters and Doctrinal Letters.
3. Historic-Polemical writings, such as the “Apology against the Arians”.

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4. Ascetic writings, such as “The Life of Anthony”.
5. Exegetical writings, such as “Commentary on Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Genesis”.\(^{19}\)

2. **ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA**

He was another Egyptian sage who stressed the unity of the divine and the human natures of Christ. He was the Bishop of Alexandria (c. 378-444) when the city was at its height of influence and power:

Cyril wrote extensively and was a leading protagonist in the Christological controversies of the later fourth and fifth centuries. He was a central figure in the First Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431, which led to the deposition of Nestorius. Cyril is counted among the Church Fathers and the Doctors of the Church. His reputation within the Christian World has resulted in his title “Pillar of Faith”.\(^{20}\)

Although the Coptic Church has been unjustly labeled as being “Monophysite” (believing in only one nature of Christ), St. Cyril made it clear that the Church believes in “one incarnate nature of God the Word”, that is “Miaphysis”. In other words, the Coptic Church believes in the union of the two natures, the one fully human nature, and the one fully divine nature in one, without mingling, confusion, or alteration. This same wording is still held by the Coptic Orthodox Church today, and affirmed by her Patriarch and Teacher His Holiness Late Pope Shenouda III in all dialogues on Christology and in his famous book “The Nature of Christ”.\(^{21}\)

This clear belief is recorded in an important document in a meeting of the Oriental Orthodox Churches of the Middle East headed by the heads of these churches, which was held in St. Bishoy Monastery in Egypt in March 1998. It ended with a common statement of the Faith of the Oriental Orthodox Churches signed by their representatives, Pope Shenouda III, Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zakka Eiwas, and Catholicos Aram I, asserting their understanding of the Nature of Christ as indicated centuries ago by the holy father St. Cyril of Alexandria.\(^{22}\)

4. **Main Features of the Theology of the School**

1. The use of philosophical studies as an effective means to establish the Christian Doctrine.
2. The Christological terminology that is still in current use, such as: Hypostasis, Physis, Homoousios, and Ousia, is due to the great scholars of Alexandria.
4. The contrastive textual method of translation of both Old and New Testaments into Coptic, said to have been carried out by Pantaenus and Clement, an achievement that undoubtedly encouraged the spread of Christianity among Egyptians.\(^{23}\)

**Patristic Theology**

Being a traditional church, the Coptic Orthodox Church lays great stress on the early fathers and the patristic literature. The early Alexandrian fathers were more capable than others in defining theological terms and in expounding their concepts. Patristic literature is represented in:

\(^{19}\) Father Tadros Yacoub, *The Coptic Orthodox Church*, 72-78.
• The Ante-Nicene Period, which includes the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, and the major figures of the following years, including among others St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Cyprian, St. Irenaeus, St. Justin Martyr, Origen, and Tertullian.

• The period between the council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) and Chalcedon (A.D. 451), representing the golden age of the Nicene Fathers, most notably St. Athanasius of Alexandria, the Cappadocians Ss Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianz, Gregory of Nyssa, the Antiochean St. John Chrysostom, and the Latin fathers Ss Hilary of Poitier, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine.

5. The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria at Present

The Head of the Church, his Titles, and his Teaching

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III was the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church up to the 17th of March 2012 (the date of his passing away). He had the titles: Pope of Alexandria and the 117th Patriarch of all Africa on the Holy See of St. Mark the Evangelist; Successor of St. Mark the Apostle; Thirteenth of the Holy Apostles; Archbishop; Primate of Egypt, Pentapolis, Libya, Nubia, Sudan, Ethiopia, and all Africa; Father of Fathers and Shepherd of Shepherds; Hierarch of Hierarchs; Dean of the Great Catechetical School Theological School of Alexandria; Pillar and Defender of the Orthodox Faith and of the Holy Catholic (Universal) and Apostolic Church.

His Holiness was known all over the world as a peace-maker and great teacher of Christianity. He was awarded various prizes and honorary doctorates from the largest universities and institutions all over the world in acknowledgment of his distinguished efforts for promoting peace, love, and unity. His Holiness was keen on implanting the true Christian Faith in the hearts of His congregation, especially the youth, through teaching. By his efforts the Church witnessed the revival of the Sunday School Movement which now works very actively, as well as the Seminary and Theological Colleges which have extended all over the world. He encouraged research on all levels, and he himself was the author of over 150 books on dogma, spirituality, history, biblical characters, and exegetics. Almost half of these books are translated into English and into many other modern languages. In addition, His Holiness wrote a weekly article published in a Coptic newspaper (Watani) in Arabic and English. Besides, and in spite of his many involvements and responsibilities, His Holiness used to deliver a weekly spiritual public lecture (every Wednesday) until the end of his life which was attended in the Cathedral by many thousands every week, and also a weekly theological lecture to the students of the seminaries and affiliated institutes (every Tuesday).

He encouraged the ministry of women in all fields of ministry, except priesthood. A large number of female students joined the Seminary and the theological colleges and obtained higher degrees. Some have PhD degrees in Theology and some teach Theology in the Seminaries and Theological colleges. Nunneries spread in many parts of Egypt in his days with a good number of nuns, and he restored the system of deaconesses, where consecrated girls serve the church in many fields, without the laying on of hands.

The Coptic Orthodox Church Abroad

Over the past thirty years, the Church has spread all over the world, spreading her orthodox teaching everywhere and keeping her children steadfast in the teaching of the mother church. Since his enthronement in 1971, H.H. Pope Shenouda III has established over 150 churches abroad in North America (in addition to a monastery), in Canada (with a large Coptic Cultural Center), in Australia (in addition to two theological colleges and two monasteries), in the United Kingdom (with a large Coptic Center and a Theological College), in Germany (with a Theological College and two monasteries), in France, Austria, Italy, Holland, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, and Sweden, in South America, including Brazil,
Bolivia and Argentina, in the Caribbean, as well as in many countries in Africa, namely, in Kenya, Zaire, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa.

**The Coptic Orthodox Church and Ecumenism**

The Church is actively involved in official and unofficial dialogues with the major Christian Churches, as she had always been. Additionally, the Church is currently a member of the World Council of Churches, the Middle East Council of Churches, the All Africa Council of Churches, and other international, regional and local bodies.

**The Coptic Congregation in Egypt**

In Egypt the Coptic Orthodox Congregation represents about 90% of Egypt's total Christian population, with the rest consisting of various other denominations.

Traditionally, the Coptic language was used in church services, and the scriptures were written in the Coptic alphabet. However, due to the Arabization of Egypt, services in churches started to witness increased use of Arabic, while preaching is done entirely in Arabic.

The Coptic Orthodox Church's Clergy, headed by the Pope of Alexandria, includes Bishops who oversee the priests ordained in their dioceses, inside and outside Egypt. Both the Pope and the Bishops must be monks. They form together the Coptic Orthodox Holy Synod, which meets regularly to oversee matters of faith and pastoral care of the Church. Priests accomplish the ministry in the churches for the congregation, and they must be married, with some exceptions depending on the permission of the Patriarch, and must be graduates of the Faculty of Theology (the Seminary) before their ordination.

**Main Dogmas of the Coptic Orthodox Church Theology**

To the Coptic Orthodox Church, “dogmas are not merely theological concepts to be discussed among clergymen, scholars and laymen, but are, in essence, daily experiences which each member of the church has to live. In other words, dogmas representing our faith in God through various aspects have one message, our communion with God the Father in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, by His Holy Spirit.”

The main features of worship and dogma in the Coptic Orthodox Church may be briefly summarized in the following:

- The worshipping of Saints is explicitly forbidden by the Church; however, asking for their intercession is central in any Coptic service. Each Coptic Church is named after a Patron Saint. Among all Saints, the Virgin Saint Mary (Theotokos) occupies a special place in the heart of all Copts. Her repeated daily appearances in a small Church in El Zeitoun District of Cairo for over a month in April of 1968 was witnessed by thousands of Egyptians, both Copts and Muslims, and was even broadcast on International TV. Her apparitions have been repeated from that time to now in various churches.

- Seven major Holy Feasts and seven minor Holy Feasts are celebrated by the Copts. The major feasts commemorate the Annunciation, Christmas, Theophany, Palm Sunday, Easter, the Ascension, and Pentecost. Christmas is celebrated on January 7th. The Coptic Church emphasizes the Resurrection of Christ (Easter) and His Advent (Christmas). Easter is usually on the second Sunday after the first full moon in Spring. The Coptic Calendar of Martyrs is full of other feasts, usually commemorating the martyrdom of famous saints from the Coptic History (e.g. Saint Mark, Saint Mina, Saint George, Saint Demiana, Saint Barbara).

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
• Fasting is essential in the Coptic Church and not matched by any other Christian community. Out of the 365 days of the year, Copts fast for over 210 days. During fasting, no animal products (meat, poultry, fish, milk, eggs, butter, etc.) are allowed. Moreover, no food or drink whatsoever may be taken between sunrise and sunset. These strict fasting rules -- which have resulted in a very exquisite Coptic cuisine over the centuries -- are usually relaxed by priests on an individual basis to accommodate for illness or weakness. Lent, known as “the Great Fast”, is largely observed by all Copts. It starts with a pre-Lent fast of one week, followed by a forty-day fast commemorating Christ's fasting on the mountain, followed by the Holy week, the most sacred week (called Pascha) of the Coptic Calendar, which has its climax in the Crucifixion on Good Friday and ends with the joyous feast of Easter. Other fasting seasons of the Coptic Church include the Advent (Fast of the Nativity), the Fast of the Apostles, the Fast of the Virgin Saint Mary, and the Fast of Nineveh. Moreover Copts fast every Wednesday and Friday over the year, except during the fifty days following the Easter, which are considered days of joy.

• The daily prayers are the seven prayers of the Hours. In the Liturgies the churches pray for the reunion of all Christian Churches. In addition to prayers for the patriarch, metropolitans, bishops, and all ranks of priesthood, for the whole congregation, for the sick and the departed, they pray for Egypt, its Nile, its crops, its president, its army, its government, and above all its people. They pray for the world's peace and for the well-being of the human race.

Daughter Churches

THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Since the Christianization of Ethiopia in the 4th century, the Church of Ethiopia has come under the dominion of the Church of Alexandria. The first bishop of Ethiopia, St. Frumentius was consecrated as Bishop of Axum by Pope Athanasius of Alexandria in 328 AD. From then on, until 1959, the Pope of Alexandria, as Patriarch of All Africa, always named an Egyptian (a Copt) to be the Archbishop of the Ethiopian Church. On 13 July 1948, the Coptic Church of Alexandria and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church reached an agreement concerning the relationship between the two churches. The relations between the two churches halted for some centuries, until resumed again in 2007. The newly elected Ethiopian Patriarch, Abuna Paulos, was officially recognized by the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria in 1992 as the legitimate Patriarch of Ethiopia.

THE ERITREAN ORTHODOX TEWAHEDO CHURCH
Following the independence of Eritrea from Ethiopia in 1993, the newly independent Eritrean government asked Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria for Eritrean Orthodox autocephaly. In 1994, Pope Shenouda ordained Abune Phillipos as first Archbishop of Eritrea, and in 1998 as the first Patriarch of the independent Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church. Four bishops were consecrated by Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria to form the basis of a local Holy Synod of the Eritrean Church. The two churches remain in full communion with each other and with the other Oriental Orthodox Churches. Both the Ethiopian and the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Churches do acknowledge the Honorary Supremacy of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria, since the Church of Alexandria is actually their Mother Church.

The Coptic Orthodox Church and Theological Education

THE REVIVAL OF THE CATECHETICAL SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA
The Theological College of the catechetical school was re-established in 1874 by a decree endorsed by Pope Cyril V (1874-1927). It was appended to the patriarchate. Its objective was to prepare a new
generation of educated priests to assume religious responsibilities in the Coptic Churches. After several years the school was suspended, but not for long for in 1893 it was re-opened by the efforts of Hanna Bakhum, a member of the community council:

He devised a viable school curriculum consisting of a balanced set of subjects from the humanities and religious matters, to be distributed over five years. Arabic, Coptic, coupled with history, geography, and mathematics were made compulsory. But greater concentration on religious materials was the backbone of the curriculum. The subjects taught were theology, church liturgy, Coptic ecclesiastical jurisprudence, and church history and rhetoric.25

The school was headed in 1918 by a prominent Coptic scholar, Habib Jirgis, succeeding Yusuf Manqarius who introduced a number of reforms and alterations in its program. It started with the intermediate class, but then it attracted university students for whom evening three-year classes were opened. Coptic University professors replenished its academic staff on visiting assignments. In 1959, women were admitted to the school, which deserved its title as a clerical college.

One of the greater achievements of the college was the publication of the complete and authorized Bohairic-Coptic text of the Bible, in addition to other publications, including the liturgies. In this respect we must refer to the role of Iqladyus Labib and that of Pope Cyril IV (1854-1861) who had previously imported the second printing press into Egypt.

6. The Coptic Orthodox Church and Theological Education at Present

The Coptic Orthodox Church keeps the richness of her history, and is keen on conveying to the contemporary and future generations the same spirit and teachings of the Early Fathers. The main objective of theological education provided by the church is to continue bearing witness to the Lord Christ amidst the challenges of the new world, while preserving the traditions of the early church fathers.

His Holiness Late Pope Shenouda III had taken special interest in spreading theological education of all levels to all age groups, and in protecting the church children, wherever they may be, from any deviations. He was ordained by late Pope Cyril VI as Bishop of Ecclesiastical (religious) Education and was named as Dean of the Coptic Theological Seminary, and he continued, to the last moment of his life, fulfilling this ministry and teaching his congregation through public and theological lectures, seminars, books, articles and so on.

Theological Education in the Coptic Church begins with the Sunday Schools which are compulsory in all local churches. No church lacks Sunday Schools for all age brackets, including youth at the university stage. They have Youth Meetings in all churches, and here the youth receive their theological education in the form of lectures or seminars, with various subjects fit for this age bracket.

There are prescribed curricula for each category, which ensures implanting sound doctrine within the young and enable them to face the challenges of the present world. The curricula focus among other things on Bible Studies, Liturgical Studies, Patristics, Church History, contemporary subjects and challenges, problems of the age bracket and ways of solving them under the direction of the church fathers (the father confessors and guides).

Following the university stage, youth are free either to join general church meetings and post-graduates meetings, which also provide theological studies, or to join a seminary or a theological college to obtain a degree in theology up to the doctoral level.

Usually those who desire to be priests or who have a certain ministry in the church prefer, and are encouraged, to join the seminary or the theological college for a degree. His Holiness Late Pope Shenouda

III set graduation from the Seminary as a precondition for ordination to priesthood. He wanted to make sure that the priests teach sound faith, with no deviations that may be conveyed to their congregations.

THE SEMINARIES AND THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES OF THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA AT PRESENT

Those who study in Seminaries and Theological Colleges include clergy of all ranks, monks, lay persons, male and female, and a few bishops who join studies for higher degrees. The numbers range from fifty students to over one hundred in Cairo. A significant number of women (over one half of the number of students) join the seminaries and obtain higher degrees in theology up to the doctorate. Some teach in the Seminary and in the affiliated institutes.

The interest of H. H. Late Pope Shenouda III in theological education was evident in many ways: in his own teaching of weekly lectures in theology at the Seminary in spite of his many involvements; in supervising its work very closely; in providing it continually with efficient lecturers and professors; in supervising post graduate studies; and, mainly, in opening many branches all over the world.

There are already twenty branches of the Seminary, twelve of them in Egypt, and eight abroad. The twelve of Egypt are distributed all over Egypt, in Lower Egypt, and in Upper Egypt, with the principal Seminary in Cairo. One of them in Upper Egypt celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in 2006.26

Abroad there are eight very advanced seminaries. These are:

- Pope Shenouda Theological Seminary at Cedar Grove in New Jersey.
- St. Athanasius Theological Seminary in the Coptic Diocese of Southern USA, in Orlando.
- St. Paul Theological Seminary in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, which received the blessing and support of His Holiness in 2006.
- Pope Shenouda III Theological College in Sydney, Australia, established by His Holiness in 1982. It is the first Theological College established outside Egypt, and it also provides distance education.
- St. Athanasius Coptic Orthodox College in Mississauga (SACOTC), Australia, established by a Papal Decree in the year 2000, which has attained accreditation from the University of Divinity in Australia (MCD). It is one of the registered teaching institutions of the Melbourne College of Divinity, University of Divinity (MCD). These have guest academics visiting throughout the year to conduct special seminars, intensive units of study, and symposia. Students have three modes of study available to undertake the diploma in theology, either as an accredited award, as internal award or an auditor.
- The Coptic Orthodox Seminary in Stevanage, United Kingdom at the Coptic Center, officially inaugurated by His Holiness in 1997.
- Pope Shenouda Theological College in Krofflebach-Waldsolms, Germany, located at St. Anthony Monastery, established in 2002, supervised by Abbot Mikhail.
- Coptic Orthodox Theological Seminary in Johannesburg, South Africa, supervised by H. G. Bishop Antonius Morcos.

THE HIGHER INSTITUTE OF COPTIC STUDIES

The Higher Institute of Coptic Studies is a post-graduate institute dating back to the fifties of the twentieth century. Many of the Clerical College graduates take their advanced studies for the MA and PhD in theology with this Institute. Women likewise join the higher studies, many obtaining their MA, and a few their PhD. The Institute includes nine Departments and provides teaching in various subjects: Departments of Theology, Church History, Languages (Coptic, Greek, Hebrew, and Hieroglyphic), African Studies, Coptic Art, Architecture, Archaeology, Sociology, Languages, and Music and hymnology. Students, as in

26 St. Mary and Archangel Michael Coptic Orthodox Church, Houston, TX, The School of Alexandria, slides 23- 25.
the Seminaries, include clergy and lay, men and women, and all are university graduates. Women also teach in the different departments, including the Department of Theology headed by His Holiness himself. There is one woman holding a PhD Degree in Theology, and she teaches in this Department and in the Seminary abroad.

There is also the Institute of Pastoral Care which was established mainly for the clergy or those who are involved in any branch of the ministry, lay or ordained. It too has many female students who are mainly lay ministers or others interested in such studies. The number of students in this Institute sometimes reaches hundreds. It provides more specialized studies on pastoral care, counseling, social and psychological studies, theological subjects and others. This Institute plays a significant part in the formation of the students, enabling them to cope with the social changes in today's world and to use this knowledge in their pastoral work and ministry. Students are taught ways of interacting with the members of the society and benefiting from the gifts of the Holy Spirit to each of them for their ministry.

To join the Seminary and these institutes, which offer evening classes, a person should have a university degree. However, there is another seminary which is open to graduates of the high school, but study in it extends to four years. The curricula for the seminaries in Egypt and abroad are almost similar, with some differences according to the needs of the communities they cover.

There are also various institutes affiliated to churches providing free Bible Studies without giving an academic degree. These are fit for those who are interested in having in depth studies in the Bible and dogma without being restricted by a certain system or attendance. For instance, in Cairo there are two of these institutes, one in the old St. Mark Cathedral downtown under the supervision and leadership of H. G. Bishop Raphael who also delivers lectures there. The other is the Bible Study Institute in Shoubra Al Kheima, founded in 2011 under leadership of H. G. Bishop Morkos and managed by a father priest. Both institutes receive hundreds of students, and give a certificate of graduation, but not an academic degree.

THE CURRICULA AND PROGRAMS OF THE SEMINARY AND THE INSTITUTES

Bible Studies for both Old and New Testaments form the main program, as the Bible is an essential component in church life on both the communal and individual level. The study aims at making the students understand the relation between the Holy Scriptures and various aspects of the church life and to use the concepts and contents of the Scriptures correctly in preaching and for pastoral purposes.

Another branch of studies is Christian Doctrine. This is very important so that students become acquainted with the Christian dogmas according to the Nicene-Constantinople Creed, and the historical framework that accompanied the drafting and interpretation and definition of faith by the divine inspiration. This helps to translate the requirements of faith to the life of the church and the believers.

Church History is a main element in theological studies in the Coptic Church due to the richness of her history and her struggle, on this earth, to stay in loyalty to the Lord. Through this study, students benefit from experience accumulated in history and gain the ability to deal with the present and work toward the future in a way that best serves the witness to Christ. They are also able to receive from the thought of the fathers and transmit sound faith to the coming generations, to help them to live with Christ amidst the challenges of the present world.

This is related to patristic studies, which denotes the authentic tradition experienced by the early fathers and teachers of the church who became witnesses to the truth of the church as the body of Christ. This branch reveals the role of those fathers to the life and teachings of the church and their contribution to the church history and to the church today. The Coptic Church has kept sound and safe her teachings of the early church fathers, and the new generations are still interested in acquiring the theological knowledge from its original sources. This is reflected in the degree of focus of the curricula on the Church History and Patrology.
As the Coptic Church is Sacramental and Liturgical, the Sacraments play an important part in the life of worship of the Church. So, naturally this is reflected in any theological curricula introduced on all levels. The curricula of the Seminaries and Colleges of Theology provide clear knowledge of Sacramental life and go beyond the outward practices to the purpose of acquiring sanctification and conveying the traditions of the church to the new generations now and in the future.

Church Canons are very important since they lay the foundation for dealings among Christians and also serve as a main source of today's ministry and church law, especially in an Islamic country.

Language requirements are essential for any theological study. Hence the curricula usually include study of the Bible’s old languages, that is, Hebrew, Greek, and Coptic. This helps postgraduate students to conduct their research, depending on the original sources of the church fathers for interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. Modern languages are also provided on a small scale, mainly English and French, besides Arabic due to the need for it in preaching and most research work.

Technological Information with the rapid changes in today's world has become a challenge that every student, especially those preparing for ministry, should be well acquainted with both in the Seminaries and in the Institutes. The new world requires every effort to use the new technology for research work and in the ministry with open-mindedness, without compromising the church's teachings. A student has to be continually up to date with cultural changes taking place. Technology also has the capacity to support a student in translating faith creatively in response to diverse circumstances that emerge.

Thus the main subjects are:

- Bible Studies (Old and New Testaments)
- Church History from the first century to the present day
- Liturgical Theology (Sacraments and Ritual Practices)
- Comparative Theology (whether other denominations or religions)
- Missionary Theology
- Dogmatic Theology
- Systematic Theology
- Church Canons (starting with the didascalia and canons of the apostles, and extending to church canons on marriage and other essential issues of today)
- Patrology (deals with the prominent early fathers, beginning with the apostolic fathers and extending to the main church fathers of the early centuries)
- Pastoral Theology (leadership and management)
- Coptic Hymns
- Christian Education (Family and Counseling)
- Languages (Coptic, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic)
- Coptic Art and Architecture
- Iconography
- Information Technology
- Ecumenism (beginning with the ecumenical councils up to the fourth century, then the contemporary relationships with other churches)

Study in the Seminaries and Theological Colleges ranges from two to three years. A student should pass 72 – 90 credit hours to graduate and obtain a Bachelor’s Degree or a Diploma in Theology. For the MA Degree, a student should have obtained a Diploma in the field of interest, then conduct research work ending with a thesis. The same applies with regard to the Doctorate Degree, which should be preceded by an MA Degree and in-depth research work, ending with the thesis.

Faculty in the Coptic Seminaries abroad consists mainly of bishops, priests, and a few lay professors. In Egypt, faculty includes bishops and priests in addition to a good number of academic professors, including women professors in all branches of Theology.

Part III: Denominational Perspectives on Theological Education in Africa
COOPERATION WITH OTHER CHURCHES IN THE FIELD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The Coptic Church maintains deep relationships and co-operation with other churches in the area of theological education. This is represented in common seminars held between the Coptic Theological Seminary in Cairo and the Catholic Seminary, as well as between them and the Protestant College of Theology in Cairo. Also there are visiting professors from the Institute of Coptic Studies to the Protestant College of Theology, especially in the field of Social studies.

Moreover the Coptic Orthodox St Athanasius Seminary of Melbourne is accredited by MCD University of Divinity and there is cooperation and exchange of visiting professors from both sides. In Stevenage, UK, the bishop of the Coptic Church is the official envoy on the official Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Theological Commission. The church there is also part of the Fellowship of Coptic Christian University Students as part of the church’s service for the youth and the community.

In actuality, the influence of the Coptic Theological Education is immense. The first and main influence is on the people of the congregation itself, encouraging them to hold fast to their strong faith built on the blood of the early church fathers. This helps them to be strong enough to face the present persecution and martyrdom that has appeared again in Egypt, with a spirit of faith and trust in their God. However, this is accompanied by more open-mindedness in order to be fit for the challenges of the new world, and more openness towards other cultures and other faiths. Scholars and Theologians are encouraged to dedicate themselves to research work, to work toward realizing the unity of the body of Christ, and to find common ground and eliminate differences between the Coptic Orthodox faith and the doctrines of other churches and religions.

THE ARAB SPRING AND THE CHURCH SITUATION

There were expectations that some change was going to happen, but the speed and extent with which this took place was surprising to everybody. The church in Egypt was involved in the situation, because the new concepts of the Revolution were focused on Egypt and the Egyptians without discriminating between Moslems and Christians. This was a historic moment of unity among the Egyptians. Unfortunately this did not continue, because, due to illiteracy and poverty of the masses, the revolution was overridden by extremist Moslems who succeeded in mobilizing the mob. The church was faced anew with attacks, which included setting churches on fire, kidnapping Christian girls with the purpose of converting them to Islam, and killing of Christian citizens. The church is in a critical situation as is the whole country. With the rising of the Islamic trends and the expectation that the president will come from the Moslem Brotherhood, the Christians do not know what to expect in the near future since the Islamist wave will be overwhelming. The dominating movement seems to be insisting on establishing a new Islamic Nation by restoring the old Caliphate Regime!

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Comprehensive collection of Coptic hymns, articles, and information on the Coptic Orthodox Church
DeaconTube – A video sharing website for Coptic Orthodox deacons containing videos, articles, books, audio and other useful material
Downloadable Coptic hymns, chants, songs, liturgies, live webcasts, and forum
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Coptic Church History at www.St-Takla.org
CoptNet – The Christian Coptic Orthodox Church Of Egypt
Agpeya: Coptic Book of Hours Prayers
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Introduction
This essay provides an overview of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) and its traditional theological educational system that contributes to its ecumenism. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church, one of the earliest apostolic churches in the world, is an African indigenous Christian church dating from the first century. It was established in 34 AD under the leadership of the Apostle Philip, a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to the testimonial of Acts 8:26-40, was a baptized Eunuch who established the Christian faith in Ethiopia by converting the Queen, her royal court and the population of Aksum. St. Matthew, followed by St Andrew, guided by the Holy Spirit then came to ordain servants of God so that they could continue to preach and teach the word of Christ through their missionary activities in order to spread the faith. EOTC has more than forty-five million followers throughout Ethiopia and the rest of the world. The EOTC has had a traditional theological educational system since the ancient times of Christianity. In fact it has preserved its ancient Christian heritage which is a bridge from the Old Testament to Christianity (such as the Ark of the Covenant and the Old Testament books) including the Book of Eunuch which is found only in the EOTC. The traditional theological educational system was not only to provide church leaders who could fulfil their ministry, but also contributed to the development of the country in the form of government officials. The ecumenical history of the EOTC begins when it became a founder member of the World Council of Churches from 1948 onwards and has continued its journey with churches across the globe ever since.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church as One of the Six Oriental Orthodox Churches
Historians agree that the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) is the indigenous church of Africa. Yesehaq, the Ethiopian Orthodox Archbishop of New York, says that “the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church is indigenous and integral church of Africa. It is one of the oldest churches in the world, if not the oldest, and one of the founding members of the World Council of Churches, and has branches in other parts of the world.”

The EOTC is one of the six Oriental Orthodox Churches, the others being the Coptic, the Syrian, the Indian (Malankara), the Armenian and the Eritrean Orthodox Churches. These churches are known as the non-Chalcedonian churches. They do not accept the council of Chalcedon 451, which decreed that Christ had two distinct natures, the Divine and the Human. They believe that Christ has only one nature that is both Divine and Human, and that this union was achieved in the womb of the Virgin, and is inseparable and indivisible. Christ is completely Divine and Human at all times and in all actions, being fully God and fully Human at the same time.

It is important to correct some writers’ misunderstanding of the difference between the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches. For instance, Binns, in his article on theological education in...

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2 The Eritrean Orthodox church become autocephalous after the independence of the country from Ethiopia in 1993.
the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, says “Today it [the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church] has a membership of around 40 million, making it the largest Orthodox national church after Russia.” However, the Russian and Greek Orthodox churches are Chalcedonian churches, or Eastern Orthodox churches, while the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church is a non-Chalcedonian church, or an Oriental Orthodox Church, along with the other five non-Chalcedonian churches mentioned earlier. After the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. which condemned the so-called Monophysites, there arose a division which caused the separation between the Copts, the Ethiopians, the Syrians and Armenians on the one hand, and the Byzantine and Latin body of churches on the other. Thereafter it is only in the eleventh century A.D. that the Eastern Orthodox Church separated from the Western Church during the schism between the Latin and Byzantine. 

Ethiopian church historians divide the history of the EOTC into three periods: the pre-Christian period (before the Law of Moses and the period of paganism), the period of the introduction of Judaism and the period of the introduction of Christianity. The EOTC is one of the few pre-colonial indigenous Christian churches in Africa. According to Gerima et al the EOTC has more than 45 million members, 40,000 churches and monasteries, and about 500,000 clergymen, mainly in Ethiopia. It has been the dominant church in Ethiopia since the 4th century and is also the largest Oriental Orthodox Church in the world.


The EOTC has a long history. According to the beliefs of the Ethiopians there are many links between the Old Testament and Ethiopian history. For example, it is believed that the wife of Moses was an Ethiopian, and that the Ark of the Covenant is to be found in the city of Axum, Ethiopia’s ancient capital. Furthermore it is believed that upon the return to her nation from Jerusalem, the Queen of Sheba bore a child to King Solomon and this son later became Emperor Menelik I, founder of the dynasty that ruled Ethiopia for most of its history up to the 1970s. This is also confirmed by Gebremanuel et al.:

While in Jerusalem the Queen of Sheba conceived a child named Minelik from King Solomon and returned to Ethiopia. When Menelik attained manhood he visited Jerusalem, the land of his father and on a return journey he brought along with him the Ark of the Covenant, priests of the Old Testament and many of the Old Testament books written up to the time of Solomon. From that time on the Judaic faith with its teaching, the sacramental service and priesthood hierarchies entered Ethiopia.

Similarly, Yesehaq says that “until the time of the introduction of Christianity into the country, the form of worship was in accordance with Judaic practices.” To this day, the position of the high priest is linked to

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5 Wondmagegnehu, Aymro. et al., The Ethiopian Orthodox Church (Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Orthodox Mission, 1970), 121.
6 Melaku, History of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, 14, 16, 42.
7 Gerima, Abuna et al, The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church History from the Birth of Christ up to 2000: Ethiopia Stretches out her Hands to God (2008), xxi.
the Ark of the Covenant so that in Axum (the capital of the ancient Ethiopia) the Ark is protected by a priest especially chosen for this. “He is the heir to the office of Azarias, the son of the high priest Zadok, who was appointed by Solomon, to accompany his son Menelik I on the latter’s return to Ethiopia.”12

Gebreamanuel argues that the history as well as the culture and traditions of the people, are evidence of the “acceptance of the Old Testament faith by Ethiopia.”13 For instance, the church buildings in the form of the basilicas, the observance of Sabbath, circumcision, prohibited food items, the Ark of the Covenant are some of the religious practices inherited from Old Testament beliefs. Therefore, “Ethiopia is the first African nation to appreciate and worship the One true God of the Old Testament and adopt the Judaic elements … and to embrace Christianity and maintain the doctrine of Christ from the era of Apostles to the present day.”14

From the New Testament we also learn that an Ethiopian eunuch was the first “foreign” person baptized into the Christian faith. Historians believe that he was in the service of the Ethiopian Queen Candace (Hindake as she is called locally). He was baptized by Philip and thereafter introduced the Christian faith to his country (Acts 8:38).15 Many scholars agree that the apostles Matthew and Andrew also evangelized Ethiopia.16

Orthodoxy and Ethiopia

Although Orthodox Christianity became the official religion of Ethiopia in the fourth century, there had been a Christian presence there from the first century (Acts 8: 26-40). This is further confirmed by the writers of ancient history17 Rufinos and Socrates.18 However, for some “historical reasons19 and because Frumentius [the first Ethiopian bishop] was consecrated by Pope Athanasius, the Coptic Patriarch in 328 A.D., the Ethiopian Church came under the jurisdiction of the Alexandrian Patriarchate.”20 From that time to 1959 the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was under the patriarch of Alexandria, which led to a number of problems. The Egyptian bishop coming to Ethiopia, “whose native language was Coptic or later Arabic, arrived in his province completely ignorant of either Geez, the liturgical language of the Ethiopian church which he ruled, or at least Amharic, the language of his flock,… performing his functions through an interpreter….”21 In addition, it was difficult to immediately replace a bishop who had died with a new one. In view of the large number of believers in Ethiopia linked to the Ethiopian rather than the Coptic Orthodox church, it was decided that the former should consecrate its own patriarch as of 1959 (1951 E.C.)22. Thereafter the Ethiopian Church became autocephalous.23 The most recent, and lamented late patriarch, H.H. Abuna Paulos, who died in 16 August 2012, was the fifth patriarch of the EOTC.

12 Yesehaq, Abuna, The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church, xxiii.
13 Gebreamanuel, et al., The Church of Ethiopia Past and Present, 10.
14 Yesehaq, Abuna, The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church, xxiii.
17 Mahibere Kidusan 2003: www.eotc-mkidusan.org/English/OrthodoxForB/breif_his_ch.htm.
19 “…the so called 42nd pseudo canon (forged canon) of Nicea. The false canon which prohibited Ethiopians from occupying hierarchal position (the rank of a bishop) was inserted late by the Egyptians. It is not found in the original Greek or Latin versions, where the discussions of the Nicean council were documented” (Melaku 2008, 51).
21 Melaku, History of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, 52.
23 Melaku, History of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, 53
The EOTC’s evangelical activities, which began under the Ethiopian eunuch, continued with the ordination of Frumentius, the first bishop of the Ethiopian Church, who was consecrated by Athanasius of Alexandria in 330 as bishop of Aksum and of all Ethiopia. Having received further training in Alexandria, he was so successful in his evangelization that the Ethiopian royalty became Christians; thus he won converts and built churches. He taught Christianity to the Aksumite kingdom and translated religious books into Geez.24 Following this, the coming of Nine Saints from Syria to Ethiopia, owing to persecution, perpetuated the spread of Christianity in Ethiopia. These Saints contributed significantly to religious monastic life and schools both in and outside Ethiopia. Hablesilassie writes:

The coming of the Nine Saints inaugurated a new era in the liturgical life of the Ethiopian church and in cultural development in general. Music and art flourished. To Yared, an Aksumite scholar of the time, is attributed the creation of Ethiopian church music. He was a disciple of the Nine Saints. He composed music in three modes, which is still used in the Ethiopian church. The hymnary attributed to him is rich in inspiration and expression; perhaps it is one of the best of its kind in the Orient.25

The Nine Saints translated the Holy Scriptures which had not been translated during Frumentius’ time from the Syriac, Hebrew and Greek languages into Geez, Ethiopia’s ancient language; they taught about the monastic order and monastic life; they established monasteries in a number of places and strengthened the church that had been established by Frumentius.26 They conducted all their religious work in Geez. After their coming to Ethiopia, almost all the kingdom of Aksum was converted to Christianity. During this period Christianity spread throughout the southern part of Arabia as there was a close relationship between Ethiopia and Arabia. Therefore, the church recognized the Nine Saints as saints in the EOTC and established monasteries dedicated to their names. Thus, “the Nine Saints are well known because of their contribution to religious monastic life and schools in Ethiopia.”27 The deep and long history of their faith has strengthened and deepened the devotion of Ethiopian Orthodox Christians.

The early Ethiopian Christians used hewn stones to build churches excavating these structures from solid rock.28 In addition, the churches are strongly traditional, so that their faith and tradition have continued unbroken for many centuries. Yesehaq also confirms these points when he says “the Ethiopian people have made the church the focal point of their lives, devoting much time to worship and prayer…. The nation of Ethiopia cannot be defined without the church.”29

Despite this, the EOTC has faced severe challenges.

Time of Persecutions

In the eighth century, as a result of the rise of the Moslems who occupied the Ethiopian coast, the Aksumite kingdom lost its territories in South Arabia. The link with Alexandria was broken and the Aksumite Empire was completely cut off from the rest of Christendom.30

24 Wondmagegnehu, Aymro. et al., The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 4.
27 Melaku, History of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, 73.
29 See also Lule Melaku, History of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church: From the Reign of Emperor Caleb to the End of the Zagwe Dynasty and from the Classical (Golden) Age to the Present: Part Two & Three.
30 Yesehaq, Abuna, The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church, xxii.
31 Yesehaq, Abuna, The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church, 27.
The emergence of Yodit, a Jewish leader in the 9th century who occupied the Aksumite kingdom and was opposed to Christians and supported the Jews in Ethiopia, led to the destruction of Aksum and the burning of churches and much of the Christian heritage.32

In the 16th century, ‘Ahmed Gragn’ (Ahmed the left handed) rose to power during the reign of King Gelawdewos (circa 1528 – 1540). Ahmed Gragn led the Turks in a battle against the Ethiopian Christians. He was supported by the Turks to fight against the independence of Ethiopia and its Christian citizens. His army also burned many churches.33

In the 16th century Jesuits, Catholic missionaries, arrived and undertook an offensive form of mission to convert Ethiopian Orthodox Christians to Roman Catholicism, as a result of which many people died.34

These challenges and others prevented the EOTC’s official missionary movement from working outside the country. The Church, however, had existed outside Ethiopia since the beginning of Christianity. The monasteries established in Jerusalem and through the unofficial missionary work in Sudan are some of the testimonies of this. This continued and spread, and today numerous EOT churches have been established in western Germany, England, North and South America, the Caribbean, the United States and Canada, as well as some in Lebanon and the Gulf region. In Africa the EOTC can also be found in northern and southern Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda and South Africa. Often Africans and Afro-Americans use the name “Ethiopian” and see the EOTC as representing equality and freedom, the nation having never been colonised by Europeans.35 It is interesting to note what Yesehaq says in this regard: “the Jew needs to practice the rites of Judaism, the Western nations need to belong to the life of the great civilization; the African descendents too, want to identify themselves with the spirit of Africanism”36. It is perhaps partly this that led members of the South African Xhosa community in Eastern Cape Province to begin to join the EOTC in 1900.37 Today 15 churches and 50 priests and deacons, along with a great number of laity, belong to the EOTC in South Africa.

The Socio-political Impact of the EOTC in Ethiopia

Besides its spiritual work the EOTC has contributed immensely to addressing the socio-economic problems of Ethiopia. For instance, for centuries education was solely the responsibility of the church.38 Yesehaq adds that “the Ethiopian church is responsible for most of the civilization of the country..... The church is the creator of religious art and crafts, and literature as well as creator of the secular and theological educational institutions and their curricula.”39 Wondmagegnehu et al. confirm this, noting that: “until the 20th century church schools have been the only education agency in the country, both secular and ecclesiastical disciplines. Priests and ministers of the State were products of these schools. Lawyers, judges, army officers, clerks etc, got their training at church schools or in the monasteries.”40

33 Yesehaq, Abuna, The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church, 49
34 Hablesilassie et al, The Church of Ethiopia, 37.
36 Yesehaq, Abuna, The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church, 175
38 Chaillot, Christine, The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Tradition: a brief introduction to its life and spirituality (Paris: Inter-Orthodox Dialogue, 2002), 83.
39 Yesehaq, Abuna, The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church, xxii
40 Zerihun, Teshome, “Aksum after the Birth of Christ”, 128

Part III: Denominational Perspectives on Theological Education in Africa
St. Yared is an Old and New Testament scholar and a well-known EOTC musician of the 5th century. “He was educated in Aksum, composed … famous hymns for many occasions. The tones of his music have three modes, namely: Geez, Araray and Ezil. From that time till today Yared’s music is still used in the morning, evening and midnight services of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.” 41 The sources of St. Yared’s music are the Bible and the works of the Church Fathers. He praises Almighty God in His different forms of Creation. His music refers to “spring, summer, autumn and winter… [and] green trees, flowers, fruits, the summer sun and its heat, rains and clouds of winter, lightning and sunders, spring water, rivers, plants, and all nature in general.” 42 Yared’s music also includes hymns in tribute to the Virgin Mary, the holy Angels, holy martyrs and saints in general. Yesehaq says about the works of Yared:

Yared composed all the music used for the Ethiopian church’s chants and developed classical music art forms in the six century A.D. His works are skilfully rooted in the Old and New Testaments. The music all speaks of the Creation and prophesies and the life of Christ- His Advent, His Incarnation, Nativity, His great works and saving acts, His Baptism, Crucifixion, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and His Second Coming. Of course the music also reflects the national expression and ideas of Ethiopia and its people. 43

According to Zerihun, Yared’s book of musical compositions is divided into four parts:

• Diuga – a collection of hymns for the whole seasons
• Tsome Diuga – hymns used during the Lent and Me’raf is used on Sundays and other major holy days
• Zimare – hymns sung while partaking Holy Communion
• Mewas’et – hymns used during the prayer for the departed. 44

The fourteen anaphora, which the EOTC uses for its liturgical (Eucharistic) prayer, were composed by various church scholars, but the singing tones are also St. Yared’s work.

Theological education that remains based on the teachings of the apostles and early church Fathers continues in the Ethiopian Orthodox church to this day. In view of its close relationship to Alexandria, the teaching of the EOTC is allegorical. This is testified to by Habelasilassie when he says that “from the very beginning in the matter of dogma the Ethiopian church was on the side of the Alexandrian patriarch, who was opposed to the definition of the Chalcedonian Christological formula. Ethiopians, from the very early times of their conversion to Christianity had close contact with Egyptian monastic life.” 45 Gebreamanuel also confirms this by saying that “although monasteries are places of asceticism, their service to the society and country is not limited to praying. They have since long been serving as sources of ... education, church music and of study of the Holy Book.” 46

**Traditional Schooling and Theological Education Systems**

The church prepared parchment from the skins of sheep and goats and made ink from various plants to enable the expansion of education and the development of literature. The religious, historical and literary books were written by trained scribes. Ancient books have their covers prepared from wood and inside pages from parchment. These books have been preserved for thousands of years in the churches and monasteries. Therefore, churches and monasteries have been centres of learning where spiritual

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41 Zerihun, Teshome, “Aksum after the Birth of Christ”, 112
42 Zerihun, Teshome, “Aksum after the Birth of Christ”, 112
43 Yesehaq, Abuna, *The Ethiopian Tewahedo Church*, 24
44 Zerihun, Teshome, “Aksum after the Birth of Christ”, 113
45 Hablesilassie, *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270*, 112.
enlightenment went hand-in-hand with temporal education in the form of acquiring the knowledge of reading and writing. It is for these reasons that John Binns says that the EOTC is “one of the oldest continuous systems of learning in the world.” In the EOTC theological education has long formed the traditional schooling system, while today other theological colleges have been established to train future church leaders to fulfill the demands of modern society.

The traditional theological educational system divides the schools into five types:

- **Nibab Bet** – Reading School
- **Qedasse Bet** – Liturgy School
- **Zema Bet** – Music School
- **Qene Bet** – Poetry School
- **Metsehaf Bet** – Literature School

1. **Nibab Bet** – The Reading School or House of Reading. This represents the first stage of primary school where one can start studying the alphabet and mastering it. Hablesilassie et al. describe its function: “We find this school (Nibab Bet) almost in all churches and monasteries, in a number of villages and in the compounds of well-to-do landlords. It is a one-teacher school, with instruction given by a priest or layman with church education.” According to Hablesilassie et al. the prime function of the Nibab Bet is to teach children how to read religious books. Those who complete this class are able to read well and with their reading skills they study certain religious books such as the Psalms and others. Traditionally writing was not needed in everyday life, unlike reading which is necessary for daily prayer and participating in the church service. The Nibab Bet has a particular method for teaching reading and writing. Memorizing and reciting what a student has learned is part of this method. It continues to serve the community, because the governmental and private primary schools are more eager to enrol children who are able to read and write. Parents also are interested in bringing their children to these schools because of the religious morality that they impart, alongside the teaching of reading and writing.

2. **Qedasse Bet** – for the training of altar priests. Those pupils who have completed Nibab Bet (Reading School) join a Qedasse Bet (Liturgy School). This type of school serves mainly to equip priests and deacons with the required knowledge to perform the liturgical service in the church, because the activities of the priest are limited to the rituals, which usually do not demand the understanding of the Scriptures.

3. **Zema Bet** – the Music School. This forms part of higher-level schooling. As we have seen the Qedasse Bet provides training mainly to produce altar priests – those who may celebrate mass or administer the sacraments. However, certain additional activities take place in the church, such as reading scriptures before and after the liturgy, ritual dances called the “woreb”, reciting of poems etc. To be able to participate in these further services one has to attend a higher-level school of the church; this is considered an extension of the Nebab and Qedasse Bet.

A student who has completed the Nebab Bet or Qedasse Bet and is interested in joining the higher school usually leaves his parents’ home and joins other students who move from parish to parish or monastery to monastery to access scholarly teachers. The reason they often need to leave home is to free them from engagement in the demanding tasks of raising livestock or cultivating crops. Students obtain their food by begging from house to house during the day and attend classes at night. The main courses of

47 Gebremanuel, et al., *The Church of Ethiopia Past and Present*, 41
49 Hablesilassie et al, *The Church of Ethiopia*, 82.
51 Hablesilassie et al, *The Church of Ethiopia*, 89.

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**Part III: Denominational Perspectives on Theological Education in Africa**
the study are church music, church poetry, and religious literature, each of which has its own specific content.53

4. Qene Bet – the Poetry School. In this school “students are enabled to compose Qene poems which are sung in different sections of the liturgy of the church or used to celebrate church and state ceremonies. About nine models are known in the Samenna Worq (wax and gold) Qene system.”54 According to Hablesilassie et al. this consists of around ten types of verses: Ze-amlakiye which has three verses; Wazema with five verses; Nibeze with three long verses; Sillasse with six verses; Zeyieze with five or six verses; Kibryieti four verses; Itane Mogar with seven or eleven verses; and Mewadis with eight verses.55 These are not the only kind of Qene, but other types are not as widespread as the Samenna Worq.56

The students in the Qene schools are more interested and motivated than in other schools, such as the Zema, because it also teaches the Geez language to a high standard. The Qene lessons usually start in the afternoon or early evening. Pupils study in a common hut, sitting around the teacher or outside under a tree. They commence with prayers to be recited; then the teacher may make some remarks about the day’s work, following which the student must go and meditate to compose his Qene, returning to the teacher to correct his work.

First, the composition is made, for example, the story or legend of the saint whose feast is to be celebrated the following day. The story should be recited by heart as the Qene will pass judgement on it. Therefore, the student should know well the history and mysteries surrounding the story he is narrating. Hablesilassie et al. say: “this also challenges student’s intellectual labour.”57 Following the recitation, the teacher either accepts the verses that the student has composed, or offers critical comments and sends the student for further meditation. This is done until the student can present a correct version of his story.

5. Metsehaf Bet – the Literature School. This is the general term for the schools of commentaries that include four branches. The first is known as Blay. The 46 books of the Old Testament are studied and commented on in this branch. The second is Haddis, a school which specializes in the 35 New Testament books. The third one, Ligawint, presents studies and commentaries on the various writings of the Church Fathers and canon law (Fetha Negest), as well as the calendar calculation (Bahire Hasab). The branch of Metsehaf Bet study is Menekosat, the school that teaches commentaries on monastic literature.58

Hablesilassie et al. further say:

In these specialized branches the students learn tradition of the church, theology, church history and law, through the interpretation of the various individual writings. The commentaries of these teachings do not proceed under systematic theological or historical categories, but when each sentence or phrase of a text is interpreted, depending on the content, theological, moral and historical questions are raised, discussed, and developed. The student has to learn each sentence of the commentary by heart.59

According to Chaillot “traditional teaching is important because it is strongly connected to the Bible and it speaks about the mystery of God, that is theology, and through it Christian moral and spiritual teaching is

54 Hablesilassie et al, The Church of Ethiopia, 92.
56 Semenna Worq means wax and gold and is a term used to interpret the meaning of the mystery of what is said in a poem. Thus, wax is as the literary meaning and gold is the deeper message behind the literal message.
57 Hablesilassie et al, The Church of Ethiopia, 93.
58 Hablesilassie et al, The Church of Ethiopia, 94.
59 Hablesilassie et al, The Church of Ethiopia, 95.
given. As for qene, … it develops the conscience and renews the spirit."\(^{60}\) The pupils learn by heart since traditionally writing materials were not readily available. The few handwritten manuscripts on parchment were, and still are, very expensive. Another factor which does not encourage pupils to write is that "the student is not allowed to have a critical opinion about any text to be commented upon, since it is believed that God revealed the content to the Fathers through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, these patristic writings are not to be considered critically, but simply learnt by heart."\(^{61}\) Bakke notes that "critical comments and different views are regarded as heresy which must be fought by every possible means."\(^{62}\)

In the Metsehaf Bet, the historical interpretations are a mixture of legendary tales, special natural events, analogies, proverbs, and popular wisdom. Together these form powerful concrete lessons which can develop the religious and social understanding of the students. These schools of commentaries are not to be found everywhere – they are only situated in large churches, Debre and in monasteries.

All five schools described above continue to provide education in Ethiopia. The traditional theological education which has been given in the various types of schools is part of the training for the those who want to become priests or deacons, but some schools, such as Nebab Bet, Qene Bet and Metsehaf Bet, provide education to others too because many government schools are quite recent appearances. In particular, the Nebab Bet prepares young children for government school through teaching literacy in Amharic. This type of church school provides a crucial service in the rural areas and townships, where government schools are not yet available or are of poor standard, while kindergarten schools are only present in the cities.\(^{63}\) The EOTC is fully aware of the necessity of training future leaders to enable them to serve modern society. New theological colleges do exist which combine traditional studies with the broader curriculum demands of the twenty first century. Currently, the EOTC has the University College and the Higher Theological Seminary in Addis Ababa, and the Theological College at Mekele in the northern part of the country. A number of theological students have progressed to further studies abroad, after completing their studies at these colleges. There are also a number of clergy training centres in most dioceses, which serve to update the training of priests and deacons who had been ordained within the traditional education system. Hablesilassie et al. confirm that the church is successfully bridging the transition from strictly traditional scholarship to a new, dynamic era where traditional learning and modern will blend together to ensure the continuity of Ethiopia’s Christian heritage in the setting of the modern world."\(^{64}\)

The Ecumenical Relationship of the EOTC with Judaism and Jerusalem in the reign of King Solomon during the visit of Queen Shaba from Ethiopia, according to the Church, resulted in the Ark of the Covenant and Old Testament Books being located in Ethiopia. In addition, during the 14th century, as with churches elsewhere, Ethiopia was also believed to have received a part of the True Cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified, and the EOTC celebrates the commemoration of the finding of the True Cross at a feast every year on September 27.\(^{65}\)

The church of Christ is one holy, catholic and apostolic, and up to fifth century Christianity was one. This is the basis for joining in a common confession of the apostolic faith, cooperating in mission and

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\(^{61}\) Hablesilassie et al, *The Church of Ethiopia*, 96


\(^{63}\) Hablesilassie et al, *The Church of Ethiopia*, 96.

\(^{64}\) Hablesilassie et al, *The Church of Ethiopia*, 97.

\(^{65}\) Gerima, Abuna et al, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church History from the Birth of Christ up to 2000: Ethiopia Stretches out her hands to God*, (2008), 297
human service endeavour and where possible sharing in the sacraments. It is further confirmed in the Bible that “they may all be one” (John 17:21), “how good and pleasant it is for brothers to live together” (Psalm 133:1), let there be no schism (1st Corinthians 12:25). Based on these understandings, maintaining a good relationship with Oriental Orthodox churches and keeping up official and unofficial inter-Orthodox dialogue with Eastern Orthodox churches and dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church has been a long-held priority of the EOTC. The EOTC shares spiritual gifts like monastic life and apostolic tradition with other churches. This is further exemplified in the arrival of lecturers from the Indian and Coptic Orthodox churches to the EOTC theological colleges and in the teaching of Greek by lecturers from the Eastern Orthodox (Greek) church. Though sending EOTC students to various other countries for scholarly learning with other churches is part of the ecumenical relationship, the EOTC seminaries are not open yet for other denominations.

As mentioned earlier the EOTC is a founding member of the World Council of Churches and a member of the All African Council of Churches. Of late, the EOTC patriarch, Abuna Paulos, was one of the seven presidents of the World Council of Churches and Honorary President of the World Religions for Peace. The EOTC hosted the World Council of Churches meeting in Addis Ababa in 1963 of E.C. The EOTC is actively participating with other Christian churches in conflict resolution and peace building in and outside the country. It is witnessed that the late patriarch, Abuna Paulos received the Nansen Medal from the UN High Commissioners for Refugees for his work for peace and humanitarian cases in 2000. The EOTC is one of the major relief organizations in the country, more especially in youth and women’s issue and as regards HIV and AIDS. For all these social and humanitarian issues the EOTC has a development commission called EOTC-DICAC, which works with other churches and humanitarian organizations.

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Handbook of Theological Education in Africa


THEOLOGICAL TRAINING AND FORMATION IN THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN AFRICA

John Cosmas Njoroge

It’s fascinating to witness a vibrant growth and spreading of orthodox faith in sub-Saharan Africa. Few decades ago, it was hardly imaginable to hear of orthodoxy in Africa, apart from the Alexandrian Greek Orthodoxy, Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox Churches, respectively. However, today, local African communities are already active members of the Eastern Orthodox Church. This means that orthodoxy in today’s Africa is in an “active” mission crossroads, setting roots in the local communities and meeting African cultures. This means orthodox faith is becoming more significant in the life of the African communities. Therefore, a relevant theological training and formation for the priests, catechists, church leaders, lay men and women has become of paramount importance.

This article will focus on the history and theological formation and training in the Eastern Orthodox Churches in Africa. A historical survey will also help us to know more about the orthodox churches in Africa, theological institutions and how the orthodox faith is growing in Africa at large.

All that has to do with the Eastern Orthodox Church in Africa, as well as with theological formation and training, is linked to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. The Alexandrian church is known especially through its catechetical school. The Catechetical school, under the leadership of St. Clement has produced remarkable Christian thinkers such as Origen, Cyprian, Tertullian and others, whose theological reflections have formed the Christian teachings and dogmas. Over the years, since the Arab occupation of Northern Africa, with consequences of growing Islam expansion over Christianity, the Alexandrian school lost it influence and importance. Despite that, the Alexandrian Church still maintains the magnificent library and there is a catechetical school under the leadership of Pope and Patriarch Theodoros II. It has students from different African countries undergoing theological training and formation as they prepare themselves to become priests and future leaders in the African Church.

Eastern Orthodox Churches in sub-Saharan Africa are developing in almost every country in Africa. Most of the Orthodox Christians are in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Congo. There also strong Greek Orthodox Communities in South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The major theological seminary is in Kenya, while minor seminary schools (catechetical schools) are in Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria and Egypt. There is also a faculty of theology in the newly established orthodox university in Congo.

A Brief Historical survey of Orthodox Theological Training and Formation in Africa

There two main ways through which Orthodoxy in Africa is witnessed today. It is also through these two ways that theological education, training and formation has been offered.

After the Turkish occupation to Greece and especially in the islands, many Greeks left Greece and settled in other parts of the world including major African cities for trade. For example, the first Greek community to sub-Saharan Africa settled in Mozambique in 1899 where they did build a church and school in Beira. They formed Greek communities with their own churches, cultural centres and schools. In these schools

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students were learning religion (orthodoxy), Greek language and culture. Although for years these schools were for the Greek children only, there were special cases where Africans who had intermarried with the Greeks or showed interest in becoming orthodox Christians would be allowed to join. Africans who attended these schools learnt the Orthodox faith, Greek language and culture and proceeded for further theological studies in Greece or in Alexandria\(^2\). The best example is the Ugandan students who joined a Greek school in Moshi Tanzania. This school belonged to a Greek community of sisal farmers and they had a Greek priest by the name Fr. Nikodemos Sarikas, who cooperated with Fr. Ruben Mukasa Spartas of the Orthodox Church in Uganda\(^3\). Some of these students went to Greece where they studied theology either in the university of Athens or Aristotle university of Thessaloniki. The presence of these African students in Greece had a very big impact in the entire Orthodox Church worldwide. In fact, their presence rekindled once the forgotten or inactive aspect of the Orthodox missionary work. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware believes that it is through Africans that the awareness of the missionary dimension of the church has been rekindled.\(^4\) The best examples are:

1. When Fr. Spartas visited Egypt in 1946 and Greece in 1959, respectively. Sparta’s visit had a very strong impact on the Greek Church and from this visit Ugandan students were granted scholarship by the Greek government to study theology in Athens and in Thessaloniki. Following the presence of African students in Greece, mission awareness and teaching started becoming more interesting in the Greek Church and Greek people started volunteering themselves as missionaries in Africa. A department of mission studies was created in the University of Athens. Also, missionary organizations such as the Apostolic Diakonia of the church of Greece, formally «Πορευθέντες» (Go Ye Mat 28:19) under the leadership of present Archbishop Anastasios of Albania, Orthodox Missionary Fraternity of Thessaloniki (formerly known as: Οἱ Φίλοι τῆς Οὐγκάντα Βορείου Ελλαδός, translated as Friends of Uganda Northern Greece) were formed.

2. When Fr. Theodore Nankyamas also extended his connections to America in 1965 and later to Finland influenced many parishes and more the youth groups-pledging themselves to prayer and financial help. It is through his appeal the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) in U.S.A was formed. Up to the present day, OCMC has continued to send American missionaries in Africa and offering scholarships to African orthodox students to study theology in Holy Cross Greek Theological seminary in Boston.\(^6\) It is through such grounds some of the African orthodox Archbishops, priests and theologians have acquired their theological training.

3. Following the State visit of the later president and Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus, in 1970, he told the Cypriot newspaper: “…What especially moved me is the fact that in the Eastern region of Africa there are thousands of Africans who follow the Orthodox faith… During my three-day stay in Kenya, I conducted mass baptism of some 5,000 natives in two towns (Waithaka and Nyeri). It can be said that there has been no similar event since the Christianization of the Slavs…”\(^7\) this visit made the church of Cyprus to become very active in missionary work especially in Kenya.

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\(^4\) Kallistos Timothy Ware (Metropolitan of Diokleia), *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 190.


\(^6\) For further details see OCMC website, [Http://www.ocmc.org](http://www.ocmc.org).

It is important not to forget to mention the missionary efforts by the churches of Greece (especially through missionary organization like, Apostoliki Diakonia, External Orthodox Missionary Fraternity of Thessaloniki and St. Cosmas Missionary Organization, Thessaloniki), Cyprus, Finland and Australia. Such efforts are offering scholarship to students from Africa, not only to study theology but also other disciplines like education, medicine and business studies. We have witnessed missionaries from these countries visiting African countries and opening primary and secondary schools, colleges and medical centers, which are not only attend by Orthodox Christians but also by members of other denominations. The best example is in Kenya where, through donations from the Orthodox Church in Australia, the Orthodox Teachers’ College of Africa is offering business courses and Early Childhood Education.

II

Through the initiatives of Africans themselves, especially in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ghana, orthodoxy planted its roots in these countries after the native Christians protested against the so-called mission churches in 1930’s. After breaking away from the mission churches, they founded their own African Independent Churches (A.I.Cs) or the so-called African Instituted Churches or African Initiatives in Christianity. The AICs started as new form of mission within the churches, but not to be a problem for the mission of a church, as the Western European and North American mission churches regarded it. The AICs appeared to have understood their emerging role and work along with the missions not primarily as a ‘Protest’, but as an extension of their activities and even a translation of the Gospel to the African spiritual realities.

In most of the African countries, especially during the colonial era, education was under the Christian missionaries. This means that for those who protested against the mission churches, they would not be accepted in the mission schools. The best example is in Kenya where the Alliance of all Protestant Missions formally formed in 1918, under the leadership of Dr. Arthur of Church Scottish Mission, today the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, rejected all those who wanted to adhere to the Kikuyu cultural practices because to him, these practices were “evil” customs and were “to be abandoned by all Christians”. Consequently, those who were rejected in these churches were to find a solution as far as education is concerned. They formed independent schools whereby surprisingly, the schools not only survived but vigorously expanded locally, financed by natives. Within five years there was a record of 54 independent schools with 7,223 pupils in Kiambu and Murang’a districts. Apart from tremendous growth of independent schools and churches they encountered a number of difficulties. One is lack of qualified and sufficient teaching staff. In order to solve the problem of training teachers, the AICs churches in Kiambu, namely (Kikuyu, Independent School Association (KISA) and Kikuyu karinga Education Association (KKEA), which later become the Orthodox Church, unanimously agreed to fund an independent teachers’ college at Githunguri. A local newspaper confirms:

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8 Aslanidis Demotrios and Damascene Grigoratis, Apostle to Zaire; The Life and Legacy of Blessed Cosmos of Grigoriou (Thessaloniki: UNCUt Mountain Press, 2001), 34-105.
13 See Colony of Kenya, Education Department, Annual Report, 1937, found in the National Archives Nairobi.
14 Welbourn, East African Rebel, 153
Establishment of the said college came as a result of long-felt need for the trained teachers in elementary, primary and secondary schools in every tribe throughout the country. The president of the Independent School Association and the landowner of Githunguri gave the buildings and the land to the Africans for the purpose of establishing the Kenya African Teachers College.\textsuperscript{15}

This shows that education was part of the mission of the AICs and they wanted to education in order to be able to solve some of the intriguing political, economical and religious problems through education. Most of the Africans felt that the education offered in mission schools was denying them the ability to satisfy their aspirations\textsuperscript{16}. The aspirations of these African men and women were to provide alternatives to the dominant mission education that aimed to deepen the colonial slavery of the African mind. Africans on the other hand aimed to decolonize themselves through a more progressive education. A progressive education aimed to equip the Africans with the skills needed to solve some of their political problems and enhance development and modernization, an exit leading to freedom and independence.

Apart from the secular education, the AICs in Kenya, Uganda, and South Africa also provided theological education. According to their history it was not easy to have their followers trained theologically. This is because education was under the mission churches against which they had protested, therefore there was no way they could have accessed a theological education. For example in July 1933, Daudi Maina Kiragû, the chairman of the Independent School Committee in Kenya, wrote to the Anglican Bishop Leonard Beecher of Mombasa, asking if they might send two men to be trained as ministers at St. Paul Theological College Limuru (today St. Paul University) “to be taught how to baptize in our schools”\textsuperscript{17} he further requested: “and if in the meantime, he (the Bishop) would send a good African to baptize our people who are ready for baptism”.\textsuperscript{18}

On 13-16 October 1933, a special conference of all missions was called to respond to the independent schools' request. It seems the response from the conference was less fruitful, according to Kiragû's report:

In these troubled days we reckoned that religion was necessary to a good and progressive educational system. We found it necessary to have churches where we could pray everyday to our creator and father. We thought of places where our people could train as ministers so that they could teach others about God and his son Jesus Christ. The need for clergy of our own was obvious in these troubled days, since none of the clergy come to our help...\textsuperscript{19}

Apparently, the AICs had to keep trying different ways to have their priests trained outside the mainstream mission churches. Consequently, the independent churches in Kenya and Uganda, which later became Orthodox Church, requested theological education from the African Orthodox Church in American in the Province of South Africa under the leadership of Archbishop Daniel William Alexander. The coming of the African Orthodox church in America (AOCA) into East Africa occurred through the sole efforts of Reuben Mukasa Spartas of Uganda. Reuben Mukasa Spartas by then had broken with the Anglican Church of Uganda and had progressively formed a Christian community free from the mission control and

\textsuperscript{17} “Kahuhia conference, 1933”, CMS, Office Nairobi. There were seven KISA schools in the Fort Hall at this time and four Karingà independent schools.
\textsuperscript{18} Welbourn, \textit{The East African Rebels}, 147.
paternalism.\textsuperscript{20} His inspirations were to affiliate his community within a church that would satisfy his people’s social-religious and economic-political dissatisfaction experienced in their former mission Churches. Following his reading as a head teacher and a librarian in the Bishop’s school library, he came across church history where he became informed about the Orthodox Church.\textsuperscript{21} He came into contact with “The Negro World” a publication by Marcus Garvey, the leader of Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).\textsuperscript{22} Reading about the movement and its objectives and about AOCA, he wrote to Archbishop George Alexander McGuire, the primate of AOCA.\textsuperscript{23} The letter contains requests for admission to the church, instructions on how to read the bible and preaching.\textsuperscript{24} In answering Spartas, McGuire put him into contact with Archbishop Daniel William Alexander in South Africa, whom he had consecrated a bishop in the church of Archangel Michael and All Angels, Boston U.S.A on Sunday the 11\textsuperscript{th} Sept 1927.\textsuperscript{25}

Archbishop Daniel W. Alexander’s headquarters were at St. Augustine of Hippo Church in Kimberly, South Africa. This parish became the center of African Orthodox Church activity in South Africa although with a full contact with the Orthodox Church in America till he received a letter informing him of McGuire’s death in 1935. It is at Kimberly where Alexander organized a seminary to educate his priests, it was also the center for annual synod meetings and publication house. It is at the same point he organized the mission activities of the African Orthodox Church, which extend to Kenya, Uganda and Rhodesia where he trained priests and baptized communicants. Archbishop W. D. Alexander’s relations with Rhodesia, today’s Zimbabwe was through Gabellah, Elliot Mdutshwa, and a Zimbabwean who had been ordained by the African Orthodox Church in the USA, and assisted in the administration of the African Orthodox Church in 1970s.\textsuperscript{26}

When Archbishop Daniel W. Alexander was in Kenya, he opened a seminary school in Gituamba, in Murang’a, where he trained seven students. Most of his activities in Kenya were to train candidates for priesthood, establishing churches and baptizing. Most of the churches he established are today the African Independent Pentecostal Churches (AIPC) and the African Orthodox Church of Kenya (AOCK) respectively. According to the informants, the seminary in Gituamba had eight students, seven from KISA and one from KKEA. Initially, Alexander had aimed to offer a comprehensive training that could have taken several years. The main reason for a long period of training could be because except for Arthur Gatung’u Gathuna of KKEA and Philip Kiande of KISA, who had been highly educated at the Alliance Boys High School of CSM, Kikuyu and CMS in Nyeri, the other students had only a basic education. They were young men in their mid-twenties, all baptized in their former mission churches where they had received a primary-level education. Having this in mind as well as the pastoral needs on the ground, Alexander relaxed the period of training to eighteen months.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{20} Welbourn, \textit{The East African Rebels}, 206.
\textsuperscript{21} Ware, \textit{The Orthodox Church}, 189.
\textsuperscript{22} Wentink D. E., “The Orthodox Church in East Africa”, \textit{The Ecumenical Review}, 20 (1968), 33. Also see \url{http://www.jstor.org/stable/23248806}.
\textsuperscript{23} See the letter in the Archives of the African Orthodox Church in America at Pitts Theological Library.
\textsuperscript{24} J.R.Kigogno Dam-Tibajjwa, “The Life of Archpriest Reverend Father Spartas R.S. Ssebanja Mukasa, Founder of The African Orthodox Church in Uganda, Politician and Educationalist”.
\textsuperscript{25} See Bishop Daniel William Alexander’s ordination certificate found in the archives of the African Orthodox Church in Pitts Theological Library U.S.A.
In his training Alexander drew his teaching materials from the Anglican common book of prayer and Roman Catholic catechism obtained from either the former adherents or directly from the nearby mission stations. Concerning the liturgical worship, the instructor introduced a form of a Divine Liturgy that was originally written by the George Alexander McGuire in 1921 as the official worship order in AOCA. Analysing the text and comparing it with the other mainstream Christian liturgies, its formal structure is that of Roman Catholicism, with a mixture of textual prayers borrowed from the Anglican and its rituals from the Eastern Orthodox rite. It is worth mentioning that it is because of this that Fr. Spartas would later affiliate with the Greek Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa after noting that the liturgical rites Alexander left behind were not the Byzantine rites. Fr. Sparta influenced Fr. Gathuna of Kenya and there the two churches were accepted under the spiritual leadership of the Greek Patriarchate in 1946.

After ordaining his student, Archbishop Alexander left for South Africa and his disciples went back to their local communities. At first there was disagreement among the newly ordained priests as to whether they would name their communities African Orthodox Church and be under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Archbishop Alexander. Apart from Fr. Gathuna of KKEA and Fr. Kiande of Nyeri, who accepted to name their churches as AOCK, the rest opted for the name “African Independent Pentecost Church” (AIPC). According Daudi Maina the word “independent” implied that their church was not under control of any one, whether missionaries or any other body. On “Pentecostal” he clarifies that it was a church guided by the Holy Spirit received by the Holy Apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13), and their independent church had now received her own gift of the Holy Spirit in an Episcopalian ordained ministry. Henceforth, the AIPC expanded their influence in Kiambu, Fort Hall, and Embu and in the Eastern parts of the Rift Valley settled areas. Primarily, AIPC followed the strongholds of KISA while AOCK remained in KKEA circles in Southern Kiambu and parts of Nyeri. By 1947, AOCK churches were well established and each community had also a school. In most case the school buildings were being used on weekdays as classrooms and on Sundays for the community to gather for prayers.

While these churches and schools were flourishing, colonial pressures began to affect the local communities. Both in Kenya and Uganda, the Orthodox churches became directly affected to the point of being closed by the colonial authorities. The arrests and detention did not spare the leaders and the members of the African Orthodox Church. For example, Fr. Spartas of the Orthodox Church of Uganda was once sentenced to 16 years imprisonment although later it was shortened to six with hard labor at Murchison Bay prison. During the Kenyan emergency, 1952-1958 leaders and members of the African Orthodox Church of Kenya were persecuted. Fr. Gathuna was arrested on 1 June 1953 for being a leader of the outlawed church. From 1953 to 1955 he was detained at the Senya concentration camp in Kajiado District near Nairobi. In 1955 he was transferred to Lamu and lastly to Hola until he was released in 1961. The detention of Fr. Gathuna and other church leaders left the congregation spread throughout Kenya, with a membership of about 30,000 followers without a spiritual leader. The colonial government was accusing the Orthodox Church of being involved in politics, fighting for freedom, inhabiting the MauMau and supporting the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA). D.E. Wentink reports that the members

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29 See the original liturgical text of the African Orthodox Church in America Liturgy found at Pitts Theological Library, Emory University U.S.A. See also Theodore Natsoulas, “Patriarch McGuire and the spread of the African Orthodox Church to Africa”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 12: 2 (1981), 81-104.
33 J.R. Kigogno Dam-Tibajjwa, “The Life of Archpriest Reverend Father Spartas”.
35 Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) was a political party that opposed the missionaries on abolition of the Kikuyu
involved in struggles for independent for Kenya have paid with their lives for the independence of the country.  

During the early stage of the Orthodox Church in Kenya, there was a seminary school in Waithaka some eight miles from Nairobi. This was the center of Orthodoxy after Fr. Gathuna left Gituamba. According to former students from this seminary, like Fr. Peter Michara, at those difficult times, there was always a strong relationship and support from the Orthodox Church of Uganda. Fr. Peter Michara narrates that, Fr. Obadiah Basajakitalo, from Uganda was the solo instructor in the Waithaka seminary. He taught Orthodox worship, the Bible, the liturgy of St. John Chrysostomos as well as other liturgical rites such as vespers and baptism.  

It is also said that Fr. Obadiah used to catechize to communities, especially to women who met at different homes after the Orthodox churches and schools were burned down on 20th October 1952. Later on his efforts were brought to standstill due to the political situation in central Kenya.

After Kenya got its independent in 1963, the new Kenyatta government released an announcement calling the formerly proscribed members of the African Independent churches to reorganize themselves and register with the government. On 5 July 1965 the AOCK secured registration as a church under section 10 of the Societies Act. From there the Orthodox Church in Kenya reopened with enthusiasm, which actually was a “new” beginning for this church. The re-opening of this church had many advantages, particularly as regards healing and reconciliation with the former freedom fighters and MauMau detainees. This church brought these men and women to a new life in Jesus Christ, the healer of our bodies and souls. This happened through their continuous participation in the sacraments offered by the Orthodox Church to its members.

It is the re-opening of this church that made President Kenyatta bring the former president and Archbishop of Cyprus Makarios to meet with the leaders of the Orthodox Church. Archbishop Makarios, who visited Kenya on March 1971, laid a foundation stone for the Orthodox Patriarchal Seminary and Paramount Chief Kinyanjui Polytechnic School and Riruta, a few kilometres from Nairobi. According to Archbishop Makarios, the very aim for building the seminary was:

…The seminary will greatly contribute, I believe, to the promotion of the missionary work in East Africa. The seminary will cater for the African youth, who once educated in the Orthodox religion, will subsequently serve as priests and missionaries on the African continent & the existence of a very wide field for Christians in Africa is also evidenced by the fact that Africans have joined the Orthodox Church in large numbers.

The Waithaka seminary closed and the students began their classes in the new seminary named after Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus. Since then the seminary has remained the spiritual and training center for Orthodox priests and catechists for the whole African continent. Currently, there are 70 students studying customs, championed Kikuyu cultural patriotism and continuously presented Kikuyu’s grievances on the issues pertaining to land, labour and oppression by the settlers. Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya was its secretary representing KCA in London in 1946. Almost of the Karing’a members were party supporters.  

36 Wentink, The Orthodox Church in East Africa, 37.  
37 Fr. Peter Michara was for many year the chairman of the Orthodox Church in Kenya and a former student at Waithaka Orthodox Seminary.  
39 See the African Orthodox Church of Kenya Certificate of Registration no. 3801 dated 5th July 1965  
40 Especially through the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist for the remission of sins, Confession and Holy Unction for the physical and spiritual healing  
Orthodox theology in Nairobi with the aim of being able, after returning back to their respective countries, to enhance the Orthodox faith through their priesthood and also to teach in minor seminaries in their countries.

**Conclusion**

It is worth noting that the search for the Orthodox faith by our forefathers means that they were searching for something more than what they had received from their former churches. They were looking for a Christian faith which was ready to be inculturated within African cultures and worldviews. Therefore, the acceptance, growth and spreading of Orthodoxy in Africa means that Orthodoxy is ready to meet new theological challenges in regard to the customs in which these communities live. This reminds us of another ‘golden age’ where theology is to dialogue with the African religious particularities in order to find the right trends for incarnating these African religious elements with the Orthodox spirituality. This however, means that the Orthodox theologians, as well as the theological institutions, must critically find new ways to ensure that the Orthodox theological thoughts meet with the African social-psychological-religious ethos.

It would right to suggest that the major orthodox seminary in Nairobi has to deepen its theological training and seek new theological hermeneutical approaches especially on the field of Mission and Evangelism. This will aim at stabilizing Orthodoxy among the Africans and creating fields into which Orthodox spirituality can give answers to social problems that are affecting Africa society. Africa is a home of many religions and different Christian denominations, it is therefore important for the Orthodox seminary schools to introduce in their curriculum ecumenical studies. Such initiatives would help the seminaries to be well equipped on how to relate with others when they become leaders in their respective communities.

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Let me begin this reflection with a question. What does it take for Africa to unleash the best talents, gifts and resources in order to re-sharpen the vision, renew the commitment and re-launch its theological-epistemological vitality? Needless to beg this question, I intend in this paper to look forward, even as I critically look back to assess the level of theological engagement and the limits of the episteme, in the century or so of the advent of Christianity to the continent. Given my given specific focus on the Catholic situation, I will try to limit my perspectives within the Catholic world.

In his recent Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Africae Munus*, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, expresses a hope in “Africa’s rich intellectual, cultural and religious heritage” and goes on to assert that “Africa wishes to preserve this, to deepen it and to share it with the world.”\(^1\)

That would seem to inform my current discourse on theological education in Africa, inevitably probing the question of how pedagogically Africa’s historic past has succeeded in passing on to succeeding generations the received Christian values of human relations with God and of their possible impact on the social lives of people on the continent. Pope Coelestine I (5\(^{th}\) C)’s injunction that *Lex orandi est lex credendi et agendi* (the rule of prayer is the rule of belief and of action) tells of the necessity of marrying orthodoxy with orthopraxis.\(^2\) Theology cannot be “ivory tower,” a pure project of accumulation of knowledge.\(^3\) This pragmatic engagement is not an extra option or a subsidiary enterprise taken on in the aftermath of central issues. Ultimately, the relevant question is about how much theological engagement affects the life of the People. The biblical injunction that we cannot pretend to love God, whom we do not see, and neglect to love our neighbor whom we do see, puts a direct relationship between theology and anthropology. Our relating to God must have an impact on our relating to one another, which would imply that, if our visible relations with one another leave much to be desired, there is danger of a symptomatic interpretation out there that our relations with God are either nonexistent or non successful.

Given that African theological production resists neat categories,\(^4\) my task will be to try to discern a certain central aspect, setting my reflections in the double axis of the vertical and the horizontal, even as I try to map the epistemic as related to the pastoral and the ethical, in historical and pragmatic relationship. As background to this, it is important to bear in mind that African Christianity certainly grew up in a cultural milieu, which was influenced by strong human values, easily identifiable with the Gospel ideals. Whatever future theology may take on in the continent, it needs to make sure that Christian witness is

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3. Advocating for the positive role the Small Christian Communities (SCCS) can play in molding local theologies to suit local contexts, Alphonse Timira asks whether our theology has been “too much theology from above” at the expense of “a theology from the grass-roots level, from the lives of ordinary people, a theology from below” Cf. Alphonse Timira, “Liturgical Creativity in Africa,” *African Ecclesial Review* (AFER), 26:5 (October 1984), 307.
4. Africa’s vastness and divergent socio-cultural and political reality, makes it almost impossible to lump all in one category. However, one can also note a certain cultural, social and religious affinity. When it comes to Christian values, and especially to Catholic Ecclesiology, one can appreciate a high level of uniformity despite the mentioned geopolitical diversity.
central. The aim would be to establish a theological tradition that would help promote the ability in Christians to live what they preach and learn at school. Religious discourse ought to help people cross the floods of life, and the vexing problems are mainly pedagogical and pragmatic. How might a brighter theological future of Africa best serve the African academy in preparation for the Christian mission in the 21st Century? How is the Catholic Church prepared for the challenge? How has it acted in the past?

Catholic Theology and Seminary Education: Status Questionis

From the start the advent of Catholic Christianity in Africa identifies with the advent of the school and the hospital. While Catholic schools in Africa have been among the most efficient in providing secular education, theology has largely been taught in major Seminaries according to a pastoral objective. Those who join the Seminary are expected to become priests and to dedicate their lives to preaching the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments of the Church.

Traditionally theology in Africa has been associated with pastoral and ministerial objectives. Catechetical formation of children and young adults continues to be the means of transmission of basic Christian knowledge, aimed at cultivating the faith of individual Catholics. This takes place at the level of parishes and forms the main pedagogical approach to the pastoral care of the faithful. Over the years, as children and young adults prepare for the reception of the sacraments of initiation, mainly the Eucharist and the confirmation (given that most children are baptized as little children), pastors, nuns and catechists have the duty and opportunity to teach the elements of faith. This is the main way through which most Catholics are introduced into the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Those who are baptized as adults go through the same training.

Although this system has helped many Africans to embrace Christianity, the catechesis contains little doctrinal and theological sophistication. While most learning is done through memorization of concepts, often in foreign jargon, the ability to critically and adequately master the theological content remains largely to be desired. If anything, catechesis has helped to give the basic Christian vocabulary, on which preaching at Sunday liturgical gatherings would build to nourish the souls of the faithful with the necessary spiritual nourishment. It is an essential option which sadly remains basic and conventional rather than being an effective effort for deeper theological and spiritual enrichment worthy of academic flavor and also then in the pragmatic sense life giving and really affirming religious achievements.

In the future, catechesis needs to be enriched, made more systematic, organic and holistic so as to foster a comprehensive Christian vision for a better world. Aiming at strengthening the solidity of faith and Christian living, a reflective study of the Christian mystery needs to educate the faithful to live as Disciples of Christ, who reflect Christ’s own light into the world. Thus authentic catechesis will always make sure that the Revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ is always made present from its transmitted tradition in the memory of the Church and in the Sacred Scriptures, and coherently transmitted from one generation to the next through a living catechetical tradition. That normally is done in intrinsic relationship with the liturgical and sacramental life of the people of God.

Perhaps in this relationship, what has helped the pastoral situation in transmitting the tenets of Christian faith has occurred mainly through the hymnal. Singing has achieved the best theological transmission of Christian values, as through singing concepts remain better impressed on the mind and soul than through logical and strictly theological treaties. This is especially important for the African audience and culture.

That means therefore that theology has remained the monopoly of those trained for the priesthood, and even then, it remains on the level of pastoral exigencies. A very small percentage of these find scholarships to study abroad in foreign universities in Rome and elsewhere, and are usually trained to teach in seminaries to form those who will eventually be ordained. On the continent, Catholic Universities with a faculty of Theology are few if not largely absent. It would be necessary to establish more theological

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
faculties so that the laity, both men and women, can get deep theological training. This is crucial, given the significant trend of relatively decreasing ordinations to the priesthood.

**Bridging the Gap**

We would do well at this juncture to call to mind Jacques Derrida’s critique of “Plato’s *Pharmakon*” and the dialectical tension between “Writing” and “Speech”, playing on the ambiguity of the term “Pharmakon”, which means both cure and poison. The Egyptian god-king Thamus, the father of speech, tells the inventor-god Theuth, who invented writing, that writing is poison and that he would not take it as a gift for his people. Thamus had offered writing as a gift that would improve their memories and wisdom.

Thamus refuses the offer, convinced that writing would inhibit the capacity of his people to exercise their memory and would, in the process, become forgetful. Afraid that it would make his people seem knowledgeable when they would be quite ignorant, Thamus decides that writing as *pharmakon*, was in effect good for reminding but not for true memory.\(^5\)

This tremendous wisdom makes me precautious about the epistemological dangers that derive from our dichotomies, and how much of our seemingly objective value judgments pass as “good” while in fact, they actually are intrinsically “bad” – products of our conventional ideologies.

Let me come to the point on theology. Go to any bookstore in our cities in Europe and elsewhere to see how many new theological treaties are being produced! Yet we are at a loss when we hear people boast of living in a “post-Christian era”. Post-Christian Europe, for instance, excels in the production of theological literature! The point I am trying to drive at is this: these theological, moral, dogmatic treatises, are written not in human hearts but in manuals and books, for sale and readership to theological students who have to pass their exams and get their PhDs. This is fine as far as I am concerned. We need theologians who are trained for our theological institutions, and perhaps the manual we are trying to put together for Africa falls within this category.

My perplexity is about the probability of climbing a tall ladder, which is, however, leaning on the wrong wall! The danger of having to store our elements of faith in books is that we tend to relax, even as we remain ignorant of what the essentials of our faith are, well knowing that we can always go back to the shelves, from where we can take our books for reference from time to time, when we need to quote from them.

If our moral and theological codes are not in our hearts because we have not interiorized them, thanks to our books which keep them safe, who is going to witness to Jesus Christ and to the Gospel in our streets and neighborhoods? That is what for me may constitute the poisonous cortex of “Writing” and, as implied by the theological academy, *pharmakon*.

One would rather appreciate the fact that the Gospel is God’s message for the world, a message to be read, yes, – and for this we shall always need books – but a message which needs to be written in our hearts, as it is read, so that it can become life for us, light of our path, guide of our daily choices in our families and neighborhoods. That is what theology needs to do, not only for Africa but for the world.

If we dare to be honest, the picture at the moment is not rosy. Many theological faculties, especially in Europe but also in some parts of Africa, are closing down for lack of candidates. What is the future of Christianity without trained leaders? Many churches are semi-empty on Sunday and young people hardly come at all. In Africa, as in other parts of the globe, vocations to the priesthood are falling. Monasteries, formerly spiritual centers, are turning into golf clubs. What is going wrong so that the God-talk (theology) is no longer appealing?

\[^5\] A full discourse of Derrida’s “Plato’s Pharmacy” can be found in Peggy Kamuf (ed), *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1991), 114-139.

**Part III: Denominational Perspectives on Theological Education in Africa**
In Search of a Methodology

How do we settle for a methodology for teaching theology that would help inseminate Gospel values into people’s hearts, convincing them to action and the transmission of God’s own Spirit for living authentic lives? How do we do and teach theology in such a way that we become true partners with God, seeing as he sees, for the transfiguration of the world into one willed by God?

That ought to be the challenge of the method of doing and transmitting theology. The truth of God for the world has to be attained through proper reasoning, purified by the Spirit of God. It has to be transmitted by intention, to create a more just, a more loving and a more forgiving world. Interesting is the fact that Jesus did not write the Gospels! He preached, he touched to heal, he loved concretely.

How do we find a methodology to pass God’s Spirit from heart to heart? That remains to be the challenge and I wonder how God’s light is going to shine through theology into the world. My proposal is to look at the shape and content of the curriculum. What and how do we teach? For what scope and for what telos do we train young people in theology? Evidently, the curriculum will differ because of context. Yet, in every context, what will always be crucial is the ability of the theological faculty to define the true objectives of theological formation beyond the awards of academic degrees.

Our responsibility as theologians is to make God’s glory continue to shine in the world by interpreting the Word of God in such a way that it transforms the hearts of men and women for living in a world that best reflects the light of God. Here, methods of biblical interpretation taught in our theological academies matter immensely.

Biblical Hermeneutics

In the Catholic Church, although the historical-critical method has enjoyed much privilege in the academy, the Pontifical Biblical Commission has a long list of recognized methodologies that can best be combined to produce readings for faith communities across the world.

The challenge for the trainers is to transmit a methodology of biblical interpretation that will help to unleash the power of the Word to transform hearts and awaken in them the desire to be true Disciples of Christ. Biblical studies ought to serve the universal mission of the Church.

Because reception theories privilege the reader in interpretation, a multiplicity and a plurality of readings of a given text arise. This is positive in itself, an enrichment of perspectives, given also the different contexts in which the Word of God has to become incarnate. What may militate against this positive side of hermeneutics is born out of the “hermeneutics of suspicion”, in which objective contributions begin at best to be seen as ideological and therefore are discarded. Competition in interpretation leads to the birth of ever newer churches and ecclesial communities and this multiplicity of separately worshipping communities in turn make the message of the Gospel appear to be ideological rather than soteriological. Africa stands to lose if its people continue to be divided because of petty differences in interpreting the Word of God. Coming to rescue in the situation would be the adoption of a “hermeneutic of retrieval”, listening to one another’s interpretations and exchanging gifts of the Spirit in interpreting the Word of God and living it for the World.  

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6 Paul Ricoeur develops this “hermeneutic of retrieval” to counterbalance his famous “hermeneutic of suspicion” so that in listening to one another's different understandings a certain commonality of understanding can evolve. This is the essence of intertextuality, which is a mother of a “hermeneutic of reconciliation.”

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
The Ecumenical Challenge

Catholic catechetical and theological pedagogy cannot afford to overlook the necessity of transmitting the elements of the Christian faith in collaboration with brothers and sisters of other Christian confessions. This delicate precaution responds to the ecumenical wisdom, that sees divisions among Christians in matters of faith and morals as a scandal to the spread and credibility of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The more Catholics do theology with members of other Christian Confessions, the more the light of the values of the Gospel would increase, giving a better chance of witnessing to it together in the wider world.

Since the Vatican Council II, the Magisterium of the Catholic Church has consistently encouraged Catholic theological institutions and seminaries to promote this Spirit of Christian Unity. The challenge lies with the effective implementation of this injunction, especially on the levels of diocesan institutional engagement. Pope John Paul II’s Encyclical “Ut Unum Sint” sees this not as an “exchange of ideals” but rather as an “exchange of gifts”. I continue to be personally impressed by the exchange of professors between the Pontifical Universities in Rome and those of the Churches of the Reformation, whether from Germany or from the USA and elsewhere. Currently, Pentecostal scholars are offering lectures at the Pontifical Universities in Rome even as Catholic Professors are invited to do the same in exchange.

Although it is arguable how much collaboration has been going on between Catholic academic institutions and those run by other Churches in Africa, what is indisputable is the advantage such collaboration would bring to theological pedagogy and to the ecumenical movement. A real “exchange of gifts” in this field is food for thought, a valuable instrument of mutual knowledge and discernment of how much commonality of doctrine and faith there is between Christians.

Conclusion

The future of theology for Africa needs to take into account the spiritual needs of the humble people – those who should have been the first addresses of the Gospel – and the Church. An academic presentation of sophisticated doctrines and propositions deprived of a pragmatic application and link to the normal lives of the people would not do justice to the scope of evangelization. Failures in catechetical formation would mean that my faith as an act of intelligence, in which I opt for Christ, has not been able to receive the light and lucidity to illuminate my life path. A person who opts for Jesus must also have personal valid reasons to do so.

Because not all believers will be able to defend their choice for Jesus in this way, it becomes the task of a theologian to do this – he becomes a servant of Christ and of brothers and sisters – as he/she demonstrates that the option of faith makes good sense. Theology, especially so for Africa, needs then to demonstrate, beyond the fact that Jesus Christ is credible, and that there are solid reasons for faith, but also that faith has sense for the man and woman of today.

The continued profound theological unpreparedness of our people is a lost opportunity for a continent rich in traditional values which resemble Gospel values, and which get lost if not adequately expressed in theological terms. Unless this is done, Christianity will remain a shallow expression of that life in abundance, which comes from God the Father and Jesus Christ, to be lived in the Holy Spirit. Christian religious life cannot be reduced to simple formal rituals and morals, which have become, unfortunately, the mark of a certain brand of Catholicism.

Indeed, theology needs to have a pastoral connection, so that the power of theological thought is at the service of those who have the task of transmitting the faith from one generation to the next. Having said that, however, it needs be emphasized that professional theology is necessary in the Church!! A certain systematic discipline of academic depth and flavor cannot be substituted with simplistic formulations of the

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7 Ut Unum Sint, no. 8.
content of faith. One can understand that not everyone will be able to understand theology on these elevated, sophisticated levels. Yet, one cannot deny the necessity of such a technical level of reflection of things of God. The future of Christian faith on the continent of Africa will depend on its capacity to become autonomous, more tied to the local realities and expressions where it can thrive culturally. Africa can no longer “import” Western theological categories of thought without “bending” them to become incarnate in space and time. The challenge posed to African theologians is to formulate their thoughts in such a way that they can be offered as “Catholic,” and therefore suitable for the whole Church of God. That would mean that theologians on the continent will do well to marry theological orthodoxy with praxis, linking faith and reason, celebrated liturgically and culturally, offered as incense to God for a world in need of transformation and healing. Seminary curriculum and authentic catechesis can do the necessary magic and Catholic universities can support the objective by establishing effective theological faculties where the laity, men and women, can become a theological task force, for the brighter future of Christianity on the continent.

Bibliography


(26) THEOLOGICAL FORMATION IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AFRICA

Paul Béré

Life experience leads us into the topic of this paper. A renowned South-African Catholic theologian, Albert Nolan, told the story that prompted the writing of his famous book: *Jesus Before Christianity*. This how it went:

I wrote the book when I was a chaplain to university students. I wanted to teach the university students faith and theology. That was something very difficult to do since they were not interested in the kind of theology we grew up with. So, I thought maybe the best way to talk to them about theology and about faith was to talk about the person of Jesus. So I tried to build everything around Jesus as a person, trying to make him a live and a loveable person. I found that was very successful.

This testimony spells out *in nuce* the key issues at stake in Catholic theological education in Africa. It calls for a few comments in order to shed more light on our theological enterprise. First, Nolan’s audience is made up of university students of the 1970s. They are interested in Jesus as a person, but not “in the kind of theology we grew up with”, Nolan said. More than four decades later, at a continental gathering, Catholic bishops noticed that most laymen and women are giants in social, economic, and political affairs, but dwarfs in religious matters, theology in particular. Isn’t it a sign that the kind of theology religious leaders have been taught may no longer speak to the hearts and minds of our people? Second, challenged by some resistance, Nolan proved creative by finding a new way of introducing Jesus, the “marginal Jew”, in a context where marginality spoke volumes to his audience. By so doing, he succeeded in communicating the knowledge and love of Jesus, not only to the students but even to a wide readership.

Against this life story, I believe that Nolan’s experience is paradigmatic of what has been going on in the Roman Catholic Theological Education on the African continent. Most religious leaders are well trained but, at times, their theological discourse hardly speaks people’s cultural and contextual language. The question the paper sets out to address is this: What explains the discrepancy between Theological education and African reality? I think part of the answer may be yielded by the theological *curricula*, and the kinds of research questions carried out in our theological institutions. I will therefore indicate the major documents guiding theological formation in the Roman Catholic Church, and then look at the key issues underscored by the *curricula*, and finally discuss the challenges raised by the African experience.

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1 I am grateful to Kpanie Addy, SJ, for his help with regards to the English.
2 Albert Nolan is a Dominican Friar. He belongs to the religious order founded by Saint Dominic.
5 See the statement of the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Africa, *Message* (2009): n.22: “There is no excuse to remain ignorant in the faith. In this regard, EIA [Ecclesia in Africa] fervently recommended the establishment of Catholic Universities. We thank God that many such institutions have emerged in the last 15 years, and many more are in the pipe-line. This is a project of capital importance. It also costs a lot of money. But it is necessary, if we are to invest for a future of well formed Catholic laity, especially intellectuals, ready and able to stand up and witness to the faith in the world of today. This is certainly an area where the universal solidarity of the Church-Family of God is greatly needed.”
1. Theological Education in a Mould?

Just as in other areas, the Roman Catholic Church centralizes and provides a common vision for evangelization. It does so by means of fundamental texts adopted by councils, synods, or issued by the ordinary Magisterium of the Pope. To that purpose, the Congregation for Catholic Education, a curial department, oversees the Theological formation in the Church, and makes sure that views on Theological education worldwide conform to the orientations.

The abovementioned vision proposed by the Roman Catholic Church on Theological education can be found in quite a few number of texts, among which I would like to name a few major ones:

- The Constitution *Dei Verbum* of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), issued on November 18th 1965, on Divine Revelation; it puts emphasis on the role of Sacred Scripture in Theological formation. Biblical sciences must be regarded as the soul of theology (*Dei Verbum* n.12).

- The decrees *Gravissimum educationis momentum* [GE] on Catholic education, and *Optatam totius Ecclesiae renovationem* [OT], on priestly formation, issued on October 28th 1965, respectively emphasize the necessity to form those in charge of the youth’s spiritual life.\(^7\)

- Normative documents issued by Jean Paul II, such as the Constitution *Sapientia christiana* (1979), give directives about ecclesiastical faculties and universities, while *Ex corde Ecclesiae* (1990) gives norms for Faculties and Universities not founded or approved by the Roman Curia, but which need to be in line with their Catholic identity.

- Other texts may be mentioned here for the importance accorded to them in the context of Africa and of the trends of Theological research worldwide. *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* was published by the Pontifical Biblical Commission on September 21\(^{st}\) 1993. It clarifies a great number of methodological issues in the field of biblical studies for Theological schools and faculties in the Church. The post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Ecclesiae in Africa* (1995) by Jean-Paul II, or *Verbum Domini* by Pope Benoît XVI on the Word of God in the life and mission of the Church, published in 2010, both offer specific orientations on Biblical formation.

All these documents stress the importance of and the concern for Theological studies, through teaching and research in Theological Schools and Faculties, for the formation and spiritual development of the Church in particular, and society in general. These academic institutions are seen within the Roman Catholic Church as instruments in the service of evangelization. "Precisely because it is more and more conscious of its salvific mission in this world, the church wants to have these centers closely connected with it; it wants to have them present and operative in spreading the authentic message of Christ."\(^8\) Indeed, for *Sapientia Christiana*, "the future of society and of the Church herself is closely bound up with the development of young people engaged in higher studies."\(^9\) No wonder, therefore, that theologians like Nolan kept struggling with the issue of how to convey the Gospel message to university students.

In the African context, most institutions have articulated their Vision statements against the spirit and norms of the abovementioned documents. Although variations in wording may happen from one text to the other, the core can be more or less compared to the following one provided by Mlilo’s survey:\(^10\)

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\(^7\) Vatican II, *Gravissimum educationis*; Vatican II, *Optatam totius*.


[... name of the institution], centred in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and situated in the African context, seeks to:

- Empower people through philosophical and theological enquiry and learning based in the Catholic tradition yet always in a living dialogue with other Christian communities, religions and cultures.
- Provide men and women with the philosophical and theological education necessary for both ordination and a variety of other ministries in Church and society.
- Advance philosophical and theological endeavour through researching issues of faith and culture, experience and tradition, and other contemporary questions, so that the Word of God may be effectively proclaimed.
- Foster co-operation within the [...] Cluster of Theological Institutions as well with other theological institutions both national and international.
- In keeping with the visions [...] name of institution] offers:
  - a two year programme in Philosophy
  - a [three or] four year programme in Theology
  - the Catholic Studies programme
  - a post-graduate programme

A decade ago, a Vision statement like this one would have sounded like a dream. The gap between the ideal and reality was very sharp. One may ask: How many women have been educated in theology, and have been integrated as research partners in our Theological education system? How far did Theological Institutions succeed in providing thoroughly researched results on issues relevant to the continent? And yet, Mlilo considers that the Vision statement is limited in that, apart from recognizing the obvious fact that it is in Africa, there is nothing of a distinctly African tenor that actually comes through in respect of concretely cultivating a specifically African ethos in the various programmes being offered.” Nowadays, Institutions like the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) or l’Université catholique d’Afrique centrale (UCAC), to name but a few, have come a long way and have met, to some extent, the challenge of being in dialogue with their African context.

2. Fundamental Elements of the Theological Profile

In order to reach the goal of forming men and women capable of carrying out such a vision, the Roman Catholic Church in Africa focuses on Seminaries where priests are given Theological education, as well as Theological Institutes and Faculties that are open to all those interested in theological training. What kind of “theologian” comes out of these schools? An inductive approach would have led us to a more accurate answer to this question. But given the strong deductive way of proceeding, I rather suggest that we look at the elements required by Church normative documents for any institution engaged in Theological education. The document par excellence remains Sapientia Christiana. It sets the aim, indicates the fundamental theological issues to be covered, and spells out the curriculum.

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11 The elenchus bibliographicus compiled by the Congolese theologian (DRC), Josée Ngalula, Production théologique chrétienne africaine: 1956-2010 (Kinshasa: Edition Mont Sinaï, 2011), may give a slight idea of the need for more co-operation and a better focus in research. On the idea of an elenchus bibliographicus, see Teresa Okure, “Teaching Theology in the Perspective of Inculturation,” in Doing Theology, 142.
12 Mlilo, “Towards the Contextualization,” 65.
13 See the tribute to Prof. Maviiri’s leadership in making that happen, in Peter Gichure, Agnes Lando, and Jim Kanalulya (eds), Modelling a Catholic University to Meet the 21st Century Challenges: Essays in Honour of Revd. Prof. John C. Maviiri (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2011).
14 The review of Philosophical and Theological education in the Roman Catholic Church in Africa done a decade ago may serve as a case in point; see Mlilo and Soédé, Doing Theology.
The Aim\textsuperscript{15}

A Theological institution aims at (1) “profoundly studying and systematically explaining, according to the scientific method proper to it, Catholic doctrine, derived with the greatest care from divine revelation”; and (2) “carefully seeking the solution to human problems in the light of that same revelation.” The methodology implied here subordinates doctrine to human problems, and both to the light of divine revelation.

The Fundamentals\textsuperscript{16}

The document becomes specific in terms of the fundamental issues to be considered in teaching theology:

1. Sacred Scripture: understood as “the soul of Sacred Theology, which rests upon the written Word of God together with living Tradition, as its perpetual foundation.”

2. Theological disciplines: they “are to be taught in such a way that, from their internal structure and from the proper object of each as well as from their connection with other disciplines, including philosophical ones and the sciences of man, the basic unity of theological instruction is quite clear, and in such a way that all the disciplines converge in a profound understanding of the mystery of Christ, so that this can be announced with greater effectiveness to the People of God and to all nations.”

3. Revealed truth: it must be studied “in connection with contemporary, evolving, scientific accomplishments, so that it can be seen “how faith and reason give harmonious witness to the unity of all truth.” Also, its exposition is to be such that, without any change of the truth, there is adaptation to the nature and character of every culture, taking special account of the philosophy and the wisdom of various peoples. However, all syncretism and every kind of false particularism are to be excluded.”

4. Positive values: in the various cultures and philosophies are to be sought out, carefully examined, and taken up. However, systems and methods incompatible with Christian faith must not be accepted.

5. Ecumenism and interreligious dialogue: questions in this area “are to be carefully treated, according to the norms of competent Church authorities. Also to be carefully considered are relationships with non-Christian religions.”

6. Catholic doctrine and the Magisterium of the Church: the proper attitude called for is fidelity and caution in teaching “personal opinions which come from new research.”

The above guidelines ensure that sound Theological content is imparted to the students. A difficult aspect remains unaddressed: the cultural components of our theological doctrine which ought to be considered as a body of answers to questions addressed by Christian communities throughout history. The problem becomes that of methodology.\textsuperscript{17}

The Curriculum\textsuperscript{18}

The curriculum in the document is normative. Theological education runs through three cycles: the first cycle “lasts for five years or ten semesters, or else, when a previous two-semester philosophy course is an entrance requirement, for three years.”\textsuperscript{19} Theological disciplines taught are: Scripture (Introduction and Exegesis), Fundamental theology (with reference to Ecumenism, non-Christian religions, and Islam),

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} John Paul II, Sapientia Christiana, art. 66.
\item \textsuperscript{16} John Paul II, Sapientia Christiana, art. 67-71.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Marco Moerschbacher, “Sapientia Christiana and Some Features of Contextual Theology in Africa,” in Doing Theology, 50-52.
\item \textsuperscript{18} John Paul II, Sapientia Christiana, art. 72.
\item \textsuperscript{19} John Paul II, Sapientia Christiana, art. 72.a.
\end{itemize}

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Dogmatic theology, and all the other fields of theology: Moral, Spiritual, Liturgy, Church history, Patrology, Canon Law. As in any academic curriculum, the second and the third cycles are specialized.

The way these three levels are translated in a concrete manner depends on each Theological Institute or Faculty, provided that the “the theological disciplines […] be taught in such a way that what is presented is an organic exposition of the whole of Catholic doctrine, together with an introduction to theological scientific methodology.”

When all the years required for an introduction to theological disciplines are taken into consideration, the impression drawn from students’ experience is that all these years are dedicated to memory, and no room is left to experience. There are data to be studied before one can dialogue with African realities. What kind of “theologian” can one expect? Women and men well versed in doctrine and history of theology, indeed, but unable to cope with African life issues. They are more fit in communities outside the continent rather than their own. In the 1970s, Nolan had to adjust to his students who were interested in Jesus Christ but at odd with theological debates that were, at times, irrelevant to their lives. Likewise, in 1956, a book entitled Les prêtres noirs s’interrogent (Black Priests Question Themselves) revealed to the world the inadequacy of Theological education imparted to African priests in seminaries. Since then, the quest for a more relevant theological curriculum has been a real challenge.

3. Challenges of Theological Education in Africa

1. In the abovementioned survey on theological and philosophical education in the Roman Catholic Church in Africa, at the request of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) with the support of the Missiological Institute Missio (MWI), there are converging critical views on the necessity of working with the Theological curricula to make them dialogue with African realities as early as possible in the process. Indeed, faced with issues that question their faith and in the midst of the cultural changes on the continent, not many trained in theology show readiness in answering Peter’s call to “be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you” (1Peter 3:15). One of the theologians simply remarked that:

   For an effective theological reflection in Africa, the present curriculum calls for a radical revision, not a patchwork (…), so as to allow the Faculty and School of Theology to design an integrated programme of a 4- or 5-year first cycle where the prerequisites are set according to the theological orientation demanded by the context.

2. Besides this, the problem becomes crucial with regards to the teaching personnel. Lecturers are largely trained in the Western mould. According to Maviiri: “The Western patterns of specialized theological disciplines dominate the areas of specialization (…). The majority of Faculty members have had their training in Europe and America. This aspect has a lot of influence on their styles of life and academic visions.” The fact of the matter is that lecturers communicate what they themselves have received. The frame of reference of the curriculum does reinforce these patterns. The challenge Faculty

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20 John Paul II, Sapientia Christiana, art. 72.
22 Doing Theology.
23 Eugène Goussikindey, “Theology and Philosophy: Reviewing the Curriculum,” in Doing Theology, 89.
members must courageously take up should be to initiate some deconstructive process, and rethink the whole theological programme anew.  

3. Thus said, the mushrooming of Theological schools and Faculties adds to the already heavy task at hand. It worsens the problem of personnel, in quality and quantity, although a good number of lecturers would make a more personalized education possible. It makes funding more difficult, because most of the Catholic Theological Institutions in Africa depend on the same Western funding agencies. The current economic environment in Africa seems to invite Church leaders to respond more creatively to the financial issues at stake.

4. If by now it is clear that Africa strongly questions the way theology is taught today in our Institutions, methodology remains a big issue. The theological school of Kinshasa (DRC) has devised a theological method:

- **Contextualization**: one questions first and foremost the situation in which the audience lives. “At this stage, the theologian listens to the community in which s/he is incorporated, and pays attention to its questions, its agreements, its resistance, and its refusal.”
- **De-contextualization**: the second stage of the process consists in engaging contexts different to one’s own and even out of Africa, including Ecumenism, worlds like the West, Latin America, Asia, etc.
- **Re-contextualization**: at the third stage, the theologian should come back to the community’s life setting and let the Gospel voice be heard.

This contextual method, according to Santedi, takes inspiration from Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, whose letters were theological answers to concrete pastoral issues raised by the different communities. Since the famous 1956 book, the level of African context awareness has risen quite a good deal in Catholic Theological academic institutions. ‘Inculturation’ has thus become the simple way of naming that awareness. And still, something remains neglected: Scripture studies as the soul of theology, as requested by the second Vatican Council. As a matter of fact, the first stage proposed by the Theological school of Kinshasa looks for “light from Christian memory (Holy Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium of the Church),” within the de-contextualization stage which “calls for dialogue with other contexts among which the biblical context and that of Tradition.” The Holy Scripture seems diluted into a mass of other contexts. Such a theology lacks a firm point of departure, which obviously must be Scripture.

5. Theological teaching and research in Africa should therefore develop a deep and strong dialogue between theology and biblical sciences, as they engage the audience life context. The main concern for a theological discourse relevant to the African context has been articulated around culture and religion, liberation and reconstruction, but the voice of Scripture remains wanting. I do not mean that a choice must be made between the African context and the Bible. I believe that both should be integrated in a virtuous

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26 See *Doing Theology*, 191-231.
34 See how the Bible becomes a meeting point for faith and cultures: Atal sa Angang, ed., *Christianisme et identité*
dialogue, so that the theological knowledge drawn from the Scripture is transmitted along the spiritual journey prior to the encounter with the Lord Jesus, in spite of all the necessary readjustments in the trajectory, so as to maintain some continuity in the African human and religious experience of God.35

6. Finally, the connectedness between teaching and research needs to be tightened in the process of Theological Education. In spite of the quantity of theological work produced and available, books and articles by African theologians do not seem to be first-choice reading. There are many reasons for this. Some are set aside at times because of their poor intellectual quality. Can all of them be treated alike? This is doubtful. Others are simply not available for purchase because it is often difficult to get them to circulate within the continent. This too remains a challenge. A third reason might be that we need to undo our mindsets36 and learn to appreciate what we ourselves have produced, or help make what we produce better for the next generation.

**Conclusion**

In ongoing consideration of the Theological Education in the Roman Catholic Church in Africa, I have tried to stress the benefit of having a common vision that allows for a deeper academic dialogue and sharing. I have also noticed that the official curricula bear the fingerprint of Western theologies. This is the necessary path the gospel message followed to reach Africa. Now, the Churches in Africa have the duty to keep their Theological Institutions closer to their communities’ life. SECAM has set the pace by inviting Theological Institutes and Faculties to implement new curricula with “Inculturation” as the motto. This theological orientation is given serious consideration in the Church in Africa, both in teaching and research, in accordance with the two Apostolic Exhortations: *The Church in Africa* (1995)37 and *Africa’s Commitment* (2011)38. Another challenge remains insufficiently attended. That is biblical sciences as the soul of Theology, as recommended by Vatican II: “the study of “the sacred page” should be the very soul of sacred theology.”39 We simply hope that Theological Education in the Roman Catholic Church in Africa succeeds in bringing to the Faithful the wealth of the Word of God, together with a “theological exegesis”.40

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
(27) THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS SISTERS IN AFRICA

Chika Eucharia Eze

Introduction

Among the Roman Catholic faithful there is a group of men and women who feel called by God to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ by dedicating their entire life to the service of God and humanity.1 This group of men and women, both in Africa and the universal Catholic Church, live religious life. According to Vatican II, religious life belongs to the life of the laity of the Church; thus it is neither part of the clergy (ordained ministers) nor the hierarchy of the Church.2 In this regard there is a different kind of training (formation/education) mapped out for the religious and the clergy. The clergy who are the ordained religious priests both in the diocesan congregation and as members of religious congregations have a privileged education; they are given far more opportunities than women members of religious life.3 Statistically 0.12% Roman Catholic men and women live religious life4 and most are women (3 out of 4),5 therefore they are non-clerical. The reality is that women, who are not part of the clergy, and who are the majority in religious life, have limited access to education including theological education in Africa. This unequal situation raises the question of exploring the available current educational opportunities for religious sisters, particularly theological education and how/why more theological educational opportunities should be provided for Roman Catholic religious sisters in Africa.

Who are we Speaking About?

Religious life abounds in many Christian and non-Christian traditions, such as the Orthodox and Anglican churches and among the Buddhists and Hindus just to mention a few. Therefore it is important to clarify that the group of religious addressed here are the Roman Catholic religious sisters in Africa. Within the Roman Catholic Church there are different forms of religious life, namely the contemplative and apostolic life6 besides many others such as the order of Virgins and lay religious. The religious sisters whose theological educations we are discussing belong to those living the apostolic life. By apostolic life we mean those congregations whose members are involved in contemplation and the active apostolate.7 In other

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1 “Perfectae Caritatis,” Vatican Council II, # 1.
7 Paul VI, Evangelica Testificatio, 604-626.
words they combine both prayer and active service as a way of spreading the gospel message. Their service brings them face to face with every group of people in our society—the catechumens, the students, the sick, the homeless, those in prisons, those on drugs, the economically disadvantaged, the rich etc. The list goes on and on. Therefore they need to have a solid theological foundation in order to be active agents of evangelization since the Church positions all religious as light that “announce(s) the kingdom of God with a liberty which knows no obstacles”.

In Africa today, religious life is flourishing, and there is a clarion claim that Africa is experiencing a vocation boom (particularly in Nigeria) where there are a large number of men and women entering religious life. In the face of such increased numbers (particularly as women religious outnumber men) it becomes extremely pertinent that appropriate theological education is given to African religious sisters in order to reinforce their preparation for and engagement in mission.

Current Theological Education for Roman Catholic Religious Sisters in Africa

Presently the formation and training (including theological education) available for Roman Catholic religious sisters in Africa is in line with what is stipulated in Church documents such as in the documents of Vatican II, the Code of Canon Law, and the Constitutions and renewal documents of these religious congregations which are grounded in the spirituality of their founders. For the purpose of this article, much emphasis will be laid on the documents of Vatican II which greatly influenced the way religious life is lived in the Roman Catholic Church today. The constitutions of virtually all religious congregations both in Africa and throughout the Roman Catholic Church draw heavily on the Decree on Up-to-date Renewal of Religious Life of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).

According to the constitutions of many congregations, any young woman from the lay faithful within the Church who feels called to religious life goes through a discernment process of choosing a religious congregation (order) to join, as there is a multiplicity of congregations within the Church. Once the young woman has made her choice, she keeps contact with the religious congregation who in turn discerns along with her, her vocation to religious life. After this period of initial discernment, the young woman is admitted into the religious congregation to begin the process of religious formation: firstly as a postulant, secondly as a novice. It is important to note that the entry requirement for a candidate into religious life varies: generally in Africa the minimum requirement is a high school certificate. In this era many have entered with post-high school qualifications such as diplomas, honours and masters degrees and in rare cases a PhD degree. Hence candidates who enter religious life do not often possess the same level of education and certification although most candidates entering religious life in Africa are young women with only a high school education. Briefly we will look at what kind of education the candidates receive at the different stages of postulancy, novitiate and scholasticate.

Formation at the Postulancy Level

Renovationis Causam describes the postulancy as a “probationary period”. The purpose of this period is meant to provide a gradual and psychological adjustment of the candidate (postulant) in developing the

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human and emotional maturity needed for a truly free and responsible decision to enter the novitiate (the next stage of formation).\textsuperscript{12} In addition, this period provides the candidate and the congregation an opportunity to appraise her aptitude for membership. Usually, the candidates are under the direction of a mistress (a senior sister) appointed by the leadership of the congregation. Ordinarily this period does not extend beyond two years and in some cases can last for only six months to a year depending on the need of the candidate.

**Formation at the Novitiate Level**

Religious life begins with the novitiate.\textsuperscript{13} The principal purpose of the novitiate is to initiate the novice into the essential and primary requirements of religious life and also to prepare the candidate for the vows (evangelical counsels) of chastity, poverty and obedience which she will make later.\textsuperscript{14} This lasts for a period of two years. The programme of the novitiate includes study and meditation on the Scriptures, instruction on the gospel ideal of charity, the evangelical counsels, the principles of prayer, Christian asceticism and spirituality, and the relationship of apostolic action to contemplation and religious commitment.\textsuperscript{15} “It shall also include the doctrinal formation indispensable for the development of a supernatural life of union with God, an understanding of the religious state and initiation into the liturgical life of the Church.”\textsuperscript{16} In addition, the candidates at this stage are duly instructed into the particular spirituality (charism) of their various congregations\textsuperscript{17} and the cultural circumstances of mission territory, and of their country-of-origin.\textsuperscript{18}

During this period, the apostolic religious congregation whose members are dedicated both to contemplation (prayer) and active work (ministry/service), pay great attention to preparing the novices (potential sisters) from the very beginning for their future life.\textsuperscript{19} That means they are taught in progressive stages to realize the importance of establishing unity between contemplation and apostolic activity. The congregation appoints a mistress (novice mistress) to teach the novices, sometimes with the help of other sisters in the community. Where the need is felt, there could be two officially designated mistresses. On completion of the novitiate, successful candidates are permitted to take the vows which admit them as temporary members of the congregation, and from this time onward they start the next stage known as the scholasticate.

**The Scholasticate**

This period is dedicated to on-going formation (training) in which the sister is expected to spend her time in developing her spiritual and temporal skills that will equip her for mission (work). Vatican II states that:

The up-to-date renewal of institutes (religious congregations) depends very much on the training of the members. For this reason, non-clerical religious men and religious women should not be assigned to apostolic

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\textsuperscript{OP (ed) Vatican Council II, 564-582.}
\textsuperscript{12 Renovationis Causam, 564-582.}
\textsuperscript{13 Code of Canon Law, in English translation/prepared by Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland in association with the Canon Law Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Canadian Canon Law Society, (London / Grand Rapids: Collins / Eerdmans, 1983), 646; Renovationis Causam, 564-582.}
\textsuperscript{14 Renovationis Causam, 564-582; Lumen Gentium, 320-385.}
\textsuperscript{15 Renovationis Causam, (RC # 15) 564-582.}
\textsuperscript{16 Code of Canon law, 652 #2; Daughters of Divine love (Art. 120).}
\textsuperscript{17 Antonio Romano, The Charism of the founders, ( United Kingdom: St. Pauls,1989), 46; Perfectae Caritatis, 545-555.}
\textsuperscript{18 Perfectae Caritatis, 545-555.}
\textsuperscript{19 Renovationis Causam, 564-582.}
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tasks immediately after the novitiate. Their religious, apostolic, doctrinal and technical training should, rather, be continued, as is deemed appropriate, in suitable establishments. They should also acquire whatever degrees they need.20

Plainly this quote explains that the sisters are meant to be duly equipped through education, be it theological or secular, in order to complete the process of formation before they embark on apostolic tasks (mission). Thus the onus is on their religious congregations, particularly on the leadership, to ensure that the sisters are highly qualified with appropriate skills (expert knowledge) needed for mission. Access to expertise knowledge includes education in all fields of life and should be tailored to suit the ability of each individual sister. In this view, education in the field of theology should be a prerequisite in addition to other degrees. Unfortunately there is a dissonance between theory and practice, in most Africa nations, particularly in the West of Africa, and specifically in Nigeria, based on de facto observations that many religious sisters are often sent on mission immediately after the novitiate with little attention paid to their further education. This kind of situation has resulted in lack of knowledge, particularly in theology, and many have deliberated on the discourse of knowledge as power21 which if lacking may result in a serious handicap that will be counterproductive for individual and communal progress. Hence the women’s religious congregations in Africa need to address the issue of further education including theological education for each and every member of their institute. Based on such arguments we turn to look at the need (the why) of theological education for Catholic religious sisters in Africa.

Need for Theological Education for Catholic Religious Sisters in Africa

The major point that underpins the importance of theological education for Catholic religious sisters in Africa is that like all Christians, every religious sister shares the identity of Christ by sharing in his ministry as priest, prophet, king and servant.22 Therefore religious sisters in Africa and elsewhere have the mandate to be relevant in ministry.23 They need to be relevant particularly in the sense that they are not just leaders of the Church but also custodians of the faith, who are supposed to bring about the reign of God.24 Although in principle they are not part of the Church’s hierarchy25 they work together with the clergy and laity. As a consequence they are still leaders, and without doubt the grace of God sustains them in the ministry they undertake in God’s name, but a human response is needed to accompany grace.26 For this reason the sisters need theological education in addition to the existing religious formation they receive in their various congregations. Theological education will enable them to be more effective and efficient missionaries, particularly in the face of modernity and post-modernity. Therefore, after completion of the initial formation, the religious sisters in Africa should be given access to theological education for the following reasons:

20 Perfectae Caritatis: 553.
22 Lumen Gentium, 320-385; Perfectae Caritatis, 545-555.
25 Lumen Gentium, 320-385.
To be Relevant within the Context of Post-Modernity

The existing training which the religious sisters are exposed to in their formation programme during initial training is not essentially grounded in many aspects of theology. In the first place, three years formation as was discussed above does not give the sisters ample opportunity to engage with critical issues of theology, such as in-depth theological studies that advocate social and political reforms, theology that solves ecclesiastical problems, theology that transforms the lives of people. As such, many of the sisters do not have the adequate theological tools in order to be relevant. It is important to note that some African religious sisters are professors of theology, e.g. we have Jose Ngalula, RSA (DRC), Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike, LSOSF (Kenya), and Teresa Okure, SHCJ (Nigeria), just to mention a few. But the number of African Roman Catholic religious sisters who are theologically educated is insignificant compared to the rapid widespread transformation whereby many men and women, to whom the sisters minister, are themselves highly knowledgeable. Therefore the sisters must themselves be theologically resourceful in order to be effective/efficient ministers of the gospel. In other words, theological education for sisters is strongly based on missiological and apostolic need, which further fosters the need for contextual theology. It has been argued that there is a different way of doing theology when brewed in an African pot.

Theology for Social and Political Reforms

Theology as a form of discourse about the reign of God is multifaceted. Among the different components are issues of social, political and cultural concerns, which the African religious sisters need in order to be relevant. They cannot exclude themselves from the socio-political issues within the cultural milieu in which they live. Therefore, they need theological education that is sustainable and which will facilitate their ministry as servants of God who bring about social justice, peace and compassion, particularly within the context of the constant turbulence that invades African nations.

Theology that Solves Ecclesiastical Problems

There are problems in the Church both at the local and international levels. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are not always fully displayed in the individual lives of God's people (cf: Gal. 5:22-23). Hence, problems abound. But how we solve those problems when they surface makes a great deal of difference. Theological education is one of the best tools to be used in addressing most of the problems in our world/Churches. This is particularly significant for African religious sisters in the face of patriarchal structures that perpetuate inequality between the genders. The Catholic Church positions priests as the clerics and therefore offers them a sound theological education in the seminary and even beyond. The argument has been that the priest functions as “alter Christus”, but that is also the identity of all baptized Catholic Christians, thus the religious sisters need access to theological education as a way of confronting this

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ecclesial problem. Significantly Vatican II states that everyone is entitled to theological education. Therefore the sisters cannot continue to be excluded, particularly in this era when the Church says the hour has come when the vocation of women is being acknowledged in its fullness. Based on this, there is a need to break the status quo of the gender-based dichotomy between priests and sisters. Each one of them is called to serve God’s people; therefore, they need to be theologically equipped for service.

**Theology that Transforms the Lives of People**

The essence of theology is spiritual transformation. As a result, it is anticipated that those who go through theological education will allow what they study to be reflected in their lives. In this sense they will embrace liberation, morality, ethics, hermeneutics, and re-construction of self for the good of the gospel. Thus, there is a need for on-going theological education in the life of African religious sisters in order to ensure that their personal and intellectual development is achieved, not only for personal enhancement but also for the service of the kingdom of God. Exposure to theological education will improve the sisters’ human virtues such as love for justice and truthfulness, which reflect the appropriate decorum for facilitating the spread of the gospel. In other words, theological education will help and challenge the sisters to contribute their quota towards making the world a better place.

**Economic Issues**

African religious sisters, when well trained with an appropriate theological education, will be able to earn good salaries for self-sufficiency as well as satisfying the need for appropriate witnessing. Gone are the days when the Church was supported by mission funds from the West. The Church in Africa is becoming self-sufficient, so too should religious sisters. Having discussed some of the various aspects that make theological education an important curriculum to be included into African religious sisters’ training programmes, the next essential question is how this can be achieved?

**Action Plan**

If African religious sisters are going to access theological education, a feasible plan must be put in place. The leadership within African religious sisters’ congregations needs to look deeply into their already existing programmes of training to evaluate where they can make additions and changes. First, the three-year initial formation already in existence should be planned to consciously introduce the young women to theological education; second, an effort must be made to provide opportunities for further studies in theology at various tertiary institutions (in Catholic institutions but if need be, also within secular institutions). This action plan is in line with Vatican II’s mandate for the updated renewal of religious life within the universal Roman Catholic Church. If the leaders of women’s religious congregations in Africa abide by Vatican II’s perspective, then every religious sister will be enrolled to study theology at the diploma or degree level (according to her ability) within the first four years after making her profession (vows). Beyond this, effort must be made to provide opportunities for further studies in theology at the

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35 Perfectae Caritatis, 545-555.

masters’ and doctoral level. In this way they will advance their theological knowledge which has direct bearing on their effectiveness and efficiency in ministry. In order to achieve this, the following action plan has to be put in place:

**Money:** The cost of training sisters theologically at tertiary institutions of higher learning will be enormous; therefore the leaders in religious life, particularly superior generals/provincials and their councils need to review the budget and strategize accordingly. Funds should be set aside for the education of their members.

**Time for study:** There is a need to create time for studies. Time and space should be made available in order to release sisters for initial and further studies. Often religious sisters are so carried away by the needs of service (ministry) that it becomes extremely difficult to create time for other needs. Therefore space for further studies must be included into the lived reality of being a sister within the African context.

**Personal commitment:** Apart from holding the leaders within the religious communities responsible for providing the money and space (time) for studying theology, it is appropriate that each African religious sister takes personal responsibility for self-improvement (particularly in the area of accessing theological education). This is in line with women’s ethics which emphasizes that women must take personal responsibility towards their own self-definition.37

**Seminars and workshops:** Part of the effort toward achieving theological education should include ongoing seminars and workshops which will continue to advance and challenge the sisters’ knowledge of theology. Theology is absolutely necessary for Catholic religious sisters; it is all about the discourse of understanding God and the social, political and cultural issues within the historical milieu, therefore African religious sisters cannot allow themselves to be marginalized.

**Conclusion:**
Building on the above submission, there is no doubt that Roman Catholic Religious Sisters in Africa need theological education in order to fortify their effectiveness in ministry. The basic three years training (plus the scholasticate) they receive is certainly not adequate to equip them with the required theological education needed to be relevant and authentic. Since they take the lead in providing key services in God’s name on behalf of the Church and for the people, they need to be relevant, particularly in the face of constant secularism in today’s context. The sisters cannot afford to stand aloof, otherwise they run the risk of becoming irrelevant for/among the people whom they are called to serve. Theological education serves as a streetwise device which the African Roman Catholic religious sister cannot do without. Therefore now is the time for them to be involved.

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(28) STUDYING AND DOING LUTHERAN THEOLOGIES
AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Paul John Isaak

Introduction

Over the past one hundred years, Christianity has experienced a profound southern shift in its geographical
centre of gravity. In 1893, 80% of those who professed the Christian faith lived in Europe and North
America, while by the end of the 20th century almost 60% lived in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the
Pacific.¹ “Christianity began in the twentieth century as a Western religion, and indeed the Western
religion; it ended the century as a non-Western religion, on track to become progressively more so.”²
Today, the churches of the global South are more typical representatives of Christianity than North
Americans or Europeans. Furthermore, this growth could mean that within thirty to forty years, most
Roman Catholics will be Hispanics, and the highest percentage of Protestants will be Africans. According
to Philip Jenkins “if we wish to visualize a ‘typical’ contemporary Christian, we should think of a woman
living in a village in Nigeria or in a Brazilian favela.”³ Such demographic shifts in Christianity mean
that the “centre” of European/North American Christendom has passed. As Andrew Walls points out: “Today
some of what in 1910 appeared to be ‘fully missionised lands’ are the most obviously prime mission fields
of the world.” ⁴

Christianity has thus grown in recent decades and all indications are that it will continue to do so, not
only as a result of natural population growth within the Christian community, but primarily through
mission as proclamation, mission as diaconal services, mission as building reconciled and healing
communities, etc. In the midst of such demographic shifts the question for action is: “What current
theological reflections and ethical actions and attitudes can assist the churches to navigate current
challenges and prepare themselves for developments that are to be expected?”

In order to address such a question I shall in bold humility provide three answers. First, I will focus
on one of the programmes of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) within the Department for Theology and
Studies (DTS) (hereafter LWF-DTS), namely Theology in the Life of the Church. At the outset, the
following should be stated concerning LWF within the context of ecumenism. Despite the fact that its head
office is in Geneva, Switzerland, it is an intra-Lutheran ecumenical organisation. The staff representatives
come from Africa, Asia, Latin and North America, Europe, Pacific, etc. All these Lutheran Christians
ensure that the theology that originates from the LWF is truly represented by all six continents.
Furthermore, the LWF is situated within the Ecumenical Centre of the World Council of Churches. Such a
site contributes to the dictum of Lutheranism: To be Lutheran is to be ecumenical. Thus the location of the
LWF in Geneva does not do harm to theological education and theology in Africa because African
theologians and educators are in Geneva, delegates to all conferences on African theological education are
from Africa, and such seminars and workshops do take place in African cities and towns.

¹ Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder, Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today (Maryknoll: Orbis
² Bevans and Schroeder, Constants in Context, 242.
³ Julio de Santa Ana (ed), Religions Today: Their Challenges to the Ecumenical Movement (Geneva: WCC, 2005), ix-
x.
Second, I shall address the issue of leadership development, especially from a perspective of what Ezra Chitando calls a “spectacular failure of imagination by post-colonial African leaders and citizens”. He calls for transformation of theological and religious studies institutions in Africa, “to equip graduates with skills to transform their communities” and churches. Such theological training and formation of capable leadership will contribute remarkably towards the quality of theological education and formation in Africa, including self-theologising in the process of developing more innovative Lutheran theologies in Africa.

Third, I shall point out the weaknesses of Lutheran theological education in Africa. Most, if not all, Lutheran theological institutions in Africa devote four full years to the study of theology and only one year for practical experiences or exposure-type of theological engagement as lived out in the actual life of churches. For example, in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN), students spend one year on what is known as the vicariate period in a parish before ordination, and in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) they spend merely six months! There is a significant gap between academic theology and diaconal (diakonia) ministries.

There is a dilemma of perceived and real [Lutheran] tension between faith and good works. The aim here would be to promote a more engaged and critical role of theologies in the life of Lutheran churches in Africa within the context the orthokardia (the truthful heartedness to God and the neighbour), the orthodoxy (the domain of correct understanding of faith and order) and the orthopraxis (the domain of being participants in missio Dei and what it means to carry mission in a holistic way) through kerygma (the proclamation and sharing of the Gospel by Word), diakonia (being of service to the neighbour), leiturgia (spirituality, prayer and worship), martyria (the prophetic actions of Christian life), and koinonia (essential role of the community in the actual life of the church and society as reconciled and healing communities) so “that they may all may be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me” (John 17:21). I now turn to the three parts of this essay.

Theologies and Theological Education in the Life of the Lutheran Churches in Africa

Although there is no global agency within the Lutheran churches to accredit institutions of theological education with similar standards around the world, one has to recognize the need to develop some common understanding between all African Lutheran institutions of theological education on what constitutes quality assurance and enhancement in theological education. There is a need for a balanced concept of quality in theological education that includes academic proficiency, spiritual formation and pastoral competencies. Multiple forms of oppression and discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, colour, class, caste, ability, sexuality and religion should be explicitly addressed in the quality standards applied in various contexts in Africa. Such criteria could be reflected in a common curriculum which could be shared with associations of theological schools from similar denominational backgrounds, with the view that the issues should be contextualised from their own local perspectives.

However, there is a theological programme known as the Theology in the Life of the Church within the LWF-DTS. The programme “Theology in the Life of the Church: Revisiting Its Critical Role” has been the focus of overall LWF-DTS work since the 1990s. The purpose is to call for, encourage and deepen constructive theological work in relation to major contextual challenges that churches face in their respective settings. The programme seeks to bridge what have been significant divides between more

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classical and more contextual approaches to theology, and to promote a more engaged and critical role of theology in the life of the church.

In my opinion, the programme creates an impression that there is a universal [Lutheran] theology and one united [Lutheran] Church. However, in the best tradition of Luther’s theology\(^7\) one should accept diverse theologies that do not necessarily exclude each other; they form a multicoloured mosaic of complementary, mutually enriching, and mutually challenging frames of reference.\(^8\) This fact is affirmed by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in the book *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*.\(^9\) In this volume, seventeen theologies are identified, such as African theology, Asian theology, Black theology, Feminist theology, including Womanist theology, Liberation theology, and Minjung theology. All these university-cum-seminary and praxiological oriented theologies are attempts to critically reflect on the orthodoxy and orthopraxis of the society, world and the church in the light of the word of God.

However, one should be cautious when it comes to the Lutheran theological education world-wide. As noted by Karen Bloomquist and Martin Sinaga, Lutheran theology and education is inevitably European, and especially Germanic in its logic, conceptualisations and traditions, and remains foreign to the Lutheran churches in the global South.\(^10\) In order to develop a theology that will transfigure Lutheran theology from its Germanic captivity, one needs an ethos and grammar or dynamic that “transcends” the particularity of its founding context. Such “transfiguration” is more than just translation or application, but involves liberating Lutheranism from its historical Germanic and European “Babylonian captivity”.\(^11\) To be liberated, transfigured and to come out from such Babylonian captivity “involves the death and resurrection of a whole church body with much of its theological a cultural baggage”\(^12\).

In light of such static tradition of Lutheranism, the LWF-DTS launched the programme of “Theology in the Life of the Church: Revisiting Its Critical Role” and begun the process of doing theologies from the perspectives of diversity and contextualisation. Fourteen years after the establishment of the aforementioned project, the LWF-DTS met from 25 to 31 March 2009 in Augsburg, Germany. At the meeting, over one hundred Lutheran theologians from approximately thirty countries, including Cameroon, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, convened. The gathering examined how theology and practices are being transformed in light of the different assumptions and approaches present in one global confessional communion. Central themes included biblical interpretation, systematic theology, worship, mission and ministry, and the church’s public and prophetic role in society, with the vision to reshape Lutheran theology in the twenty first century.

African Lutheran theologians such as Elieshi Mungure, Benson Bagonza, Kenneth Mtata, Ramathate Dolamo, Fidon Mwonbeki, and Paul John Isaak delivered presentations on “Signs of Hope: African Woman’s Perspective in the Current Rereading and Reinterpreting the Bible in the Lutheran Communion”; “Doing Theology of Sustainable Development in Tanzania”; “African Perceptions of Childhood and its Effect on Eucharistic Practices that Exclude Children”; “The Indigenisation of the Church in Africa”;

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\(^7\) At the outset, let me note that “Martin Luther’s theology” refers to that coming directly from Luther himself in his original writings. The designation “Lutheran theology/theologies” are interpretations of Luther’s theology. In my interpretation and application, there is no one single Lutheran theology in the life of one single Lutheran Church. A single Lutheran Theology and a single Lutheran Church does not exist.


\(^10\) Bloomquist and Sinaga, “Theological Education in Lutheran Churches,” 660.


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*Part III: Denominational Perspectives on Theological Education in Africa*
“Hermeneutic of Resonance: Making Biblical Theology Relevant”, and; “The Church Prophetic Witness: Social, Economic and Political Engagement by Lutheran Churches”, respectively. Such a step to contextualise Lutheran theology and theological education was needed because:

[In] the history of the LWF as a communion of diverse churches, the awareness of the tension between the gospel that holds us together, and the diversity with which we express it, grew as a creative challenge for both the self-understanding of the LWF as a communion and its theological practice. This challenge offers new opportunities for the exercise of theology in the LWF through which the communion will be promoted if, and only if, these characteristics of a theological practice are followed: a) the LWF offers itself as a place for different articulations of diverse experiences; b) as a catalyst for innovation within theologies in different contexts; and c) as a guarantor of both the diversity and of the necessity of expressing commonalities.

If such a vision of contextualisation is not followed, the Lutheran churches face the following stagnations: First, the tradition of Lutheranism itself faces a crisis. The term, “Lutheranism” points to a static tradition and is problematic. Despite paying lip-service to both Luther’s understanding of the gospel and its transforming character, there is a tendency to adhere to a fixed list of doctrines or what is referred to within Lutheran theology as “Babylonian captivity” that is sometimes entrenched in the theological and cultural baggage of European Lutheranism. Second, there is a large gap between what might be considered as academic theology and theology as lived out in the actual life of churches; the former is often inaccessible even to church leaders or in many Lutheran churches, theology is increasingly sidelined, with attention focussed instead on what will work, is practical and popular. Or, in the face of rapid social changes, people are attracted to fundamentalist, evangelical or charismatic appeals that seemingly preclude further theological reflections. Special attention needs to be paid to the core article on which the Church stands or falls, as according to Luther, namely—grace alone or faith alone—in order to establish a single centre and to reject a whole set of secondary Lutheranism that had been elevated to central status. If not, Karen Bloomquist and Martin Sinaga note, Lutheran theology may be “at risk of losing its essential role in the life of Lutheran churches”.

In order to avoid such stagnations, one ought to pay attention to the following weakness in Lutheran interpretation of Luther’s theology: The specific relationship between faith and good works or between orthodoxy and orthopraxis. It has been said that Lutherans have a powerful theology but weak praxis. Bonhoeffer indicates such weakness in terms of cheap grace and costly grace in The Cost of Discipleship. In order to overcome such a weakness, Craig Nessan is correct when he says that “the false dichotomy between what one does as a member of a congregation and what one does as a baptized child of God in the world must be overcome…. The movement from sanctuary to streets and back again thus defines the very rhythm of congregational existence”. This is in line with Luther’s theology because Luther himself was not “a systematic theologian…but was committed to the gospel of God’s grace being communicated, in words and actions, in relation to the existential and social realities facing people of his day. This was at the

14 See the “Ten Theses on the Role of Theology in the LWF” as formulated by the Program Committee for Theology and Studies at its meeting in 1995. Proceedings, LWF Program Committee for Theology and Studies, Exhibit 3, 2-3.
16 Bloomquist and Sinaga, “Theological Education in Lutheran Churches,” 652.
18 Bloomquist and Sinaga, “Theological Education in Lutheran Churches,” 652.
heart of Luther’s theological intent and still should be considered the intended purpose of theological education in Lutheran churches today”.22

To quote Luther, we are simultaneously righteous and sinners (simul iustus et peccator). Whatever we do is tainted by sin. There will never be a perfect time for action and we do not need to wait for such a perfect time. We need to listen to Luther’s down-to-earth and situational approach to ethics. As Roland Bainton explains, “Luther’s statement peccate fortiter ‘Sin for all you are worth. God can forgive only a lusty sinner’ was not due to a sloppy indifference to morality but a challenge to those locked into inaction by fear or puffed up by the pride of having a supposedly ‘unblemished’ record”.23

Jesus comes to us in those who are hungry, homeless, sick and imprisoned. Basic human needs are listed here—food, clothing, shelter, health care and, by implication, the basic socio-political need for human dignity, human rights and integrity. In other words, studying and doing theologies in the life of the Churches tells us the good news that in a very real yet mysterious sense, the poor are “proxies for Christ”.24 To put it differently, loving the Triune God and loving one’s neighbour is a single, not a sequential act. We should remember that the new thing about Jesus was that he said the two commandments in Deuteronomy 6:5 “you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, with all your might” and Leviticus 19:18 “you shall love your neighbour as yourself” in the same breath and gave them equal weight. Jesus makes the two commandments virtually one, such that there is no sense in which we can love God at the expense of our neighbour or vice versa.

To paraphrase Luther, the question, “Where do we find a merciful God?” is always related to the cry: “How can we be merciful neighbours to one another?” Or as Luther observes, having been made righteous by Christ, we become “a Christ” toward the neighbour by enabling the poor to have their daily bread.25 A Lutheran understanding of service always has the neighbour as its focus. For Luther, the entire world is the neighbour, and the Christian is charged with bearing the face of Christ to the neighbour, while scrutinising the neighbour for the presence of Christ.26

But what does it mean to keep God at the centre of human efforts? Let me explore one possible answer by looking at Luther’s central theological category, namely the question of how one finds a gracious God. At the outset, it needs to be underscored that, when Martin Luther inserts the word alone when speaking of “justification by faith alone”, this does not mean any lack of interests in works.27 On the contrary: Luther is interested precisely in the purity of works when he inserts alone. Although emphasising that justification occurs by faith alone, Luther wishes to keep the God-relationship free from all thoughts of merit and second, to keep the neighbour-relationship free from all religious self-interest. But the question still remains: Why is justification solely by faith, independent of faith’s works?28

According to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, signed and celebrated on 31 October 1999 in Augsburg, Germany, by the LWF and the Roman Catholic Church, the biblical teaching on justification by faith and grace means that – “… We together confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit,

22 Bloomquist and Sinaga, “Theological Education in Lutheran Churches,” 653.
27 Luther, Luther’s Works, Vol. 26, 29-30.

Part III: Denominational Perspectives on Theological Education in Africa
who renews our hearts while equipping us for and calling us to good works”. This kind of God in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and this kind of action constitute the core of the gospel or this radical alteration in the human condition – *simul iustus et peccator* – must surely engage justified sinners in altering prevailing social relationships as well, if they wish to profess their faith convincingly.

The centrality of faith in the Triune God is poignantly expressed in the story of a refugee in Burundi, a country that has been bleeding from a violent ethnic conflict for many years. Like thousands of others in the Great Lakes region of central Africa, this refugee was obliged to leave his home and run for his life. All he took along for provisions was a torn blanket to cover his body at night, and a cross.

What a naive faith! Surely that is how many of us respond when hearing of a person who’s most prized possession, the one thing he could not leave behind when fleeing for his life, was a cross. Yet it was this cross that provided inner solace, comfort and security to the man; hope which no human power could snatch away. Day and night, he walked with his cross, drawing from it the spiritual sustenance and energy to move on. In the loneliness of the tropical forest, this man entered into a new relationship with God, the I am who encountered Moses when he was a refugee in the wilderness; the I am who cannot remain indifferent to the cries of people suffering from the pain of poverty.

From such a background there can be little doubt that the relationship of Christianity to one’s own contexts will not be enforced from one type of Christianity because no one is an onlooker or a hiker any longer, but all are [Lutheran] Christians who are shaking off the mental slavery and cultural domination or Babylonian captivity, thereby taking responsibilities for studying and doing theologies in their own contexts and situations. But the question is whether post-colonial African Lutheran church leadership has such imaginations? Furthermore, what type of modules are most suitable for Lutheran theological education in Africa today in order to move beyond Germanic Lutheranism that turns theology into an archival project by denying Lutheran theologians, church leaders and laity the opportunity to develop a more engaging contextual theologies that address the real questions and challenges confronting African Christianity in the twenty first century? I shall now focus on such questions.

**Servant Leaders or Leaders of Servants?**

According to Ambrose Moyo from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, African Lutherans are facing “a crisis” in theological education and leadership. The crisis of church leadership causes the closing down of the church-related theological institutions. He expressed his concern that the quality of theological education and ministerial training in most of the African Lutheran churches “leaves much to be desired”. Moyo elaborated on the churches’ crucial role for the continent’s Christian leadership when he addressed church leaders and other representatives of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches attending the 24-28 March 2010 Africa Pre-Assembly and Church Leadership Consultation in Abuja, Nigeria.

Furthermore, Moyo reminded African Lutheran churches of the urgent need to adapt their theological education and ministry formation to the continent’s needs. He pointed out that while the number of members in African Lutheran churches showed a steady growth over the years—with 18.7 million in 2009—this [membership] “growth places significant challenge on the churches in the South to develop capacities and credible leadership” to respond to the relevant issues in church and society. “It is critical that

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29 Letter signed by Ishmael Noko, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, and Walter Cardinal Kasper, President of Pontifical Council of the Roman Catholic Church for Promoting Christian Unity. The letter was dated 6 February 2004 and was issued simultaneously from Geneva and the Vatican.


we come up with structures and programs that will build the capacity of the global South to assume leadership roles in all aspects of God’s mission,” said Moyo. He challenged churches to reflect from an African perspective on Martin Luther’s explanation of the petition for daily bread in the Small Catechism. Would Luther have elaborated on daily bread the way he did “if he was an African [dealing with] hunger and starvation, bad governance, the many wars and the cry for peace, justice, reconciliation and healing?” posed Moyo. He stressed the need to write “our own African catechism which will be simple and relevant, dealing with bread and butter issues in Africa today”. Similarly, liturgies in some of the Lutheran churches in Africa had not changed since they were produced by the early missionaries, with symbols that no longer relate to the African experience today, remarked Moyo.32

One of the reasons for the crisis is because of the wrong understanding of church leadership. A Lutheran underlying conception of church leadership is that of the priesthood of all believers. This teaching emphasises the equality among all the Christians as well as the responsibility of all believers in sharing for the service of others. It is also a way of asserting the communal versus hierarchical nature of the church.

Today, especially with the Lutheran churches in Africa, the idea of the priesthood of all believers is completely overshadowed by an emphasis on ordained ministry in general and in particularly the office of the bishop. Cathedra, the Episcopal seat, is closely linked with the royal throne. Likewise, Episcopal garments are in close affinity with the royal garments. The sceptre is replaced with the bishop’s rod having pastoral connotations, and the mitre of the bishop represents the crown. It seems that archaic authoritarian symbolism has found a safe haven in the Lutheran churches in Africa, including the hierarchical model based on the mission director.

Instead, Jesus emphasised that among his followers, the one willing to be the leader should be the servant of all. It seems like that the ordained pastors and bishops are more leaders of the servants instead of servant leaders.33 The yearning for status symbols, especially among the African Lutheran bishops, is not only a matter of archaic symbolism but can also be extended to the everyday life situation. For example, many African Lutheran bishops want to be address as “The Right Reverent Doctor Bishop”. But, Jesus’ mission, ministry and service had very little understanding of hierarchical and chieftaincy patterns, and even when they were considered, Jesus tended to turn hierarchies upside down. According to Cuthbert Omari, a Lutheran theologian from Tanzania, some of the Lutheran bishops seemed to have become representatives of their ethnic groups. Omari points out that a bishop is “looked on as a tribal leader. This, then, is a sociological issue and not theological. The trend is to have these leaders according to ethnic groups”.34

In most parts of our world, we are still living with theological traditions that are based on what Paulo Freire calls *banking*35 and, one should add, an authoritarian model of leadership. This type of pedagogy or model does not facilitate critical reflective thought. Instead, the need today is for ministry formation to develop leaders who mature cognitively, morally, socially and spiritually. Such a model seeks specifically to cultivate an appreciation of and to enhance the skills needed for becoming a public and practical theologian, as well as preparing women and men for effective leadership in the ordained ministry of the Church. Such a model is grounded in the students’ confessional identities, for service in local congregations. It requires them to faithfully bear witness to Jesus Christ in our religiously pluralistic world, and to interpret the gospel in engagement with the deep human longing for personal and social healing.

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32 Moyo, “Emphasis on Theological Formation.”
Today, we should advocate a participatory education instead of a banking pedagogy or a model based on authoritarian or chieftaincy leadership. Such student-cum-people-oriented methods of pedagogy facilitate critical reflective thought in the students’ lives, and better prepare them for real-life ministry if their training is experientially based. According to Luther, education is always linked with social responsibilities.\(^{36}\) For him, education is necessary for the spiritual growth of both girls and boys, and is equally essential if they are to become useful citizens. Such suggestions are interesting because they help us see the importance and significance of social responsibility. Luther says, for example, that for every dollar that is invested in military expenditures, 100 dollars should be invested in education.\(^{37}\) Imagine adopting such a formula today to provide food, clothing, shelter and other basic necessities of life to those who need it most!

The church has the responsibility to equip leaders who will guide congregations and church-related institutions in the ministries and mission of the church. Each and every leader of the church ought to be equipped to lead the people of God in worship to praise God, the Creator, Jesus Christ the Saviour, and the Holy Spirit that sanctify God’s people. Such leaders have to be equipped to proclaim God’s saving gospel of justification by grace alone; and be engaged in the diaconal social ministries of serving one’s neighbour, after being justified, by offering assistance and empowerment to the thirsty, the hungry, strangers, refugees, the sick, the landless and the disinheriteds.

The service rendered by the whole people of God has to be relevant to the needs of the people in the Church and in society. Different ministries have to be created in accordance with the needs of the people. We see this happening in the New Testament, especially with Jesus, whose ministries included teaching, preaching, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and counselling the grieving. Critical awareness of the human condition and a variety of gifts, services and activities will affect the process of leadership development. For instance, the process of equipping theologians and ministers needs to be evaluated periodically in order to meet the challenges confronting the Church.

Today, development efforts cannot be separated from the Christian life of faith, witness, and vocation. In our complex world and century, driven by the forces of globalisation, the faithful and effective leader needs to attend to the implications of such forces in order for human life and local cultures to flourish. Thus, it is important to equip committed Christian leaders with skills for holistic mission, ministry, and service.

**Two Models of Lutheran Theological Education in Africa**

There are two schools of thought when it comes to the question of whether one is studying or doing theology. One school claims that if you study theology you immerse yourself deeper and deeper into the ocean of knowledge. The deeper you go, the better you know all classical books in their original languages in the best libraries. The other school says that while it is beautiful to delve deeper and deeper to the bottom of the ocean of libraries found in the greatest cities and intellectual centres of the world, the journey does not end there. This is so because of the many voices crying and calling us to come back to the shores and share the good news so that our world will be a reconciled and healing community. I submit that while we ought to go deeper and deeper into the oceans of libraries, we cannot remain deep down there. It is equally important that we come back to the deserts, the flea markets, and dusty streets to share the well known Gospel of Luke 4: 16-21.

At the outset let us state that studying and doing theologies in the life of the Churches is an attempt to bridge what have been significant divides between more classical and more contextual approaches to

\(^{36}\) Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol 45, 344.


*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
theology, and to promote a more engaged and critical role of a specific theology in the life of the church. According to John de Gruchy, 38

... those training for the ordained ministry go to college, so we say, to study or, as it is described in some universities, to ‘read theology’. It all sounds so academic. The advantage of using the phrase, ‘doing theology’, is that it indicates that theology is not simply something one learns about through reading textbooks, or listening to lectures, but through engaging in doing theology in particular contexts and situations.

De Gruchy is making his case by saying that studying theology is a necessary and important academic activity, whereas doing theology is more—it is a faith-praxis, a committed engagement, a way of being, a passion. 39 In short, African Lutheran theology is envisioned as an activity “done” with clear regard for a social transformation and transfiguring, faithful to the Christian gospel. Studying theology has significance only in so far as it enables us to do theology today with better insight and greater faithfulness to the gospel. Hence the use of the word ‘praxis’ is important, to emphasise the connection between theological reflection and Christian mission, proclamation and social action in the world. Consider the following illustration that de Gruchy gives of the connection between studying and doing theology:

Just a week or two after I was inducted as minister of my first congregation, the young son of a family who were members was run over and killed by a drunken driver. Quite apart from the suffering and pain which this caused, you can imagine the kind of questions which the parents and others in the community asked in trying to understand and make sense of what had happened. You will also appreciate how much I had to try to remember what my study of theology had taught me about God’s providence, the problem of evil and suffering, and related issues. Let me say that within a very short time I recognised that while I had indeed learned much about these agonising issues as a theological student, and while much of this helped me to respond to the questions being asked, I really had to work through the issues myself in the light of my understanding of the gospel and the particular needs of the people to whom I was ministering. Theology was essential in order to minister to the needs of my congregation, but a second-hand theology was not of great use. Somehow I had to learn how to move from the study of theology to doing it within the context in which I found myself. 40

Studying of theology is good, it sounds good, it has all the ingredients of traditional teachings, but sometimes it might be bad theology if it lacks context. According to Konrad Raiser, the former General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, the question is:

What then, is the role of the academic theology in the ecumenical movement? It has the indispensable function of working out and enforcing the rules and the criteria which are needed to keep the dialogue between different contextual theologies alive, to keep theological activity authentic. Academic theology is not an end in itself; it is meant to serve and support the theology by the people. The partner and addressee of theological reflection should therefore be much less the non-believing, secular person than the person who is involved in the struggle for human dignity. 41

We need to study and do a theology with the aim of going deeper into the ocean of knowledge, but at the same time return to the desert as soon as possible to share with those in need. According to an African proverb, if the shepherds are limping, the flock will not reach the green pastures. Such a proverb reminds

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40 De Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio, Doing Theology in Context, 2.
me of the narrative of David, King Saul and Goliath during the war between the Israelites and the Philistines in 1 Samuel 17. David, a young shepherd, was sent by his father to take provisions to his three brothers on the battlefield. On arrival, David became curious about Goliath, the Philistine giant whom no Israelite dared approach. Despite his brother’s anger wanting to silence him, David expressed an interest in fighting Goliath and word of this reached King Saul. Although he was young, David had had some experience with fighting lions and bears when they attacked his flock. So King Saul allowed David to face Goliath, but insisted on clothing David with his armour and strapping him with his sword. But David could not walk! In place of the armour and sword, David pulled out his own simple slingshot and killed the giant.

Today, we must ask ourselves: How do we avoid imposing foreign tools and methods on our theological education and formation? How do we transmit to students of theology habits that sustain a lifelong intellectual exploration of love of the Triune God and knowledge of God in service of God’s world? How do we help them acquire a conviction that theology is done for an encompassing way of life rather than simply to satisfy intellectual curiosity, earn a living, or dazzle others with brilliance? How do we inculcate a sense that theology is itself a way of life – a life of love and service to God and fellow human beings – so that one is a theologian with one’s whole life and not an “ordained technician” but a “practical theologian”.42

Studying and doing theologies can never be a neutral exercise or academic detachment, nor can it be a substitution for faith and commitment. Instead, it assumes faith in the Triune God, and it requires commitment to the causes of our neighbours in need. I am now thinking on the issue of commitment or neutrality in theology. To what extent should theologians be “committed”? To put the question in an especially pointed way: Can Christian theology be taught by someone who is not a Christian? Is commitment to the Christian faith an essential qualification for anyone who wants to teach or study Christian theology?

Contextual theologians have been scornful of the notion of “academic detachment”, that is, a scholar who is already committed to a theory (such as the truth of Christianity) will prejudice her or his evaluation of the material to be studied. In other words, the only person who is intellectually qualified to pass judgment on the Christian faith is someone who is neutral toward it. For contextual theologians, such academic detachment has a severe hindrance to the cause of social justice and political transformation. They ask the question, if something is true, ought one not to be committed to it? In other words, contextual theology arises in response to the faith of a community or it is meant to serve and support the theology of the people (the laity) and their struggle for somebodyness, human dignity and human rights.

The question whether a theologian should be neutral or committed has long been a debate. Just to be engaged in “studying theology” may not demand commitment to one’s faith. Anyone can examine what Christians believe and why, and may well be able to do this better than many Christians themselves. But if we locate the study of theology within the framework of “doing theology”, then we assume that the theologian is part of the Christian community. From this perspective, “doing theology” can never be a neutral exercise, nor can it be a substitute for faith and commitment. It assumes faith, and it requires commitment to the poor and oppressed. With these words I am bringing together the two modules of theological education: The studying and doing of theological education in Africa. We ought to “study theology” but it should be placed at the service of “doing theology” and thus to make a vital contribution and commitment to the task of the missio Dei, ministry, theological education and diaconal ministries.

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42 De Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio, Doing Theology in Context, 3.
Conclusion

To recapitulate, studying and doing theologies in the life of the Lutheran churches in Africa directly challenges and corrects the tendency to a certain intellectualism in the *sola scriptura* tradition and to ritualism in the sacramental traditions. Instead, studying and doing theologies in our various churches creates a new culture, ethos, and spirituality of receiving and sharing the gospel. Likewise, in Martin Luther’s theology, human beings are God-related individuals and all human activity is directed to the benefit of the human race. Such a movement towards the neighbour starts with divine approval. As Luther observes, he or she who wants to be a true Christian must be truly a believer. But he or she does not truly believe if works of love do not follow his/her faith. To put it differently, love of God and love of neighbour cannot be separated. In *The Freedom of a Christian*, Luther speaks of being a Christ to one’s neighbour. That is, in serving one’s neighbour, we are not serving God; on the contrary, we are being united with God by faith, and participate in the *missio Dei*. In short, having been made righteous by Christ, we become “a Christ” towards the neighbour by enabling the poor to have their daily bread.

To conclude, let me end with an open invitation and a vision. The future of studying and doing theologies in the life of the Lutheran churches in Africa will depend on developing appropriate Lutheran, contextual, ecumenical, and inter-religious engaged theological work and education. Andrew Walls, in the book *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, states that there is in Christianity an “essential continuity” by which it remains itself as it transforms itself in missionary outreach. Thus Walls states,

> Each phase of Christian history has seen a transformation of Christianity as it entered and penetrated other cultures. There is no such thing as ‘Christian culture’ or ‘Christian civilisation’ in the sense that an Islamic culture, and an Islamic civilisation. There have been several different Christian civilisations already; there may yet be many more. The reason for this lies in the infinite translatability of the Christian faith.

According to David Bosch, the mission as translation should be done in the spirit of continuity with the best of what missionary theology has been in the past decades and centuries. For Bosch, such an approach calls forth the discontinuation of one single missionary theology or even one single Lutheran theology. Instead, what is needed today is to see Christianity as a multicoloured mosaic of complementary and mutual enriching as well as mutually challenging frames of reference.

Today, we are living in a world of demographic shifts within religions and religious plurality. What is certain is that Christianity can no longer draw on a dominant northern religious, cultural, linguistic or political framework for direction. Neither can the future be seen exclusively through the lenses of southern Christianity. World Christianity and religious plurality are today’s phenomena. In short, today’s world cannot be seen through the lenses of uniformity but of ever-increasing diversity. Thus the question that each one of us would answer is, How well will we work, minister, and grow together in the context of this astonishing diversity? What is sure is that in light of the demographic shift in Christianity, the time has passed when Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific sat at the feet of Europe and North America in order to learn theology. Therefore the following vision is based on the book of Ruben Alves, *Tomorrow’s Child: Imagination, Creativity, and the Rebirth of Culture*. Alves’ work on creative and prophetic

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47 As quoted in Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 33.
48 As quoted in Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 33.
imagination might help us to contextualise Lutheranism with clear regard to a social transformation faithful to the Christian gospel. In the words of Alves:

If ours is not the harvest season, it may well be a time for sowing...In spite—and because—our tall trees have been cut down, our air polluted with fear, and our soil turned into a heap of refuse, a new seed must be planted: the seed of our highest hope.\(^{51}\)

**Bibliography**


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(29) **ANGLICAN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICAN AND THE ROLE OF ANITEPAM**

**Henry Mbaya**

**Introduction**

The critical role of theology in preparing or equipping people for ministry, which implies a bearing on church growth, is unquestionable and is thus taken for granted. The nexus of theology and the formation of clergy/ministry (therefore affecting church growth) may be seen as what water is for fish, as the latter cannot survive without the former. This paper seeks to explore how *African Network of Institutions of Theological Education Preparing Anglicans for Ministry* (hereafter ANITEPAM)\(^1\) has fulfilled its task in preparing God’s people for the church of God. The critical question I seek to address is: to what extent has ANITEPAM managed to live up to its vision which reads “To have well trained, Godly men and women able to serve Christ in His Church.”\(^2\) I will do this by tracing the history of ANITEPAM from its inception, highlighting landmarks.

**The Origins**

The idea of the African Network of Institutions of Theological Education Preparing Anglicans for Ministry, ANITEPAM originated at the first Anglican-Episcopal Inter-Seminary Symposium in Africa in Harare in 1991.\(^3\) It was borne out of a need to strengthen the previous efforts of dialogue and mutual support among the African educators’ ministries.\(^4\) One of its objective was to affirm the importance of “the development of an authentically African theology” and the value of “wider exchange and dialogue among Anglican and ecumenical theological centres in Africa.”\(^5\) The delegates at the symposium called for “a communication network among seminaries in Africa preparing Anglicans for ministry.”\(^6\) The delegates proposed the formation of a structure that would support, nurture and sustain theological education for Anglicans on the continent.

Meanwhile, meeting in October 1992, the Anglican Archbishops and Primates, who constitute the Council of Anglican Primates in Africa (CAPA), endorsed the formation of the African Network of Institutions of Theological Education Preparing Anglicans for Ministry (ANITEPAM). As a body ANITEPAM came to represent 120 Anglican regional institutions in West, East, Central, Southern and Francophone Africa.\(^7\) More significantly, from its inception Anglican bishops came to regard ANITEPAM as its theological think tank which could give them direction on issues facing the church in Africa.

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\(^1\) [http://www.anitepam.org/](http://www.anitepam.org/)


\(^7\) The ANITEPAM Bulletin, No. 59-60, August-November, 2009.
Right from the start ANITEPAM was conscious of the challenge it faced of operating with a limited amount of resources and how to meet its commitments. At its first council meeting, presided over by the Rt. Revd. Benjamin Kwashi of Jos, (former Rector of St. Francis of Assisi Theological College in Nigeria), it stressed the need for ANITEPAM “to embrace an immense variety of programmes in Africa”; expose theological educators to a diverse experience of theological programmes on the continent, not prescribe what theological colleges should do or the theological content of their programmes as compared to that of residential colleges. Furthermore, ANITEPAM decided that it would not take a position on issues affecting the African Church or the Communion.

Thus in 1993 ANITEPAM was formally launched in Nairobi, Kenya. Its head office was set up in Nairobi, Kenya. Manas Kuria, the archbishop of Kenya, appointed Revd. Dr. Leon P. Spencer to serve as its first Corresponding Secretary. Spencer held the position from 1983 to 1998. In 1998 he was succeeded by Revd. Gareth Sendegeya of St. Mark’s College in Dar-es-Salaam, whose term in office came to an end in 2003. In that year the latter was succeeded by Revd. Michael McCoy. He served in that position until 2006 when Revd. Martin Mgeni, a Malawian educator whose term in office ended in 2011, succeeded him in 2007.

The ANITEPAM Bulletin

When the Network was formed dissemination of information and shared reflection constituted one of its priorities. A milestone in the development of ANITEPAM was the launch of the ANITEPAM Bulletin. The Bulletin is sent to every Anglican bishop and other interested individuals throughout the world. It disseminates news about the African Church and the Anglican Communion. These comprise the opportunities to strengthen institutions by providing information about scholarships for further studies of African educators, conferences; notations and reviews for libraries; and encouragement to share information in the Journal between the Faculty and students.

The ANITEPAM Journal

In 1999 another milestone was reached when the ANITEPAM Journal was launched. The Journal carried news items, notably: “The African Church Toward the new millennium: challenges for African theological education (1999); Christian-Muslim relations in Africa (2000); “Understanding TEE, A course outline and handbooks for students and tutor” (2001); women in the African Church (2002); contextual theology (2003 and 2004); “Theological Education and God’s Mission in Africa”2005; and “Theological Education and the African Way in Africa” (2006).

Broadening the Horizon

1. French-speaking Anglicans

One weakness since the start of the Network had been the absence of the French-speaking constituency and the voice of women. Consequently ANITEPAM sought to bridge the gap. Thus in 1996 another significant

11 ANITEPAM home page website: http://www.anitepam.org/About%20Anitepam.htm

Part III: Denominational Perspectives on Theological Education in Africa
landmark was reached when, jointly with the International Association of Anglicans of French expressions, “Rencontres”, the Network hosted a consultation for French-speaking theological educators and church leaders. With the guidance of the Reverend Isingoma Kahwa, former Directeur of the Institut Superieur Theologique Anglican in Bunia, Zaire (present bishop of Katanga), ANITEPAM Council member for francophone Africa, efforts to hold a conference in French-speaking Africa failed and consequently it was settled for Limuru, Kenya. The delegates, mostly from Africa, Haiti, France and Canada, attended. They called for a high quality ministerial training in French with French literature and calling upon French-speaking Anglican theologians to make their research available.

**Contextual Reflection**

In 2003, ANITEPAM was involved in the first global consultation of Anglican theologians held at the Episcopal Divinity School with the “intent to establish a voluntary network of Anglican Contextual Theologians”. According to Martin Mgeni and Leon Spencer this “was a way [of] enabling the articulation of multiple voices.”

A year later, ANITEPAM hosted the second consultation of Anglican Contextual Theologians in Durban, South Africa. To give the delegates a feeling of the uniqueness of contexts, an arrangement had been made for the candidates to leave the industrial polluted Durban for a while and visit the Valley of a Thousand Hills and then return to Durban. To make their experience more meaningful, according to Martin Mgeni and Leon Spencer, the participants reflected on four questions: What do you see and hear? What do I feel about this? What connects with my home context? Where and how is God at work? According to Martin Mgeni and Leon Spencer these were attempts to provide a forum for open debate.

Even in the current context of the Anglican Communion strife with conflict, Martin Mgeni and Leon Spencer asserted that ANITEPAM decided not to take sides on issues affecting the church in Africa or the rest of the world, but rather to encourage its constituencies to reflect and discuss them. Meanwhile, responding to the Windsor report, ANITEPAM took the opportunity to encourage theological institutions to engage in the study of the document. However, it must also be noted that a comment made on the report according to which some of the partners involved in the crisis facing the Anglican Communion had not observed the principles, suggesting ANITEPAM taking a position. It has to be noted that, contrary to the official position not to take a stance on issues affecting the church in Africa or the Communion by making that statement, ANITEPAM had taken a position on the issue of the Windsor report.

However, Mgeni noted that the diverse nature of current theological positions of member churches that make up the network sometimes makes it difficult for ANITEPAM to forge a united front regarding common issues facing ‘one continental church’. One the other hand, according to Mgeni, gatherings also help to expose the participants to different features of the Anglican Church life on the continent, so much so that one visiting another region would be already familiar with their traditions.

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16 Martin Mgeni and Leon Spencer, “Mission and Ministry…”, 270.
18 Martin Mgeni and Leon Spencer, ANITEPAM, Org, 1.
21 Martin Mgeni and Leon Spencer, “Mission and Ministry…”, 273
22 Martin Mgeni and Leon Spencer, “Mission and Ministry…”, 273
23 Martin Mgeni and Leon Spencer, “Mission and Ministry…”, 273
24 Telephone interview, 08.04.12.
25 Telephone interview, 08.04.12.
In September 2009 ANITEPAM’s Governing Council met in Nairobi, Kenya. This also involved some sessions with CAPA General Secretary, Grace Kaiso. Kaiso articulated the role of ANITEPAM as “a catalyst for helping solving theological problems, a serving arm of the Anglican Communion.”

He further noted that CAPA has a theological desk and that he would like ANITEPAM to co-ordinate on theological issues within CAPA. Kaiso’s vision would seem to conflict with the avowed objective of the organization which stipulated that it should not take a position on theological issues or interfere in other institutions.

In view of the CAPA meeting scheduled for the following year, in August ANITEPAM chose Dr. Esther Mombo, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Revd. Canon Prof Joseph D. Galgalo of St. Paul’s in Limuru, Kenya, to serve on the working team preparing for CAPA.

The Council chaired by the Very Revd. Victor Atta-Baffoe, Dean of St. Nicholas’ Seminary in Ghana, dealt with a number of important issues, including “a thorough examination of ANITEPAM’s ministry.” At that meeting another women’s consultation similar to the one that was held in Harare in 1998 was planned for 2010 conditional on the availability of funds.

**Partnerships**

1. Overseas links

As support from the African Provinces has always been small, the Network has tended to look overseas for resources. It has links with the Society for the Propagation of the Christian Knowledge (SPCK), the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG), the Church Missionary Society (CMS), Crosslinks, the Episcopal Church in the USA and the Anglican Church of Canada.

Highlighting the challenge of funding, Martin Mgeni said that funding from overseas comes with strings attached to it. African Churches are dictated to based on the theological position of the donor church, which sometimes runs contrary to the traditional stance of the local church. According to Mgeni, the lack of funds sometimes undermines the implementation of set programmes.

2. Theological Education for the Anglican Communion (TEAC)

One of the objectives of the Network is to link with other theological networks. After its inception ANITEPAM established a link with the Theological Education for Anglican Communion (TEAC). In 2006, TEAC met at Kempton Park where some members of ANITEPAM also attended.
immediately after the TEAC consultation, ANITEPAM described the “distinct challenges each of the Africa regions faced as well as common issues they had to resolve, such as acute lack of resources…a plea for improved theological education which must change the Anglican Church.”

The conference ended with commitments from its members to continue working on concrete proposals for professional, ecumenical and contextually sensitive theological education.

In spite of its principal objective, namely to “establish links among Anglican and other theological educational work in Africa…” “or affirm links with educational structures throughout the world” it is strange that ANITEPAM has had no links with other African networks, such as the Association of Theological Institutions in Southern and Central Africa (ATISCA) or ACTEA, which seek to promote an Africa-oriented theological training.

Michael McCoy asserted that during his tenure he was not aware of the existence of such institutions. On the other hand, Martin Mgeni said that ANITEPAM is only involved with Anglican institutions.

3. Faculty Exchange

According to Martin Mgeni and Leon Spencer, believing that experience is better than merely sharing of information, ANITEPAM initiated a faculty exchange programme in 1997 with the aim of fulfilling one of its objectives. Exchanging experiences in an African rather than European or North American theological institution was considered to be of greater value for African educators. Thus an exchange programme between Bishop Tucker College (Uganda Christian University) and the College of the Transfiguration in South Africa was arranged, followed by another one between St. Nicholas Theological College in Cape Coast, Ghana, and Gaul House in Zimbabwe.

4. Ecumenical Partnership

Even though ANITEPAM has been involved in wider fellowships, its engagement in ecumenical relations has not been its strongest point. According to Michael McCoy, while serving as Secretary General of ANITEPAM, he attended an All-Africa meeting of the Theological Education by Extension (TEE) practitioners in August 2003 in Uganda, which was ecumenical in nature. On the other hand, Martin Mgeni, ANITEPAM’s Secretary until 2011, stated that the network, being an Anglican organisation, was not really involved in ecumenical partnership.

During his tenure as Corresponding Secretary, McCoy remembered that, in spite of trying to reach out to all Anglican institutions, it had not been easy even to get them to share their life stories in the Journal.

He cited his attempt to get the institutions to share how they went about fulfilling their roles. In the editorial of November 2005, he wrote, “ANITEPAM invited our seminaries and theological education programmes to tell their stories, in these pages, of how they are equipping African Church leaders for the...
Missio Dei. Sadly, the stories have not been forthcoming. McCoy concluded that this may have been “a result of natural diffidence; it may also be a sign that we have yet to get to grips with this ‘new fact’, at least in our theological education curricula.” The lack of response may reflect a degree of commitment or apathy on the part of the constituencies. However, it may also reflect what McCoy noted as “the challenge of achieving a wider ownership by the Anglican Provinces”. What this implies is that, to a degree, the Provinces have not yet ‘fully’ owned the Network. It exists very much as a loose affiliation of theological institutions with little to bind it together.

Consultation on African Women in Theological Education

What role have women played in ANITEPAM? James Amanze, who is himself involved in theological education in Southern and Central Africa, wrote that in “general churches are now making deliberate efforts to encourage theological institutions to integrate in their curriculum gender studies designed to promote women issues. Theological reflection on the position and role of women in church and society is now firmly entrenched in... theological colleges.” However, it is noteworthy that Amanze’s observation largely applies to the context of Southern and Central Africa. However, for a broader picture of the state of theological education and ministry in Africa as it affects women in ANITEPAM, perhaps we should turn elsewhere.

Under the influence of the global trends, women have found their voice in ANITEPAM forums, which have given them the opportunity to influence the direction of ANITEPAM, particularly on women issues. From 9 to 13 January 1998, with financial assistance from some of its partners overseas, ANITEPAM sponsored a consultation for women in Harare, Zimbabwe. Meeting under the theme “Nurturing our calling... Strengthening Our Ministry”, the consultation was organised by Revd. Mabel Katahwere, an Ugandan. Wide-ranging issues affecting women were discussed, notably ‘the role of women in Theological Education in Africa’, ‘The Challenges Faced by Women in Theological Education’, Structures Existing That Can be in Solidarity with African Women in Theological Education’, ‘Working With Others Groups in Solidarity’ and ‘Women in TEE and Residential Supporting One Another’

It is significant that the women identified structures as responsible for undermining their process of learning, hence the call for ‘women power’ as a block to dismantle the power of men entrenched in church structures. However, going beyond structural challenges, the women identified sexual abuse and violence as an area where they felt vulnerable in theological training. So they pointed out the need for “Women in Theological Education’ in Africa to stand in support of each other, and more importantly they condemned “sexual violence against women in the church and the society”.

However, this was not just a general statement, as it seemed some of them, either directly or indirectly, had in fact experienced this form of abuse while in theological institutions. Therefore they asserted that “female staff and students in theological institutions have been subjected to sexual violence, inter alia at the hands of Church leaders, which is not treated as a crime. Such crime is rather blamed on women.”

For an African meeting such radical tone was unprecedented. It is significant that the consultation was highly critical of male dominance in theological education. The women clamoured for their own space in

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45 Correspondence with Michael McCoy, 02.04.12.
46 Correspondence with Michael McCoy, 02.04.12.
47 Correspondence with Michael McCoy, 02.04.12.
49 See http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/reports/antipam/index.cfm
50 See http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/reports/antipam/index.cfm
51 See http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/reports/antipam/index.cfm
52 See http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/reports/antipam/index.cfm
theological training. They noted that “a key issue about the current situation in theological education is that theological education is the province of men and is male-dominated.” They also pointed out the ‘weaknesses of the current theological pattern in Africa’ as,

Historically and currently, theological education has been structured for preparation for ordination exclusively… although women have recently received the right to ordination in a few areas; the reality is that most women are barred from the prospect of ordination. This continues to perpetuate theological education as preparation for the ordination of women, excluding most women and even men who do not seek ordination for men, excluding women and even men who do not seek ordination but theological education in order to fulfil their call to the ministry.53

The issues raised suggest that in general ANITEPAM has not been very successful in fulfilling one of its roles, which stipulates that theological education is still tailored to ordination in the male priesthood. Certainly women raised highly critical issues. How equipped was ANITEPAM to address the m? In their view, the problem was exacerbated by the “lack of procedures and systems through which women would seek help from sexual violence has meant that most women suffer silently.”54 More perceptively they identified male chauvinism and discrimination of women as the most pressing issue facing the church, which led to victimisation of female students. In other words, justice was even denied to them as men seemed to collude.

Discrimination against female students undermined efforts to equip women theologically. They went on to assert that “in case of sexual violence or pregnancy, gender was used to determine discipline, in which case women were adversely affected. In the case of student pregnancy, the female student involved would be discharged from the institution or job while no action was taken against the male student involved.”55 However, opportunities for women to study overseas met with negative attitudes as this was considered to be “westernised” or “overeducated.” It may be said that this kind of conduct undermines ANITEPAM’s vision of providing a “… well trained, Godly men and women able to serve Christ in His Church.”56 This shows that women face formidable struggle to acquire theological training, as stereotyped attitudes tend to obstruct their progress.

Commenting on a similar issue in the context of the USA, Marilyn Naidoo stressed the importance of ministerial formation or theological training in ministry. She argued that the issue of sexual violence against women members of staff or students in the USA cannot be dissociated from the issue of ministerial formation in theological institutions.57 There according to Naidoo, ordinary church members linked ‘professional misconduct by some clergy’ to ministerial formation “where member schools of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) have been sued over the misconduct of their graduates.”58 Following sexual scandals which plagued the clergy candidates, Naidoo stated that “they demanded that an institution do a better job of screening clergy candidates and give more priority to the teaching of ethical values in the curricula. Such criticisms raise the issues of standards of admission and readiness for ministry”.59

However, it is important to note that the Harare consultation identified the unprofessional behaviour of some clergy, not only in the church but also in theological institutions, where they asserted it impeded the

53 See http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/reports/antipam/index.cfm
54 See http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/reports/antipam/index.cfm
55 See http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/reports/antipam/index.cfm
58 Marilyn Naidoo, “Ministerial Training…”, 358.
59 Marilyn Naidoo, “Ministerial Training…”, 358.
fulfilment of women training and ministry and also violated their rights. Moreover, more significantly, the women identified the ‘lack of procedures and systems’ in theological institutions, which in their view provided an environment for such abuses. In other words, women identified patriarchy as a cultural problem that tended to undermine the progress of female theological training.

More significantly, in his Master’s degree study of the Anglican Church in Kenya (ACK), DN Kagema outlined more serious challenges faced by the church, which were also reflected in the theological institutions. Among other reasons, Kagema mentioned a perpetual lack of finance coupled with a lack of strong leadership and a predominance of tribalism in the church. Specifically regarding theological training, he noted that “candidates drawn to study are mostly low-level candidates unable to find work or study opportunities elsewhere...good teachers are scarce, unpaid and more often tempted to leave the country for better opportunities abroad.” According to Kagema this “undermine (d) their professional image in the community…”

He went on to note that “on the curricula... it is not contextualised and irrelevant to the local context”...and consequently that “the clergy produced by these changes are ‘half baked’ and as such cannot stand the challenges of the 21st century…” this, in his view, has rendered the ACK not to be a self-theologising Church.” Certainly the issues that Kagema raised would not apply to all theological institutions or churches in Africa. Yet they are issues that possibly reflect a broader constituency if viewed in the light of the Harare consultation. There was a sense of urgency to their call consequently suggesting that there were burning issues that needed drastic response.

Yet ANITEPAM’s quest to foster a contextual theological reflection in African theological institutions has in recent times been put to a test, particularly with regard to the global issue of homosexuality facing the Anglican Communion, even more than the ordination of women. As Amanze noted, the consecration in 2006 of the openly gay Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire, has affected the African Church. “The issue of homosexuality facing the Episcopal Church in America has now assumed its own course in Africa where it is being propelled on the wings of poverty and has put the African Church in disarray.” So far there appear to be no signs that ANITEPAM has had the resources to engage its constituent colleges and seminaries on a topic like this one more creatively – or let alone provide theological direction to the Anglican bishops in the Provinces of Africa (CAPA).

To what extent has ANITEPAM walked the talk of a contextualisation and being an African institution?

Thus, in spite of the clarion call from the African theologians advocating the use of African languages as a medium of theological discourse, in Kenya and most other institutions English or French still remain the fundamental mode of communicating theological knowledge. Theological training at all colleges is still in English; however, theology remains foreign if not taught in the mother tongue.

## Challenges ahead for ANITEPAM

According to McCoy ANITEPAM faces three major challenges:

Firstly to have a committed and able Corresponding Secretary without which very little can be achieved; as he put it, “the success of ANITEPAM depends on the commitment and ability of the person occupying...

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61 Jurgens Hendricks, “Theological Education in Africa…”, 5-6.
62 Jurgens Hendricks, “Theological Education in Africa…”, 5-6.
63 Jurgens Hendricks, “Theological Education in Africa…”, 5-6.
64 James Amanze, “Shifting Paradigms…”, 126.
the position of a Corresponding Secretary”. In other words, it is largely the performance of its Secretary which gives life to the organisation. However, it is a weakness in itself to suppose that the Corresponding Secretary almost carries the entire burden of driving the whole organisation.

Secondly, “the capacity to offer the networking and resourcing skills that are the basis for ANITEPAM’s existence.” ANITEPAM suffers from the shortage of networking and resourcing skills. From the outset, ANITEPAM has had to face this problem.

Thirdly, “Achievement of wide ownership by the Anglican Provinces, by especially our theological institutions.”

**Conclusion**

Undoubtedly ANITEPAM has made good progress in a number of areas. Fundamentally, it has to a degree broken the sense of isolationism of outlying theological institutions on the continent, especially by bringing together the leadership of those institutions, at least when funds are available. Reflecting together, sharing ideas has been the most important contribution of the network. Women’s spaces provided in its forums, such as the one in 1998, have been another positive development. However, the network continues to face crucial challenges. The lack of resources, especially financial resources, weakens its capacity to function more effectively. It is a condition that makes it vulnerable to influences that may undermine independence. A lack of sense of ownership by some of its constituent members is another weakness. We have also noted that the involvement of ANITEPAM in non-Anglican organisations has been scarce.

**Bibliography**


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66 Correspondence, 2.4.12.

67 Correspondence, 2.4.12.

68 Correspondence, 2.4.12.
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES IN AFRICA

Isabel Apawo Phiri

Introduction

The Presbyterians in Africa are a product of the missionary enterprise of the 19th century. The Presbyterian missionaries who brought the Gospel to Africa belong to the Reformed family of churches who trace their history to Zwingli and John Calvin in the 16th Century in Switzerland. From Switzerland they spread to the neighbouring countries of southern France and western Germany. They went further to western European countries of Scotland, England and the Netherlands, and also to Eastern European countries such as Poland, Hungary, Bohemia and Transylvania. As the Scottish, English and the French immigrated to North America, they brought with them the Presbyterian Church. Currently the Presbyterian churches and theological institutions in Africa have continued to maintain partnerships with the various forms of Presbyterianism from the Global north. It is not the aim of this paper to describe in detail as to what makes the Presbyterians different from other Reformed churches. The purpose of this article is to critically examine the Presbyterian contribution to theological education in Africa. In order to achieve this purpose, I have limited myself to the study of six English speaking countries which are as follows: Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya and Malawi. As I examine each country, I will briefly focus on the following: a) Historical background of the missionaries who brought Presbyterianism to each country; b) Tertiary institutions for the training of Presbyterian ministers; c) Contribution of Presbyterian theologians to the development of contextual theology in Africa; d) The establishment of Presbyterian Universities in Africa and e) Issues to be considered for the future of Presbyterian contribution to Theological Education in Africa.

Theological Education in Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt traces its origins to the evangelistic work of the American Presbyterian Mission which started in 1856. From the time the missionaries started evangelizing, provision of education for the locals was a priority. Indeed Graton, Salah and Wahba have remarked that “one of the primary marks of the Presbyterian Church was the establishment of a large network of schools from elementary up to the university level”. Provision of education was a form of evangelization, which is seen everywhere among the missionaries in Africa. Besides circular education, the American Presbyterian Mission also introduced training of the church leaders. The first seminary, the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo (ETSC) was established in 1863 on a floating boat, which the early missionaries used as

2 The Presbyterian Church is ruled by two types of elders: The teaching elder who is called the “Reverend” and the ruling elders who are ordained laymen and women and who also help in preaching the Good News and see to the smooth running of the congregation. The Presbyterians are also classified based on other confessions in addition to the Westminster confession of faith. See ‘Know your Church” at http://www.angelfire.com/ex/penuyoparish/INDEX1.HTM.
a base for evangelizing and training leaders along the Nile River. Once the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Egypt was established on land, a new campus in Cairo was established for ETSC in 1926. The American University of Cairo which was charted in 1914 was also established by the Presbyterian Church of Cairo. There are five observations worth noting about ETSC. First, is its unique location between North Africa and Middle East, which are all predominantly Muslim countries. Therefore ETSC is in a strategic position to provide theological education to church leaders from Protestant churches in North Africa and the Middle East. Second, although ETSC is reformed in its theology, it has no choice but to be ecumenical in its student body. Its schools are open even to Muslims. Third, although the campus has programmes for undergraduate and postgraduate levels and has graduated more than seven hundred ministers, there are still 96 Presbyterian churches in Egypt with no ministers. This is an issue of concern especially in the context where the Christians are in minority. Therefore the increase of the number of students for the seminary becomes urgent. Yet the seminary is also faced with a problem of space to expand their existing infrastructure in order to accommodate more students. Fourth, there is very little interaction between theological scholars, let alone Presbyterian scholars, with the rest of the tropical Africa. The only Presbyterian scholar who regularly attends conferences on the continent is Magdi Ghendi. His education at Stellenbosch University in South Africa opened him up to interaction with other scholars from the continent. This is an area of need as Egyptian scholars need to engage with other scholars of religion and theology in tropical Africa to forge a theology of what it means to be a Christian in a predominantly Muslim country. Last, there is need to find out how theological education has been affected by the 2011-2012 political changes in Egypt.

**Theological Education in the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria**

The seeds of Presbyterianism in Nigeria were first sown by a Jamaican missionary who was sent to Nigeria by the Church of Scotland in 1846. The Scottish missionaries were responding to a call from the kings of Calabar. The current name of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria was only adopted in 1960 when Nigeria became politically independent from the British. The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria is well known for its contribution to education in Nigeria. It established many primary, secondary and tertiary institutions of education all over the country. When it came to establishing a theological institution, the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria decided to join with the Anglican and Methodist Churches to establish an ecumenical institution called the Trinity (Union Theological) College in Umuahia. My observations are as follows: First, although the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria has a membership of 3,806,690, it has decided to go for ecumenical theological education of its ministers, thereby promote visible unity of a group of churches in Nigeria. In so doing the graduates from such a college have the potential to continue to promote visible unity among Christians wherever their churches are located. Second, it has opened its theological education to women who later join the ordained ministry. Although the number of ordained women ministers currently stands at 50 in a context where there are 6904 ministers, this is still worth celebrating, with the hope that many more women will have the opportunity to study theology and go for ordination to become ministers of the Word. Third, the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria has produced many scholars of religion and theology. The most well known internationally is Ogbu Uke Kalu, a prominent scholar of History and

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5 This observation was made by the Global Ministries, who are in partnership with the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo. See the report of the Global Ministries http://globalministries.org/mee/projects/evangelical-theological-1.html (accessed 18.9.2012).

6 Uke Ogbu Kalu died in 2009 after a short illness. A book was dedicated to him while he was still alive, which is as follows: Chima J. Korieh and G. Uko Nwogei (eds), Religion, History and Politics in Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Ogbu U. Kalu (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 2005). Kalu published extensively. See his bibliography on the internet.
Mission of Christianity. Some of the issues that he addressed, which are still relevant for the church in Africa are: church unity in Africa, relationships between Christians and Muslims in Africa with a particular focus on Nigeria, the relationships between African Women theologians and African American Womanist theologians and the Pentecostals and Charismatics in Africa. Although Kalu taught at some Presbyterian seminaries in North America, he maintained contact with theological associations on the continent. Last, it is worth pursuing how the Presbyterian Church has been affected by the Muslim-Christian conflict that is still going on in Nigeria and how this has influenced the theological curriculum.

Theological Education in Presbyterian Church in Cameroon

The history of the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon is linked with the Basel Mission which came to Cameroon in 1886 to take over the mission work started by the Baptist missionaries. The Basel Mission introduced a basic programme for the training of catechists in 1889, who were to help the missionaries with the evangelization of the local people. In spite of the upheaval of World War One and Two, the training of church leaders continued in one form or another under different names and locations. The history of Presbyterian Theological Education in English-speaking Cameroon has been well documented by Armin Zimmermann.\(^7\) In his book, he has shown the development of theological education from a certificate course to a degree granting institution; from the campus in Nyososo to Kumba; from debates on cooperation with (Union Theological) College in Umuahia, Nigeria to the final decision to remain in Cameroon; from training only all men to attempts made to include women in theological education; from providing theological education during the colonial period to post colonial period when the church was struggling with issues of selfhood. His analysis has shown that both the Basel Mission and the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon struggled with the issue of the quality of the type of ministers they were producing. This issue was connected with the content of the curriculum and the quality and quantity of the academic staff. It is for this reason that they have decided to only offer courses at undergraduate level. Concerning women and theological education, Zimmermann has said: “It was not that the women were not able to cope with the studies, but both had to be dismissed already in 1981 for family reasons.”\(^8\) The struggles over the inclusion of female students were presented in a vague way so that one is not able to ascertain as to what the actual problem was other than that the students were dismissed for family reasons. The concern that not many women have received theological education does not match with the vague report of 2012 which says “the current statistics of female pastors in the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon including Ordained, unordained and students in PTS is 72”.\(^9\) This is an area that needs further interrogation in order to set in place plans to increase the number of female students studying theology.

Concerning the issue of inclusivity of non-Presbyterians and students who want to study theology for non-ordination purposes, the church has to give clear direction. For an institution that wants to be ecumenical; for a church that also depends on lay leadership; and for an institution that is struggling financially, this should be considered seriously as an area for growth. When it comes to internationally recognised Presbyterian theologians, I could not find one who has roots in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary. However, when combined with the French speaking Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, one comes across the work of Priscille Djomhoué,\(^10\) a Presbyterian who is teaching at the Protestant University of Central Africa Yaoundé, Cameroon.

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8 Zimmermann, *History of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary*, 82.


10 Priscille Djomhoué is one of the contributors to this volume of the *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*.
The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon established its own university known as the Cameroon Christian University in 2010. The University is on two campuses of Bali and Kumba. The Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Kumba became a college of the university.

The Presbyterian Church of Ghana/The Evangelical Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian presence in Ghana is traced initially through the work of the Basel Mission in 1829 which was later replaced by the United Free Church of Scotland in 1917. There are two Presbyterian churches in Ghana, which are separated by location and theological emphasis. The members of the Presbyterian church of Ghana are mainly found among the Akwapim speaking people in Accra while the Evangelical Presbyterian Church members are mainly located in the south east among the Ewe speaking people. Despite having two wings of the Presbyterian Church in Ghana, the Presbyterians are known for being the first to introduce Western education in 1843. Of great significance was the establishment of the Presbyterian Training College (PTC) at Akropong in 1848. “This college is ranked as the second higher educational institution in West Africa after Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone.” It is this institution which was turned into the Presbyterian University College in 1998. Since then they have made a significant contribution to primary, secondary and tertiary education in Ghana. The Presbyterian Training College was turned into the Presbyterian College University in 1998. The University is located on three campuses as follows: Abetifi, Akropong and Agogo.

In terms of Presbyterian tertiary theological education, the article on Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture, a graduate research institute located in Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana (ACI) by Gillian Mary Bediako, which is part of this handbook, covers very well the Presbyterian contribution to theological education in Ghana. In addition, it is appropriate to acknowledge the Presbyterian presence as part of the Trinity Theological College, Legan Ghana. As an ecumenical institute, it is the result of cooperation among the Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians in Ghana to train their ministers together. It is at these institutions that one finds prominent Presbyterian theologians such as Kwame Dankwa Bediako, Emmanuel Martey, Dorothy Akoto and Rose Teteki Abbey. Yet it is the scholarly work of Kwame Bediako which has made the biggest impact in African scholarship. This is what Andrew Walls had to say about Bediako’s contribution to African Scholarship:

Over many years he pointed others to Africa’s proper place in contemporary worldwide Christian discourse. He charted new directions for African Christian theology. He labored so that generations of scholars, confident equally of their Christian and their African identity, might be formed in Africa, and to that end he created a new type of institution where devotion to scholarship and understanding of the cultures of Africa would be pursued in a setting of Christian worship, discipleship, and mission.

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The Presbyterian Church of East Africa

The Presbyterian presence in Kenya is linked to the Free Church of Scotland Mission work which began in 1891 at Kibwezi where the first school was established. However, it was only in 1921 that the training of the first senior evangelists started. Those who completed the initial course proceeded to a second course for the ordained ministry. The first group to complete the second course were ordained to the ministry of the Word in 1926 in Thogoto. However, the first students to graduate with a diploma in Theology were sent to Fort Hare University in South Africa in 1934. By 1937 the mission led the colonial government in the establishment of quality elementary, primary and high school education for girls and boys. Still the Presbyterian Church in Kenya wanted their ministers to receive a theological education that would prepare them to face the problems of what it meant to be an African and a Christian. It was for this reason that the church decided in 1949 to join the Anglicans and the Methodists in the theological training of their students at St Paul’s Divinity School at Limuru. St Paul’s Divinity School later became St Paul’s United Theological College. By the time the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa joined with the Overseas Presbytery of the Church of Scotland to form the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in 1956, the issue of the theological training of the Presbyterian ministers of the church had been settled.

However, the expansion of the church membership became faster than the number of ministers that St Paul’s Theological College could train. Therefore, as reported by Muita, “a three months programme for senior elders and evangelists of the church who felt a call to the ordained ministry” was created at the Lay Training Centre at Thogoto. Another Pastoral Institute was established at Muguga until 1995 when the two Pastoral Institutes were combined and located at Thogoto. It was the Pastoral Institute, which became the Presbyterian College. A year before the joining of the two pastoral institutions, courses for a diploma in theology were offered under the accreditation of St Paul’s United Theological College and the Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa. In 2007 the Presbyterian College became the Presbyterian University of East Africa (P.U.E.A.). The University is offering courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa has produced scholars of international recognition. Some of them are: John G. Gatu, Nyambura Njoroge, Isaiah Wahome Muita, Johnson Kiriaku Kinyua, and Godfrey Ngumi. In all their publications, the theme of identity in the context of African culture and the Christian faith dominates.

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16 Isaiah Wahome Muita, *Hewn from the Quarry: The Presbyterian Church of East Africa 100 Years and Beyond* (Nairobi: The Presbyterian Church of East Africa, 2000).
17 See the article by Esther Mombo in this book on St Paul’s University.
20 He is the author of the book which provided the background to this section.
The Presbyterian Church of Central Africa

Presbyterianism came to Malawi through three groups of missionaries. The first to arrive were the Free Church of Scotland who established the Livingstonia Mission in Northern Malawi in 1875. The second group were the Church of Scotland missionaries who established the Blantyre Mission in the Southern Malawi in 1876. The last group were the Dutch Reformed Church Mission from South Africa who arrived in Central Malawi in 1889. The Livingstonia Mission and the Blantyre Mission joined together in 1924 to form the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). The Dutch Reformed Mission joined the other two in 1926. Currently CCAP has five Synods which are: Blantyre, Livingstonia, Nkhoma, Harare and Zambia. As is the tradition of the Presbyterians, schools and a printing press were a priority in the evangelisation of the locals. Therefore CCAP still owns many elementary, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Malawi. In fact, in conjunction with the government of Malawi, the CCAP provides approximately 40% of the educational needs of the country.23

Among the three Missions, it was the Livingstonia Mission that from the outset had missionaries who had a vision for a university for the African people. The Mission leadership was not satisfied with providing the locals with enough education in order to help them read the Bible as was the case with the Dutch Reformed Mission. Initially each Synod had its own school for the training of ministers. It was only in 1977 that the Zomba Theological College was opened to train CCAP ministers. The location at Zomba was strategically chosen so that the college could be near the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Chancellor College, University of Malawi. The college offered a Licentiate in Theology and Diploma in Theology accredited by the University of Malawi. The best students would then proceed to the University of Malawi to study for two years for them to receive a Degree in Theology.

In the past twelve years dramatic events in theological education took place. Zomba Theological College started offering a Bachelor of Divinity in addition to Diploma and Licentiate, thereby reducing the need to send students to the University of Malawi to study for a Bachelor of Theology. Livingstonia Synod and Nkhoma Synod opened their own theological colleges primarily due to limited intake at Zomba Theological College and yet more ministers are needed due to church growth, an increase in the deaths of ministers from AIDS related illnesses, and the older generation of ministers retiring. While the need for ministers is indeed huge, splitting limited resources for theological education has had negative effects. The Anglicans who were among the first to join CCAP at Zomba Theological College pulled out to start their own theological college with limited number of students and staff. The Church of Christ continued training their ministers at Zomba Theological College, which now predominantly train ministers for Blantyre Synod and with an intake of five students each from the other synods and churches. It is unfortunate that the spirit of ecumenism is not being nurtured as was done before. In the case of postgraduate training of ministers, the CCAP sends most of their ministers to Stellenbosch University and Fort Hare University in South Africa.

Livingstonia Synod has gone a step further in that in addition to opening Livingstonia Theological College at Ekwendeni, in 2003 it also opened its own University of Livingstonia which is located on two campuses: Livingstonia and Ekwendeni with five colleges. It is argued that this is a realisation of the vision of the first missionary to Livingstonia as mentioned above.

The CCAP has many scholars of religion and theology with international standing. For those who are outside the country, some of them include: Harvey Sindima,24 Augustine Musopole,25 Isabel Apawo Phiri26

23 This is a claim made on the website of the Livingstonia University: http://www.ulivingstonia.com/History%20Of%20UOL.htm
and Fulata Moyo. Within the country, some of them are: Felix Chingota, Silas S. Neozana, and Getrude Kapuma. Just like the other African Presbyterian theologians, issues of concern include identity in the church in relation to African religion and culture.

The Future Prospects for Theological Education in Presbyterian Churches in Africa and Conclusion

This article has given a survey of theological education in key Presbyterian churches in Africa. A sample of six churches was taken from English speaking Africa. This means I have left out another significant contribution from within the African speaking countries, Francophone and Lusophone Africa. This is because of limited space assigned for each article in this book. My analysis of the six countries was also limited to the sources available to me at the time of writing. While writing this article, I realised that one needs to write a complete book on this topic. Therefore, what I have done in this article is to scratch the surface.

Nevertheless, there are some common trends in theological education that I would like to highlight. The first is that there is no balance between the growth of the Presbyterian Church in Africa with the training of adequate ministers to give leadership to the church. Each institution examined is concerned that they are not producing enough ministers to meet the demand of the churches. As short term measures are put in place for fast tracking the production of ministers, there is also the danger of compromising on the quality of the type of theological education offered, which may not address the theological issues that the members are grappling with.

The second observation is that the theological institutions which started as ecumenical theological colleges are slowly being abandoned in favour of denominations’ own colleges, which are also slowly being upgraded to become universities. Where is church unity, which has always been a strong theological point for Presbyterians? Often the argument is that one can have a single denomination theological institution and still be ecumenical in what is being offered, and in the student body. This has been the trend in other denominations too. However, while Christianity was received in silos from the missionaries who brought it to Africa, Africa does not have to keep to this trend if it is a trend that does not promote the building of the Africa Christian community.

The third observation is that while the establishment of denominational universities is a sign of growth, it does not solve the problem of having enough resources to run a theological college. In fact the resources are then spread too thinly and there is still not enough money for staff and infrastructure development, which is conducive to effective theological studies. The European model of universities has shown that where colleges of theology have grown to become universities, theology is sidelined in favour of the sciences and developmental subjects. How is Africa going to make sure that theological education still remains at the centre of the denominational universities?

Fourth, in all the six institutions sampled, the theological education of women is still very low in comparison to men in ministry. At a time when the church has grown and yet it does not have enough ministers, is this not the time to encourage congregations to send more women to study for the ordained ministry? The participation of women to the ordained ministry does not happen naturally, because of the long history of the perception that ordained ministry is for men. It requires church leadership with a vision to strategise on the best way possible to have more women as ordained ministers in order to contribute to solving the problem of shortage of ministers.

Fifth, since Presbyterianism encourages the participation of lay people in ministry, this makes a strong argument for the inclusion of candidates who may want to study theology in the colleges and yet not go for ordination but join in the lay leadership of the church. It really becomes dangerous to have elders with no theological education background leading the church due to shortage of ministers. Elders in the Presbyterian Church need to receive the same theological education as ministers even if it means doing so through theological education by extension.

Lastly, the majority of Presbyterian scholars in Africa do not grapple with issues of doctrine in the same way they do in Europe. The African scholars are still grappling with issues of identity pertaining to African culture and religion. The church in Africa still needs to continue to produce its own theology which reflects its identity. A look at the majority of the books in the Presbyterian theological colleges will show that the students are not being introduced enough to the work written by African theologians. They are still studying heavily western theology which does not prepare them to deal with the African problems they face in the African communities. Studying African theology should not be an optional subject but core to the curriculum because the issue of formation of an African identity is still at the forefront of the study of theology in Africa.

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*Part III: Denominational Perspectives on Theological Education in Africa*
1. Introduction

This essay discusses two central convictions of Reformed faith which impact on the understanding of the task, focus and priorities of theological education today. The Reformed emphasis of the lordship of Christ provides an impetus for developing an inclusive focus and scope for theological education. The confession that God is in a special way the God of the poor, the wronged and the destitute illuminates the priorities of theological education.

The Reformed emphasis on the lordship of Jesus Christ does have implications for the task and scope of theological education. A short discussion of the meaning of this confession of the lordship of Christ is provided in the first part of the paper. In the next part of the paper, which is the major part of the paper, it is argued that the notion of the lordship of Christ implies that theological education focuses on the redemption and wellbeing of all walks of life. The famous publics of theology as described by North American Roman Catholic theologian David Tracy\(^1\) provides a helpful framework for discussing this broad and inclusive focus of theological education. The practice of theology, and specifically of theological education, focuses upon the public of the church, the public of the academy and the public of broader society.

In the last part of the paper it is argued that the notion of God’s special identification with the poor and the vulnerable prompts theological education to respond faithfully to and to prioritise the plight of the various faces of marginalised people.

2. The Lordship of Christ and the Scope of Theological Education

Allan Boesak is perhaps the South African theologian who gives the clearest exposition of the lordship of Jesus Christ. His theological labour over decades is strongly influenced and determined by this confession.

When the text of the Belhar Confession was drafted, Allan Boesak insisted that the phrase “Jesus Christ is Lord” be part of the conclusion and climax of the Confession. This notion is central to his theological labour and personal piety.

In his first major work, and also in his more recent theological work, Boesak affirms the notion that Jesus Christ is Lord of all areas of life, and he spells out the implications of this confessional position for public life – in the first publication\(^2\) for public life in apartheid South Africa, and in the later publication\(^3\) for the challenges of public life in the very young democratic South Africa.

With an appeal to amongst others, MM Thomas and Paul Lehmann, Boesak affirms the universal reign of Jesus Christ. According to Thomas Jesus Christ is Lord of all history. He is at work in all nations of the world, and in the ambiguous political, economic and social actions in any given country. The comprehensive rule of Christ is also evident in the belief that the kingdom of God cannot be identified with the church. Both the church and the world (politics, economics, environment, civil society, public opinion

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formation) centre around Jesus Christ, both are under his reign. Through faith Christians can discern the work of Christ in history. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the divine power of judgement and redemption for all cultures, political orders, social ideologies and moral systems. The redemption which Jesus Christ offers is the redemption for the world, the world of persons, nature, society and history. Jesus Christ exercises his kingly rule through his law and love, and his presence and actions are manifested through continued dialogue with humans and society.4

Boesak also draws insights from Paul Lehman about the extensive reign and involvement of Christ in public life. For Lehmann the essence of being Christian does not reside in church membership or even baptism, but in whether we acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in all walks of life, in whether we recognize his presence and redemptive actions in the historical processes in the world, in whether we see Him at work in the church and in the world to make human life human.5

According to Boesak a Black social ethic, or Black Theology, which takes the situation of oppression and dehumanization of black people and all other oppressed people seriously, will take heed of the comprehensive Lordship of Jesus Christ. His Lordship calls for participation in God’s liberating and humanizing activities in the world. It pleads for participation in the dawning of comprehensive salvation, or what the African tradition, according to Boesak, calls wholeness of life. This wholeness is expressed in liberation from internal bondage and external enslavement, and from psychological, cultural, political, economic and theological dependency and oppression.7

From a Reformed perspective, according to Boesak’s later publication, the basis for public involvement is the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This basic presupposition has important implications for doing theology in contemporary South Africa:

- highest loyalty is paid to God and not to earthly powers, not even to democratically elected governments and former struggle comrades and their agendas;6 the church has a unique contribution to make to public life since it is a unique servant of the Lord of the universe;7 the Public Theology of the church is informed by the rich catholic and ecumenical Judaeo-Christian tradition; the church does not accept a form of democratic centralism which implies that the masses of people, including churches, are marginalized within a democracy and that a select group of the political elite and intellectuals plan and execute the process of political transformation;11 the church is not a junior partner of government with the role of praise singer, but the church speaks out critically and cooperates with government on the formation of public opinion through inclusive public debate, and also the formulation and implementation of public policy on behalf of the silenced, most wronged and vulnerable in

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5 Boesak, *Farewell*, 73-74.
6 For Boesak black is not only a colour category. It refers to various black groups in South Africa. It also has the experience of oppression and dehumanization of black people in mind. To talk about black is to recognize your own agency and worth, and to become aware of what you suffer because of your blackness, but also to be aware of your power to change the situation. Blackness does not function exclusively. Black oppressed people can express true solidarity with all oppressed groups. They also have the power to love those who oppress them and to enhance their repentance and healing. See Boesak, *Farewell*, 27-29, 109-110. “Blackness does not in the first place designate colour of skin. It is a discovery, a state of mind, a conversion, an affirmation of being, which is power. It is an insight which has to do with wisdom and responsibility; for it is now incumbent upon black people to make South Africa a country in which both white and black may live in peace. ‘We have seen enough of white racism’, writes Adam Small (South African poet – NK), ‘we have suffered enough from its meaning – we cannot want to be racist in our blackness’.” See Boesak, *Farewell*, 110.
9 Boesak, *Tenderness*, 166.
10 Boesak, *Tenderness*, 166.
society; the primary solidarity of the church is not with governments, but with the poor, wronged and vulnerable.

Based on this understanding of the lordship of Christ one can conclude that Christian faith, Christian theology and Christian theological education focus upon all walks of life, on every square inch of the universe.

David Tracy’s appeal that theology engages the three publics of church, academy and broader society assists theological education to develop a more adequate scope and agenda. In the next part of this paper this threefold focus of theological education is discussed.

2.1 Theological education and the public of church

Theological education equips students with knowledge, skills and values to serve the church in its various forms.

Dirkie Smit’s identification of six forms of the church is very helpful. The first four forms constitute the church as institution. They are worship services, local congregations with their various practices, denominations and ecumenical bodies. The other two forms constitute the church as organism, namely individual Christians in their normal daily roles in family, work, neighbourhood etc., and individual Christians in voluntary organisations.

a. Worship services have the potential to transform people. The impact of worship on ethics, also economic ethics, is increasingly measured by a growing number of authors. In a recent publication American theologians Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells edited a book in which a plea is made for an end to the separation of worship and ethics. From different perspectives various authors demonstrate how worship impacts on our ethical choices, policies and moral living in various walks of life. The transformative, subversive and revolutionary potential of worship services are investigated by an increasing number of theologians. Those participating in worship see alternative realities that are in conflict with the earlier realities of a world where injustice reigns supreme and they are transformed to participate in the building of these alternative realities. Those who pray for daily bread, see a world where there is bread for everyone and they participate in creating such a world.

b. Various practices of congregations constitute a crucial form of the church. American theologians Craig Dykstra and Dorothy Bass define practices as follows: “By ‘Christian practices’ we mean things Christian people do together over time to address fundamental human needs in response to and in the light of God’s active presence for the life of the world”. Practices refer to cooperative and meaningful human endeavours in which certain beliefs, virtues and skills are entwined with certain behaviours, relationships and symbols.

c. Denominations and ecumenical bodies are two more forms of the institutional church. They undertake initiatives in cooperation with role players in other spheres of society, amongst others governmental institutions, businesses, trade unions and even the media. Churches on denominational and ecumenical level also have the responsibility to intervene in public policy processes. It is crucial to help ensure that

12 Boesak, Tenderness, 162-163.
13 Boesak, Tenderness, 168-170.
19 North American theologian J Philip Wogaman, Christian Perspectives on Politics (Louisville: Westminster/John
laws are formulated that enhance the vision and ideals of justice and dignity. For this purpose various denominations and ecumenical bodies have already established public policy liaison offices at national parliament in Cape Town, amongst others the South African Council of Churches, the South African Catholic Bishops Conference, the Dutch Reformed Church as well as the Baptist Church.

d. Individual Christians in their normal daily roles and in voluntary organizations are equipped by the institutional church to participate in appropriate ways in various sectors of society. Individual Christians contribute to ways of thinking and practices that enhance the embodying of sound values. The institutional church, through its worship services, congregational practices, denominational and ecumenical policies, declarations, confessional statements and public actions and witnesses, contributes to the transformation of individual Christians into people who live with virtue and character.

Theological education should set as goal the equipping of people, the so-called specific offices like ministers and so-called laity, as well as the so-called general office of believer, to serve the church in these various forms.

2.2 Theological education and the public of academy

Theological education is an academic and scientific enterprise. In the public of the academy students are equipped to function in an intra-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary manner.

Theology is done in an intra-disciplinary manner. In his widely acclaimed book on the philosophy of theology Wolfhart Pannenberg, one of the most influential German and Lutheran theologians of the twentieth century, argues in favour of the unity and integrity of the theological disciplines. The unity of theology resides primarily in the internal continuity between the disciplines, which rests in the nature of Christian faith as a historic whole. The unified, holistic nature of Christian faith constitutes the unity of theology. In a very important study on the nature of theology a scholar of Vanderbilt Divinity School, Edward Farley, supports this second notion of material unity. He also reminds us of Schleiermacher’s second motivation for the unity of theology, namely its teleological unity, in other words its purpose to train people for ministry. Farley pleads that the unity in diversity of theology be acknowledged consistently. The notion of discipline should not be employed to fragmentise theology. He suggests that the concept of catalogue rather be employed to signify the uses of various theological disciplines and sub-disciplines for educational purposes.

Old and New Testament scholarship studies Scripture as one of the sources of the Christian faith tradition and uses appropriate methodological rules. The Old and New Testament that is studied by biblical scholars is the primary witness to the identity and significance of Jesus Christ by wrestling with the text that transmits knowledge of Him and that indicates that Christianity has its historical grounding in both the histories of Israel and the living, crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ.
Systematic theology, including dogmatics, ethics and philosophy of religion, investigates the contents of Christian faith as it is articulated in Scripture and in the Christian tradition. Systematic theology aims to map out the salvation of God in a well-rounded system. This system is, however, eschatological in nature. The best that fallible humans can do, is to practise *theologia viatorum* (wayfarers’ theology), in other words to clarify in part, to live with vacuums, break-offs and inconsistencies but also to reach for the unattainable, namely the unity of knowledge, the unity of God’s work, which mirrors the unity of God. To do systematic work is to analyse, to take elements apart and also to synthesise, to put together in an orderly, systematic way. From this work of analysing and synthesising, in other words scientific work, intellectual clarity arises.

On the basis of the methods of the historical sciences Church history describes the development of the Christian faith tradition since its inception until today and also illumines its development in the framework of broader historical developments. It traces the many ways in which Christian faith and life have been and are still expressed in different times and places. Church history, or historical theology, illumines the historical contexts within which theological formulations were made. By emphasising this historical situatedness of theological formulations, historical theology teaches us that theology is not a static discipline but that it is alive and dynamic. Mistakes can be made, which implies that theological formulations call for critical scrutiny, amendment and transformation.

Practical theology, which is divided into various sub-disciplines, reflects on the practices that facilitate reception of and sharing in the extensive salvation that Christians proclaim. These practices are, amongst others, preaching, educating, pastoral counselling, caring for the poor, the sick, the dying and the bereaved. Mission and evangelism could also be included under these practices.

Some scholars offer more distinctions with regard to various theological disciplines, for example philosophical theology and mystical theology/spirituality. It is a challenge for theological education to respect this integrity of theological disciplines and to communicate this to next generations. Intradisciplinarity is crucial for the theological task.

Theology is also an inter-disciplinary endeavour. David Tracy describes the academy as that public or social location of theology where serious, critical, scientific enquiry takes place with other academic disciplines. In its engagement with the academy, theology is challenged to provide arguments that all reasonable people from diverse religious and secular traditions can recognise as reasonable. In this discourse appeals are made to universal faculties such as experience, intelligence, rationality and responsibility. Claims are stated with appropriate warrants, backings and rebuttal procedures. Tracy also pleads that although theologians confess allegiance to a specific religious tradition or to a praxis movement bearing religious significance, they abstract themselves from these faith commitments for the sake of critical analysis of religious and theological claims by outsiders and by those who belong to the tradition. There are, of course, many theologians who would oppose Tracy on this point. They would namely argue that you need not abstract and distance yourself from your faith commitments in order to do critical and

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26 H Kuitert, *Filosofie*, 23.
30 A McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 144-145.
34 For a collection of reflections about the future of the various theological disciplines by Stellenbosch theologians, see *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa* (2009), 100.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
honest introspection into the cognitive claims of your tradition. They view such a withdrawal for the sake of honest scientific enquiry as dishonest.

With an appeal to Thomas Kuhn’s paradigm theories, Dutch systematic theologian Gijsbert van den Brink, for instance, supports the later developments in the philosophy of science discourse, which make room for adherence to particularistic commitments in the scientific endeavour. Although he is of the opinion that there is something to be learned from older important philosophies of science, it remains his conviction that these approaches do not by far take the significant and determinative particularistic influences such as faith commitments of scientists seriously enough.

In the encounter with the academy theology makes the choice for scientific reflection, for making faith convictions rationally accessible to all reasonable people, for constructing arguments that pass the test of coherency, consistency and logic reasoning. Theology, however, does not have to distance itself from its faith commitments but takes care that such commitments do not exclude scientific scrutiny. The age-old Christian notion of *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding) coined by Anselm of Canterbury (1033 – 1109 AD) needs fresh application in this dialogue of theology with the academic public.

In inter-disciplinary discourse theologians strive to practise their discipline as well as possible in terms of its methodologies, approaches and body of knowledge, and to dialogue with other disciplines in order to be enriched by them and to hopefully enrich them, and to jointly serve the quest for liberating knowledge and transforming truth more optimally.

Trans-disciplinary discourse is another manner in which public theological discourse can develop. Trans-disciplinarity refers to the attempt to solve complex public problems on local to global levels by drinking from the diversity of knowledge, insights and perspectives of a variety of academic disciplines, practitioners and members of various sectors of public life. The expertise of every discipline and sector is respected, but disciplinary and sectorial boundaries are destabilised. Dualisms and even incommensurabilities between, for instance, the secular and religious, the human and the natural sciences, are challenged. The goal of the joint reflection is not only to understand challenges better, but to transform society and to enhance justice and dignity for all. This discourse is not carried out in an impartial, distanced, spectator-like manner, but asks for engagement, involvement and participation in the issues at stake.

Theological education is done in intra-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary modes.

2.3 Theological education and the public of broader society

In investigating the role of theology in developing thinking that will enhance the fulfilment of social and economic rights, dialogue and cooperation with broader society is required. Dirkie Smit offers a helpful description of modern democratic societies. He is of the opinion that modern societies consist of four spheres, namely the political and economic spheres, as well as the spheres of civil society and public opinion-formation.

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38 See D Smit, “Oor die unieke openbare rol van die kerk” in *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe* September 1996, 190-198.
39 D Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination*, 6-14, divides the public of society into three spheres, namely the realm of the techno-economic structure that deals with the organization and allocation of goods and services; the realm of the polity where the aim is to embody social justice in the traditions and institutions of society through the legitimate use of power and force, and the regulation of conflict within the rule of law; and the realm of culture, which includes art and

*Part III: Denominational Perspectives on Theological Education in Africa*
The political sphere focuses on the state, government, political power and the control and regulating of public life. The economic sphere entails aspects like the so-called autonomous market-economy, globalisation, ecology, science and technology. Civil society focuses on themes relating to the relationship between theology and, amongst others, the institutions, organizations, associations and movements of civil society which, independently from the state and economy, strive to enhance the quality of life, satisfy the needs and foster the interests of people, change the nature of society and build the common good, that is a life of quality for all. Families, schools, legal bodies, cultural and sports clubs and neighbourhoods are all institutions of civil society. Sociologically speaking churches are part of civil society, albeit institutions with both a sociological and pneumatological character. The area of public opinion-formation focuses on themes like the nature of society, the common foundational values for society, common challenges and common priorities for society. The ensuing public opinion paves the way for jointly striving towards the common good.40

It is an exciting challenge to equip people for ministering the gospel of Jesus Christ in the public of broader society.

The Reformed emphasis of the lordship of Christ paves the way for theological education to develop an inclusive focus on the publics of church, academy and broader society.

3. God’s Identification with the Most Vulnerable and Theological Education

The second Reformed emphasis that impacts on theological education and that determines the priorities of theological education, is the confession that God identifies with the poor, the wronged and the destitute in a special way.

South African theologian John De Gruchy41 argues that the conviction of God’s special identification with the poor and the marginalised is a Reformed notion, which badly became neglected. Liberation theologies helped us to re-value the importance of this conviction for faithful living. This notion was prominent at the birth of the Reformed tradition. This was the case because many of the earliest Reformed theologians and pastors, as well as congregations, were persecuted, and much Reformed theology was conceived in exile, in poverty, amidst adversity and in the struggle against social and ecclesiastical tyranny. He cites the famous address of John Calvin to King Francis 1 of France in which he describes his fellow refugees as the “off scouring and refuse of the world”. De Gruchy’s42 explanation about how this notion influenced the Reformation is worth quoting:

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40 Smit’s distinctions strongly coincide with the distinctions of Jürgen Habermas. For him the democratic public consists of four spheres. At its centre are government, the civil service, judiciary, parliament, political parties, elections and party competition. Outside this core system, but still belonging to the state, is an inner periphery of institutions such as regulatory agencies with powers delegated by the state. The second public sphere, which is part of the outer periphery, is organizations that Habermas calls customers, i.e. business associations, labour unions and private organizations. The third public sphere, which is also part of the outer periphery, consists of organizations that he calls the suppliers, i.e. voluntary associations, churches, new social movements and public interest groups. Fourthly he makes room for the public opinion that is formed by the dialogue of public interest groups and professionals who, as the sensors of society, identify, draw attention to and interpret social problems and who, with the aid of the media, propose solutions and apply pressure which can bring forth change that will better the situation of especially the disadvantaged. See J Habermas, Between Facts and Norms (Cambridge: Polity, 1996).


42 J de Gruchy, Towards a Reformed Theology of Liberation?, 76.
The original impulse which led to the Reformation and to Calvin’s interpretation of it, was a rejection of human tyranny of all kinds and the proclamation of the liberating power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was this which first led to Calvin’s break with Rome, and it was this that motivated his attempt to create a new, just and equitable (if not egalitarian) society. Likewise, this has been the motivation of all those prophetic Calvinists who have taken the side of the oppressed, whether in the past or in the present.

According to De Gruchy this theologising from the perspective of the destitute faded as Reformed Christians became part of the so-called middle and upper classes where the dominant political power also resided. It regained prominence in Reformed theology as a result of the challenge posed by Liberation Theology about God’s preferential option for the poor.

De Gruchy states that Liberation Theology did not challenge Reformed theology to develop a commitment to the public square, because since its inception Reformed theology has taken the public square seriously. According to him Reformed theology is essentially a public theology. De Gruchy is of the opinion that Liberation Theology’s real challenge to Reformed theology was to rediscover and to revalue the notion which was so central at the birth of Reformed theology, namely to express its commitment to the public square from the perspective and in the interest of the victims of oppressive power. De Gruchy’s statement that article three of The Belhar Confession, which links justice to God, to theology in the narrow sense of doctrine of God, is a positive Reformed response to this challenge, is therefore fully supported.

This brief analysis of the special identification of God with the vulnerable is an indispensable parameter for theological education as we seek to define our task and our priorities. We need to develop a practice of theological education which addresses the plight of the most vulnerable and wronged. And these vulnerabilities and injustices have various faces. They deserve not our exclusive attention, but indeed our primary attention. This should be done in a country and on a continent that experience poverty and inequality, unemployment and violence and bloodshed, crime and corruption, oppression and dictatorship, and various forms of alienation like racism, tribalism, ethnocentrism, nationalism, classism, sexism, homophobia, handicappism, ageism and ecocide.

This quest has implications for our three central academic tasks, namely research, learning and teaching and community interaction. In this regard our curriculums are central vehicles in facilitating the aims of addressing the plights of the most vulnerable. This central notion impacts on the accessibility and affordability of theological education for disadvantaged persons. It also impacts on how we prepare pastors to function in communities of poverty and the ongoing struggle for survival. Without being co-opted by the agenda of the economisation and commodification of theology, we also need to equip pastors to develop social and systemic entrepreneurial skills in order to minister faithfully in poverty-stricken communities.

6. Conclusion

Theological education in South Africa faces exciting challenges. The Reformed branch of Christian faith does offer helpful parameters for this endeavour. The inclusive scope and focus of theological education – in the light of the recognition of the lordship of Christ – and the priority of the most vulnerable in the theological education endeavour – in the light of God’s special identification with the poor, wronged and destitute – demand that theological education needs to be done together. The Reformed tradition and other

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branches of Christian faith need to work together ecumenically in order to live faithfully to our joint calling. The strengthening of ecumenical theological education, in which every tradition brings its rich insights to the table, might be one of the strongest vehicles to strengthen broader ecumenicity.

**Bibliography**


Although Baptists are the largest Protestant denomination worldwide, they are a relatively small group that is active and influential within Africa. Comparing to other denominations, Baptist work had a slow start in West Africa, and a weak start in Southern Africa, and a late start in Eastern Africa. Apart from missionary work, Baptists are heavily engaged in theological education in many parts of Africa.

**Concept of Theological Education**

Many Baptists in Eastern and Southern Africa seem to understand theological education as preparation for ministry of a mature regenerate church member, one who is born again; in other words, one with a genuine conversion experience. The major textbook for such preparation is the Bible. Very few know that preparation for ministerial vocation includes other subjects like systematic theology, apologetics, counseling, church history, etc.

The New Testament verb translated “to minister”, is “to serve”. Baptists in this region would view ministers or pastors as they are commonly known, primary as servants. The basic distinctive that distinguishes the Baptists from the mainline churches is the concept of a regenerate church membership, a congregation of people with personal faith committed to serve Christ as their Lord. In this local congregation, all believers are priests, and this produces the distinctive of the priesthood of all believers. Since Christian ministry is doing something of service like Jesus did, Baptists affirm that every Christian is called to minister in the name of Jesus Christ. Although they may not be able to articulate the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, many Baptists understand the church as a priesthood, a “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9) and ministers corporately in the name of Jesus. Someone who has received theological education is viewed as a minister amongst many, a priest amongst priests. Therefore, theological students and graduates are expected to serve. Academic requirements are of value if theological students contribute directly to the work of serving others.

Nevertheless, theological education has been understood as concerned with developing church leaders; leaders in ministry, a more or less “professional” ministry. Almost all seminary students study to become better leaders in Christian ministry. They are expected to become leaders who lead by serving others. For one to become a leader, one must be trained in the areas of intellect, skills and spirituality. Many Baptists view theological education primarily as ‘spiritual formation.’ It is a formation whereby one’s inner character is developed so that the person experiences more of God, reflects more of God’s characteristics in everyday relationships and increasingly knows the power of God in ministry, and that it is a process. That is why many Baptist seminaries encourage or require students to be actively involved in ministry through local congregations while attending seminary. The Baptist distinctive of the autonomy of the local church

2 Klaus Fiedler, *Baptists and the Ordination of Women* (Zomba: Lydia Print, 2010), 1.
recognizes the highest authority as the local congregation. This calls for the need for voluntary cooperation between local churches as it is expressed in the concept of associations and conventions, and in some cases, unions or fellowships.\(^7\)

**Two Perspectives of Theological Education in the Region**

While theological education is understood as preparation for ministry, the theological institution has been understood as a ‘pastors’ school. After winning people to Christ, Baptist missionaries brought the converts together into groups that later became local churches in many areas of the countries they were found. While this was and probably still is the primary objective of Baptist missionary agencies, the initial step in accomplishing this task required, in addition to this primary task, the setting up of supportive ministries in order to achieve these aims. That included the establishment of some type of theological training institutions such as Bible school and seminary. Anyone who has been to one of these was automatically called a “pastor.”

Many people including Baptist men and women have been made to believe that only men can be pastors. For example, the Baptist missionary conviction has been that ordained pastor of a church must be male.\(^8\) The argument has been that Scripture prohibits a woman to serve as a pastor of a church. Women have been perceived as homemakers because Baptist missionary wives were not called ‘missionaries,’ but wives of missionaries. They were on the mission field to support their ‘missionary’ husbands. Though some single women have been accepted as missionaries, they still played supportive roles. As a result, African women accepted the homemaking role as part of their Baptist faith.\(^9\) Women have been admitted into theological schools on their husbands’ tickets, and a few as individual students.\(^10\) They have been allowed to study courses specifically designed for women, leaving those intended to prepare students serve as ordained pastors for male students only. Of late, some institutions have allowed female students to audit or to take full credit any individual course offered in the curriculum for which they are otherwise qualified. The erosion of the priesthood of all believers to the priesthood of men only, has led to some theological schools denying women to study theology and or become pastors. Although the concept of freedom is the bedrock from which Baptists have come off, they have denied some members of the local congregation academic freedom.\(^11\)

While to the north of the Limpopo River, Baptist theology has been confined within male Baptist missionary perspective, to the south, particularly in the Republic of South Africa, Baptist theology has all too often been confined within a white, male, middle class and clerical perspective.\(^12\) Although the White Baptist missionaries formed a Baptist union in 1811 and began work among black South Africans in 1816, Colored in 1888 and Asiatic Indians in 1903, compared to other theological training facilities within Southern Africa, Baptists took their time to discuss full-time training for pastors because of the influx of foreign pastors. The first Baptist Bible School in South Africa was formed in 1926.\(^13\)

From 1930 Black ministers were trained separately at an institute specifically for “Native Ministers and Evangelists” as they were called. The first Baptist theological college in South Africa, whose aim was to

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\(^7\) Fiedler, *Baptists and the Ordination of Women*, 2.


train ministers of the gospel, missionaries and Christian workers excluded blacks and women given the nature of South Africa and the missionary agency. Like many Christians, South African Baptists have been quick to advocate ideals of freedom but often just as quick to forsake that heritage for mean causes.

There were two obvious reasons why Baptists operated racially separate theological institutions. The first was that due to unequaled economic and political circumstances naturally meant it was difficult for black Baptists to obtain even a basic education. The admission requirements effectively excluded the majority of the black Baptists. Looking back, the colleges could have, for example, catered for black students by offering a bridging course which, on successful completion, would have enabled them to pursue their theological education alongside their fellow white students. It can be argued that the white Baptists in South Africa accepted the “separate development” ideology of the apartheid government policy of separate education by skin color.

The second reason for the separate theological education was that despite the belief in the separation of the Church and the State and the freedom of religion, Baptists permitted the government to decide how they should train their ministers. Black students were excluded from an institution that was in a white-only area. The Baptists did not even consider whether that was a law which they ought to disobey. The white Baptists were also encouraged by the government to close an institution in one area because of the view that blacks were not to be regarded as permanent residents in the “white” urban suburbs. The missionaries defended themselves by describing themselves as “law-abiding South Africans;” as a result, they considered an alternative remote site for an institution that would accept black students. Although it was in the middle of the 1970s that the missionary agency opened doors to all racial groups to study together, black students were still at a disadvantage. An attempt to work towards a united, relevant and credible theological Baptist Education in South Africa was not accepted by the white dominated Baptist executive bodies.

Why Theological Education

Why should the church teach? The answer has been because Jesus specifically asked the church to teach and make disciples. Baptists understand that God did not ask them to make converts, but disciples, learners or followers of Jesus Christ. Discipleship has been perceived as endeavoring to seek and grow like Christ; it is a continuous process. It should begin when one accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of one’s life and finishes off when one is under Christ’s feet. Discipleship costs and it pains; it is joy and happiness. It is an initiation in, and a willing embrace of, a certain form of life in obedience under God, revealed in and through Jesus Christ. The responsibility of theology is to help God’s people to be what God wants them to be. A mature disciple is expected to win and teach someone else.

In theological education, the institutions are to teach God’s called men and women to observe all things.

It has been argued that theological education and church growth go hand in hand. There is no church growth if there is no theological education. The only way to ground the churches in the faith is to put the

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20 Turner, *Baptist Beliefs and Customs*, 22.
21 Hany Longwe, seminar notes on, “Developing Theological Education in Africa,” Nairobi, 3.
leaders under theological education. The purpose of theological education is to develop leaders. In a broader sense, Baptists understand theological education as a way to equip the churches to participate in God’s mission in the world; it is about following and learning from Jesus. The greatest theological challenge has been to communicate the gospel in its fullness in order not only to build up believers who will impact their societies as salt and light, but also enhance and enrich their own lives.22

Many people have believed that a habit of personal Bible study makes the study of theology unnecessary. A Bible study student penalizes oneself by not studying theology, for theology, which is in fact an overall grasp of Bible teaching, enriches Bible study enormously. Theological education enables one to see more of what is there in the biblical passage. All things being equal, one sees further into the meaning and implications of the Bible passages than one would do otherwise. Good theology then grows by induction out of Bible study, and must always be taught with reference to its biblical base. The converse is that Bible study is informed by theology.23

Theological Training Methods

Theological education can be done in two ways: informally and formally. The informal aspect is expressed in sermons, songs, popular literature, hymnbooks, Sunday school and Bible study materials, church documents, booklets, etc, while the informal aspect is expressed through theological education institutions.24 There are a number of ways in which this is done throughout the Eastern and Southern Africa region.

The need for theological education has called for a whole spectrum of training programs. The call for every Baptist to be a learner and the cost of training, among other factors, has made some education to be available to the masses and others programs for a few. The triangle represents how theological education has been conducted. The triangle shows that more people have been trained at a low level of education and very few at high level. The challenge has been to develop leaders both pastors and laity from the local church to national structures.

![Theological Training Methods Diagram]

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
The broad area at the base of the triangle represents lay-workers within the local church, with training programs usually being part of a church theological education curriculum. This is where many people are theologically trained. Topics that are studied include: who are Baptists? Baptist beliefs and practices, which include Baptist understanding of church membership, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, evangelism, the local church, association and convention, Sunday school, family life, and so on. This prepares the person to be able to lead a group of new converts or Christians into a local church.

The next segment represents pastors and lay-leaders that would lead or are already leading mainly vernacular speaking churches. Many of the leaders will often be somehow bi-vocational. To a certain extent, they support themselves financially. They would learn how to prepare and deliver sermons and leadership skills on top of what is taught in the first group. A lot of emphasis is given to local church leadership development and evangelism that leads to the establishment of local churches.

The third segment represents pastors who are generally trained through a seminary or a theological college program. Although Baptist institutions pick from a range of subjects what to teach, the Bible is central to their theological training programs. Since the focus of many schools is to produce pastors or pastor related leaders, the courses are designed to equip students with an understanding of what the Bible teaches on fundamental subjects of Christian doctrine, and how to apply these truths to one’s life and to the cultural context in which one ministers.

The small segment at the top of the pyramid represents persons who are prepared to fill other specialized roles in denominational life or become seminary teachers. These positions often require advanced academic training, either in their own country or in some other country. A few have received theological training outside of Africa.

**Local Church Training**

Few men are gathered together, mainly lay-preachers, for some theological education at a local place. One of the ways would be to begin by just teaching the Bible. All beginning efforts were directed to evangelism and church planting and development.25 One of the Baptist theological convictions is from the New Testament teaching about the need to share the Good News of Jesus with those without Christ (Acts 1:8). Evangelism is defined as, ‘telling others about Jesus.’ It is seen as the work of all Christians, both as individuals and as a group such as a local congregation. Baptists teach each other the various ways of how to share the Gospel. One can tell others about what Jesus has done for one. One can proclaim or preach the gospel. One can talk to others about who Jesus is. One can discuss with others the meaning of the Christian faith.

Baptists believe the life of a witness should prove that one has been changed; if it does not, it can prevent others from accepting Christ. Every area of a Christian’s life needs to prove that one has been changed, or regenerated, or born-again. This is seen in one’s business affairs, with family, with community and even in the church. Being born-again is the first qualification for who can be a member of a Baptist church. An emphasis upon a regenerate church membership has historically been dominant in Baptist life that some Baptist leaders have contended that this theological tenet is the core distinctive for Baptists.26 Anyone who has been born-again may become a church member. A church is a fellowship of believers. One should not conclude that the Bible teaches that the churches are sinless (1 John 1:8). There is tension between the ideal and the actual holiness of the members of the churches of Christ.

In the beginning, apart from using the mission station approach, some missionaries began by just teaching the Bible in the process of making early contacts. All beginning efforts were directed to evangelism and church development. Bible studies led to the beginning of Sunday schools the effort that would materialize in many cases into local congregations. The missionaries also prepared Bible notes to equip the early co-workers or local leaders. They taught the local leaders during the evenings. In turn, the leaders used some of the biblical materials they had studied in evangelistic meetings so that they had on the job training. The training was so important to the development of theological understanding that the missionaries brought the leaders to a central location for in-service training, after which they awarded the trainees with a certificate. The length of training sessions increased from a few evenings a week to several weeks per year, and that went on for several years.

Although in some cases, single missionary women taught the men, local women were not included in the local leadership programs.

**Bible School Training**

The local church training programs in many ways had direct influence in the establishment of Bible schools. Though the training of evangelists and lay-leaders in short courses worked well, people realized that it was not enough. As the numbers of local congregations that the evangelists had opened increased, the requirement for church leadership also increased; as a result, the need to establish Bible schools.

Depending on the need and design, some schools started courses ranging from two to four years long. Though at first many schools conducted their courses in the local languages, many later adopted English as the medium of communication. A few schools have continued to teach in the local languages with some transliteration of certain theological terms.

Some training programs were designed with the students in mind. For example, in Malawi the missionaries brought together pastors and lay-leaders for brief intensive courses of study “between crops,” that were planned to avoid interfering with their work since many of them were subsistent farmers.

Most of the Bible schools in the region were opened basically for training pastors and lay leaders. The need for a course of study specifically designed for a particular country also resulted in the opening of Bible schools.

**Residential Seminary/College Program**

Baptist seminaries in the region have been offering theological courses for ministers at different levels. Some have been offering a three-year course for primary school graduates, and an advanced course for high school graduates. The majority of participants have been Bachelor of Theology, Diploma and Certificate, with little or no college education.

28 Frey, History of the Zambia Baptist Association, 58.
29 Frey, History of the Zambia Baptist Association, 58.
Some institutions have served students from a number of countries. For example, the seminary at Gweru, for a number of years it trained ministerial students from Malawi, while the one at Arusha served all East Africa. That remained so until it was soon apparent that theological seminaries within the countries were necessary.

Some institutions began with student bodies that were composed of both male and female. The female students were not expected to be pastors, but as Christian workers. At the time of writing, some colleges have trained women and their conventions have ordained them into ministry. An example is the Baptist Convention of South Africa.

**Decentralized Theological Education (DTE) Program**

A couple of seminaries have used a modified residential approach to theological education (decentralized theological education, DTE). This approach was as a result of the concept to train the largest number of qualified applicants in the most economically efficient avenue available for the greatest likelihood of effective ministry in the country. The students were never at the seminary for more than a month at a time and generally not more than two weeks at a time. The students used 90 workbooks by the time they graduated after four years at certificate level. While at home the students were expected to send in their books and ministry reports.

The seminaries offered certificate (secondary level in vernacular language), advanced certificate (secondary level in English), and diploma (post secondary level) awards. After two years in advanced level work, a student might qualify to work for a diploma.

**TEE and Theological Training**

Within a few years of providing theological education, the task of developing leadership centred in seminaries, Bible schools and local churches. Later it became apparent that those institutions prepared only a portion of the leadership needed for rapid multiplication of churches and the indigenous strength. Without appropriate trained leaders, the churches would not be able to nurture new converts or train sufficient leaders. The rapidly growing movement for theological education by extension (TEE) supplemented what was being done in more formal theological institutions. TEE was well-recognized as part of Christian leadership training in many countries. Some Baptists introduced TEE as early as 1974 to help those who study the Bible at home. In other countries, TEE gained a wide acceptance. TEE combined with a strong discipling program focused on obedience and with hard work, the result has been churches.

TEE does not remove the students from their normal productive environment; instead, it brings the resources of theological education to the functioning and developing leaders of the congregation.

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37 Baptist Convention of South Africa 36th Annual Assembly, 32.
41 Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe, Programme Design (Bulawayo: Baptist Publishing House, 1984), 19.

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material helps the students to reflect cognitively on a biblical lesson, and then act in response to their reflection, and finally bring the results of their actions to the discussion seminars and reflect on the consequences of their actions to refine and better their ministries.\textsuperscript{43} Records have shown that some students as they did Christian service eventually left secular employment for full-time Christian ministry. I am one such person. I was a mechanical engineer with a sugar company, during the process of TEE studies, I felt the call to ministry, of which I did and went to a Baptist seminary. Though, I have not used much of the TEE material in training others, it is because of the TEE that today I teach theology in a seminary.

**Regional Bible Schools**

Certain Baptist groups started regional Bible school programs in an effort to train more leaders, or give opportunities to more people who qualified throughout the country to study the Word of God in their areas.\textsuperscript{44} The teachers taught the lessons for several days, for example for four days – Thursday through Sunday.\textsuperscript{45} Another regional Bible school developed a curriculum for a two-year program of four weeks of study each year. The quarterly sessions of one week duration began with classes on Monday morning through Saturday morning. Teachers were expected to teach each of the three courses for at least two hours per day, Monday through Friday, with Saturday reserved for reviewing and testing. Seminary graduates have been teaching in the Bible schools. Although the Bible schools were not designed to train pastors, the output has been more of vernacular-speaking pastors. The numbers of women trained through the schools has increased mainly because some have always felt called to be pastors, therefore, the training, while many want to improve their understanding of God’s word.

**Winter School of Theology (WST)**

In South Africa they also have what they call Winter School of Theology (WST). The WST is similar to conferences in which papers are presented and they are collated and discussed in a WST Book. They are different because the WST seeks to create a context in which all participants are learners and teachers, that is to say, they share their various insights and experiences as a group so that all the participants have the opportunity to listen and speak. Built in this is time for small group reflection and evaluation, worship and stories.\textsuperscript{46}

The WST is also part of a wider process within the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA) and the Baptist Convention College (BCC) in which they aim to more fully understand and live out their Mission Statement. The educational task is only completed when members read, digest and apply the contents of the booklets. The WST is more than an academic conference, but more so, a life changing encounter. It is also seen as a place of theological formation for those members of the BCSA who attend regularly. As a result, theological education is understood as intimately linked to personal discipleship, ecclesiastical renewal and social transformation. It is seen as part and parcel of their salvation through Jesus Christ who is the living Word.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{43} Stewart G. Snook, Developing Leaders Through Theological Education by Extension: Case Studies from Africa (Wheaton: The Billy Graham Center, 1992), 7-8.
\textsuperscript{44} Longwe, “Democratization of the Christian Faith,” 286-287.
\textsuperscript{45} Frey, “History of the Zambia Baptist Association,” 80-81.
\textsuperscript{46} Kretzschmar, “The Ethos and History,” 2-3.
\textsuperscript{47} Kretzschmar, “The Ethos and History,” 4-8.
Baptist University

In the western tradition theology has been known as the queen of the sciences and therefore, has been one of the subjects offered at the universities.\textsuperscript{48} However, in other traditions theology has been regarded as the province of the churches and therefore, has been kept out of the universities. As a result, churches have had seminaries. People have thought the reason seminaries exist was to form people for Christian ministry. Many people still hold that what the seminary does and is or should be is different from what a university department does. Nonetheless, looking at the definition of theology, there should be no distinction. Whereas people always talk as if theological education necessarily must lead to becoming pastors, it should equip men and women for Christian ministry to the world.\textsuperscript{49}

There is only one Baptist university in Eastern and Southern African region – Mount Meru University (MMU), formerly known as the International Baptist Theological Seminary of Eastern Africa (IBTSEA), which for forty years met the spiritual needs of Christians. In 2002 the nationals took full responsibility of the seminary, and in the same year Mount Meru University (MMU) began operating as a fully fledged university when it embarked on meeting the intellectual and social needs of the region. It became an accredited university in 2003. MMU’s mission is ‘to equip students with Christian, ministerial and professional skills to improve their quality of life and that of their communities, nations and the whole world’. This is carried out through training, conducting research and offering consultancy services to the public.

On this basis, Mount Meru strives to:

1. Sustain training programmes which focus on spiritual and physical needs.
2. Become a leading provider of high quality consultancy and community service.
3. Conduct high quality research and disseminate research findings to the users.\textsuperscript{50}

Like a seminary, MMU has been producing men and women for education-related occupational roles, church-related occupational roles like pastors and other church leaders, academically-oriented occupational roles, and a more diffused group of occupational roles such as mass-communication welfare work and adult education. This is in line with the university’s vision which is to be a fountain of knowledge and wisdom that produces excellent, God fearing, visionary, skilled, proactive, hardworking and transforming servant leaders.\textsuperscript{51}

The Concept of Servant Leader

Like in many movements, Baptists confuse the metaphor of servant leader with the popular pressure toward making ministers “enablers” or “equippers” or “conflict managers.” This picture has also a biblical base, Ephesians 4:12. Theological institution need to educate the churches that, though that may provide peace and unity in the churches, the calling of ministers as leaders is to project a vision, to offer directions and to exercise authority as well as to participate in congregational life.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{48} Bruce, \textit{Know the Truth}, 9.
\textsuperscript{50} Mount Meru University. http://www.mmu.ac.tz/
\textsuperscript{51} Mount Meru University, Arusha, Tanzania, http://emiea.org/projectEAhighlight_9066.shtml
Residential and/Non-residential Programs

Some interpreters and missionaries in some countries fell into the trap of polarizing institutional leadership training and theological education by extension. That was sometimes followed by a pendulum swing between the two emphases. A “both-and” approach would have been more constructive. Baptists in the region have been working on the adoption of a workshop or laboratory approach whereby students perform more in the learning process rather than merely sitting in a class like a sponge trying to soak up the teacher’s knowledge. Theological education being a dynamic process, the concern has been with attitudes than just information. The concept of having approaches which combine residential with non-residential studies has been viewed as a more effective way of doing theological education. In any case, Baptists in this region agree that personal relationship between the teacher and student is more important than the information that the teachers pass on. This is why students on any program are required to have practical experience during their training if they are to be considered in positions of leadership with the local churches or national bodies.

Partnerships and Other Options in Theological Education

For the purpose of training church leaders for various degree levels several Baptist seminaries/colleges have had to go into partnerships with other like-minded accredited universities or seminaries on the continent or overseas. The students are trained in several different capacities (i.e., theology, religion, religious education, and so forth) while they serve in different leadership roles in their community and surrounding communities (i.e., pastor, youth minister, music minister, teacher, administrator, and so forth). The degrees, certificates, and diplomas are offered for the purpose of seeing the growth of pastors/ministers. The colleges have been offering accredited or validated diplomas and degrees through partnership with both secular and Baptist universities and other theological seminaries or colleges in the region. Many Baptist students of theology have used programs offered by other secular colleges and universities in the region to study at MA and PhD levels, and those who have joined faculties of Baptist colleges have brought other perspectives into the life of the institutions.

Women and Theological Education

Baptist theological education has offered no real place for women. Many theological institutions had separate woman’s theological schools some of which have now been integrated into the theological institutions. Like in many countries women organized meetings where they learned and discussed biblical topics, apart from home making.

In some theological institutions there were ‘men’s courses’ and ‘women’s courses’. This was so because women went to the seminaries as wives of seminary students. They were not students in their own right. That was to change. Southern Baptist history and their rural background had forged strong ties of loyalty to traditional cultural values, which also influenced the Africans’ theology and women. Almost all of the women who went to the seminaries with their husbands never thought of themselves as becoming

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54 Gerald Wright, “Theological Education as Ministerial Formation; A Response” in *Theological Education Consultation* (Cisurua: Foreign Mission Board, 1990), 2.
56 Baptist Theological Seminary of Zambia Handbook (1985), 18, 35.
pastors in their own right, but pastors’ wives playing a secondary role to that of their spouses. When asked, almost all said that they were sent to the seminary on their husbands’ tickets. They described themselves as being lucky and thankful to the local churches that enabled them to be trained alongside their husbands. Even those who were admitted on their own tickets to study at the seminaries, did not think of themselves (at first at least) as training to become pastors.59 Though the population of women is greater than that of men in many churches in this part of Africa, women are not allowed to stand before men, that is, to preach or teach although Baptists believe in the priesthood of all believers.60 Yet, in many communities in the Eastern and Southern Africa, it is not their culture that bars women from standing before men and teach in public places, but the missionary Baptist culture.61

Though white Baptist women in South Africa served as missionaries and engaged in evangelistic work, they were not offered any formal theological education by the colleges whose aim was to provide not only ministers, but also missionaries and Christian workers. On the other hand, black Baptist women were the core of the churches, particularly in rural areas. Their situation was even worse than that of the white women because they did not have the educational opportunities that the white women enjoyed. Within the white dominated Baptist union, theological education was essentially offered only to men.62

Women to the north of the Limpopo have had more freedom to study theology than their counterparts to the south. Some women have taken advantage of their husbands study leave and used the time to study theology, at colleges and universities within and outside the country. Almost all of the institutions have been non-Baptist. That has been for many a way to upgrade their lives and find employment in especially non-Governmental and para-church organizations. Several non-South African women have earned MAs and PhDs in theology from universities in the Republic of South Africa.

Almost all of them have not received denominational sponsorship. Some have had to pay for their education, while others benefitted from a scholarship from theological fellowships and other small grants from various sources. Their families provided the moral support and encouragement for them to keep going.

In the face of hostility against women, at the time of writing, several Baptist women were teaching in Baptist theological institutions and in national universities throughout the Eastern and Southern Africa region. In the region as a whole, very few women have graduated from Baptist theological institutions let alone from other theological institutions. Although issues pertaining to women have received some attention, the position of women in Baptist theological education system still leaves much to be desired.

**Baptist Theological Education and Socio-religious Issues**

Some of the missionary understandings and practices of theological education have been severely flawed by their conception of the Christian faith which cannot make an effective or fully Christian contribution to the myriad of problems facing the people of Africa.63 They understood theological education as been there to meet the “spiritual” needs of the churches alone, and did not address the physical, social, economic and political needs of the wider society. After the establishment of theological institution there has been no potential of establishing strong leadership teams for the conventions that were able to theologically address contemporary issues. The theological systems have been there to basically produce preachers who could evangelize and plant churches wherever they went, with less regard for physical needs of the people they

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60 Longwe, “Democratization of the Christian Faith,” 263.
63 Kretzschmar, Privatization of the Christian Faith, 6.
preached to. In many parts of the region, theological education has not been able to provide a basis for socio-ethical analyses nor for strategies to achieve genuine church unity across racial and cultural lines. African Baptists have not been able to critique their diluted version of the gospel and, thereby, develop a more holistic perception of the Christian faith. Baptist seminaries or colleges did not adequately equip black ministers to develop the necessary skills and confidence to challenge the white version of Baptist faith and principles.

The theological colleges have given little attention to the theological debate which has been taking place within the region especially in South Africa. While they were claiming to train ministers for work within South African Baptist context, the colleges did not offer courses that included the social dimension of these subjects. While some African Christians were vigorously debating how Christians should respond to their African context, Baptist colleges did not offer theological education that reflected such issues. Baptist theological perceptions remained tied to Western theological models and were abstract, conservative and privatized in their emphasis.

**Quest for Relevant and Credible Theological Education**

The African church has largely grown as a result of the obedience of foreign gospel workers. Though many Africans are continuing that work by planting and leading churches still many lack proper training as they lead churches with their self taught knowledge. Though Baptist seminaries and colleges are striving to train as many leaders as possible, their current capacity is inadequate. According to Baptist conventions, unions or fellowships in the region, by 2008 there were 13,292 out of a total of 30436 churches if Africa, but the number of trained ministers was estimated to be far less. To make things worse, because of their evangelistic zeal, Baptists start hundreds of new churches each year, few of which will ever have theologically trained leaders. Clearly, the greatest need facing Baptists is to train new and more leaders. Training of leaders is not anywhere near that of the need. Quality leadership is required to nurture and disciple members who will also disciple others. If leadership training is not increased significantly, it will negatively impact church growth opportunities. There is the challenge of the leadership pool which has been shallow, while the costs and facilities of training qualified leaders are not easily available.

Though some heads of institutions have wanted to make their colleges to be academically credible, they have been hampered by the limited vision of their colleges. Many pastors trained in the Baptist theological institutions in this region have not been able to assist their members to make a contribution to the vast social needs of the communities in which they live. What's more, by perceiving Western theology teachings as “the truth”, the institutions have not been able to train Baptist pastors to relate the Christian faith to the entire African life. As a result, Baptist theology became inextricably linked to white self-interest at the expense of the needs of black Africans. Baptist theological education in this region has remained in the watchful eyes of foreign missionaries who want it to remain, “Baptist,” meaning what suits their interpretation and purpose. This does not allow theologians of every nation to develop their own theology that is appropriate to their culture.

The All Africa Baptist Fellowship (AABF) organized a Theological Educators Conference that aimed at moving Baptists in Southern Africa towards a united, relevant and credible Baptist theological education.

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70 Andre Bokundoa and Frank Adams, “All Africa Baptist Fellowship,” in *Baptist World Centenary Congress Official *
Baptists have realized that there is need to transform the entire understanding of theological education. For theological education to be a life changing encounter, theological education institutions have to be places of theological formation. Theological education has to be sufficiently oriented towards the new paradigm that it will open students’ hearts, minds and souls to the new realities which demand new solutions for missions.

A rationalistic understanding of theology, history and biblical studies without a spiritual dynamic will turn out students incapable of reaching their society. Head knowledge without heart knowledge leads to emptiness, and vice versa. Theological education in this region is also the key for missions. One practical recommendation for encouraging and stimulating the worldwide missionary effort of all Baptists was to support the establishment of, at least, one major Baptist University on every continent. The purpose of such a university was to challenge and equip students intellectually, lay and ordained, to confront secular and pagan worldview with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in their own contextual and cultural settings. 71

It calls for the rewriting of the curriculum to include not only the appropriate contexts in which the skills of social interrelationships and communication are shared and experienced but also the economic and political structures which sustain and enable the community. Today these structures have both global relationships and international references and therefore the theological student must learn how to live, function and witness in this new reality. Therefore, effective theological education demands the integration of academic knowledge and the skills for ministry. The undertaking demands time, energy, commitment, collaboration and interdisciplinary teaching, adequate funding and maybe even a reconfiguration of the delivery of theological education.

Concept and Understanding of Accountability

Theological enterprise remains a most sacred responsibility for the churches. Baptist churches encourage every denominational theological institution in this region to understand that they do not existing for self. To be true to God, theological institutions have to have purpose in organizing theological education. This speaks of accountability to God for it is his work, and to the churches because it is for their benefit that the institutions exist. Accountability to the churches includes that for students, results, good will and prayer support, and finances. It is understood that by being accountable to the churches in these areas, the churches will be able to carry the institutions where God wants all of them to go.

Accountability for Students

The primary purpose for Baptist theological institutions is to train leaders for the local churches and denominational organizations. Theological institutions understand themselves as servants of the churches through their denominational channels of associations and conventions/unions/fellowships of churches. The denominations depend upon churches for their leadership. Therefore, the local church is understood as the necessary base for recruitment for students in theological training. There are two sides of recruitment, and these are, quantity and quality. The church should understand its responsibility in recruiting leaders in training and making sure that these are quality leaders. Too many failures in theological training are the result of churches not supplying the quality persons for training.

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72 I have taken and developed this section from some notes presented to representatives of theological institutions and national conventions from Eastern and Southern Africa, Nairobi, (1993).
Fundamentally, Baptists insist on the autonomy of the local church. For many this means that each church has freedom to choose and call its own leadership. Many Baptist churches have no restrictions in them in this selection of leaders other than those restrictions that they impose on themselves under God and his word. That includes the amount of training required. However, the requirements from church to church vary from no training to the other extreme of multiple degrees as well as years of experience on the job.

Since many churches in Eastern and Southern Africa are young and are really tuned to the Great Commission, their primary interest is to start new churches. Always the question is: “Where are we going to get the leaders for those new church-type groups that evolve out of our new work of evangelism?” Non-growth or slow growth churches are defeated by this thinking that they can begin work only with satisfactorily, theologically trained leaders. Multiplication-growth churches either provide lay leaders from their churches or adopt the Acts 13 and 14 model of taking new converts in the new group to be the leaders for those new groups.

Some new Christians and new as well as old churches may be slow in prioritizing theological training for their leadership. A definite part of the accountability of the theological institutions is a responsibility to conceive and implement ideas and methods for instilling a sense of need and value in both leaders and churches for this training. This sense of need causes churches to be co-enlisters in theological education. Also there is the responsibility to enable both parties to know what training opportunities are available as well as the benefit of each.

Many local Baptist churches and their leaders in Eastern and Southern Africa have been struggling to reach the point of seeing the value of sacrificing in order to buy Christian books, Sunday school materials, and, too often, a personal Bible. That has made it difficult for them to understand the greatness of the need for theological training. As a result, in order to succeed well, theological institutions have been compelled to acknowledge the responsibility to help their communities to understand the need to make this training a high priority item.

**Accountability for Results**

The local congregations have held the seminaries accountable for the results of their training. Many young men who have gone to the seminaries have done so because they were willing to study to become ministers. Too many times, in their minds it has been a means to be in employment for which there has been a vast need in most of the parts of the region. Those responsible for establishing theological training programs have seen the need to be accountable to God and the local churches. Attempts have been made to train those in ministry rather than training those who someday perhaps become ministers, and most important, emphasis has been put on quality training for students without taking them out of their ministry, culture, support base and their accountability to their own local churches. Having students of this kind has not been easy.

Baptist theological institutions in Eastern and Southern Africa are responsible to the local churches to teach their leaders how to find needed information, how to break that information down, how to design something useful, more effective, and how to evaluate most effectively that which is produced or done. This helps the churches to adapt the changing societies and an increasing complex world. Theological institutions are responsible for the type of ministerial leadership they turn out.

Baptists in the region have responsibility to develop their leadership capacity. Strategies to develop leaders by providing opportunities for quality education have been extremely weak. Baptist theological institutions have not yet developed into viable centres of excellence. Baptists have made it extremely difficult for some of their best minds to serve in the theological institutions as the churches continue to rely on foreign personnel because the conventions/unions do not pay them. The Baptist autonomous heritage has to some extent inhibited the capacity for the conventions/unions to work together as a region to develop
joint institutions for capacity building. Instead of every country trying to build a college they can hardly run, Baptists should pull their meager resources together and support a few strong institutions for national, regional and continental leadership. It is the responsibility of the churches to pull their resources together and invite Baptists who are serving in non-Baptist institutions who wish to join the vision of developing indigenous leadership in the region and move on. 73

Accountability for Good Will and Prayer Support

The purpose of theological education is also spiritual. The work of churches is primarily a matter of volunteerism, built around spiritual values and ideals. Most of the church leaders are volunteer leaders; that means that many of the students in the theological training programs have little or no material support from their churches. Realizing that the whole work of the theological institutions depends on volunteerism, the churches and the institutions have had to watch carefully how they enlist more volunteers and how they encourage those already enlisted.

Spiritual development has two aspects: personal relationship with God and relationship with others. Spirituality is not merely an academic exercise. The theological institutions have had to structure programs so that the students have adequate time and energy for their own spiritual growth. The task of spiritual formation, however, has always been负荷 with difficulties. There are meaningful differences in the way people understand spirituality. Besides, there is always tension between individuality and conformity in spiritual discipline. As a spiritual venture, theological institutions are expected to undergird themselves with prayer. Prayer support will relate to the good will.

Theological institutions have had to build good relations that mean good will towards the organizations in order to succeed. That has only been true where the leaders and the local churches have seen the theological institutions as “our Bible school”, “our seminary” or “our university.” Good will is a result of good communication. It can be won or lost as a result of communication. Volunteer participation and volunteer support is determined by the amount of good will that has been generated through the institutions expressing their dependence on and accountability to the churches while demonstrating their value to the local congregations.

Accountability for Finances

In the early days the mission organizations carried the primary burden of theological education. For many years the churches depended upon the mission boards overseas. They supplied the theological institutions with missionary teachers that went together with the money. That has tremendously affected the ability to support the institutions locally. 74 Today, Baptist theological institutions in the Eastern and Southern Africa like many others in different parts of Africa are increasingly looking to the local churches in regard to support for training their leaders. The preparedness of the churches has had to experience how it feels to be responsible for the theological institutions under their conventions. It does not matter whether the money comes in the form of student fees, direct, regular contributions from the churches to the institutions, or contributions through the associations or conventions/ unions/fellowships, or endowment funds. Because it is right for the institutions to look to the churches for their support, it makes the institutions more conscious of their need for accountability to the churches and of the need for the right kind of results in theological training.

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Stewardship is understood as a responsibility for the whole of what one is and has. Theological institutions have a responsibility to teach local congregations through the leaders whom they train what Christianity really is. God set the pattern – he gave his one and only begotten Son. Christ carried on the pattern – he gave his life that people might live; that the church might be born. Anyone who has Christ within has a spirit of giving. It is in this spirit that one is more Christ-like. The local churches need this responsibility for supporting theological institutions. Theological institutions have to lead the way in creative brainstorming to come up with new ways for teaching this original principle that Christianity is a life of giving rather than of receiving. If people’s value system is changed, the institutions will be adequately funded. The churches will embrace theological institutions as theirs only when they fund the institutions to a degree. Then the institutions will see themselves as accountable to the local churches. If churches commit themselves to the struggles of the theological institutions, theological training would be sustainable.

Conclusion
In general, Baptists understand theological education as a spiritual pilgrimage. As a result, Baptist success is only possible as they place themselves at the disposal of the Holy Spirit because the challenges in theological education are great.

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Methodism may have been “born in song” but it is through education that its influence as a Christian mission organization has mostly been felt in Africa. Wesleyan Methodism on the West Coast of Africa predates the arrival of the General Wesleyan Missionary Society because there were already Wesleyans in Sierra Leone by the middle of the 18th century. British immigrants brought Methodism to Nova Scotia by British immigrants and with Primitive Methodist coming into that region, different types of Methodism including United Methodists registered good presence from Senegambia to Cameroun. William DeGraft from the Gold Coast was sent to Nigeria to help with the work there and his wife began a school in Badagry.

The importance that Methodism attached to theological education from the basic level through high school to training college levels is evident through the themes handled in a small volume by Mercy A. Oduyoye. The titles include: “Preparing Persons for Mission”, “Ministerial Training”, “Wesley College”, “Wesleyan Boys’ High School”, “The Making of an Enlightened Laity,” and “The Education of Women.” In virtually all of West Africa, 19th century Methodism initiated basic and gender-based high schools and training colleges and theological education was part of the curriculum. Basic theological education was part of the West African mission school system at all levels from the early 19th century. Christianization of the Methodist type, like several others, thus took place mainly through formal education and religious instruction has always been part of the training of children. Such Christian-oriented formal education was sustained through teacher-training institutions in particular leading to the production of personnel for both the classroom and church services on Sunday. The Methodist Sunday School was the best organized among African historic mission denominations and remained a virtual extension of the week-day school even in post-independent West Africa. Many students went through Confirmation during high school receiving the needed instruction as an extra school activity.

These arrangements helped many Methodists to also progress within the academy as teachers of Christian religious studies in universities and seminaries in Africa. In Ghana, arguably the heartland of West African British Methodism, the Mfantsipim Boys’ High School and Wesley Girls’ High School both in Cape Coast and the Wesley College of Education in Kumasi all established during the early years of the Methodist missionary era in the middle of the 19th century, are still among the educational institutions of choice in the sub-region. Female education in West Africa took off late and to provide a glimpse of what the Methodist influence has been in this area through the Wesley Girls’ High School, it is worthy of note that more than half of Christian female medical doctors who have their high school education in Ghana still come through this Methodist school. Two of Ghana’s most accomplished women theologians, Elizabeth Amoah of the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Ghana and Mercy Oduyoye of the Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana, have both been associated with Wesley Girls’ High School. Elizabeth Amoah was there as a student and Mercy Oduyoye started her illustrious career there as instructor in religious studies.

4 For example see, Martha T. Frederiks, We have Toiled all Night: Christianity in the Gambia 1456-2000 (Zoetermeer: Unitgeverij Boekencentrum, 2003), 228, 240.
Theological Education, Church and Public Life

The effectiveness of the Methodist system of theological education through school and church structures resulted in the production of high caliber churchmen and women who later became Christian religious instructors in high schools, universities and seminaries. E. Bolaji Idowu and E.A. Adegbola both of Nigeria and Kwesi A. Dickson, Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Kwame Bediako all of Ghana, are West African church and theological education stalwarts trained through Methodist institutions. Except for Bediako who was a Presbyterian, the rest are Methodists. Adegbola, Idowu and Dickson became Methodist heads of churches in their home countries of Nigeria and Ghana. Dickson was the author of a number of volumes on Christian religious studies used for many years by students of the General Certificate of Education at both the Ordinary and Advanced level examinations organized by the West Africa Examinations Council.

The books of Methodist scholars, E.A. Adegbola, *Traditional Religion in West Africa* and Bolaji Idowu *African Traditional Religion: A Definition and Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, are still in use as important textbooks for West African Seminaries and university departments for the study of religion. Thus the integration of theological education with formation at the secondary and tertiary levels of education produced Christian leaders for the church in Africa. The first General Secretary of the All African Conference of Churches, Samuel H. Amissah and Albert Adu-Boahen the astute historian whose works were used in West African high schools were both Ghanaian Methodist laymen trained through Methodist institutions. For public service at local and international levels Kofi Annan, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Alex Quaison-Sackey the first African President of the United Nations and Kofi A. Busia former Prime Minister of Ghana also passed through Mfantsipim, the oldest Methodist boys’ high school in Ghana. Busia and Quaison-Sackey in particular are remembered as lay preachers in the Methodist churches where they used to worship.

Theological Education as a Lay Endeavor

That a number of high profile Methodist public servants, teachers and university professors were lay preachers underscores an important point in the history of theological education in West Africa. At the formal level Methodist theological education started as a project for lay training in preaching. Lay people received training to serve as preachers, Sunday school teachers and class leaders. The Methodist involvement in formal theological education has been continuous with the churches involvement in basic and high school education. Methodists who opted to train for the ministry in particular often first went through some Methodist teacher training colleges and many belonged to school preaching bands that served rural churches on Sundays. When they learnt to preach, such persons served as teacher-catechists across the sub-region. The availability of non-academic theological education through formal education thus ensured a steady supply of lay preachers for West African Methodism.

Additionally Methodist Churches in West Africa adopted the Wesleyan system of the Local Preachers’ School where participants met over weekends to take lessons in biblical studies, basic theology church history and homiletics. Most of the curricula were in two parts and only those who passed part two of the Local Preachers’ School examinations were accepted and inducted as Accredited Local Preachers of the Methodist Church. It is still the practice in most of West Africa that Methodist lay preachers relocating to

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7 Frederiks, *Christianity in the Gambia*, 244.
neighboring countries have to produce their certificates before they can gain recognition as preachers in their new locations. This is simply to ensure that they have the necessary background knowledge in Methodist doctrine. Candidates for the ordained ministry, according to the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Methodist Church Ghana, ought to have been Accredited Local Preachers for at least one year before taking the seminary entrance examinations.

In Nigeria the need for training lay workers culminated in the establishment in 1902 of Oron Training Institute by the Primitive Methodists in the East. It is from here that many Methodist evangelists and teachers went out to evangelize and teach in schools. Still in the East, another center was established in Uzuakoli in 1936 for the training of local agents. When the Church in the East felt the need and urgency to start replacing the missionaries with indigenous agents, a joint decision was reached among Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterians in 1948 to jointly establish the Trinity Theological College in Akwa. This college moved to Umuahia in 1950 and has now been taken over by the Anglicans. Nigeria also established its own version of Ghana’s Wesley College with the motto “I am among you as one who serves.” This was in Ibadan and from here teacher-evangelists were equipped with the necessary basic theological education to serve their communities. In 1928 a Methodist Lay Training Institute came up in Sagamu. This was a faltering endeavor until 1951 when the Rev. E.A. Adegbola took over as principal. This Institute trained class leaders, society and circuit stewards, local preachers and youth leaders until 1985 when it was transformed into a ministerial training center.

A similar center to the one established in Oron emerged in Uzuakoli. The same reasons that led to the establishment of the lay training college in Sagamu informed the establishment of the Methodist Lay Training Institute in Umuahia in 1956. In 1976 a crisis erupted in the united Nigeria Methodist Church of the episcopal system of leadership introduced by Patriarch Idowu. Trinity Theological College, Umuahia was greatly affected by this crisis and Methodist students backing the Idowu adventure were chased out of the College. Left with no choice they moved to the Methodist Lay Training Center at Umuahia in 1979 and this was how what is now known as the Methodist Theological Institute came into being. This now serves as a training center for both ministers and other church agents including deacons and deaconesses.8 Thus success of offering theological education to West African Methodist laity is seen in the numbers of catechists who were received into the ordained ministry. In 1860 for example, a Gambian catechist and local preacher, York Clement was sent for further training in Sierra Leone at the Fourah Bay College and thus became the first Gambian Methodist minister. The Gambia was virtually Islamic and this has remained so and so for years Sierra Leonean trained Methodist ministers served that origin.9 In more recent years the Gambian District of the Methodist Church has trained most of her younger ministers through the Trinity Theological Seminary in Ghana.

Formal Theological Education

Nigerian Methodism has its good version of developments in Ghana.10 In Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone Methodist Ministers, until the late 1940s, received much of their formal theological education in the Methodist Institutions in the UK including Cliff College and the Selly Oak colleges. Most of them would have been teachers trained through Methodist colleges of education where rudiments of theological education would have been picked up. Unlike Ghana where British Methodism dominates and ministers alongside the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Nigeria was evangelized by two Methodist missionary societies. These are the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist churches and both of them

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9 Frederiks, Christianity in the Gambia, 254.
developed theological institutions. The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society operating in Western Nigeria established the Wesley College in Ibadan in 1923 as a training center for sub-pastors. The pioneering principal was Rev. E.G. Nightingale and this college was where indigenous candidates offering to enter the Methodist ministry were trained. In 1955, a little over a decade after the Trinity College was founded in Ghana, Wesley College merged with the Anglican Melville College to form Immanuel College for the training of pastors from the two historic mission denominations.

In the Gold Coast (Ghana since independence in 1957), the formal theological education for Methodist candidates for the ministry started during the first decade of the 20th century. In 1913, two boys who had just graduated from the boys’ high school in Cape Coast, Francis C.F. Grant and Benjamin A. Markin, started ministerial training. When Ghana Methodism became autonomous of the British Conference in 1961, Grant became the first President of the new independent church and Markin became the first Chairman of her premier District of Cape Coast. A number of the clergy from then on went on to train in Sierra Leone at the Fourah Bay College at the invitation of the Church Missionary Society. The standard practice has been that those who go through formal theological education have opted for the ordained ministry which until the middle of the 1970s remained the preserve of men. Prior to this development, West African Methodist women who sought to serve the church through her institutionalized ministry, could only do so through a deaconess order which is still active in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

In 1942 the Protestant historic mission denominations in Ghana started a Joint Theological College in Kumasi for the training of ministers. The project which initially involved the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches was expanded to bring on board other denominations. Now in its seventieth year, the Trinity Theological Seminary is sponsored by five historic mission denominations—Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Evangelical Presbyterian and African Methodist Episcopal Zion—with other private students coming from independent Pentecostal and charismatic churches. Programs have also expanded from the initial Licentiate in Theology to Diploma and Bachelor’s degrees in theology. There are three graduate programs on offer—Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Ministry and Master of theology—with a PhD program going through the initial process of accreditation. Western missionaries have played an important role in the historical development of the Seminary. The first Principal (now President) was the Methodist missionary Sidney G. Williamson who previously served in Sierra Leone, W. A. Stamm of the Basel mission who had previously served in Sierra Leone and the Gambia and Hugh G. Thomas. The last missionary principal of the Seminary was the American United Church of Christ missionary, Eugene Grau, who served as a missionary of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church with historical links to Bremen. Grau left Ghana in the early 1970s and since then all heads of Trinity have been Ghanaian.11

**Contextualizing Theological Education**

The Methodist emphasis on the translation of the Bible into the vernacular was the beginning of a process of contextualizing theological education in West Africa. Dickson and Idowu by authoring books like *Theology in Africa*, *African Traditional Religion* and *Towards an Indigenous Church* helped to put African theology on the agenda of universities and seminaries. The two most popular Methodist theological educators in West Africa were both proponents of the process of indigenization. Hitherto the mode of theological education and the curriculum used had been modeled solely on those of Western theological schools where most of the theologians had received their higher education. The best African theologians, Dickson argued for instance were going to be those who had a thorough understanding of African life and thought and who

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regarded these as formative factors of Christian theology in Africa. An important conclusion in the theological education proposed by Dickson as a Methodist was that such education took place at three main levels.

These are first the seminary or university department offering courses in religion and theology; second, the congregational settings; and third, the community within which theological truths are lived out. Two decades before Dickson wrote Theology in Africa, Idowu had written Towards an Indigenous Church through which he outlined his vision for the contextualization of the church in Africa and the Methodist Church in particular. Similarly in 1972 when he was elected President of the denomination, Bolaji Idowu noted that the Methodist Church in Nigeria had to take on the task of ordering the life of the Church in such a way that she will minister effectively and adequately to the needs of the people in their “native context.” He called for a process of indigenization that embraced review of the liturgy inherited from the West.

Conclusion

Ogbu U. Kalu has noted that how Christian groups recruit, train, equip and morally “form” their leadership agents may determine the quality and faithfulness of Christianity in Africa and its missional vocation. The vocation, he notes, is exhibited in the character of Christian being or presence in a community, concrete participation in the lives of the people, and a consistent sharing of the gospel message that heals, nurtures, and transforms the physical and spiritual lives of communities. In some parts of Africa the churches have been slow to respond to the changing the nature of Christianity. Since the rise of the independent church movement and especially the contemporary Pentecostal churches from the end of the 1970s, African Christianity has increasingly become charismatic. In response several Methodist institutions in Africa such as the Trinity Theological Seminary have introduced courses in Pentecostal/charismatic studies in order to help their ministers to understand and respond to the charismatic challenge.

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1. Introduction

Evangelical churches have generally come to appreciate the value of theological education for ministerial training and for the sustainable growth of the church. In fact, both church leaders and seminary professors are agreed that effective theological education in seminaries is best done when the church and seminary collaborate together. According to Bob Ferris, this collaboration is such that theological programmes “must become manifestly of the church, through the church and for the church.”¹ Evangelical churches not only send students to the seminary but also play a role in preparing them for seminary education. The local church’s theological education in their formation/discipleship programmes at various levels is critically important and perhaps the best guarantee for quality seminarians and quality graduates from the seminary. This of course assumes that local church leaders have themselves received adequate theological education in order to make it possible for them to run local church discipleship programmes. Conversely, seminaries must pay close attention to the needs and expectations of the church when designing their programs.

The evidence of this connection between church and seminary on the continent is found in the large number of denominational and interdenominational owned seminaries and the very many local churches that support them by sending students and at times seconding faculty. This is happening across our geographically huge, culturally complex, and linguistically diverse continent. What makes an analysis of theological education in Evangelical churches in Africa a complex exercise are the various levels of theological education found on the continent, which range from non-formal church-based programmes, through certificate and diploma levels, to bachelors degrees and even to post graduate degrees.

The focus of this article will therefore be on the degree levels. While not discounting at all the importance of the others (it is at the basic level where the greatest numerical need for training is to be found), they are too varied and too numerous to be able to include them within the scope of this survey. Secondly, this paper will address theological education in sub-Saharan Africa because North Africa is a very different context with its special set of challenges in which the Church is a small, and sometimes persecuted, minority.

The reflections below are borne out of our experience of multiple visits to some 40 evangelical theological institutions in sub-Saharan Africa over the past six years on behalf of a ministry called Overseas Council International (OCI).²

2. Forms of Ownership

Evangelicalism is one stream within the broader Christian tradition. But even so, there are variations on that theme. These variations might be found in the different founding histories and current legal owners of the theological colleges.

² The Overseas Council International was established 36 years ago to help to resource degree level evangelical theological colleges in the majority world. Besides monetary grants, an important element of the ministry is capacity building among the leaders of colleges. Today it relates to some 110 ‘partners’ in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, South East Asia and China.
Some colleges are owned by a single denomination such as the Baptist college in Ogbomoso, Nigeria or the Presbyterian college in Lusaka or the Lutheran college in Addis Ababa. There are colleges that were started by mission agencies which are now owned by the national church that was planted as a result of the early mission enterprise, such as the colleges in Jos, Nigeria, Machakos, Kenya and Addis Ababa.

Some colleges are owned by a group of denominations such as the college in Windhoek or the one in Bunia, eastern DRC.

Some are owned by the Evangelical Fellowship of that country such as the college in Lubango, Angola or the college in Ndola, Zambia or the college in Ndjamen, Chad.

Two are owned by the continent-wide Association of Evangelicals in Africa, namely the one in Nairobi which serves Angophone Africa and the one in Bangui, Central African Republic for Francophone Africa.

A few are run by self-perpetuating boards whose members have links with churches but the seminary, as such, is entirely independent, such as the college in Pietermaritzburg and Bulawayo.

As a result of these patterns of ownership, most seminaries have good links with churches and have not spun off into activities that are irrelevant to the faith communities.

A trend common to them all is the fact that they are run by Africans today. The era of expatriate domination is over. This has resulted in the release of new energy to change the curriculums and the freedom to establish links with other like-minded theological programmes.

3. Post-Colonial and Post Missionary

Over the past decade there has been a marked decline in the number of Western missionaries either on the faculties or staff of evangelical colleges. The positive aspect of this is that it signals the growth in education standards of African lecturers and the fact that the colleges no longer are dependent on the West for these skills. The exception to this trend is found in those colleges offering doctoral level degrees, and at times at master’s level, where well-qualified expatriates are still needed. Colleges are, of course, ‘caught between a rock and a hard place’ because missionaries come with their own support and thus help to reduce the overall cost of running the college. Because salary costs constitute on average 65%-75% of the running costs of a seminary, any reduction to those costs is very alluring. In Maputo there is a nice example of South-South cooperation in which a Brazilian seminary is associated with a local cooperative venture between two seminaries to offer a master’s degree. However the Faculty is predominantly non-Mozambicans because of the costs of salaries, even though there are a number of well qualified nationals who could do the job.

4. Improving Qualifications

Fifty years ago, merely having the title of ‘Reverend’ qualified one to teach in a Bible School. Later, a bachelor’s degree was sufficient. Not so today. In order to teach an undergraduate degree the lecturers must have at least a master’s degree. Over the past 15 years, lecturers qualifications have improved greatly to the point where about 50% would have some form of doctorate, be it a vocational D Min or the academic PhD. Previously, most evangelicals went overseas to the United States or the United Kingdom (or France in the case of French speakers) for their doctoral studies but today a radical shift has occurred with the majority of students opting for universities and seminaries in the region. South Africa is a favoured destination, particularly the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the University of Stellenbosch, UNISA and Pretoria University. However, Nigeria has at least three seminaries that offer doctoral degrees and Kenya has one. The cost of studying in situ is much lower than that of the West, the return rate is higher upon graduation and the contextual relevance is greater. These facts make good sense to funders.
5. Challenging Contexts

It is important to note how many colleges operate in unstable political contexts or ones that have recently emerged from horrible wars. One need only think of Angola, Mozambique, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Congo Brazzaville, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast. Some colleges in Kenya became havens for people being targeted by mobs after the disputed elections two years ago. The seminary in Jos has the constant challenge of coping with the effects of interreligious violence that is stirred up by politicians. Yet in each of these countries there are evangelical colleges. This bland statement disguises the painful effects of war. There is loss of life, destruction of property, disruption of services, a slide into poverty, the ever-present threat of danger and, sometimes, the invasion of campuses and subsequent looting of them.

Unreliable electricity supply is a headache. Many seminaries are located in countries with a net shortage of power resulting in often random and unpredictable power outages. Apart from the personal discomfort of having the fan die in the heat of the day, power outages are very disruptive to academics trying to work on their computers. Africa has also been badly served with respect to computer connectivity. The limited available bandwidth has made computer-based research a tedious and frustrating business, and a costly one at that. But this is changing with the installation of fibre optic cables along the West and East coasts of Africa.

The accusation of ‘ivory tower’ theology hardly applies to most of the evangelical colleges because they have started programmes and ministries to their communities. The seminary in Sierra Leone has a ministry to a nearby village of resettled amputees. The seminary in Chad has a food security project. The one in Kitale was actively engaged in peace making around Mt Elgon. The seminary in Pietermaritzburg has trained 130 congregations to care for AIDS sufferers. The seminary in Kampala has a ministry to women in a nearby informal settlement. The list could go on, but suffice to say that the perception of the ivory tower European model of doing theological education is being changed in Africa.

6. Changing Curriculums

Given the realities described above, it is not surprising that there is little interest in the abstractions of higher criticism that so characterised the Enlightenment project. Having said that, the curriculums were slow to respond to African realities. In 2003 I organized a conference on ‘HIV/AIDS and the curriculum’ to which 97 people came from 37 evangelical colleges from different parts of Africa. Fewer than five had any course on AIDS! How irrelevant can the training be? Mercifully the situation has changed markedly. All 40 colleges that comprise a grouping of Francophone colleges now have a required course on HIV/AIDS as do many of the Anglophone colleges. The Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology even has an MTh in the subject, as does the seminary in Abidjan.

To do a good job of contextualizing curricula and course content, an institution needs a predominantly African faculty to manage the process, with as little interference as possible from those who are foreign to the context. Curriculums in most evangelical seminaries have either been imported from abroad, or have been handed down unaltered from the past. As we visit seminaries we are beginning to notice that this is becoming a thing of the past.

Today a dozen colleges have developed courses on peace making and conflict management. A growing number include courses, and even whole tracks, on development studies. The best example is that of the college in Bunia, DRC which started a certificate program on fishing, farming and forestry in order to address the chronic poverty of the region caused by years of war. By the second year, the programme had attracted 600 students.

There are two glaring deficiencies in the current curriculums in my view. The first is the absence of courses on urban ministry. It is as if we believe that we live in the rural past. Africa is rapidly urbanizing
and has recently reached the position of being 51% urbanized. In 20 years’ time, Lagos, on present projections, will become one of the top 10 largest cities in the world. Future pastors need to understand the city. They will have to devise new models of doing church. The poverty stricken, overcrowded sprawling informal settlements pose special challenges to ministry.

The second great omission is the general absence of courses on gender studies. The lack of interest can be ascribed to the fact that most leaders of theological institutions are males, and Africans, and conservative evangelicals. However, women make up the great majority of the local congregations and their needs and voices must be heard. Besides this, a programme could deal with issues such as violence against women, rape as a weapon of war, cultural patterns that disadvantage women, female genital mutilation, women’s health and more positively, women in ministry. All of these subjects are valid pastoral and theological concerns and beg the question ‘What would Jesus do?’ in this situation.

A gradual resistance is building up in some of the poorer regions of Africa where families are unwilling to club together to send a family member to undertake theological training because there are such poor returns on the investment, i.e. the graduate is so poorly paid in the ministry that the wider family will not derive much support. If this becomes a significant trend in the future, seminaries shall have to include some marketable job skills in their curriculums in order to facilitate a self-supporting ministry. Low student enrolment is a feature of some colleges, which results in a constant struggle to find the money to cover the operating budget. The point at issue is that we have inherited a model of the full time paid ministry from the West and need to critically interrogate it in the light of widespread poverty.

Most denominations experience a shortage of trained clergy. Clergy often have to look after numerous preaching points which they service on rotation as time allows. The ordained person spends most of the time doing the formal aspects such as baptisms, confirmation, weddings and funerals, and has no time left for the life-changing elements of teaching, evangelism and spiritual formation. Small wonder then that the epithet that ‘the church in Africa is a mile wide and one inch deep’, is sadly true. Perhaps the investment in training ordained clergy should refocus on them as trainers of the laity to do the work of ministry (see Ephesians 4:11-12). If this were to become the pattern, then the curriculums would need to reflect this shift in order to build those competencies.

The evangelical heritage in theological education has always valued a holistic approach to training for the ministry which combines the elements of ‘head, hands and heart’ i.e. cognition, volition and affection. With the ever-increasing cognitive demand, there is a constant danger that character formation and spiritual formation, which is very difficult to assess, may be given less prominence.

7. Accreditation and Quality Assurance

The work of the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA) over 30 years must be credited with setting standards to assure quality among many evangelical seminaries in Africa. This body is a division of the World Evangelical Fellowship. The original benefit was to enable a graduate from an accredited school to go to the United States for further studies. Minimum standards are required in the 5 areas of faculty qualifications, educational resources (including library holdings) and facilities, finance and administration, educational programmes and students. The process encourages self-evaluation which may be defined “as a process of critical, corrective self-inquiry resulting in a comprehensive analytical report.” Over the years, ACTEA has established a reputation for reliable benchmarking of minimum standards. A few seminaries, especially Pentecostal colleges with links to the United States, tend to obtain accreditation from an American university.


Part III: Denominational Perspectives on Theological Education in Africa
A noteworthy trend today is the fact that some African governments are prepared to accredit seminaries. After independence, governments did not bother with theological education and probably did not know what to do with such educational institutions. Today, however, it is required by law in South Africa for any educational institution to be registered with the government and subjected to a quality assurance audit in order to be accredited. Kenya and Ghana are two other examples of countries with active relations between private theological colleges and the state. This relationship can also be problematic when the state sets requirements that infringe on the ethos of the seminary. In Kenya for example, seminaries are required to admit 17 or 18 year-old school leavers when they once had a minimum entry age of 20 or 21, believing that students needed more life experience before embarking on pastoral training.

8. Governance and Leadership

A problem not unique to Africa is that of leadership. A principal may be appointed because he/she has a doctorate in a theological subject. This, however, does not give the requisite skills to lead and manage an educational institution. The annual training Institutes of Excellence provided by the Overseas Council have been very significant because they have provided training for principals in such relevant topics as financial management and fundraising, strategic planning and vision casting, curriculum design and classroom practice, organisational development and managing change. One principal wrote that “tears rolled down my face” when the Board told him that he had been appointed principal because he knew he did not know how to do the job. The OCI Institutes were the only organized training that he received. He goes on to write “The impact was so positive that a new leadership style started to form.”

Governing boards are often problematic and seldom add value to the leadership of a seminary. There are a number of reasons for this. People are appointed as representatives of another ministry or denomination and sit on the board to safeguard those interests rather than having the primary focus on the interests of the seminary. There are too many ministers on the boards and not enough people with other skills that are needed to run a tertiary level educational institution such as law, human resource management, education, and marketing. It has happened that denominational rivalries have been fought out on the board of an unsuspecting seminary – to its detriment.

Leadership is the key. An organization will not be better than its leaders. Capacity building is therefore vitally important for the health of seminaries and for their future.

9. Educational Facilities and Classroom Practice

The physical facilities of most evangelical seminaries are either surprisingly good or at least adequate to the task (though poor maintenance is a characteristic problem). Library holdings are adequate to good but journal holdings are abysmally poor, perhaps due to the high cost and the need to maintain a series even when there is no money. One looks forward to the day when open source journal holdings are readily available in digital form because this will transform access to worldwide scholarship.

Classroom practice is characterized by the out-dated ‘teacher tell’ method. It is as if the whole field of adult education does not exist. The content driven ‘talk and chalk’ approach leads to dependency and will not produce life-long learners and critical thinkers and problem solvers for today’s fast changing world. It is said that we teach as we were taught. A sustained effort of faculty training and modelling will have to be made if this cycle is to be broken.

Evangelical seminaries have been teaching institutions faithfully teaching material derived from the West, and have not generated new knowledge specifically related to African realities. It seems however

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4 Personal correspondence 4 September 2009.
that we are on the cusp of change as capable scholars recognise the need to write books for seminary students and for the wider church. In the next ten years I expect to see numbers of books published by evangelicals in both French and English. The trailblazer has been the one volume *Africa Bible Commentary*\(^5\) which has sold 150000 copies in just 4 years. Every contributor was an evangelical African scholar.

### 10. A Significant shift towards Christian Universities

The well-known Daystar University was started in Nairobi decades ago as an evangelical Christian liberal arts college. Over the years, it has grown to over 3000 students and has established a good reputation in the marketplace. But what is currently happening is something different. Well-established seminaries that were founded to meet the training needs of the church are becoming ‘Christian universities’. The motivation seems to range from the desire to attract more students by offering marketplace subjects in order to survive financially, to having a new vision of the mission of the seminary to serve civil society. This raises many fundamental as well as practical questions. What makes a university ‘Christian’? Will the changeover really solve the financial problems or merely add extra costs, especially in the form of salaries? Will the seminaries lose their focus on serving the church and, in which case, who will meet those needs? What will prevent institutional drift away from the founding Christian values and ethos into becoming just another secular college? The history of this institutional drift is well documented\(^6\) and calls for much wisdom and circumspection.

### 11. Emerging Models

The traditional model of full-time residential theological education is under pressure because of the high costs, the loss of earning while studying and the disruption to families and ministries when a student goes off to study. If it is becoming too expensive for the student to go to the seminary, ways must be found to take the seminary to the student. Many seminaries are trying out various forms of *distributed education*. A seminary in Harare cancelled its daytime programme and only offers night classes. Some seminaries have extension sites in other cities. The seminary in Kitale has a series of block classes of one or two weeks each for different groups throughout the year. Serving teachers are able to do a bachelor's degree by studying during their school holidays. They use their campus for 50 of the 52 weeks in the year. The large Assembly of God seminary in Togo changed over entirely from having full-time residential students to the block residency model a few years ago. A number of seminaries have large TEE certificate classes for lay people which are paper based. The Nazarene seminary in Maputo has 1000 students enrolled in these classes while they have only some 32 full-time students. The latest addition to the definition of distributed education comes in the form of electronic delivery systems. The twelve year old South African Theological Seminary (SATS) offers degrees online and on CDs. They are obviously meeting a need because there are over 4000 registered students. In the next decade, the frontier will move from laptops to smart phones in which courses will be downloaded and read by a very dispersed body of students.

The older European model of a seminary was that it was entire unto itself and rather isolated from the community. I have already shown in paragraph 5 above how seminaries in Africa are engaging in

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\(^5\) T. Adeyemo (ed), *Africa Bible Commentary* was jointly published in 2006 by Zondervan in the United States and by Word Alive in Africa.

significant ways with their communities. They are also becoming resources for lower level colleges instead of being elitist. The Lutheran seminary in Ethiopia for example relates to four regional schools which in turn relate to twelve smaller local schools. The old European model is being reinvented in Africa!

12. Conclusion

It is abundantly clear that change is the order of the day. The needs of the Church in Africa calls for training which ties in to the competencies required to be effective in the pastoral ministry. The widespread poverty and the great need to train pastors for a growing church call into question our inherited model of the full-time minister and of the full-time student and begs the question as to other modes of delivery and models of doing theological education. The pressing needs in the church and, indeed, in society cry out for gospel-centred answers through the engagement of local churches with their contextual realities.

Leaders in theological education in Africa today have to manage change and have a different vision of the future in order not to go the same way as the dinosaurs. Seminaries need to be nimble, flexible and courageously responsive if they are to survive. They will need to be ‘anchored to the Word and geared to the times’ in a very intentional way.

Bibliography

Introduction

Theology is the study of God, and theological education is the process by which men and women are prepared in their personal knowledge and commitment to God, to serve God with all their mind, heart, soul and strength. Theological education is therefore a discipleship process where the faithful disciple is equipped to disciple others. Thus the ultimate aim of theological education is not just to impart knowledge but more importantly to produce obedient disciples who are committed to the Great Commission of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Christianity, from its inception as a new faith, sought to educate and equip its faithful in matters of faith and conduct, and in response to the value systems of popular society. In modern times, major ecumenical conferences have also sought to emphasize the need for appropriate theological education to equip the Church for the task of missions. Recent research has emphasized that the first world mission conference in Edinburgh in 1910 was already marked by a strong commitment to Christian education. Although it was an “unchallenged assumption at Edinburgh 1910 that countries in the East and South must grow into the systems of civilization, Christianization and education which had been developed in the “Christian West”,...there were voices already in Edinburgh 1910 warning of the one-sided, technical way of exporting Western achievements and standards to other countries. In Edinburgh 1910 there was already an awareness of the ambivalent character of Christianity, as it worked hand-in-hand with modernization and Westernization. Voices were raised for the “moral education of the people of the South”, which was understood at that time as a “religious and spiritual education of the masses, which would safeguard them against the negative side-effects of the encounter with Western modernization and technology.” Thus the conference was marked by a strong commitment to Christian education, highlighting common approaches to higher theological education of missionaries and particularly the need for the theological training of indigenous church leaders in their mother tongue. This in part was to ensure that emerging churches in the East and South were not cloned in the systems of civilisation, Christianisation, and education which had been developed in the “Christian West”.

The Second World War delayed the International Missionary Council (IMC) from developing and implementing the Edinburgh 1910 recommendations and those of the subsequent IMC assembly in Tambaram (1938) on theological education. It was only the IMC Accra Conference of 1958 which responded to these concerns to some extent, evident in the formation of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) with the mandate to facilitate the process of developing quality theological education. The approach was to combine intellectual rigour, spiritual maturity, and commitment as a basis for critical encounter with each cultural context. The other mandate was to show creativity in promoting new approaches in mission. Thus the major aim of the TEF was the promotion of an indigenous or contextualised theological education in the churches of the Southern continents. It was the TEF which was integrated into the World Council of Churches in 1976 to give shape to its Programme on Theological Education (PTE/ETE) which continued the tasks of enhancing theological education for churches in the South. The Edinburgh 2010 conference –

2 “Report of Study Group on Theme Six on Theological Education and Formation,” 149.
3 “Report of Study Group on Theme Six on Theological Education and Formation,” 149.
one hundred years after the first world mission conference – reflected some of the unfinished tasks of Christian education and theological education in World Christianity and continued to give voice to the need to develop indigenous leadership in the younger churches and to do theological education in vernacular languages.  

**Theological Education and the Church in Africa**

It was David Barrett who first drew the world’s attention to the growing number of churches in Africa. In his outstanding publication, Barrett indicated that at the close of the 20th century, the population of the church in Africa would have moved from a modest figure of 10 million as recorded in 1910 to about 350 million in a span of a century. Following up on this discussion, Andrew Walls emphasizes that not only was the church in Africa seeing significant growth but that the continent is set to tip the balance and determine the nature of theology at the turn of the 21st century. Thus Walls argues that a theology that matters will be the theology where the majority of Christians are.

In his seminal publication, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, Philip Jenkins, Professor of History and Religious Studies at the Pennsylvania State University, outlines impressive statistics to demonstrate that not only is Christianity expanding in the Southern continents of Asia, Latin America and Africa, whilst the Western counterpart experience a steady decline, but that such growth is most notable among those of the Pentecostal and Charismatic tradition. These churches in the global South place emphasis on holiness, dream-vision, prophecy and *glossolalia* among other experiences. Jenkins observes that by the year 2050 only about one Christian in five will be non-Hispanic Whites and that the centre of gravity of the Christian world would have shifted firmly to the Southern Hemisphere. Thus following Mbiti, Jenkins maintains that “the centres of the church’s universality [are] no longer in Geneva, Rome, Athens, Paris, London, New York but Kinshasa, Buenos Aires, Addis Ababa and Manila.” Jenkins shows that the churches that have grown significantly in the global South are far more traditional, morally conservative, evangelical, and apocalyptic than their northern counterparts. Mysticism, Puritanism, belief in prophecy, faith-healing, exorcism, and dream-visions-concepts characterise these newer churches in the South. It is noteworthy that these Pentecostal-like, non-traditional denominations have always sought to adapt Christian beliefs to local traditions and worldviews and also “as a protest against ‘man-made creeds’ and the ‘coldness of worship.’”

It is in this light that we examine the nature of theological education in Africa with special reference to the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition in Ghana, which continues to experience phenomenal growth.

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4 “*Report of Study Group on Theme Six on Theological Education and Formation,*” 150.
7 Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 3.
Models of Theological Education in Africa

In the past, theological education in Africa has sought to approximate North American and European models of seminary structure, with the content heavily dosed with details of systematic theology, European missions and church history, which often ignores the penetrating questions and felt needs of the African. Candidates for ordained ministry are interviewed by their local or district Presbyteries or Circuits and supported to attend the seminary or Bible College for a period that ranges from one to three years. The Roman Catholics would normally extend their training to six or seven years prior to ordination.

The need for indigenous expression of the Christian faith in Africa was born out of at least two related happenings: the decolonization of the African Christian from European categories and the need for cultural and spiritual relevance of the Christian faith to the African people. The need for relevance also has reference to the African cosmology, which in a way also embodies the African personality and identity. The debate on the relevance of the gospel to the African has generated a number of philosophical and theological discourses, including Black Theology in the case of Southern Africa and the Black community in North America, and African Theology which draws many scholars from East and West Africa.

African Theology has sought to redeem African religious and cultural heritage which is considered as being very significant for the self-understanding and vitality of the church in Africa. John Mbiti describes this heritage as a \textit{preparatio evangelica}, a preparation for the gospel, and thus holds the key to the flourishing nature of the church in Africa. The writings of scholars such as John Mbiti, Kwesi Dickson, Harry Sawyerr, John Taylor, Andrew Walls, Kwame Bediako, Bolaji Idowu, Benezet Bujo, and Charles Nyamiti have sought to develop a framework for this purpose. This in a way also ties in with the subject as discussed in the Edinburgh conference of 1910, which was to make the Christian faith and theological education relevant to the African, without sacrificing the integrity of the apostolic faith.

The Pentecostal Perspective

Pentecostalism in its classical form was both a liberating movement and a spiritual awakening in Africa. As a liberating movement, Pentecostal theology removed excessive ecclesiastical bureaucracy and deconstructed the privileged role of the ordained ministry by emphasizing the priesthood of all believers. This phenomenon was born out of the Azusa Street revival and other similar experiences around the world, such as in India and the Welsh Revival. Remotely, the Azusa street revival was borne out of Charles Parham's short-term Bible school. Thus Bible schools are natural to Pentecostals. However, such short term schools were not to offer the early Pentecostals a license to preach the word, administer the holy sacraments or be sent out as missionaries. In this connection, Pentecostals share a common ground with the early Wesleyan tradition. For Pentecostals, the key requirement was the baptism in the Holy Spirit, as evidence by the speaking of tongues. This experience was to empower the believer to witness for the Lord and live a holy life.

As a grassroots movement, Pentecostals were at liberty to employ the use of local resources and instruments in the conduct of their church services. Clapping of hands and the use of local musical instruments, such as drums and tambourines, were used in contrast to accordions and organs and the use of hymn books and structured liturgy. Pentecostal services were often spontaneous with flexible or no fixed liturgy.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{13} Robeck, \textit{Azusa Street Mission & Revival}, 39-52.
\item \textbf{14} Opoku Onyinah, \textit{Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana} (Blandford Forum: Deo, 2012), 130-
\end{itemize}
Pentecostals also took the spiritual worldview of the African very seriously and sought to respond in their liturgy and theology. Spiritual warfare, healing and deliverance and the eminent parousia became important issues of concern, not only in church life and liturgy but also in formal and informal theological education that sought to prepare people for ministry.15

The eschatological yearning was the driving force for evangelism and also defined members’ lifestyle in terms of holiness, modesty and a sense of faith and community. The movement’s worldview, philosophy of history and self-understanding is better understood in terms of the “Latter Rain” motif. In this motif, Pentecostals saw themselves as the last and final movement of the faithful that would usher in the New Jerusalem, where Christ would take his seat as the final judge and Bridegroom who would receive his faithful church into glory.16 Classical Pentecostals saw all other movements preceding it, such as the early Reformation and the churches that ensued, as belonging to the “Former Rain”.17 This theological orientation, to a large extent, made early Pentecostals distance themselves from the ecumenical movement. It also became difficult if not unacceptable for early Pentecostals to access theological education from colleges and seminaries which had been set up by non-Pentecostal denominations. Pentecostals therefore desired a new approach to training and worship which took the heart language of the people, their cosmology and the power of the Holy Spirit more seriously.

Among the earliest Pentecostal movements in Africa were the Apostolic Faith that entered through Southern Africa, the Pentecostal Missionary Union of the UK (PMU)18 through Central and Eastern Africa, and the Apostolic Church and Assemblies of God through West Africa.

Theological education in the past went along two different but related streams: the first stream characterized churches that emerged from the Apostolic Church of Bradford, UK, such as Christ Apostolic Church, the Church of Pentecost (COP) and the Apostolic Church. These churches in the early days cared very little about formal Bible schools. Their type of training was a process of discipleship on-the-job, as Jesus did, and also Paul. The leaders did this by selecting some faithful and committed people to “be with them”. The curriculum was informal, characterised by fasting, prayer, evangelism and practical demonstration of the power of God in healing and deliverance through the power of the Holy Spirit. Short courses of one week, one month, or three months would be carried out for what was called at the time, an in-depth training. Strong emphasis was placed on holiness, modesty, sacrificial giving of one’s life and possessions for the sake of the ministry as well as speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit. There was also a strong sense of the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ, which, it was believed, would be preceded by the rapture of the saints. This Premillennial view which was developed from Revelations 20 also indicated that the Second Coming of Christ could only be made possible when the gospel has first been preached to all people on earth. “This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached to all the world for a witness unto all the nations and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14, KJV). These in a sense were the hallmarks of classical Pentecostalism, which also determined the members’ sense of mission.

131.
15 Onyinah, Pentecostal Exorcism, 142-143.
18 This was the first Pentecostal missionary agency, formed in Great Britain, in 1909, under the leadership of Cecil Polhill (and Alexander Boddy). The PMU was open to all who had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and were sincere in professing the fundamentals of the evangelical faith. See Peter D. Hocken, “Pentecostal Missionary Union” in International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, Revised and Expanded Edition, eds. Stanley Burgess and Eduard M. Van Der Maas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 970-971.
The second stream was those carried out by movements, such as the Assemblies of God and Pentecostal Missionary Union. Prominent among the original reasons for founding the Assemblies of God were the creation of order in the emerging Pentecostal churches, the formation of its own distinctive Bible schools, support for foreign missions and the establishment of doctrinal standards. Consequently, the establishment of Bible institutes became natural for the young Assemblies of God and many of the Pentecostal movements. In Ghana, for example, the Assemblies of God established the Southern and Northern Ghana Bible Institutes for the training of ministers. This in a way was an extension of the old short-term Bible schools upon which the Pentecostal Movement was founded. These early institutions did not seek accreditation from any accredited body, neither were they controlled by the various governments of their countries of operation. They were private and did not attract any state interference. Thus it is incorrect to assume that early Pentecostals were completely against theological education or training; rather their sort of training was one that was very practically oriented and relevant to their ministry needs.

The curricula of such schools were simple and not complicated. Generally, they offered a series of Bible teachings using inductive study methods. Here, the institutions often constructed Pentecostal doctrines by drawing together texts without much reference to their contexts. The approach was a combination of imparting knowledge through teaching with practical activities, such as open air meetings, door to door evangelism, street evangelism, home, hospital and prison visitations and Sunday preaching. Morning devotions, college worship, prayer meetings, and practical sermon preparation and presentations in class were also included. The teaching of practical ministry, often called 'pastoralia' became an important aspect of the curriculum. The institutions which were funded by or directly serving a particular Pentecostal denomination were required to teach denominational distinctive practices, liturgy and church polity. Usually there were very few full time faculty members. Most of the lecturers were drawn from denominational pastors who excelled in their field of study and had outstanding practical ministry experience. Such training was very practical and yielded results for the Pentecostal movements.

This sort of training went on for some time until the 1980s, when some Pentecostal Bible Colleges revised and expanded their syllabus to become theological colleges and sought accreditation from the government and other accredited bodies. This trend was promoted partly by the writings of some of the Charismatic leaders within the Charismatic renewal movement in the mainline churches, including Michael Harper, Denis Bennet, Peter Hocken and Don Basham. Their writings appear to promote the Pentecostal faith through the Charismatic lens. The classical Pentecostals might have felt they needed the academic language to tell their own story. However, the challenge that came along with the quest for accreditation was the requirement to have course contents evaluated and approved by non-Pentecostals and sometimes liberal theologians. Such scholars insisted on textual, form and source criticisms of the biblical material and the study of biblical languages such as Hebrew and Greek. However, these academic demands were not considered to be useful to many Pentecostals. Other requirements were the use of extensive bibliographies and big libraries. In the case where such Bible colleges have metamorphosed into universities or colleges, institutional accreditation requirements demanded open admission to students, irrespective of their religious orientation, as well as gender balance of the faculty.

Such requirements from accreditation boards often result in many of the practical oriented courses that are considered very important for the purpose of the ministry to be scaled down. In some cases, theologians who have no pastoral experience had to be invited to join the faculty, not for their practical skill but their academic qualifications. This tension is similar to what happened to the Pentecostals in the West, as

described by William Kay, “After internal resistance Pentecostals accepted that the courses they offered should submit themselves to assessment by non-Pentecostals and, where accreditation was given, courses began to look like theological courses in secular institutions.”

The 1990s saw this trend repeating in African communities. The negative aspect of this trend was that African Pentecostal institutions were forced to include in their curriculum subjects that were considered irrelevant to their course such as abortion, euthanasia and homosexuality. These and other related issues from the Pentecostal perspective did not warrant any argument. As far as the Pentecostals are concerned, the Bible is clear on these issues. They are sinful and unacceptable, and that concludes the matter. Any deliberation and concessions made on these matters were regarded as unspiritual.

While some of the Bible colleges upgraded themselves to meet the demands of the accreditation bodies, the usual ministerial formation training continued in the same institutions. Thus two streams of schools were running in most of the upgraded institutions. Other colleges that could not meet the criteria of the accreditation bodies continued with the Bible Schools and sent some of their tutors to obtain higher academic degrees from colleges that were accredited by the government.

Following this line of practice, many of the Charismatic churches and some classical Pentecostals who had mega churches also set up their own Bible schools. In a way it was a means of discipling the young people and prospective leaders of the church without falling victim to liberal theology and theologians. The system ensured the preservation of the faith as understood in the Pentecostal tradition as well as the development of appropriate ecclesiological structure. At the back of the minds of some of these Charismatic leaders was the thinking that the theological seminaries were not spiritual and sound enough to prepare their people for ministry. This tension of studying theology and being able to maintain sound spirituality at the same time continues to be a major struggle in the minds of many Pentecostals and Charismatics. Nonetheless, the positive side of this new trend of Pentecostal scholarship is that Pentecostals are coming up with their own theologians who are able to reflect and theologize in the light of their own denominational values and principles without sacrificing the necessary academic rigour.

**School Of Theological Education by Extension – The Church of Pentecost Model**

Currently the trend that is gaining root in Pentecostal circles is Theological Education by Extension (TEE). The idea of TEE first came to the attention of scholars when the pilot project by the Evangelical Presbyterian Seminary of Guatemala assumed both a national and international dimension. This was followed in the second phase of the project to Honduras and then to the “South American Triangle” of Columbia, Bolivia and Brazil, which completed the second phase. By the 1970s, a major fund had been set up by the TEE Educational Fund to promote research and popularize the project for the benefit of the church in the South.

Pentecostals have found this approach to be useful and relevant for their purposes. An example is the School of Theological Education by Extension (STEE) established in 2006 by the Church of Pentecost (CoP), at the Pentecost University College in Accra, Ghana.

STEE offers opportunity for students to access distance learning education at the certificate, diploma and degree levels in theology, pastoral and mission studies. Distance learning means that students can study at home, at their own time and pace, although this opportunity is carefully controlled, allowing for flexibility. For the Bachelor of Arts degree (BA), students could complete their course within a maximum of six years and four years in the case of a Diploma.

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Rather than theological students being isolated and separated from what is going on in the field, some benefits of the STEE model among other things is that it allows ministerial students to be in constant communication with the local churches where practical church services and other activities, such as evangelism and discipleship, take place. It also recognises that those involved in the ministry are best qualified to help and educate students to prepare for the Great Commission. Consequently, lecturers for the STEE programme comprise both resident lecturers and as well as practicing senior ministers who are assigned to local churches.

**Philosophy and Aim of the Programme**

The theology programme seeks to develop an in-depth theological understanding and equip students to engage with the religious challenges that confront society today. Thus the study is designed to provide students with practical experience and necessary academic rigour which will enable them to become effective Christian leaders. The course also seeks to equip students with the knowledge, skill and competencies necessary to engage in cross-cultural mission and pastoral care. Thus students gain a good grasp of current thinking, trends and developments in global Christianity as well as sharpen their missiological use of the Bible.

**Curriculum Design and Content**

The design and content of the curriculum reflect the rationale and philosophy of the programme. It takes the view that the programme is preparing students with specific endowment of knowledge to make a contribution to the Christian mission. This means that the course outlines and content are designed to harness the student’s potential in intellectual and conceptual framework. Priority is given to certain subjects which are of concern to African social and spiritual needs as well as intellectual discourse. Thus the standard curriculum covers five main areas of study, namely: personal development and spirituality, theological and biblical foundation, world and traditional religions, church history and practical ministry courses which include pastoral studies and homiletics.

A comprehensive course outline is developed for each module together with a Course Reader. The benefit of the Course Reader is to offer students the opportunity to work through a variety of texts as an important aspect of the learning process, as well as providing students with relevant materials for further readings and assignments. The Course Readers complement the readings students would normally do in the library if studying full time at the College.

**Admission Requirements**

Pastors or church leaders who have earlier completed pastoral training from a recognised institution are granted a one year exemption and given 42 credits, if they can provide relevant certificates and a portfolio of evidence of relevant experience covering a period of not less than three years.

Students who have successfully completed a certificate course in theology from accredited tertiary institutions gain access to level 200 of the degree programme without a requirement for a period of experience.

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23 See Pentecost University College, School of Theological Education by Extension, Course Handbook, 2012.

**Part III: Denominational Perspectives on Theological Education in Africa**
Church leaders who have any degree other than in theology from a recognized institution may be considered for level 200 of the BA programme, if they can provide relevant certificates and a portfolio of evidence of relevant experience covering a period of not less than three years. In addition, students must pass an interview to demonstrate ability to pursue the course. Prospective ministerial students are admitted to level 100 of the certificate programme upon recommendation by the Church. The Church of Pentecost has found the model of the STEE very helpful in providing training for the growing numbers of the pastors and lay leaders of the Church.

Theological Education by Extension (TEE) – The Way Forward for Addressing the Growing Numbers and the Needs of the Church in Africa

Theology may be defined as faith seeking understanding, or humankind’s response to what God has done. Andrew Walls draws our attention to the fact that theology in a sense springs out of practical situations; it is therefore occasional and local in character. In this regard, he argues that there is “in every believer, and every community of believers, at least a rough outline of a theology.” It is against this background that we develop our understanding of theological education, as the “reflection of Christian faith and praxis (fides quaerens intellectum).” In North America for example, the term ‘theological education’ is used almost exclusively for ministerial formation, often referring to graduate level degree programmes designed to prepare people for various kinds of ministry.

In the discourse of WCC Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE), theological education does not focus mainly on those seeking ministerial ordination but applies also to every Christian adult. Thus theological education in this broad understanding aims at developing reflective Christian identity and practice. It becomes an informed and spiritually enriched access to biblical tradition that seeks to empower people for participation in the Missio Dei.

We want to argue here that TEE holds the key to the future training of ministers for the rapidly growing churches in Africa. The reasons are many. First, the impact of the Pentecostal and the charismatic renewal movement on existing denominations and society at large calls for a robust theological training and response to the growing number of Christians, who desire to know more about the Christian faith. Second, TEE offers an easy and flexible access to theological education at affordable cost. Third, students can access the course whilst keeping to their jobs either in the church or secular society.

Fourth, students of TEE can easily test their hypotheses and assumptions in the churches or areas of ministry to find out how relevant these are. Students of TEE do not have to rush through their education but could study at home or from their churches at their own time and pace. Furthermore, this concept falls within the original practice of Pentecostals, where people were brought together for a short period, trained and sent back to ministry.

Conclusion

Theological education will continue to remain an important instrument in the development of the church and the church’s engagement with the wider society. In some cases we may need to make a distinction between theological education and ministerial or spiritual formation, and in other cases the two go together. But it is the latter that raises critical issues of concern. The history of the Church has revealed that

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26 “Report of Study Group on Theme Six on Theological Education and Formation,” 151.
27 “Report of Study Group on Theme Six on Theological Education and Formation,” 151.
universities and academic laurels have not always serve the purpose of the church and in some regrettable situation these have led to the latter losing its vision in place of secular glory. It is also the case that in a world open to a wide range of information and constantly new developments, one cannot ignore the place of serious academic reflection. However, it is seeking the right balance that often remains an enigma. It is without a doubt that the special appeal of Pentecostalism and its rapid growth has reference to the spirituality of simple dedicated men and women whose faith is firmly rooted in the Bible and their mission inspired by constant dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, healing, dream-visions, exorcism and apocalyptic yearnings had often characterised such a faith and action across the world.

However, the rapid growth of Pentecostalism at present requires sound and capable leaders to ensure effective discipleship among congregations. It is to this end that theological education by extension becomes most relevant in meeting the educational needs of the growing church in contemporary society. As the tension between church and society grows, the former is constantly being forced to rethink its theological engagement in the light of contemporary scholarship rather than its mission praxis. What this means for the young church in Africa is yet to be seen and is an important subject for further research.

Bibliography


Right from the time of their inception, the focus of Pentecostal churches in Botswana was on the experiences of baptism into the Holy Spirit, divine healing and repentance. The Holy Spirit experience was in those early days the most important criteria for full-time ministry. The emphasis on the importance of the Holy Spirit, consequently, led to the negligence of theological education. In recent years however Pentecostal churches have become more convinced of the importance of theological education. Despite these efforts, the growth of Pentecostal theological education institutions in Botswana has generally lagged behind when compared to developments in the region, especially in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia, where Pentecostal educational institutions have grown significantly. Most Pentecostal ministers today have obtained both their basic and higher Pentecostal theological education from the Pentecostal theological schools in neighbouring countries. The Apostolic Faith Mission in Botswana, one of the oldest, most influential and fastest growing Pentecostal churches, has 85 percent of over 60 full-time ministers having been trained in Pentecostal institutions in Zimbabwe or South Africa. At present, no Pentecostal school offers a Masters or Doctor of Ministry program in Botswana. Insufficient networking is a major weakness of Pentecostal theological education in Botswana, regionally and at the global stage. Assembly Bible College (ABC), due to its historic relationship with the worldwide Assemblies of God Church, is an exception.

This section presents Pentecostal theological education and training institutions in Botswana, with specific reference to the Botswana Bible Training Institute (BBTI) which has played a significant role in the training of church leaders in Botswana. While its doctrines, practice and theology is strictly Pentecostal, it has presented itself as an interdenominational institution, thus appealing to the training needs of Christians from a wide range of theological and denominational backgrounds, such as the mainline churches; the African Independent Churches (AICs), who form the majority of their students; and the Pentecostal/charismatic churches, who are naturally attracted by their Pentecostal foundations, emphasis and leadership. This section therefore examines the Pentecostal theological education in Botswana from the 1970s when it was established to its more recent development. The section further shows that at its inception, Pentecostal theological education concerned itself with the training of church leaders, such as Sunday school teachers, evangelists and youth leaders. It is disheartening to find that Pentecostal theological education has not yet moved beyond this point to concern itself with tertiary

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2 Interviews with Apostolic Faith Mission (Botswana) and Pentecostal Holiness Church leadership (2007), Unpublished manuscript entitled “The History of Pentecostalism in Botswana” by Nkomazana.

theological education, or development and training of highly qualified teachers who would hold recognized
degrees, such as Masters of Theology and Doctors of Divinity, as in other parts of the world.

**Overview of Pentecostal theological Institutions in Botswana**

In this section I will provide an overview of the Pentecostal theological institutions that have made an
impact in the development of Pentecostal Christianity in Botswana. There are six important Pentecostal
theological institutions that need mention, namely:

1. Assemblies Bible College (ABC)
2. Botswana Bible Training Institute (BBTI)
3. Shashe Bible Training Institute (SBTI)
4. The Ministry Training Centre (MTC)
5. Nazarene Bible College (NBC)
6. Love Botswana Bible Institute (LBBI)

**1. History, Context and the Nature of Training Programmes**

A brief account of the history and context of the above-mentioned Pentecostal theological schools in
Botswana is important in order to help the reader appreciate what has already been achieved, its challenges,
and difficulties encountered thus far. Like in other parts of the world, the growth of Pentecostal theological
education grew out of the holiness and revival contexts that drove the growth and spread of
Pentecostalism.\(^5\) In Botswana, Pentecostalism grew rapidly because of the general religiosity of the people,
but not due to the strength of the economy as it happened in the west. However it is important to note that
its growth was largely resisted by the existing churches, such as the Congregational Church, the Anglican
Church, and the Dutch Reformed Church, which were already established and rooted among certain tribes.

Most Pentecostal theological schools in Botswana offered basic Bible training that included a form of
systematic theology, which is core to their training programmes. While Biblical Studies remains central to
their programmes, emphasis is on practical theology. Elements of Pentecostal history and doctrine are also
important aspects of the Pentecostal curriculum. The belief that the coming of Christ was imminent
discouraged ministers from undertaking advanced studies. Pentecostal theological institutions, therefore,
designed three-year certificate and diploma programmes to facilitate a speedy acquisition of qualifications.

Another important factor that contributed to the growth of Pentecostal theological education had to do
with developments that occurred at the University of Botswana in 2000.\(^6\) As part of its major programme
review and semesterization process, the University, excluded certificates and diplomas from most of its
programmes which led to the exclusion of the pastoral theology certificate and diploma programmes from the
Department of Theology and Religious Studies. The Botswana Training Authority and the Tertiary Education
Council began the process of accrediting certificates, diplomas and degrees offered by tertiary institutions.
Under this arrangement, theological institutions were at liberty to teach according to their theological traditions
provided that their course structures conformed to the outlined standards. The result was that students who used
to go for university certificates and diplomas now diverted to these theological institutions.

\(^4\) Theological institutions have either used the phrase Bible School or Bible institute, Bible college or training centre to
refer to a place where men and women are prepared for ministerial training.

\(^5\) Stanley B. Burgess and Gary B. McGee (eds), *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids:

\(^6\) See accreditation requirements and conditions of both the Botswana Training Authority (P/Bag 80340, Gaborone,
Telephone 365 7200, Fax 395 9220) and the Tertiary Education Council (Plot 50369, Tholo Building Fairgrounds;
P/Bag BR108, Gaborone, Telephone 3900679; Fax 3901481).
An overview of these institutions is crucial. ABC was founded in the 1970 by S.M. Makgaola assisted by Assemblies of God American missionaries. The primary aim was to provide theological and ministerial training for church ministers and lay workers in order to equip them to meet the spiritual needs of their fast-growing denominations. ABC is accredited by the Ministry of Education and trains students from various Pentecostal denominations as well as government chaplains working for the Botswana Defence Force and the prisons department. Subsequently, Raphael Habibo (1990s), Pat Mahar (American) (2001-2005) and Chuck Wilson, another American missionary (2007), and other local ministers contributed immensely to the numerical and physical growth of the college.

The SBTI was established by the Africa Evangelical Church in 1989, through the leadership of Reverend Mmolawa, the then superintendent. The objective of the institute was to provide formal theological training to its ministers, who after training could graduate with a certificate in Pastoral ministry and Sunday school ministry. At its initial stages the work was supported by white missionaries who designed the programmes, developed courses and produced teaching materials. The majority of students came from the Africa Evangelical Church with almost half coming from the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches and the AICs. The programmes were a mixture of residential and correspondence courses. The three-year Pastoral Programme for church leaders, especially pastors, was the most prestigious but not of a thorough standard due to the lack of qualified teachers in all the basic areas such as Old and New Testament, Bible language, Systematic theology etc. The school ended up closing down in 2002 mainly due to financial constraints.

MTC is an interdenominational Charismatic/Pentecostal Bible school founded in 1989 and operating under the auspices of the Bible Life Ministries founded and led by Enock Setima. It offers courses in pastoral theology, leadership management and counseling, but is strictly Pentecostal/Charismatic in orientation, theology and outlook. It specializes in pastoral, leadership, children’s, youth and family ministries as well as in missions. The major focus therefore is on systematic and practical theologies from a Pentecostal point of view.

NBC was established in Botswana in 2004 by Cheri Kommel, a global missionary with the Church of the Nazarene in Botswana from 2001 to 2006. She introduced extension education programmes that were useful to members who could not be full time students. The certificate in ministry was offered by the General Board of the Nazarene Church in 2006. The NBC offers a certificate that was accredited by the Botswana Training Authority in 2009.

LBBI is another Pentecostal theological institute founded in 2002 by Laura and Jenny Lackey in Maun (Northwest District), the most favourite tourist destination in Botswana. The location of LBBI is unique and strategically placed with easy access for candidates in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa. It is particularly a useful resource for the unreached people groups, such as the Basarwa. In addition to classrooms for 750 students, a library and chapel, it possesses a cultural intern training centre and a dormitory for 100 multinational African Bible school students. Its vision is to train leaders for ministry from the nations of Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly the unreached peoples. The school, as part of its training programme, imparts the gifts of the Holy Spirit to believers. It emphasizes the importance of corporate worship, evangelism, children’s ministry, church planting, etc. Combining residential full time programmes and part time

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7 Amanze, Botswana Handbook of Churches, 21-22.
8 Amanze, Botswana Handbook of Churches, 4.
9 Sydney Berman, Minister of the church and lecturer at the school; currently pursuing PhD studies at Stellenbosch University.
10 Reverend Mokgwathisi, who was the head of the school from 1999 to about 2005, played a leading role in the development of the school. Interviewed by F. Nkomazana, Gaborone, 30 December 2011.
11 Personal Interview with Cheri Kommel, Nazarene Bible College, Broadhurst, Gaborone, 2009.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
evening class training programmes has contributed to attracting 20 students from the region in its first year. This strategically located institute, therefore, aims at training and equipping emerging Christian leaders from the entire Central and Southern region of Africa in particular, and the whole of the Sub-Saharan region in general, thus becoming an international Bible School. It is an affiliate of Christ for the Nations, located in Dallas, Texas.12

BBTI formed in 1974 by Jayson R. Faucet (New Zealander missionary) as a correspondence school, after initial discussions with some local Pentecostal leaders such as William Simon Scheffers of the Apostolic Faith Mission and Moses Musa of the Pentecostal Protestant Church. It was officially opened by Bakwena Kgari, the then Minister of Home Affairs in 1975. The first graduation was in 1976. The school greatly benefited from the training modules produced by Reverend Fred Bugke (South African) and translated into Setswana by Robert Gabasiane. When Faucet moved to South Africa in 1995 as the principal of that country’s school, he was replaced by Pastor Moses A. Musa, who was in 2003 also succeeded by John Philip.13 Today the school is run by a board of pastors from the local Pentecostal churches. Its primary objective is to train ministers, evangelists, Sunday School teachers and youth leaders for ministry, based on Ephesians 4:11-13 in the context of Botswana. The important elements of the Pentecostal theological colleges in Botswana are as follows:

2. Interdenominational Character

While institutions such as the BBTI, were established with a strong Pentecostal foundation and theological inclinations, their programmes promote an ecumenical and interdenominational spirit. They accommodate students from different doctrinal backgrounds and church affiliations, such as from the various AICs and the most controversial ones such as the International Pentecostal Church (Universal). Others are from the mainline churches such as the Roman Catholic Church and the rapidly mushrooming independent ministries and charismatic churches. It is, in fact, uncommon to find a school bringing together for ministerial training such a wide range of students with such a diverse doctrinal background and church affiliation as BBTI does. Through this interdenominational approach to ministerial training, the BBTI has introduced an important element – inter-faith dialogue and co-operation. Students from diverse cultures engage in exchange of views that enrich their Church and the community. Exposure to other people’s beliefs and convictions will contribute towards removing prejudice and create readiness to accept each other’s religious experience, and willingness to collaborate for the common good of the society. This is also about the willingness to reach a compromise that will be acceptable to all sides, promote an attitude of respect, and create friendship with those who hold different theological views. It is also about flexibility and openness to truth, and strength to eliminate every prejudice, intolerance and unnecessary misunderstanding. Through this approach, BBTI has achieved what Pentecostalism in general has failed to accomplish over many centuries. Pentecostalism has always failed to cohabitate with other churches and religions. It has in the past refused to accommodate any form of interfaith cooperation. In Botswana, for instance, the Pentecostal churches were strongly opposed to the introduction of an interfaith religious education curriculum in government schools. The interfaith or multi-faith curriculum had been designed in such a way that it is constitutionally permissible, educationally sound and sensitive to the beliefs of all the

12 Lovebotswana.org/departments/lbbi/about.html. Its training program offers about 20 classes alternating subjects per term. The tuition for first year students is P 800 per term. LBBI provides scholarships through partners worldwide. Although LBBI residence teaching staff is made up of seasoned, proven teachers for daily instruction, I was not able to ascertain their qualifications and training. To further strengthen its teaching staff, LBBI also draws from international guest teaching staff it receives from Marilyn Hickey Ministries, Lakewood Church, and Christ for the Nations.
13 Reverend John Philip, the Principal of the Botswana Bible Training Institute, and Catherine Lewis, an administrator and lecturer at the institute are the main sources of most of the information on BBTI.
students. It stressed the importance of tolerance, respect and accommodation of other people’s views and
faiths. The Pentecostals, later joined by the Catholics and the Congregationalists, objected to the heavy
content of other religions such as Islam in the syllabus. The Roman Catholics and the UCCSA appealed to
the Minister of Education and consequently came up with their own version of the syllabus, demanding to
be given the right to be allowed to teach what will promote their vision and mission. This approach seemed
to contradict the 2016 National Vision, a Government of Botswana project, which aims among other things
to assist the country to rediscover a collective identity based upon shared values and a respect for ethnic or
cultural differences, or differing views or religious beliefs as stated in the Constitution of Botswana. The
various religious groups were given the responsibility to work on a pillar focusing on morality and
tolerance, which posed a challenge in the light of the above attitudes of intolerance.

3. Theological Education by Extension (TEE) Programme

BBTI is the best example of a TEE programme that has contributed to the training of ministers in
Botswana. The programme is composed of the Ministers’ Diploma Course (24 to 36 months); the
Evangelist Certificate Course (12 months duration); the Youth Leaders’ Certificate Course and Sunday
School Teachers’ Course. There is also the Ministers’ Advanced Diploma Course, which has seven satellite
teaching stations spread throughout the country. The students are however expected to come to the institute
twice a year for formal lectures. The institute currently has three full time lecturers handling both the
Setswana and English courses: Reverend John Philip, Pastors Lot Motlaleng and Catherine Lewis, working
with part time assistants.

The key point that needs to be emphasized in connection with the Pentecostal theological education in
Botswana, as represented by the BBTI extension programmes, is its relevance to the Church. It addresses
urgent realities that confront the Church today. Ross Kinsler has pointed out that the major strengths of
theological education by extension are that it supports ministry by the people, for the people and of the
people, having the potential of reaching a large number of the population.\(^{14}\) Through extension
programmes, institutions with limited physical and personnel facilities are able to diversify their influence
in equipping all God’s people for service. According to Kinsler, TEE programmes have two major primary
concerns: missions and access.\(^{15}\) They minimize the economic demands posed by residential programmes
by reaching large numbers of marginalized people, such as women and the poor. It presents access as a
very important aspect of the Pentecostal curriculum. Academic qualification and lack of financial support
for tertiary education is a hindrance to accessing tertiary institutions. Pentecostals also find the theological
training at most secular institutions unsuitable for their ministerial training. TEE programmes have
therefore addressed two major points of access: economic and gender aspects. With meager resources,
churches and institutions have served many times the number of students that could have been
accommodated in centralized programmes. Another important point is that students pursuing TEE
programmes are usually not expected to give up their employment or means for supporting themselves,
their families and contributing substantially to their ministerial training expenses. Economic dependence on
churches, as in traditional centralized programmes, where the students practically live in residential
environments with expensive tuition for accommodation, food, water, electricity expenses, and living
allowances and fees paid by sending churches is discouraged.\(^{16}\) The BBTI enrolment is, for instance, ten
times higher than that of the ABC, due to its economic accessibility. Many poor candidates from the
rapidly mushrooming Pentecostal and charismatic ministries and the AICs have found it economically

\(^{14}\) R. Kinsler, *Diversified Theological Education: Equipping All God’s People* (Pasadena: William Carey International
University Press, 2008).

\(^{15}\) Kinsler, *Diversified Theological Education*.

\(^{16}\) Kinsler, *Diversified Theological Education*, 8.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
possible to send their students to train under the BBTI TEE programmes. There is particularly greater accessibility for women, who would have otherwise found it difficult to go away from their homes to engage in residential studies for ministry. The TEE programmes have allowed them to remain within their communities, managing the social affairs of their families, while studying for ministry. They also continue to be guided by their religious mentors. This arrangement greatly contributed to the increase in the number of women enrolling with the BBTI. By the end of 1995, figures show that BBTI had trained over 800 men and women. According to the Principal Reverend John Philip, the number of women was approximately 40 percent of the above figure. Decentralizing programmes have accommodated women – traditionally marginalized from theological education. This is significant because it is theological education which has been responsible for reinforcing sexism and patriarchy in the church. Although, there are no figures available, Philip confirmed that some of these women have already been ordained and are in full time ministry with their various churches. Philip observed that as the Church embraces the principles of equality and democracy for all, the future of women would become brighter. He however insisted on women respecting the Setswana culture and upholding the values of botho (humanity). He further pointed out that in Pentecostal churches, the contribution of women was far more than that of men and that this situation will continue into the future. Evidently, the increase in the training of women through BBTI has also contributed to the rise of ordained women in Botswana.

**Pentecostal Theological Institutions and Women Further Discussed**

To further understand the role of Pentecostal theological institutions, I will examine their contribution in preparing women for full time ministry in Pentecostal Churches. By 1995 BBTI had made remarkable progress in empowering women within the local socio-cultural context. The policies, principles and objectives of these theological colleges were to train ministers and lay workers to meet the growing needs of churches. The entry qualifications were not discriminatory and gender insensitive. However, the ABC had graduated far more men than women. The imbalance was not because women were less interested in theological training than men, but that certain socio-cultural factors promoted this trend. Out of 90 graduates from ABC by 1995, only 24 were women. There was a false belief that ministry or key leadership positions were reserved for men, a thing that affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the church. Interestingly, out of the 24 women who graduated for ministry with ABC, only 6 (25 percent) got ordained compared to 100 percent ordination recorded for men at the same period. Traditionally the ministerial office was always seen as a male prerogative, while women were side-lined to the supportive roles, such as Sunday School teachers etc, which were deemed to be inferior to the pastoral position. Some Pentecostal churches, such as the Goodnews Ministries believed that the Bible was against women preaching in church, hence their decision not to ordain and support women’s desire to pursue full time ministry.

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17 Rev. John Philip interviewed by Oesi Sebusang, August 1995 (BBTI, Box 1085, Tlokweng, Tel. 3922610, Fax 3925367).
19 Interview between Pastor Habibo, the principal of ABC and Oesi Sebusang – my research assistant – June to August 1995.

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**Part III: Denominational Perspectives on Theological Education in Africa**
ministry. Furthermore, out of the 6 ordained women from the 24 who graduated from ABC by 1995, only 5 were assigned congregations, and these are smaller and remotely based. The sixth works as an administrator at the BBTI. Women continue to face biases and opposition from the male dominated church and society. Asked what he saw as the future of women in the church, Pastor Habibo, pointed out:

They have a bright future as they can now contribute to the development and leadership of the church. However, there are many difficulties or challenges for them to face because they are generally not recognised as leaders in some denominations. The other problem is that they can sometimes get married to husbands who need a wife who will stay at home as a housewife and a mother. As a result of the expectations of our tradition most men would insist that they do so. This might affect their call as pastors or church workers.

Pastor Habibo’s last comment is very useful and needs consideration by the Church at large. The thinking that the only proper role for women is the home is an old one and has in the past denied the church of a vital contribution of women on public matters. Traditionally speaking, women were expected to limit themselves to the home, while men took care of most of the public responsibilities such as politics, priesthood etc. Out of the enrolment of 35 students for 1995, only 5 (12.7 percent) were women. This state of affairs spoke volumes in as far as the place of women in the church is concerned. It also had a lot to do with the factors that limited their participation.

The November 1995 ABC graduation also revealed the extent to which women’s training for full time ministry is adversely affected by other social factors. Of the 10 graduates, eight received certificates and diplomas, while two candidates graduated with a degree in theology. Of the ten graduates, three were women, two of whom were compelled by circumstances beyond their control to graduate in absentia. One was due to pregnancy, which had reached a critical stage and the woman could not travel from Francistown to Gaborone, while the other one was forced to stay at home and nurse a sick child. What is interesting is the fact that the husband, instead of staying behind to nurse the sick child and allow the wife to attend the graduation, attended the graduation on her behalf.

**Concluding Remarks**

As already observed in the preceding sections, in the earlier years of the inception of Pentecostalism to Botswana, Pentecostals were traditionally and historically not only seen as theologically uneducated, but also as unwilling to spend too much time training for ministry. As has been demonstrated in the preceding pages, this picture used to be true, many years ago when Pentecostals understood the Holy Spirit to be their teacher, thus seeing no reason for theological education. This was seen as a waste of time. Like the AICs, some saw their bishops as highly equipped by the Holy Spirit to train and educate those being called by God to the work of ministry. Based on the example of the first disciples of Jesus, who never left their communities to go and attend a school as part of training for ministry, the first Pentecostals did not see the need to spend many years attending training. Even the idea of attending formal education to learn how to read and write was seen as a waste of time since the Holy Spirit would teach them how to read. This is why most early Pentecostal leaders could read their Bibles without having entered schools. Early Pentecostals had little commitment to theology, hence historically lacking a clear structure of theology. The theology they have is borrowed from the mainline churches. Again, it is obviously evident that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is an important model under which they have tried to establish themselves. While they have been very strong on the aspect of evangelism, their educational and theological elements have been historically weak. Although they have come back and tried to re-establish themselves in the course of

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21 Interviewed Ms Dorothy Masimolole: January 2012, Plot 21096 Bogadi Road, Village, Gaborone.
22 Rev. Pastor Habibo Interviewed by Oesi Sebusang (research assistant), June to August 1995.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
history and time, by strengthening their biblical and theological spirituality, their curriculum and educational programmes are still at a developing stage.

Another problem for the Pentecostal theological institutions is that they have not shown much interest on the study of African Traditional Religion. Their curriculum has also demonstrated no commitment to the history of Christianity in Botswana, Southern Africa and Africa as a whole. It also absolutely makes no mention of world religions, such as Islam, Hinduism, Bahai Faith, Sikh Faith and Buddhism. The curriculum of most of these Pentecostal theological institutions lacks well developed and balanced courses on current issues and challenges, such as HIV and AIDS, the problems of corruption, gender studies etc. Their library resources need to be upgraded in the light of current theological and religious issues and trends.

The appropriateness of stipulated modes of delivery is sometimes described as part time, full time, college-based, distance learning or e-learning etc. BBTI is the only institution that without doubt presents its programmes through extension.

Areas of Improvement to Pentecostal Theological Education

1. Accreditation and validation of programmes with Botswana Training Authority or the Tertiary Education Council. This will challenge the institutions to improve their programme quality and standards.
2. Teacher development – there is a great need for developing teachers through training and teacher enrichment seminars and through further education so that these teachers have their qualifications upgraded to Masters of Theology and Doctor of Divinity etc. The majority of these teachers are holders of diplomas and first degrees as their highest qualifications.
3. Theological research, conferences and scholarly writing. Pentecostal theological institutions in Botswana have a poor record on research and publications. There is the need to cultivate a culture of research and writing, so that ministers trained at these institutions will be thoroughly equipped to produce relevant books to be consumed by the local market.
4. A regular programme assessment to ensure that current developments are incorporated into the curriculum.
5. Articulation into higher programmes and identification of progression pathways. This will call for co-operation between Pentecostal theological schools, which will facilitate further growth of programmes and training of teachers. A co-operation between MTC and BBTI will, for instance, strengthen the Pentecostal theological education, its training agenda, purpose and resources. Together they can come up with an articulation and progression pathways into higher training programmes.

Bibliography


**THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES – PERSPECTIVES FROM ZIMBABWE**

Kudzai Biri

**Introduction**

Busia points out that every community must have a way of passing its accumulated knowledge to the young, to enable them to play adult roles and to ensure the survival of the offspring and the continuity of the community.\(^1\) Theological education in Africa has always been part of an overall educational system practised by indigenous societies or imposed by outsiders, and falls into three categories: pre-colonial times, the colonial era and the post-colonial period.\(^2\)

Zimbabwean Christianity is deeply divided denominationally and theologically, with some Christians even considered to be ‘false Christians’ because of their beliefs about their ancestors and ‘witches’.\(^3\) There are serious divisions that characterise the Christian community in Zimbabwe. This article does not endeavour to establish the truth or falsity of the above claims but aims to establish a denominational perspective towards theological education in Africa against the backdrop of denominational and theological divisions. Several churches in Zimbabwe, ranging from the mainline, Protestant and Evangelical churches, have theological institutions that provide theological education. Is it possible to talk of theological education in Africa against the background of fragmented and diverse Christian denominations, or can we write off theological education in Africa because of divisions, particularly in reference to Zimbabwe? In this study, a denominational perspective on theological education is explored through a case study approach, focusing on Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA).\(^4\) This examination of the Pentecostal perspective is restricted to the activities of ZAOGA, in particular their orientation, their concepts and understanding regarding theological education. The central question addressed is: What is the Pentecostal perspective on theological education in Zimbabwe? This question can be answered by exploring briefly the main tenets of the Pentecostal orientation towards theology and their attitude towards the sacred scriptures (bible). A glimpse of the Pentecostal perspective on theological education in Africa can be derived from this theological standpoint. The history and origins of Pentecostalism will not be explored here because several scholars including Anderson\(^5\) and Kalu\(^6\) have already provided detailed accounts.

Perspectives on theological education in Zimbabwe are varied and complex. This variation and complexity raises the question of ideology that is central to religion. Different religions and subsequently denominations operate from ideological standpoint(s) that influence perspectives towards theological education. Pentecostals have an interest in theological education, but specifically a denominational theology that primarily serves the denomination’s interests. The background and interests of the founder(s), also govern the way Pentecostal denominations engage with the ‘outer world’ or the society. In this study,

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4. The author is a member of ZAOGA, was a member of ZAOGA on Campus from 1999-2003 as a student, and there witnessed the discouragements to attend CU and SU by ZOC leadership.
the complex dynamics of Pentecostal perspectives on theological education are unravelled through a critical analysis of the background that influences perceptions and attitudes. The study also unravels the challenges encountered in the process of establishing Pentecostals’ perspectives towards theological education in Africa, and at the same time exposes the seeming contradictions inherent in Pentecostalism with regards to theological education. Methodologically, the study employs many complementary methods of data collection and analysis, including both formal and informal interviews and discussions with members of ZAOGA, those of other Pentecostal churches and those strategically positioned to give their views on theological education. Pastors were especially targeted because they oversee the assemblies and exert a great deal of influence through their teachings; teachings that draw on those of the founder of ZAOGA, Ezekiel Guti.

Key Tenets of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe
The study focuses on the structure of Pentecostalism, and its interaction with other religions, the society and other theological institutions. Through examining key tenets of Pentecostalism, it is possible to assess Pentecostal perspectives on theological education. Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe is hierarchical in nature. The founder is at the apex and is the unquestionable nodal power point who commands authority. This bureaucratic nature often results in dictatorial tendencies by leaders, characterised by authoritarianism and autocracy. The bureaucratic nature of the movement enables the flow of information to and from the founder to the lay people in the church. This is enabled by a host of bishops, overseers, pastors, elders and deacons/nesses in the church. Organisation of events and teachings all emanate from what the founder, as the nodal power point of the whole movement, decrees.

The structure itself allows the founder to maintain a firm grip and control on the entire movement through a host of loyal ‘aides’. This also applies to the institutions that the denomination’s theological institutions are affiliated to. The orbit of the theological thrust of theological education by most Pentecostals in Zimbabwe has a slant towards American Pentecostal theology. ZAOGA theological institution Africa Multi-Nation For Christ College (AMFCC) is affiliated to Friends University of America. AFM is affiliated to Assemblies of God, the world umbrella body of Pentecostals. Although Pentecostal theology is derivable from the bible, it is also largely influenced and shaped by the experiences of the founders’ interaction with North American theological institutions such as Oral Roberts University, and Jimmy Swaggart’s World Evangelism Institute. The implication of aligning with the American Pentecostal belt theologically is that Zimbabwean Pentecostalism bears the marks of, and promotes, North American Pentecostal type of theology. Apart from the influence of North American and other Western theological institutions, the question of religion and culture also comes into play in shaping perspectives and attitudes. All these factors have a bearing on the attitude and perspectives towards theological education in Africa.

The Perspectives: Challenges and Limitations
As noted above, it is a cumbersome task to establish Pentecostal perspectives on theological education in Zimbabwe, mainly because of the variations and complexities that characterise Pentecostalism. Therefore, an attempt is made to establish these perspectives and attitudes while at the same time paying particular attention to the challenges and limitations. Although the perspectives, challenges and limitations of Pentecostalism that are explored here are not exhaustive, they help us in pointing out the Pentecostal perspective and attitudes towards theological education.

To this end, the following are considered: World Council of Churches (WCC) Report, Pentecostal relationship with other denominations and institutions, Africa Multi-Nation For Christ College (AMFCC),
ZAOGA’s biggest and oldest theological institution in Zimbabwe, and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), the umbrella body of Evangelicals (and Pentecostals).

The Report of the WCC
The World Council of Churches (WCC) Report provides a glimpse of Pentecostal attitudes towards the WCC, an ecumenical body bringing together many Christian denominations, that partly sheds light on Pentecostal perspectives towards uniting and working with others. It is the assumption of the study that this attitude towards the WCC spills into the perspective and attitudes towards theological education. One of the primary purposes of fellowship in WCC is “to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharist fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.” The WCC says:

While the WCC has some Pentecostal churches among its members, the vast majority of this quickly growing segment of the global Christian Faith remains outside – and often critical of the WCC fellowship…Pentecostal raised the concerns about the WCC, such as its apparent over-emphasis on a social agenda at the expense of evangelism.

Musasiwa, the national treasurer of the EFZ, confirms the WCC’s report by claiming that the WCC has been extreme in emphasising social issues to the detriment of evangelism, yet at the same time Pentecostals have been on the extreme of over-emphasising evangelism, so there is a need to balance. Yet he argued that the differences between denominations are historical rather than theological because of the realisation that the Christian churches are bound by belief in Jesus and the bible, and that they are glad to see theological convergence in every matter. The attitude of exclusivism and exclusion seems to impact negatively on the quest for unity in the provision of theological education in Africa. This attitude exemplifies Cox’s observation that the church would cease to be part of the common human situation which is marked by imperfections if it is exclusivist and adopts the attitude of pointing fingers. Several authors maintain that the binding factor of religion also provides society with a moral code since morality, as they see it, is largely sanctioned by religion. Therefore, fundamentalist Christians are urged to go beyond a mere study of other religions and prepare themselves to meet with adherents of those faiths, in an encounter of listening and witnessing to each other. This call for acceptance and tolerance is logical against the background of Pentecostal exclusivist claims to theological truths against other Christian denominations and their theological teachings. This theological exclusivism implies that plausible and true theological education is only found within the parameters of Pentecostal dogma. Yet that attitude and perspective is an impediment towards theological unity and the establishment of distinct Christian theological education in Africa (Zimbabwe).

Relationships with Other Denominations and Institutions
Pentecostal relationships with other institutions can be assessed from their teachings. Many Pentecostal preachers have demonised Catholics, Protestants and African Independent Churches. Sometimes, even

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8 World Council of Churches, *From Harare to Port Alegre*, 24-25.
9 Interview between author and Roy Musasiwa, the National Treasurer of Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, 17-02-2012.
10 Interview with Roy Musasiwa, 17-02-2012.
12 Cox, *Changing Beliefs and An Enduring Faith*, 158.
other Pentecostal denominations are criticised as they compete for followers. Pentecostals encourage theological education that is within the confines of Christianity, and Pentecostal dogma specifically. Many ZAOGA preachers claim that Christianity is not a religion but a way of life. Hence the religions of those who are not ‘born again’ qualify to be called religions, because they are not in accordance with the divine will of God. The idea of election by God and ‘being born again’ through believing in Jesus Christ is central to ZAOGA and governs conduct with others. This is the basis for the condemnation of other Christian denominations, which they perceive and judge as erring in their theological teachings.

Another feature of Pentecostals is their emphasis on personal theological education. Personal advancement is highly valued in order to equip the individual in the ‘secular’ world. However, this personal advancement theoretically has to be within the confines of ZAOGA doctrines and ideologies. This means that theological education offered in theological schools and seminaries of other Christian denominations is under-estimated because, by virtue of Pentecostal standards, it is deficient and not adequate, as it is offered by deficient Christians. However, some within Pentecostal circles believe that for effective evangelism there is a need to tolerate and understand others. Islamic teachers are pointed out as people who study the bible, not to nourish and enrich their faith, but in order to criticise Christianity, so Christians have to do the same.

There are serious challenges that emanate from such fragmentation, the approach to other denominations and the theological education they offer. In light of the fragmentation that characterises religious bodies in Zimbabwe, this has repercussions for establishing common perspectives or attitudes towards theological education. The role and place of theological education even in schools becomes an area of contestation if denominations do not unanimously agree on the type of theological education that has to be offered in Africa. To further point out the issues that complicate Pentecostal perspectives on theological education, struggle arises in relation to the issue of divine appointment and religious studies. This observation emanates from the author’s experience as a lecturer in the Religious Studies department at the University of Zimbabwe. The few Pentecostal pastors studying in the department found it difficult to critique Christianity and sacred texts because of the view that it is the word of God – but they found it easier to dismiss other religions as false, including other Christian denominations. It was clear that most of them did not want Religious Studies but wanted Theology, so the difficult time with them was to make it clear what Religious Studies entails and that it is not Theology. Hence Pentecostal pastors (including ZAOGA) faced difficulties in enrolling at the University of Zimbabwe because the churches could not release them for such studies. This is in spite of the fact that some pastors have enrolled with the open and distance learning institution in the country, Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) as opposed to conventional University of Zimbabwe. This shows that Pentecostals absolutise their own denominational perspectives on theological education, where their education is offered primarily to ‘equip’ the believer against ‘false’ teachings. But the reality is that Christians are living in an increasingly pluralistic world. In the Zimbabwean context, Mukonyora confirms the challenge of religious plurality to making policies and decisions at national level. With reference to the proposal to declare Zimbabwe a Christian nation by EFZ in 1999, she points out that the pluralistic religious context means that proposals are criticised by others. This proposal saw the divergent views among Pentecostals, some discrediting the proposal and others advocating the proposal. This sheds light on the diversity of perspectives and differing attitudes, especially

13 This is the view that many ZAOGA preachers espouse; one has to be ‘born again’ by ‘receiving’ Jesus, based on Romans 10:15.
14 General observations made by lecturers in terms of numbers of Pentecostal pastors enrolling with the University of Zimbabwe, Religious Studies Department, compared to Catholic and Protestant pastors, Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy, University of Zimbabwe, 2011-2012.
16 Mukonyora, “Foundations of Democracy in Zimbabwe.”
on issues that infringe on spirituality. The divergence of views helps to show that Pentecostal perspectives towards theological education are not uniform. If we are to present a fair critique of ZAOGA, it has to be emphasised that to establish a Pentecostal view is rather complex and not generalizable.

Below are further examples extracted from various dealings of ZAOGA with others that demonstrate the complexity in establishing a Pentecostal perspective towards theological education.

One ZAOGA pastor expressed concern over university students who were enrolled at Solusi, a Seventh Day Adventist university in the country. She complained that the dietary rules and regulations that they imposed on the students were not biblical, hence they were wrongly indoctrinating their children.17 Another pastor pointed out the indoctrination that takes place at Catholic mission schools. In Zimbabwe, Catholics are sometimes demonised by Pentecostals, especially regarding the use of icons such as the rosary and holy water. This is why, according to many leaders in ZAOGA, Pentecostals need to establish schools and theological institutions – so that their children will not get indoctrinated by ‘heresy’. However, this attitude towards schools and theological institutions of other Christian denominations reinforces the exclusivist stance that is often labelled against Pentecostals and is a challenge and detriment to the establishment of theological education that is ‘shared and supported’ by Christians – a universal theological education. ZAOGA has established schools that include Grange Primary school in Harare, Ezekiel Guti primary school in Mashonaland East province, and is currently raising money from the United States of America to build a university in Bindura, the ‘mythical birth place of the movement’,18 apart from its theological institutions within and outside Zimbabwe.

One ZAOGA pastor reported that Families Builder Ministry (FAMB), founded by Guti in 2007, is not inter-denominational but only for ZAOGA members, as stressed by Guti.19 Guti claims that the ministry was birthed in order to curb the disintegration of families. We need to note the attitude towards inter-denominational unity, probably emanating from the fragmentation of Zimbabwean Pentecostals, despite being under the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), its umbrella body. This attitude, as mentioned earlier, emanates from the puritanical exclusivist stance, the ‘us against them’ attitude that becomes adversarial towards the theological standpoint of others and consequently the larger society.

In addition, Guti and his pastors seem to protect the local cultural systems, and look down upon the dynamics of cultural transformation that have resulted from mingling and cross-cultural exchanges. Guti seems not to accept such exchanges and cultural transformation, and always idealises the past with great nostalgia because the culture of the Shona, imbued with respect and honour, led to the preservation of families and society. Yet, when we advocate theological education in Africa, it is within the framework of religious and cultural transformations in a globalised world. The nostalgia betrays Zimbabwean Pentecostalism’s contradictions, because the traditional religion is demonised and denounced for its lacking the culture of learning to read and write. The views and attitudes of the founders influence believers and shape their perceptions and attitudes toward existential realities in life. Hence we note some contradictions in the attempt to preserve the past and at the same time to transform. It becomes problematic because balancing the two inherently affects perceptions and attitudes towards theological education.

The authoritarian nature of African Pentecostalism affects individual perceptions of theological education. Information and views of the founders are highly regarded. There is a tendency to repress individual creativity and freedom of thought. Thus the founder exerts a great deal of influence that affects and shapes the worldview of believers. This means that many believers simply regurgitate what their leaders, who have become almost like ‘living saints’, say to them. The major problem of working within this Pentecostal frame of reference is that we cannot easily engage with the issues and questions of

17 A ZAOGA pastor teaching at ZAOGA Big Sunday at Marborough District Church, 3.6.2010.
19 A ZAOGA overseer teaching FAMB leaders at Kwekwe, 5-02-2010.
believers. In ZAOGA, during bible study, both the bible and Guti’s books are studied, giving the impression that both are normative and equal in the Christian faith in terms of providing theological education for the followers. Yet the founder might not be a ‘recognized’ authority in other Pentecostal denominations and the Christian community at large.

ZAOGA encourages theological education, defends its theological standpoint and judges others on the basis of morality. However, the question is, who offers the theological education and where? Pentecostals in Zimbabwe have established bible colleges that offer training for pastors and members of the church. Encouraging theological education is not for its own sake, but it is perceived that theological education is necessary in order to ‘equip’ believers against the tide of rising heresies in the world. This follows the adversarial stance that Pentecostals have against other world religions. Other Christian denominations are accused of syncretist tendencies, for example, the Catholics. Hence we learn that Pentecostals value theological education for the purpose of equipping believers to stand against the wiles of worldly heresies but at the same time advancing their own denominational dogma.

The Case of AMFCC: Affiliate of Friends University of America

Pentecostals are strategically positioned to advance the promotion and valuing of theological education in Africa through the theological institutions they run. ZAOGA (Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa) has AMFCC (Africa Multination For Christ College (AMFCC), Harare, Zimbabwe) and another bible college in Chiredzi, Nampula in Mozambique, among others. ZAOGA runs AMFCC, which has extension into provinces and districts all over Zimbabwe. AMFCC blends theological education and religious education through the Bachelor of Arts degree it offers, affiliated to Friends University in America. ZAOGA encourages members to establish libraries, particularly of books that are written by the founder, to counter the African syndrome that desists from reading and writing. The impression is given that when reference to theological education is made in ZAOGA, it is simply in connection with ZAOGA’s theological institutions and its dogma rather than a more broadly imagined picture of theological education within the wider context of Zimbabwe/Africa.

Pentecostals encourage leadership formation. In ZAOGA, everyone has to study and everyone is regarded as a leader. AMFCC evening schools in ZAOGA districts and provinces serve to realise that goal. This is a positive development particularly in the quest to develop theological education and strengthen theological institutions in Africa. However, students at the theological college (since most of them are members of the church) seem to pledge their allegiance to the theological history and dogma of the denomination and oppose criticism of the movement.20 Yet theological institutions seem to be the best places for providing theological education in multi-religious societies, while at the same time promoting mutual understanding and peace. However, this seems to be a farfetched reality in Pentecostal theological education, in view of the emphasis on denominational theology.

That theological education is offered within the matrix of denominational theology and is limited by its links to church doctrine betrays the need to establish a holistic approach to theological education, a theological education that is unanimously shared by a nation or a continent. In light of the above, the question then is: How can Pentecostals “join hands for the training of African theological leadership”? This is not to overlook the positive achievements of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe or Africa as a whole, such as providing education through establishment of schools and institutions of higher learning. The study commends the theological institutions that Pentecostals have established as laying the foundation for strong theological education in Africa, especially considering that they also possess wealth that can be tapped and channelled towards promotion of theological education in Africa. However, the study challenges Pentecostals to broaden their scope regarding theological education in a multi-religious society, and also to

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20 Observation made by the author while helping AMFCC students in writing their theses, 2010-2011.
recognise and acknowledge practically other Christian denominations and their theological institutions in the country.

It is also important to examine briefly the perspective of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), the umbrella body of Pentecostals, towards theological education. ZAOGA is a member of the EFZ and EFZ embodies some of the diverse views of its membership of Evangelical (Pentecostal) denominations.

The Role and Perspective of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe: Theological Unity

The study presupposes that theological unity is the basis for theological education in Africa. We therefore need to examine the role and perspective of the unifying body of Evangelicals in Zimbabwe, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ). In 1999, EFZ, under the presidency of Andrew Wutawunashe, founder of Family of God church, advocated that Zimbabwe should be declared a Christian nation, although this failed. Several Pentecostals criticised the move as painting a negative image of Pentecostals.21 We have to note that in spite of there being an umbrella body of Evangelicals (Pentecostals) in Zimbabwe, Pentecostals are not monolithic but are diverse denominations. The contestation surrounding the idea of declaring Zimbabwe a Christian nation and the question of whether or not Christians should actively involve themselves in politics serve as examples to show the diversity that characterises perspectives and attitudes (on other issues) in Zimbabwean Pentecostalism. This means that the EFZ does not dictate to its members, especially when theological opinions and orientations differ, because EFZ acknowledges the diversity of the evangelical denominations.22 This diversity of perspectives on issues includes perspectives on theological education, and sheds light on the challenges on perspectives on theological education that face the multi-religious and cultural nation of Zimbabwe.

However, Musasiwa argued that EFZ maintains theological unity especially through prayer because prayer is part of education in Africa and no one should despise it. It is prayer, he said, that is largely responsible for the peacefulness in Zimbabwe despite the crisis years that the nation has been undergoing.23 While Musasiwa accepted that there is a great deal of emphasis on denominational achievements among Pentecostals, it was encouraging to see the way that EFZ worked with Catholics and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) to produce the document The Zimbabwe We Want, launched by President Robert Mugabe.24 Despite working together in response to the national challenges that require Christian leaders and organisations to intervene, ‘self-concentration’ by denominations remains a challenge. ‘Self-concentration’ underplays the quest for theological education in the religiously plural context. In spite of ‘self-concentration’, and because of diversity and fragmentation of Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe, we also need to examine if there are positive changes or avenues in Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe that can be positively utilised to influence positive attitudes towards theological education in Africa, transcending denominational boundaries, and based on the unity of the shared Christian confession in Jesus Christ.

Changing Role of Pentecostals

Many people have been critical of the attitude of most Pentecostals in Zimbabwe towards other churches and institutions. For example, ZAOGA discouraged members from attending inter-denominational gatherings, and ZAOGA on Campus (ZOC) leaders at University of Zimbabwe discouraged ZOC members from attending Christian Union (CU).25 However, there are notable positive shifts that seem to promote

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23 Interview with Musasiwa, 17.2.2012.
24 Interview with Musasiwa, 17.2.2012.
25 ZAOGA discourages inter-denominational gatherings. The author was a member of ZOC from 1999-2002 at the
unity and work to the advantage of establishing theological education in Africa from a Pentecostal perspective. Some Pentecostals, as said earlier, are members of WCC and are inclined towards unity with other Christians. As pointed out at the ATISCA conference in Johannesburg, there is a need to follow up with theological institutions in our countries so that they participate in the Association of Theological Institutes in Southern and Central Africa (ATISCA). This is one way of establishing/cultivating relationships that encourage unity in diversity and promote theological education in Africa.

In Zimbabwe, Christian gatherings and events, such as the National Day of Prayer for the Nation, seem to have worked to the advantage of bringing churches, including Pentecostals, together. According to Hollenweger, the church should enter into dialogue with medicine, economics and science, the “principalities and powers in contemporary society, engaging the powers by using their language at the same time correcting them, thus producing responsible syncretism”. This is important as it discourages exclusivism and encourages dialogue with others. The positive role that Pentecostals have played is also manifest in the discourse about gender and religion in Africa in relation to theological education, with the acknowledgement and promotion of women in leadership positions.

Theological Education and Gender: The Question of Female Leadership

An important dimension that Pentecostalism has been appraised on relates to the education and empowerment of women. While the subject is an area of contestation, many scholars agree that Pentecostalism has given space to women. How does the issue of gender affect Pentecostal perspectives on theological education in Africa? It seems the concepts of creativity, collaboration and the spirit of creating links is particularly helpful and fitting to women in leadership roles. Pentecostal attention to issues of gender includes the removal of traditional barriers to female leadership and the exercise of official authority by women in the church’s organisational structures, the emphasis on personal development, and encouraging girl-child education so that girls will have the chance to overcome the ‘myths’ and ‘misconceptions’ that prevent them from becoming the ‘highfliers’ of society’. Pentecostals in Zimbabwe have set standards for the leadership of women.

ZAOGA has a host of female overseers, pastors, elders and deaconesses, both in local churches and those further afield. Guti has always encouraged members to go to school and develop themselves. The challenges that Zimbabwe has been undergoing, especially economic challenges, seem to have led to the shift, emphasising the economic empowerment of women. Thus theological education responds to the economic, social and cultural challenges, although it is within the framework of ZAOGA’s teachings. The promotion of education in general is a positive step for the promotion of theological education among women who, apart from constituting large numbers in the church, have enormously contributed to the welfare and well-being of the church in Africa.

Conclusion

Pentecostal attitudes towards theological education defy generalisations. Pentecostals exhibit different perspectives on different levels concerning several issues and this extends to perspectives and attitudes toward theological education in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, theological education has to be understood in
terms of cultural settings that are dynamic and changing, and which affect the representation of religion.\textsuperscript{29} The co-presence of many cultures in Zimbabwe makes Pentecostals suspicious of what is referred to as ‘theological education’. Given the multi-cultural and multi-religious societies that characterise the African landscape, complex challenges abound in relation to establishing perspectives on theological education. Therefore, establishing what are Pentecostal perspectives on theological education in Zimbabwe is quite complex.

This emanates from the fact that theological perspectives are largely dependent on the theological standpoint of an adherent of a specific religious tradition. While ZAOGA promotes theological education, they seem to be selective, accepting a certain kind of exclusivist theological education; the very thing that prevents the church from fully interacting with other theological institutions. Pentecostals are selective in their interaction with other theological institutions, hence the call to cultivate an inter-faith philosophy that promotes the unity in diversity of theological education in Africa. However, we note the paradigm shift that they have displayed. Many Pentecostals seem to be aware of the growing need to partner as Christian communities. This is a positive move in the quest to establish theological education in Africa. The EFZ and the National Days of Prayer seem to have cultivated a sense of belonging to the Christian community in Zimbabwe. The emphasis on the bible, evangelism of all, and the need to devote time in searching the scriptures are all positive developments that strategically place Pentecostals on the roadmap to prioritising theological education.

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Interview

The author had a formal interview with Reverend Roy Musasiwa, the National Treasurer of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe on 17/02/2012 at Domboshava Theological College, Harare.

\textsuperscript{29} Erricker, “A Critical Review of Spiritual Education,” 27.
Introduction
This article discusses briefly theological training in African Independent Churches (AICs) in East Africa. It explores the historical methods of theological training within AICs, and gives the current and future direction of training.

The Organization of African Instituted Churches
The Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) is an association of AICs that was founded in Cairo in 1978. The International Headquarters of the OAIC is located in Nairobi, Kenya. It works in seven African Regions: East Africa, Southern Africa, Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of Congo, West Africa Francophone, West Africa Anglophone and Nigeria. These Regions are represented on the governing body, the General Assembly, and on the Executive Committee, which meets annually. At country level, OAIC works through Chapters.

The OAIC has programmes in theological education, livelihoods and food security, HIV and AIDS, women’s empowerment, Just Communities and research. The OAIC is an associate member of All African Conference of Churches and is recognized as an Ecumenical Body in working relationship with the World Council of Churches. It is also a member of the World Conference of Religions and Peace, and the Conference of Christian World Communions.

Historical Methods of Training in African Independent Churches
In discussions and interactions with leaders and elders of AICs it is self-evident that their expression of spirituality and teaching of Christian faith is similar. The act of worship and faith is an expression of their cultural context. Thus, the leaders are trained theologically on how to use traditional stories, proverbs and rituals. Historically, various methods were utilised in AICs training.

The first method through which training was done in AICs and even in some up to the present time is apprenticeship or mentorship. In this method the leader of the church automatically becomes the tutor or trainer of the personnel. Although, there was no understanding how such a leader got trained it is obvious that it was through oral tradition method which at its best required listening and doing. In this method knowledge is handed down by word and not by documents or reference books. Consequently, no documentation of information was done.

The second method of training was by occasional meetings-cum-seminars which were arranged for any person, who demonstrated mastery in mass communication and acceptance by the congregation. In this understanding charisma was preferred more as a qualification for training. For example someone who was well versed in mastery of traditional stories and proverbs was qualified for leadership and preaching. Such

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1 The terms African Independent Churches and African Instituted Churches are used interchangeably within this article.
2 Unpublished OAIC report by Rev. Samuel A. Mohono the pioneer General Secretary, 1985 slightly modified.
a person could use many stories and proverbs to illustrate the Bible text which one had chosen to preach about in order to bring the point home.

Thirdly, in some AICs, training is done through weekly sessions on a given course/subject and the candidates are given certificates of participation after successful completion. For example stewardship is picked as a course to be done for a week of candidate’s facilitator/tutor learning contact and at the end of the contact period they receive certificates for that course.

Since the 1970s a number of AICs have trained and continue to train a few candidates in theological institutions sponsored by the established churches. It is important to note that by early 1980s, out of more than 200 AICs registered in Kenya with the registrar of societies, only eight (though admittedly most of the bigger ones) were members of the National Council of churches of Kenya (NCCK). These theological institutions according to former students and leaders are listed below:

1. St. Philips Maseno – Anglican
2. St. Paul’s Kapsabet – Anglican
3. Berea Theological College – Anglican
4. Kima International School of Theology – Church of God in EA originating form Anderson Indiana USA
5. St. Andrews Theological College Kabare – Anglican
6. Makumira University College – Lutheran (Tanzania)
7. Moffat Theological College – African Inland Church
8. Scott’s Theological College – African Inland Church

In Uganda, AICs used to train their personnel in Pentecostal learning institutions. The Tanzania churches were able to access training in Kenya though in very few numbers through mother churches. Internally, AICs in Tanzania trained in Pentecostal and evangelical sponsored institutions.

**AICs and OAIC Theological Education by Extension**

A key objective of the founding meeting of the OAIC in Cairo was training and theological education for AICs. Hence, the first OAIC programme to begin was Theological Education by Extension (TEE). TEE, however, came as the second option, after the funding proposal for a theological institution for AICs sent to WCC was rejected in favour of TEE. Thus, the OAIC’s development of a TEE methodology for AICs was necessitated by the decision of the WCC in favour of this model of theological training – a model that fell short of AIC leaders’ aspirations for a residential training institution. This situation reflects the high OAIC’s dependence at that time on overseas funding by ecumenical partners. By 1980 the United Presbyterian (USA) had provided the OAIC with TEE programmers with experience in Chile, the Rev. Agustin and Mrs. Rosario Battle.

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3 In Kenya, the National Council of Churches of Kenya for many years ran a programme (now discontinued) for subsidising tuition fees for AIC candidates at St. Paul’s United Theological College, Limuru (now St Paul’s University), Carlile Theological College (Anglican, Church Army) and the Kenya Methodist University.

4 The eight were the African Brotherhood Church, African Christian Church and Schools, African Israel Nineveh Church, African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa, African Interior Church, and African Church of the Holy Spirit, Episcopal Church of Africa, and National Independent Church of Africa. NCCK: Report to the General Assembly, 5th – 8th July 1983.


6 The rejection of the request for institutional training was on the grounds of expense and in the belief that even at that time there were more than enough residential theological institutions in Africa – a typical mainline church mind-set.

As already noted, theological education among AICs has been traditionally conducted through informal methods at a larger extent. Indeed, very little AIC theology has been recorded, or even clearly articulated. To suit this context, Rev. Agustin Battle developed OAIC/TEE methodology from Freirean principles of adult education and conscientization. Battle’s role as the TEE facilitator was to build the ability of church leaders and members to think theologically, to articulate their theology, to understand the ministry of the church, and to live out more fully their faith and calling as Christians and as church leaders.

OAIC/TEE was on three levels. The first level targeted Christians at the congregational level. The second level targeted the clergy. The third level targeted the top leadership. The facilitators soon learnt the unwillingness of most senior church leaders to sit in the same seminar as their pastors. AIC members who had already received theological or biblical training in conventional theological institutions were invited to Nairobi for a period of three months to study the Kenyan model, learn its educational philosophy and methodology, write a TEE text in their mother tongue, and plan for the introduction of the programme back in their own denominations and home countries. They became Trainer of Trainers (TOTs). In this way and on a minimal budget OAIC/TEE was introduced into Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroun, Madagascar, DRC, South Africa and Botswana.

Since the mid-1990s there has been a conscious shift in OAIC/TEE towards the training of church ministers at a higher level and a search for accreditation. It was envisaged that the trained ministers would in turn facilitate TEE in their respective churches, something that initially proved difficult, but after making TEE methodology a core course in the ministerial training with assignment requirement to start TEE classes, it seems working.

From 2000 a number of AICs have attempted to start theology training programmes. The OAIC Programme for Theology and Ministerial Formation accompanies them to advice on curriculum and monitor adherence on the same. However, most of these churches have been struggling with registration of their institution with respective countries ministries of education or the equivalent departments mandated to vet and register institutions of learning.

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8 Taken from OAIC, ‘Facilitating AICs to Articulate their Theologies in the global Context: A Concept Paper for the OAIC Department of Theology’, 2004/5, 3.

9 “Facilitating AICs”, 3.
The emergence of African Independent Churches (AICs) on the religious terrain of Africa has added a veritable dimension to African Christianity. John Pobee and Ositelu affirm this fact that “There is no way we can talk of world Christianity, much less Christianity in Africa, without taking account of this genre of AICs.”¹ Despite the importance of the AICs in Christianity, many scholars find it difficult to understand them. Finding the uniqueness of the AICs has even been a tug of war among scholars. They are popularly known as **African Independent Churches** because most of their leaders seceded from Churches founded by missionaries from the West. Through their independency they are able to introduce new phenomena in African Christianity without seeking approval from a mother church outside of the continent. Some scholars, whilst not doubting the level of independency in the AICs, hesitate using the word “independent” to refer to them. They rather prefer using “initiative” to describe the uniqueness of the AICs.² No matter how one looks at the struggle to find a common generic uniqueness, it is clear that the AICs, unlike, other genres of Christian communions in Africa, have unlimited levels of independence. They are not concerned, in the words of Desmond Tutu, “to maintain standards which Cambridge or Harvard or Montpelier have set, even when these are utterly inappropriate…”³ The initiatives of the AICs can be better appreciated when put in the context of their independent nature.

Many attempts have also been made to define the AICs. The most popular definition of an African Independent Church has been “a church which has been founded in Africa, by Africans and primarily for Africans.”⁴ Whilst this definition was true at the beginning of the 20th Century, it is no longer appropriate if one considers the fact that AICs have planted many congregations in many continents.⁵ Certainly, members of the African Independent Church congregations outside of Africa are not only Africans. African Independent Churches have, therefore, been defined as: “congregations and or denominations planted, led, administered, supported, propagated, motivated and funded by Africans for the purpose of propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ and worshipping the Triune God in the context and worldview of Africa and Africans.”⁶ This definition encompasses a large section of Christians in Africa so they have been categorised into three groups – Conservative AICs (also known as Classical AICs), Reformed AICs, and Charismatic AICs⁷ This article is about the first two categories of AICs.

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5 The Celestial Church of Christ, an AIC which was originally founded in the Republic of Benin, has congregations in Nigeria, USA, Canada, U.K., France, Italy, Spain, Austria, Netherlands, India, Republic of Ireland, Ghana, Guinea, Togo, and South Africa. See http://www.celestialchurch.com
7 Thomas Oduro, *Christ Holy Church*, 18-20. The third category of AICs does not regard themselves as AICs but they are, in reality.
**AICs’ Concept of Theology**

African Independent Churches have a broad concept of theology. Theology, to the AICs, is not a systematic documentation of doctrines and praxis. Theology does not need an ecclesial acceptance by a group of churches, for the theology to be practiced. AICs do not make a difference between secular and sacred beliefs. To them, every belief is sacred. They do not affirm any definition of theology – whether universally accepted or unknown. To put it in a Pauline epistemology, “In him we live and move and have our being…” (Acts 17:28) is the summary of AIC theology. Theology, to the AICs, includes every aspect of life. Everything in human beings and outside of humanity is theological.

In fact AICs do not look up to a group of trained clergy or scholars to formulate and articulate what they consider as theology for them. Technically speaking, AICs do not have persons whom they regard as repositories of theology. They agree with Stone and Duke that “All Christians are theologians. It’s not that they were born that way or decided one day to go into theology. It’s a simple fact of Christian life; their faith makes them theologians, whether they know it or not, and it calls them to become the best theologians they can be.”

**Sources of AIC Theology**

The theology of African Independent Churches is drawn from four sources. The first source is the Bible. Leaders and members of AICs do not doubt the credibility of the Bible. They have a high regard of the Bible as the Word of God. One may call them fundamentalists. As such they believe whatever the Bible enjoins. Philip Jenkins records an AIC perception of the Bible.

> We read the Bible as a book that comes from God and we take every word in the Bible seriously. Some people will say that we are therefore fundamentalists. We do not know whether this word applies to us or not but we are not interested in any interpretation of the Bible that softens or waters down the message. We do not have the same problems about the Bible as white people have with their scientific mentality.”

AICs regard the contents of both the Old and New Testaments as equally valid at all times. Most AICs, as a result, hardly regard the doctrine of gradual revelation of God as anything to pay attention to let alone cherish it. Consequently, many AICs observe the dietary restrictions and holiness codes in the Pentateuch. The International Pentecostal Church in South Africa, for instance, prohibits her members from eating pork. Women in their menstrual periods are not allowed to worship in congregations of the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim, a Nigerian AIC with congregations in other West African countries, Europe, Asia, and North America. The Musama Disco Christo Church (M.D.C.C), one of the largest AICs in Ghana, uses the blood of animals for atonement during the church’s annual Peace Festival. Some AICs regard angels in high esteem. Many find solace in the imprecatory Psalms; they perceive the psalms as divine arsenals for spiritual warfare. Once AICs read something in the Bible, they do not hesitate to obey.

The second source of theology for African Independent Churches is the Holy Spirit. AICs are passionate about the Holy Spirit. They are, therefore, variously and popularly called Spiritual Churches in Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya. Prophet Jehu Appiah, a leader of the MDCC, comparing AICs to western mission-founded churches, asserts, “Politically, we are the harmless; economically, we are feeble; socially, we are

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
down trodden; spiritually, we are more than giants.”

Many leaders and members of AICs claim that the Holy Spirit reveals as aspect of Christian theology to them. With the belief that the Holy Spirit is part of the Triune God, they accept whatever they claim to have been revealed to them by the Holy Spirit.

The third source of theology for AICs is African Traditional Religion. AICs integrate the theology of African Traditional Religion to Christian theology. Every African is God-oriented. Among the Akans of Ghana, it is a common saying that “no one teaches a child about the existence of God.” Many Africans imbibe the main features of African traditional theology – belief in God, the reality of evil, belief in ancestral spirits, belief in supernatural entities and lesser deities, life after death – from infancy. Leaders and members of AICs do not throw away such beliefs. Adding African traditional beliefs to that of Christianity enlarges the theological scope of AICs. As the theology of African Traditional Religion is not documented so is a greater part of AIC theology not documented. All this adds up to the complexity of having a clear and concise understanding of the beliefs and practices of AICs.

The fourth source of AIC theology is from their own experiences or encounter with God. Since in the AICs everyone is a theologian, everyone is allowed to use his or her encounter with God to form the basis of a theological formulation. The religious experiences of some leaders that led to the establishment of African Independent Churches are popularly called “Founders’ Vision” in the Organisation of African Instituted Churches (OAIC), a continental umbrella organisation for African Independent Churches. The Founders’ vision is usually incorporated into the core beliefs and practices of specific AICs; they are simply, inseparable.

The dilemma of AICs

The lack of understanding of AIC theology coupled with their unbridled scope and use of independence and initiative, particularly, in their desire to worship the Triune God in the context and worldview of Africans and Africa, have made many non-AIC Christians to speculate the nature of AIC Christianity. The strangeness and bizarre nature of some of their practices have given credibility to the convictions of some non-AIC church leaders and scholars that AICs’ claim to Christianity and adherence to Christian theology are not justifiable. Consequently some of the practices of AICs have been condemned as “unchristian.”

Another aspect of the dilemma is about the relationship between AICs and some western mission-founded churches. Leaders of many western mission-founded churches did not take the religious experiences of some AIC leaders seriously. In fact many AIC leaders were excommunicated from western mission-founded churches for expressing and practicing some beliefs and practices considered being “abnormal” to the tradition of the western mission-founded churches. Even the mammoth growth of most AICs, was derided by some members of the western mission-founded churches as a result of “sheep stealing”, i.e. snatching members of other churches to populate a church. AICs have been poorly perceived by non-AIC Christians. Ratovonarivo, former Vice Chairman of the OAIC and a Madagascan AIC leader, vividly describes how AICs have been perceived:

There was a time (and even today) when it was taught in the Established Churches that the Independent Churches are sects, Dissident churches, churches of ill-disciplined people, and therefore it was necessary to be

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careful not to mix with these churches; if these lost sheep want to return to the fold, let them repent and rid themselves of their dirty linen of independency.\textsuperscript{13}

The Roman Catholic Church of Ghana, alarmed at the rate at which their members were defecting to African Independent Churches, conducted a survey of Churches in Ghana in 1971. Whilst sampling opinions about the AICs, “One parish priest qualified Catholics who joined [the AICs] as rotten Catholics, he was sure the leaders played all kinds of tricks and were deceiving people.”\textsuperscript{14}

All these factors led to a sour relationship between African Independent Churches and western mission-founded churches. Consequently, many leaders and members of AICs became objects of intense persecution\textsuperscript{15} – a situation that still exists, though not as serious as it used to be in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The history of Christianity in Africa is, therefore, replete with numerous instances of persecution of AICs. The persecution of the AICs led to their marginalisation in many respects but the AIC leaders have been undaunted.

One area where AICs have suffered greatly in the hands of non-AICs as a result of their persecution and marginalisation is that of theological education. Many AIC leaders and members were initially deprived of the privilege of studying Christian theology in Bible Colleges and Seminaries established by western mission-founded churches. Many AIC leaders and members, therefore, did not receive theological education in traditional Bible schools. AIC leaders and members who were privileged to be enrolled in such establishments were either perceived as objects of proselytism or objects of evangelism because of the fact that they were not regarded as Christians enough.

Ironically, some AIC members who were able to brave the storm at western mission-founded Bible schools seceded from their churches after graduation. John Padwick attributes three reasons to such secessions: First, western mission-founded schools stress formal education whilst AIC leaders stress experience and the gifts of the Spirit. Second, The colleges produce “graduates” who are designed to fit into the modern formal sector, receiving regular salaries (i.e. church structures originating from abroad) whilst AICs, who are strongly egalitarian, are focused on the grassroots, paying very little allowances to their pastors. Third, the colleges expect their graduates to make it into the world, whilst ACIs expect their pastors to build and sustain grassroots communities.\textsuperscript{16} In essence, Bible colleges and seminaries of western mission-founded churches have value systems that are at variance with that of the AICs.

Various forms of theological education in AICs

To the AICs, theological education is a broad venture which can be done at any level; it cancels all laid down regulations as to who is qualified and what the resources should be. The goal of theological education, to the AICs, is to make theology relevant and to propel African Christians to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a context that is readily acceptable, meaningful, and applicable – thus, yielding bountiful results. With this in mind, AIC leaders have been impervious of their marginalisation in theological education by the wider church. They have ingeniously used a variety of pedagogies while keeping the traditional pedagogies of western mission-founded churches to entrench theological education

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\textsuperscript{13} Rev. Dr. Ratovonarivo, “The Independent Churches in Madagascar” in Sam Babs Mala (ed), \textit{African Independent Churches in the 80s} (Lagos: Gilbert, Grace and Gabriel Associates, 1983), 52.
\textsuperscript{15} See for example, C. G. Baëta, \textit{Prophetism in Ghana}, 26-60, 72-88.
\textsuperscript{16} John Padwick, \textit{Facilitating African Instituted Churches to Articulate Their Theologies in the Global Context}, an unpublished TEE Concept Paper for the OAIC Department of Theology @ the library of the OAIC, 00505 Ngong road, Nairobi, Kenya.
in their members. Some of the pedagogies will be discussed. I have categorised them into four – (1) theological education by the laity, (2) theological education by the clergy, (3) traditional theological education, and (4) Theological Education by Extension. In all these forms of theological education, vernacularisation has been a major medium of communication and instruction where necessary.

**Theological Education by the Laity**

Among African Independent Churches, theological education is the duty of all; it is not left to a few selected people to teach others; each person is a teacher and a learner as well. The laity as well as the clergy play major roles in theological education. In this section we would discuss some pedagogies of theological education by the laity.

**Hymnody/Songs/Choruses**

The AICs have enriched Christian theology through the composition of their own hymns, songs and choruses. Most of them have drifted away from using western hymnody, which most at times, are written in theological languages that are very difficult for those who are not highly educated to comprehend. Leaders and members of AICs use their religious experiences, personal encounters with God, and how they perceive God in creation and the environment to articulate their theology in hymns, songs, and choruses. The lyrics of the hymns/songs/choruses composed by AICs are usually in the vernacular so they sing Christian theology with meaning and attitude. They bring new and fresh dimensions in Christian theology.

The followers of William Wade Harris, a distinguished AIC forerunner in West Africa, transformed various traditional genres of music into praise songs to God.

In the years following Harrist’s swift passage throughout southern Cote d’Ivoire, and continuing right up to the present day, composers within the Harrist movement have written thousands of hymns exploring new themes and developing additional musical styles as they learned to read the Scriptures and grew in Christian understanding. Some of these hymns tell Bible stories… other texts function as prayers, mini-sermons, and confession of faith – all set to music by members of the church, for the church, and in a language that the church can well understand.17

AICs sing their beliefs about God, Jesus Christ, sin, salvation, and every aspect of Christian theology. They sing their own hymns, songs, choruses at homes, on their farms, in the forests, while crossing rivers, in the kitchen and in fact, wherever they find themselves. The theology in songs/choruses facilitates prayer and fasting. It builds faith. It is no wonder that “The Kimbanguist Church [an AIC] is a singing community. In songs their theology is embedded and articulated, not in treatise nor in propositional terms.”18 AICs are not inhibited in any way to teach theology through music and songs. As they sing the songs, they educate their colleagues on Christian theology.

**Testimonies**

Many AICs, when they meet to worship, make their members to stand before the congregation to testify about what the Lord has done for them. The members are given the freedom to express themselves in their

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18 Marie-Louise Martin, “Perspectives from an African Christian Independency” in J. S. Pobee and J. N. Pobee (eds), *Theological Education in Africa: Quo Vadimus?* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1990), 19. The Kimbanguist Church is officially known in English language is, The Church of Jesus Christ on Earth through the Prophet Simon Kimbangu. In French language, it is *Eglisé de Jesus Christ sur la terre par le prophéte Simon Kimbangu* (EJCSK).
vernacular about God’s goodness to them and the lessons they have learned from their experiences with God. They are, therefore, not intimidated in any way to testify about their knowledge about God. The members, when testifying, articulate their experience with God with convictions. That way, they inadvertently teach the audience their own concept of Christian theology. In Christ Holy Church International, an AIC in West Africa, the ministers comment on the testimonies of the members every Sunday. The ministers, in their commentaries, emphasize some theological points from the testimonies and draw the attention of the members to the points. The comments by the ministers serve as an endorsement of the theology the members have taught their fellow members.

Visions/trances/voices/Prophecies

The experience of Apostle Peter in the tenth chapter of Acts of the Apostles has also been the experience of many members and leaders of African Independent Churches. Being in trances, seeing visions and hearing voices presumed to be prophetic have been common pneumatological phenomena in African Independent Churches. Many prayers in AICs do not end after saying AMEN. Members are asked to say what they saw or heard during the prayer. Some narrate a vision whilst others tell of a prophetic voice. The visions and prophetic voices are interpreted in a theological language to the hearing of all. It is common in many AICs to diagnose a disease and prescribe a cure. Both the diagnosis and prescription are, more often than not, revealed through either visions or a prophetic voice. The effectiveness of the diagnosis and the efficacy of the prescription either add more knowledge to one’s perception of the Triune God or emphasizes a theology one has been taught officially. This is a pedagogy which even some of the AICs are not aware of yet very effective.

Theological Education by the Clergy

AIC leaders have various ways of educating their members theologically. The commonest is through preaching and teaching. Apart from preaching and teaching, they use many other methods that are not common in most non-AIC congregations. Some which are going to be highlighted are:

Founders’ Vision

The commonest theological education used by AIC leaders is that of the Founders’ vision which has already been defined in this article. After having been overwhelmed with their encounters with God – encounters that made them leave everything and everybody to follow Christ – they entrench that experience in the minds and lifestyles of their members. It is, therefore, common to see members of an AIC bubbling with the knowledge of God which is based on what their leaders (founders) encountered when they were called. Pedagogically, the leaders impart their vision to the members through preaching, conversation, counseling, and teaching.

Discipleship (Elijah-Elisha mode)

Following the footsteps of Jesus Christ, AIC leaders use discipleship as a means of training some members of their congregations. The leaders select some members whom they consider as prospective ministers. At times some of the members who feel called submit themselves to the leaders to be trained. The trainees physically leave their relatives, children, spouses, businesses and fellowships to be with the leader for some unspecified period. They follow the leaders, observe them, hear them, and in some cases serve them till

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19 A lady, giving a testimony at a Sunday service at a congregation of Christ Holy Church International in Accra, Ghana, on 21 August 2011, described Jesus Christ as the original designer of her life. She stressed that “no one can alter what Jesus Christ has already designed.”

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
when the leaders graduate them by ordaining them. This sort of theological education makes the disciples prototypes of the leader, thus, carrying out the vision of the leader and keeping the status quo in the church.

Symbolism
Another common means of theological education in African Independent Churches is the use of symbols. There are numerous symbols in AICs, some of which are – water, white garments, prayer gowns, colours, flags, turbans, sashes, crucifixes, iron staff, wooden rods, incense, candles, rings, sand, and many others. Each symbol is interpreted in a theological context that helps members to have a better understanding of the Triune God. For instance, Many AICs use the name of Jesus Christ to pray over ordinary water and use it as a therapy in many aspects of life. Prophetess Agnes Okoh, the woman through whom God used to establish Christ Holy Church International, blessed two streams in eastern Nigeria – Nkissi and Olo Ogwashi – to heal thousands of people. The efficacy of blessed water and streams give AICs much credence and pragmatic understanding of the immense power in Jesus’ name as stated in Philippians 2:9-11.

Parables
Africans are endowed with pithy statements, maxims, adages, idiomatic expressions, proverbs and parables. AIC leaders use all these to impart theological lessons to their members. Mdliwamafa Mloyisa (Isaiah) Shembe, the founder of the Nazareth Baptist Church, popularly known as AmaNazaretha, was noted for using parables as a method of theological education in his church which is the largest AIC amongst the Zulu. Shembe’s “Parable of the Servant of Sorrow” and “The Parable of Two Sons” are classic, insightful and innovative manner of theological education. The former is an exposition of the sorrow of God over the sinful lifestyles of Christians. The latter is about the omnipresence and omniscience of God.

Periodic Theological Education
AIC leaders, being aware of their freedom to do what would benefit them, organizes periodic seminars, workshops and conferences for their ministers, members and auxiliary groups. The seminars, workshops, and conferences are organized as and when the need arises. The leaders, most of the time, are the teachers at such gatherings. They, however, seek the assistance of other Christians when they realise that they lack the knowledge to teach the selected topics effectively.

Traditional Theological Education Methods
African Independent Churches have not discarded the traditional methods of theological education that was brought to Africa from the west, though they consider them as expensive means of teaching. These methods, therefore, are the preserve for AICs who can afford. It must be stated, however, that most AICs that use the western traditional methods do so in collaboration with either some scholars or some churches or mission agencies. Three of the traditional methods will be highlighted are:

20 Thomas Oduro, Christ Holy Church International, 89-91.
Sunday School teaching

Writing and publishing Sunday School study manual is an arduous task for many African Independent Churches. Even training people to teach the study manual adds another herculean hurdle to the task. Nevertheless, some AICs have accepted the challenge and have been using this traditional means of theological education to teach their members. One of such AICs is the Christ Holy Church International who in 1998 contacted a lecturer from the Good News Theological College and Seminary to teach some selected members on the dynamics of writing Sunday School Manuals and also how to teach adult Sunday School. Christ Holy Church International has since 2000 published her own Sunday School study manuals. Leaders of the church identify the needs of the church and commissions the Sunday School manual writers to put the needs in theological language and flair for the members to study on Sundays mornings and Tuesday evenings.

Institutional Theological Education

Theological education that goes on in Bible schools, colleges, institutes, and theological seminaries is one that was introduced from the west to Africa, south of the Sahara. Buying land, building structures, employing lecturers and other staff, and developing a resourceful library are capital intensive ventures. Many African Independent Churches cannot afford undertaking such ventures considering the poverty levels of their leaders and members. Those who have dared taking that kind of theological education on a solo effort have faced numerous challenges, some of which have been stated by Sam Babs Mala:

As of now, none of these seminaries are well-developed, fully-equipped and adequately staffed to cater for the demands of the members. All the seminaries merged together cannot qualitatively match any of the seminaries of the mission churches, in terms of physical structures, library facilities, staff and curriculum. Unfortunately, even the curriculum is the imported one. No one is making an effort to interpret, indigenize and contextualize it to suit the needs for future developments of AICs.23

It is for these reasons that AICs have devised numerous innovative ways of theological education. Nevertheless, some AICs still treasure theological education in Bible schools, Institutes, and Seminaries; they have, as a result, established such institutions. One of the early AIC theological institutions in Africa was established by the Kimbanguist church. Shortly after the church has been legalised by the Government of the then Zaire, a pastoral was established at N’Kamba, the headquarters of the church, in 1962. The church continued to build three theological institutions – Ecole de Théologie Kimbanguiste in Kinshasa from 1970-1975, Ecole Supérieure de Théologie in Kinshasa-Lutende built between 1976 and 1981; Faculté de Théologie with three cycles: Graduate 3 years, Licence 2 years, Doctoral studies.24

The Good News Theological College and Seminary (GNTCS) in Accra, Ghana, is another example of an institutional theological seminary for African Independent Churches. GNTCS is an interdenominational theological institution that was established in 1971 through the vision and initiative of the Mennonite Mission Board which was represented by a couple – Edwin and Irene Weaver. They were assisted by AIC leaders and congregations, and church leaders and scholars from western mission-founded churches. The seminary was established not only to offer theological education to leaders and members of African Independent Churches but to also document the histories and religious experiences of AIC leaders and serve as a bridge of understanding between AICs and western mission-founded churches. These are

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Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
fundamental reasons for establishing the Good News Theological College and Seminary. Thirty-nine
years down the line, GNTCS, a tertiary institution which is accredited by the Government of Ghana, has
trained over a thousand AIC leaders and members from more than six African countries.

**Theological Education by Extension (TEE)**

Theological Education by Extension (TEE) is another formal form of education that is known to AICs. Under this system, some people are selected, trained to be either text-writers/facilitators, and or teachers. TEE Centers are set up in many places so the learners need not travel to far destinations to study. Facilitators coordinate the study by traveling to the various centres. Leaders of the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) adopted the use of TEE to teach AICs in 1978. After constituting a committee to manage the program at a continental level in 1978 in Cairo, Egypt the program got underway in 1980 under the auspices of the OAIC.

Response to the TEE program was massive. More than a thousand people benefited from it in Kenya alone, within the first two years of the program. TEE study materials were translated, upon request, into French, Malagasy, Chichewa, Yoruba and many other African languages and were taught in member-countries of the OAIC. Study Centers with resource books between 100 and 150, dubbed ‘Mini libraries’ were initially set up in Kenya and Malawi. The training of TEE Text writers and instructors were done in earnest. The trainees were drawn from other African countries. “From the very beginning this TEE programme has been very well received. The participants of the different Independent churches we have been collaborating with have been repeating ‘This is what our churches have needed for a long time.’”

Theological Education by Extension is a useful form of educating both the clergy and laity since learners study in a relaxed manner. It was not until the Central American expatriate couple who directed the program had left, and the donors began dragging their feet did AICs realise the enormous amount of money needed to run the program. The continued training of facilitators, text writers and the writing of text have virtually come to a halt. Coordinating the various centers, payment of appreciable remuneration for the facilitators and text writers have become a big challenge to those who are still holding on to the program.

**Conclusion**

The varied ways of teaching theology in African Independent Churches have helped not only the AICs but also the worldwide Christian community. AICs have been the trailblazers of enhanced theology in Christianity; they AICs have enhanced the theological landscape of Christianity in Africa. Apart from devising innovative ways of teaching and doing theology, they have expanded Christian theology to unprecedented levels. This is easily perceived when one compares the theology of Christianity in the pre-AIC era to present-day Christian theology in Africa – even in the churches that were planted by western missionaries. The AICs, themselves, are presently rich in Christian theology since they are not restricted to any laid down theological formulas or creedal statements. Both Churches that were planted by western missionaries in Africa and Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in Africa have all benefitted from AIC theologies. The AICs, by their actions, have shown other African Christians leaders not to be bogged down by pedagogies that have been handed down to them by western missionaries and their mother churches; they are to make use of all kinds of pedagogies to educate Christians.

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(40) THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE
AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES IN BOTSWANA

Obed Kealotswe

Literature Review on Ministerial training in African Independent Churches

In order to understand ministerial training in the AICs in Botswana, one has to examine the general picture of ministerial training in the African Independent Churches (AICs) as a southern African and African phenomenon. In addition, one has to examine closely the Botswana context. This context has been well discussed by Chirenje1 when his thesis was to find out how the AICs managed to penetrate the strong traditional structures of Botswana which were dominated by the London Missionary Society (LMS). The second clue to ministerial training in the AICs in Botswana is found from Boschman 2 where he discusses conflicts between the Tswana Chiefs, the colonial government and the AICs. According to Chirenje, the first Ethiopians, Siele and Mareko, who visited the Bangwaketsi, were well trained evangelists who disguised themselves as educationists who wanted to improve the standard of education amongst the Bangwaketsi and the Batswana in general. The first independent church which was founded by Mothowagae Motlogelwa in 1902 was started by a well trained LMS minister who disagreed with the LMS. His dissatisfaction with the LMS was more of the Ethiopian type of AICs than the Zionist. He was more concerned with administrative and power struggles with the missionaries. The outstanding new thing which happened was when in 1908 Sencho Legong appeared amongst the Bangwaketsi, and then proceeded to the Bakwena and the Bangwato. Sencho Legong was an uneducated prophet who claimed to be Jesus Christ. He could be classified as an indigenous prophet because he was anti-Christianity. He asked the Bangwaketsi to burn their hymnbooks and Bibles. He promised the people that there would be plenty of rain which would fill the hilltops. Many people were impressed by these teachings and amongst the Bakwena, Sencho was given herds of cattle and even given a wife. The point that should be noted here is that the traditional understanding of training for the ministry as conceived by the LMS and other missionary founded churches in Botswana was completely challenged. The Batswana are used to prophecies which were made by their prophets even before the concept of biblical prophecy was introduced to them by the missionaries. The gift of prophecy was not anything new to the Batswana. They had heard prophecies before Christianity. Such prophecies were made by people with special gifts from God and the ancestors such as the various types of the dingaka traditional healers, and sangomas spirit mediums. A ngaka or a sangoma is always a divinely trained and not academically trained person. If people do some researches on how divination is done and on how the ditaola or divining bones are used, that academic knowledge cannot make one a diviner or a ngaka. A ngaka divines with guidance from the spirits which are referred to as badimo, ancestors and all the other variations of the term in many African languages. The appeal to the traditional cultures of the different Batswana tribes and nationalities is what Chirenje found as the major factor which made the AICs to penetrate Botswana. This is the context within which ministerial training in the AICs should be understood.

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Historically, from the studies of Bengt Sundkler, David Barrett, many founders of the AICs, especially those which were classified as Ethiopian, were theologically trained leaders in the western sense of theological education. But as time went on, for them to meet the needs of the Africans, they adopted the Zionist style. The Zionists who emerged from the Pentecostals with an American influence, Sundkler believe in divine leadership with prophecy. Leadership has been inherited right from the beginning of the AICs in South Africa and their spread to Botswana. Simon Moripe, puts the matter in these words:

Like kings and chiefs, the leadership of the Zion Christian Church is charismatic in nature and hereditary. The clergy is hierarchically structured around the office of the bishop, who is the head of the church and also a family member of Lekganyane.

This observation summarizes what basically happens in almost all the AICs of the Zionist type. It also happens amongst some Ethiopian type AICs. Daneel, discusses the ecumenical movement in Zimbabwe. The movement did not only affect the AICs but all the Protestant and even the Roman Catholic Church. Of some relevance to this chapter was the Theological Education by Extension program (TEE). The TEE program which was run from many centres was done by all the denominations in Zimbabwe. The first group of lecturers was not even from the AICs but they were accepted by the AICs. The second group of lecturers which included some AIC lecturers was accepted by even the Roman Catholic members or students. The major achievement of the program was not to develop church leaders but to develop academics in the churches who could work well with each other at ecumenical levels. The leadership of the churches still remained Charismatic.

Gerhardus Oosthuizen discusses training in the AICs in SOWETO and the Greater Durban area. There are no instances of any formal theological training in a formal theological college. Ministers are trained by the Holy Spirit of Christ and also by the ancestors under the supervision of some senior and experienced prophets. This then draws us to the Botswana situation.

**Theological Training in the AICs in Botswana**

It must be made clear from the beginning of this discussion that theological education is different from ministerial training. Apart from taking courses from other places which are outside of Botswana, the major places from which the AICs study theology are:

1. Kgoldagano College of Theological Education by Extension
2. Botswana Bible Training Institute (BBTI)
3. The Mennonite Ministries/ Inter – church Ministries
4. The University of Botswana

Let me state from the onset that the reader must separate theological education from ministerial training. Secondly, the reader must take note of the different attitudes to education or theological training between the Zionist and the Ethiopian type AICs.

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7 Moripe “Indigenous clergy in the Zion Christian Church,” 104.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Before we can discuss what actually happens and how theological and ministerial training is done in the AICs in Botswana, let us first of all examine briefly what is offered by the theological and ministerial training institutions in Botswana. I will give examples from three of the institutions because there have similarities between them.

**Kgolagano College of Theological Education by Extension**

Kgolagano College was launched in 1975 as Botswana Theological Training Program by Extension (BTTP). Its purpose was to train church leadership from an interdenominational level. But as the years passed, some churches, such as the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), recognized it as a ministerial training college for part-time, as well as full-time ministers of the church. It was also recognized as an institution to train people into various leadership positions in the church, such as Sunday school teachers and others. Many people from some AICs studied with BTTP mainly as private candidates who were not necessarily sent by their churches. Most of these people gained some theological insight as viewed and understood from a western theological perspective. But I must state very clearly that such people were not necessarily recognized as ministers by their churches. Instead they were appointed to attend conferences and workshops organized by interdenominational organizations such as the Botswana Council of Churches and many others. The reason was that they could speak good English and also understood the beliefs of other churches, especially the main-line churches since they had some theological education. When the BTTP changed its name to Kgolagano College, one of the strongest members of Kgolagano College was the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). It had a representative in the Governing Board of Kgolagano. Many of its candidates, most of whom were already ministers due to the divine calling, studied with Kgolagano College in order that they should be competent with the members of the main-line churches but not for ministerial formation. Ministerial formation was done through the church from a divine calling into the ministry. The more experienced ministers of COGIC guided those who were divinely called into the ministry of the church. It was not through Kgolagano College that candidates became ministers in the church but through divine calling and guidance from the more experienced leaders of the church. This is characteristic of many AICs in Botswana. What I am trying to emphasize here is that ministerial training and formation does not come from theological education but from divine calling. So, with regards to the AICs in Botswana, a clear distinction must be made between theological education and ministerial training or calling. The two are different. Let me explain that Kgolagano College offers theological education in the traditional manner through the classification of disciplines such as Biblical Studies, Systematic Theology and Church History, etc. It is different from BBTI. In addition to theological education, there are also courses on Church Leadership and Financial Management which have been offered for a long time by Kgolagano College. These have attracted many members from the AICs which had faced criticism because of their bad financial management. With some of their members taking courses at Kgolagano, they were made church treasurers and book-keepers for the church. The training of many church members, including some ministers, through Kgolagano College, even if members trained as individuals, helped many AICs in areas of financial management and church administration.

**Botswana Bible Training Institute (BBTI)**

Botswana Bible Training Institute has trained and is training many members from the AICs. Its emphasis is more on Biblical Studies and preaching and also the general duties of a pastor in the church. It has succeeded in attracting many independent candidates from the AICs. Most of these candidates comprise of church ministers who were divinely called into the ministry and wanted some skills in delivering the word of God. They also want some skills on the general running of the church. BBTI is more attractive because

Part III: Denominational Perspectives on Theological Education in Africa
its educational requirements are lower than those of Kgolagano College. A person with Standard Seven, which is the basic primary school certificate, can find some courses to do at BBTI whilst Kgolagano needs a Junior Certificate or a Senior Certificate. What should be emphasized here is that these courses have nothing to do with ministerial calling or training, which is done by the more experienced ministers and prophets of the AICs.

What then is theological education in the AICs in Botswana?

The first thing that this chapter has been trying to emphasize there is no theological education in the AICs in Botswana but ministerial training. This ministerial training is done through divine inspiration as has been stated above. Let me cite some findings from my researches which demonstrate how this training is done.

The first thing that makes one a minister in the AICs is divine calling. This divine calling manifests itself through dreams or visions. A person who becomes a minister in the AICs in Botswana starts by having visions and dreams. The candidate will then go to an experienced prophet of a church who will find out whether the dreams and the visions are calls for the ministry of the church. The experienced minister will also tell if they come from the ancestors of the candidate or from the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ. If the dreams and visions come from the ancestors to a member of a church, the church encourages that member to do away with the ancestral spirit and become a church prophet who is inspired by the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ. The senior minister prays for a candidate who is troubled by an ancestral spirit. In the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion (HMG)\textsuperscript{10}, some diwacho placebos, are used to expel the ancestral spirit so that the candidate should become a church prophet possessed by the Holy Spirit from Jesus Christ. The prophets of the HMG, who are also, in many cases, the ministers of the church, are always tested at Jackalasi No. 2 where the church holds its annual conference and festival during the Easter holidays. The test is done in this manner: Patients come forward into the centre of the church to be prophesied in order to find out their problems and illnesses. One prophet is given the opportunity to diagnose the patients at a time. The belief is that what the Holy Spirit of Christ, reveals to this one prophet, who is doing the diagnosis is also revealed to all the prophets in the church. If the prophet states something which is not also revealed to the other prophets, it is believed that the prophet uses an ancestral spirit. At once, some of the prophets will shout and stop the prophesying one from talking. In some cases, the prophesying prophet will be hit with the staves which the prophets hold as a sign of divine office. It must also be stated that the HMG also has ministers who are not necessarily prophets. These are men and women whose characters are good and they also feel some divine inspiration to make them lead the church. Such men and women are ordained into the ministry. Most of them have some good theological and other educational qualifications which make them to be of great assistance to the church. But the overall belief and practice is that ministers are trained by the more experienced and elderly ministers and prophets of the church.

It has been stated above that the Lambs Followers Apostles Church allows its youth to participate fully in the life of the church. But, regardless of the theological qualifications of some of its youth, they cannot become church ministers until they have experienced some divine calling. Let me say that this is the common characteristic of all the AICs in Botswana.


Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Relevant Theological Education for the AICs in Botswana

This chapter argues that for theological education to be relevant to the AICs in Botswana, it must first of all understand who the AICs are and what has led to their rise. To try to address this problem, let me make reference to David Adamo. Chapter Five of his book is entitled: *Reading and Interpreting the Bible Therapeutically*. Let me cite from this chapter:

In the African indigenous culture, the means of dealing with traditional problems like diseases, sorcerers, witches, enemies, and lack of success in life experience, have been developed. Western missionaries taught African Christians to discard these indigenous ways of handling these problems without offering any concrete alternative. Charms, medicine, incantations, divination, sacrifices and other cultural ways of protecting, healing, and liberating from the evil powers in African forests were hurriedly discarded in the name of Christianity. Yet we were not taught how to use the Bible as a means of protecting, healing, and solving the daily problems of life.11

To me, this statement captures what theological education in the AICs in Botswana should be in order to meet the needs of the AICs and the Batswana in general. The failure of the western type of theological education to address the deep religious, spiritual and emotional needs of the Batswana has made many Batswana to resort to AIC prophets and traditional healers whenever they are confronted by these realities of life, such as the fear of witchcraft and the desires for life amidst all odds. Theological education in the AICs in Botswana should start by first of all addressing the basic concepts and understanding of God. On the 12th of December, 2011, when I was in the process of writing this chapter, I visited Kgolagano College and the Principal of the college asked me to prepare a syllabus that specifically addresses the theologies of the AICs in Botswana. What I am drafting is a two year certificate course to be taught by extension by Kgolagano College. The qualifications needed are a Botswana Junior Certificate or any equivalent. This is a semesterized course running for four semesters. The idea behind semesterization is to create room for the candidates to qualify for the UB Degree in Pastoral Theology.

The course will look like follows:

**Certificate in AIC Theology (AICT)**

**Semester One: AICT 1 Introduction to African Traditional Religions (3 Credits)**

Course description: The course examines the concept of God in ATR with special focus on Botswana. It examines the working relationships between God, the ancestors, the dingaka, traditional healers and the people. The course examines the concepts of rituals and taboos amongst the Batswana and Africans in general. It examines the meaning and significance of life and how people live in relation to God, the ancestors and their environments. It examines human relations especially in the area of gender issues. The course examines the existence of these beliefs in the modern and postmodern world.

**Semester Two: AICT 2 Introduction to Biblical Studies 1 (3 Credits)**

Course description: The course examines the concepts of God in the Old Testament. It examines the concepts of the ancestors and the concepts of prophecy in the OT. The course examines the concept of rituals, taboos and the understanding of life in the OT. It examines human relations in the OT with special focus on gender issues. The course examines the place and role of the OT in the modern and postmodern world.

SEMESTER THREE: AICT 3 INTRODUCTION TO SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY I (3 CREDITS)

Course description: The course defines systematic theology and all the areas of systematic theology. It examines the major beliefs of the Christian religion as found in both the Old and the New Testaments.

SEMESTER FOUR: AICT 4 A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AFRICAN AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY I (3 CREDITS)

Course description: The course critically discusses the similarities and differences between ATR beliefs and Christian beliefs in the basic understanding of God, ancestors, traditional healers, prophets, rituals and taboos. It critically examines gender relations in ATR and Christianity.

The above proposal is meant to assist the ministers of the AICs to have some basic academic theology which could assist them in their ministry. But as it has also been observed by John Gichimu\(^\text{12}\), that theological training in the AICs lies in experience rather than theory, the same situation applies to theological training in the AICs in Botswana. He argues that it follows the African tutelage where there is listening and doing. Although Gichimu writes from the East African experience, the reality is that there is a lot in common in the lives of the AICs in Africa. Divine revelation and training through experience rather than theory are the major methods of ministerial training in the AICs. Theological education could be similar with that of the mainline churches but without affecting ministerial training. To give a classical example of this situation, the late Rev O.O. Ditsheko who at one stage was the General Secretary of The Organization of African Independent Churches (OAIC) in Southern Africa had a Diploma in Pastoral Theology, a BA Degree in Humanities and a Masters Degree in Theology from the University of Botswana. But he still remained a junior minister in his church in spite of his academic training. This is a clear demonstration of the importance of divine calling in the ministry of the AICs.

Theological training in the AICs should be honest with the beliefs and practices of the AICs. It must not in any way be an attempt to think that at one stage, the AICs would go back to the western forms of Christianity. The existence of the AICs as African expressions of Christianity has long been proved. The AICs being no longer subjects of mission has been well argued by Inus Daneel.\(^\text{13}\) This then means that their theological education should directly reveal and teach what they believe. For example, the Lambs Followers Apostles Church allows its youth to have some influence in the life of the church. But it is also interesting to find that these postmodern youths still believe very strongly in the teachings and beliefs of their church. One of these beliefs is that the youth of the LFAC (Lambs Followers Apostles Church) should not play football. They can only watch it but they do not have to play it. The theology behind this belief is that football represents the head of John the Baptist which was cut by King Herod after Herodias had danced for him and he had made an oath that he was going to give her anything that she required (Matthew 14:1ff). She demanded for the head of John the Baptist who then was imprisoned for criticizing King Herod. Since John the Baptist was sent by God and was the forerunner of Jesus Christ, his beheading was a great threat to the rise of Christianity. The belief then is that anyone who plays football plays with the head of John the Baptist and is against the proclamation of the gospel message. There are many such theologies and beliefs of the AICs which should be taught in programs that are specifically geared towards the AICs and also for other churches for understanding and ecumenism.

\(^{12}\) John Gichimu, “Theological Education in African Instituted Churches (AICs)”, in Dietrich Werner et al. (eds), Handbook of Theological Education in the World Christianity (Oxford: Regnum, 2010), 368-374.

\(^{13}\) Inus Daneel, Quest for Belonging: Introduction to a Study of African Independent Churches (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1987).
Conclusion

The conclusion of this chapter is that theological education, as a world phenomenon, should take some recognition of the various theologies which are emerging all over the world. As long as these emerging theologies are biblical and scriptural they should be so recognized without using western theology as the only model of theological and ministerial training. At the moment in Botswana and possibly throughout Africa, theological education in the AICs is for academic prestige whereas ministerial training is from divine calling and experience rather than theory.

Bibliography

(41) THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST (SDA) CHURCH

Mary Getui

Introduction
This short article includes an attempt to explain what theological education as well as its objectives entails in the perspectives of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, a survey on SDA institutions that offer theological education in Africa, a reflection on some challenges as well as some suggestions for efforts towards enhancing theological education in the SDA Church.

Theological Education
Theological Education, as perceived from a broad sense, is the study that primarily focuses on the actions of God in history; God, humankind and their relationship with each other. A student who undertakes theological education is expected to be enhanced spiritually, mentally, physically and socially. Further, the thinking of the student is also expected to be more open, critical and more enhanced.

The main objective of theological education is to equip for ministry. The pastor is the “main” minister, as it were. Nevertheless, teachers, evangelists, administrators and all those that train and serve in the SDA Church and elsewhere are expected to benefit from and to be guided by theological education. For example, some of the compulsory courses for all students enrolled in an SDA university include The Life and teachings of Jesus, Christian Beliefs, Introduction to Christian Ethics; and Adventist Heritage. Theology students are also expected to undertake basic multi-disciplinary courses in amongst others music, writing skills, entrepreneurship, management, education, recreation, health principles, agricultural technology, human biology, information technology, mathematics, biostatistics, physical sciences, environment, geographic information systems, world civilization, development studies, economics and vocational skills.

Institutions Offering Theological Education
SDA colleges and universities in Africa that are offering theological education include:
- Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya
- Adventist University of Arusha, Tanzania
- Adventist University at Lukanga, North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Adventist University, Cosendai, Yaounde, Cameroon
- Adventist University of Central Africa, Kigali, Rwanda
- Adventist University Zurcher, Sambaina, Antisirabe, Madagascar
- Babcock University, Ogun State, Nigeria
- Bongo Adventist Seminary, Huambo, Angola
- Bugema University, Kampala, Uganda
- Ethiopia Adventist College, Ethiopia
- Heldergerg College, Somerset West, South Africa
- Malawi Adventist University, Ntcheu, Malawi
- Mozambique Adventist Seminary, Mozambique
- Solusi University, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
The Curriculum

The theological education offered in these institutions is at Bachelors level. In earlier years, some of these institutions offered certificate and diploma programmes but they have generally been phased out, on the understanding that those who opt to undertake theological education should have academic qualifications as would be required for admission to other programmes in the university.

The curriculum covers courses that one would term as ‘traditional’, such as Greek and Hebrew, Biblical studies, Homiletics, Evangelism and Church History. Other courses include youth ministry, marriage and family, stewardship, Church administration, strategic planning, counseling, psychology, book keeping, religion and science, African traditional religion, psychology of religion, sociology of religion, phenomenology of religion, contemporary themes in Christian theology, new religious movements, comparative religion, philosophy of religion, Islamic studies, ecumenism, Christian theology, religion and state. The courses that may be reflective of these being Adventist institutions include literature evangelism, writings and philosophy of Ellen G. White. White is a key figure in the foundation of the SDA Church.

Challenges in Theological Education

There are some challenges with regard to theological education in the SDA Church. One of these is the ‘professionalization’ of theological education. This is based on the premise that in the initial stages of the Church, those who served as pastors did not go through a structured or formal programme. Indeed, it is those who were ‘called’ that provided this service, and did a good job as it were. This challenge goes with the one of finances. Many theology students struggle financially. This leads to many of them spending more time than is stipulated for the programme, as they resort to engage in income generating activities such as being literature evangelists even as far as the Nordic countries. Other income generating engagements include hiring farms in the institution’s neighbourhood to grow own food and to sell the surplus. Many of the students also cut on costs by seeking, often shared accommodation, outside the institution. It is important to state that these challenges are not unique to theology students but are common to many students pursuing university education in Africa today.

Just like for other professions, the theology graduate is not assured of a posting. Indeed, there are many on the waiting list. This is not because there is no work, but because of budgetary constraints. Pastors salaries are pegged on the giving of the faithful, which is often meager especially in the rural locations.

Brain drain is another challenge faced in theological training. Those who train outside the continent do not come back. This is contrary to the expectations of the community that may have contributed financially.

There is a conspicuous absence or minority number of women in theological education. Some of the contributing factors include the cultural milieu, as well as the fact that up till now, ordination of women has not been passed. This limits the opportunities and service of women.

As the academy advances technologically in line with the contemporary world, much of Africa continues to struggle due to lack of the infrastructure and other facilities that go with technology. For example, libraries are poorly equipped and advanced research is hard to pursue. Again, this is common in many institutions of higher learning in Africa.

Opportunities to pursue post graduate programmes are hard to come by mainly because of finances. Those who can, however, do proceed to institutions within or outside the continent. Some of the
institutions also have link or collaborative initiatives within the continent and beyond. These include offer of scholarships, exchange programmes and external examination services.

**Efforts at Enhancing Theological Education**

Despite the challenges highlighted above, there are several efforts at enhancing theological education in the SDA Church in Africa, as follows:

The mature entry admission allows for special consideration on the basis of age, at least twenty five years, and also due experience in ministry related involvement. This does not, in any way, compromise academic ability required for a diploma programme.

In Eastern Africa, the cross-border opportunities are appreciated. Students are free to seek and receive training as they consider most conducive financially or otherwise, and their certificates are recognized and accepted for posting and placement, albeit the limited opportunities.

While studying in SDA institutions is encouraged especially for the first degree, studying in secular or non SDA institutions is not prohibited. Associating with other professional theological bodies encourages sharing of ideas and opening of horizons.

Many pastors who are interested in further studies do get financial and other support from the Church, to allow them study without jeopardizing their regular duties.

There are groups and individual church members supporting needy students who are pursuing theological education. Further, these groups and individuals are keen on identifying ‘unreached’ areas and are working towards providing the required services to and as much as possible from these areas.

**Conclusion**

From what has been discussed above, theological education in the SDA Church in Africa is central in the institutions of higher learning. It has evolved with time and corresponds with the basics and the traditions of curriculum in theological education. It is clear that there are some aspects of this education that are unique to the SDA Church. The challenges, however, are not unique to theological education, but are reflective of the general scenario in higher education pursuits in contemporary Africa. It is expected that the Church will continue to respond to emerging issues within the Church, on the continent, in the wider Christian world especially with regard to theological education and play its critical role in providing well skilled, informed, open-minded and positioned personnel.
PART IV

KEY ISSUES AND NEW FRONTIERS IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA
BIBLICAL STUDIES

(42) LES ETUDES BIBLIQUES DANS L’ENSEIGNEMENT THEOLOGIQUE EN AFRIQUE

Priscille Djomhoue

Introduction

La lecture biblique est au cœur de la foi chrétienne. Elle permet de mieux connaître Dieu, elle structure notre vie spirituelle. La prédication au culte est l’un des moyens qui permettent aux chrétiens d’être en contact avec la parole de Dieu. Mais elle a des limites parce que durant le culte, le pasteur ou le prédicateur parle seul, et il n’y a pas un moment d’échange pendant lequel les fidèles peuvent poser des questions ou trouver des éclaircissements sur des aspects du texte et de la prédication qui leur semblent encore obscurs. L’étude biblique en petits groupes donne alors l’occasion aux fidèles d’aller plus loin dans le partage et la discussion autour du texte biblique. Mais cet exercice nécessite un certain nombre de compétences et de préalables pour réaliser les objectifs à atteindre. En effet, si les participants à l’étude biblique ne disposent pas une formation particulière, par contre, le facilitateur a besoin de capitaliser des connaissances et techniques qui garantissent le succès d’une bonne étude biblique.

Dans des communautés chrétiennes et surtout dans les églises, les études bibliques sont dans la plupart des cas, animés par des fidèles engagés qui n’ont malheureusement pas toujours toutes les ressources nécessaires pour y parvenir. Aussi, les pasteurs formés en exégèse n’ont pas toujours eu l’occasion de s’ouvrir méthodologiquement à toutes les applications de l’exégèse. Autrement dit, ils ont acquis des méthodes en exégèse, mais pas une méthodologie en étude biblique appliquée. En conséquence, certains sont mal outillés et incapables de former des animateurs en étude Biblique contextuelle (EBC). L’importance des EBC n’est plus à démontrer parce que son objectif est évangélique, en ce qu’il vise la transformation des fidèles et de leur environnement. Etant donné que jusqu’à nos jours, les pasteurs en Afrique francophone sont les garants de tout enseignement touchant à la Bible au niveau de la paroisse et même dans la société, nous pensons qu’il est impératif aujourd’hui de veiller à ce que dans leur formation, les curricula puissent inclure aussi une formation en méthodologie d’études bibliques contextuelles afin de s’assurer qu’ils utiliseront efficacement les méthodologies d’exégèse dans leur ministère pour promouvoir le Royaume de Dieu que nous attendons.

L’intérêt de cet article est donc de plaider pour la considération des études bibliques dans la formation théologique. Je commencerai par introduire un paragraphe de définition afin d’apporter d’abord un éclaircissement sur le grand nombre du vocabulaire utilisé dans l’usage de l’étude biblique, puis d’en montrer l’importance dans la construction du Royaume de Dieu promis dans l’Évangile. Autrement dit, apporter de la lumière sur l’importance de cet exercice dans la transformation du chrétien et de son environnement, laquelle garantit le développement de tous les aspects de la vie de l’individu et de la société ; ensuite, je montrerai comment l’exégèse1 peut être utile à cet exercice afin d’établir un lien entre le monde académique et la lecture populaire de la Bible. Ce sera l’occasion de préciser pourquoi il est

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1 En effet, on ne demandera pas à un animateur en étude biblique contextuelle d’être spécialiste en exégèse. Mais il est important qu’il sache comment utiliser efficacement les résultats de l’exégèse qui existent dans de nombreux commentaires, pour emmener aider son audience à comprendre la parole de Dieu afin de voir comment cette parole d’adresse particulièrement à leurs situations.
impératif aujourd’hui, que l’étudiant futur pasteur, acquiert non pas seulement les méthodes d’exégèse, mais aussi la méthodologie d’Etude Biblique Contextuelle. Je ne finirai par présenter succinctement les grands traits de la méthodologie de l’étude biblique contextuelle.

1. Définition et Objectifs de l’Etude Biblique

Il existe, selon les contextes plusieurs expressions liées à l’étude biblique : Etude Biblique Appliquée, Lecture populaire de la Bible, Lecture Communautaire de la Bible, Etude Biblique Contextuelle, Lecture Biblique Interculturelle, Animation Biblique ou tout simplement Etude Biblique. A bien regarder, les qualifications qui accompagnent cette expression ont une préoccupation commune, celle de rendre la parole de Dieu compréhensible au lecteur. Voici la problématique qu’apportent ces différentes qualifications: Comment est-ce que la Parole de Dieu qui a été donnée aux destinataires primitifs il y a plus de deux mille ans peut s’adresser à moi aujourd’hui devant toutes mes préoccupations, avec tous mes problèmes et m’apporter une solution ? Autrement dit, comment cette parole qui a libéré, et qui a transformé les premiers chrétiens m’intéresse aujourd’hui dans ma situation qui n’est pas celle des premiers chrétiens ?

Pour trouver une solution à ces diverses questions passe nécessairement par le partage et la discussion de la Parole de Dieu en communauté et par petit groupe, et ne pas se limiter seulement à l’écoute de la prédication qui n’autorise pas un débat qui puisse lever les incompréhensions et ouvrir selon la préoccupation de chacun, divers horizons de compréhension et d’application du texte.

Ainsi, la diversité des qualificatifs à mon avis, exprime les différentes manières selon lesquelles les peuples ont voulu rendre la préoccupation sus-mentionnée. Ainsi, même quand les méthodes pour y parvenir varient d’un contexte à l’autre, la préoccupation reste la même.

Il est important de mentionner que cette préoccupation de lire et de discuter la parole de Dieu en communauté et en petit groupe ne date pas d’aujourd’hui, même si les méthodes pour y parvenir évoluent et s’affinent au fil du temps.

Il faut même avouer que la lecture des textes bibliques en lui-même est contextuelle, j’en veux pour preuve, la rédaction des trois premiers évangiles qui font montre d’une ressemblance étonnante en même temps qu’une différence déconcertante. West a bien raison d’affirmer que toutes les lectures de la Bible sont contextuelles.

Nous pouvons donc définir l’Etude Biblique Contextuelle (EBC) comme une lecture interactive des textes bibliques qui met en rapport le contexte de la Bible et le contexte du lecteur dans l’objectif de faire prendre conscience et d’inciter au changement, mieux à la transformation de l’individu et de son environnement. Nadar mentionne un certain nombre de mots clé qui permettent de scerner les contours de cet exercice:

- Elle doit être interactive, parce qu’elle requiert les voix et les opinions de tous ceux qui participent. Les réponses aux questions posées pendant l’étude sont données, non pas par le facilitateur, mais par les participants eux-mêmes. L’essentiel, ce sont les débats et les discussions entre les participants. Pour cela, l’étude biblique (EB) est communautaire et non individuel. C’est un espace de partage et d’échange et non d’enseignement. West précisera qu’il est idéal que cet espace de

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2 Intervention faite lors de la conférence sur les Etudes Bibliques Contextuelles organisée par ICCO/Kerkinactie février 2010 à Utrecht, p1 de son power point. Pour aller plus loin, lire son manuel, Doing Contextual Bible Study: A Ressource Manual, Ujamaa Centre for Theological Community Development and Research, avril 2005.


Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
dialogue regorge des personnes d’horizons divers: des lecteurs ordinaires, des chercheurs et des biblistes socialement engagés.4

- Elle tient compte du contexte des participants: en effet, les contextes varient à travers le monde, dans un pays particulier, dans des tributs et des localités. Le choix du thème de l’EBC requiert donc l’assentiment des participants. L’EBC commence donc en s’appuyant sur la réalité du contexte des participants, et le thème choisi dans la Bible doit être en rapport avec ce contexte là.

- L’EBC doit respecter le texte dans son contexte initial d’énonciation. Nous ne sommes pas les premiers destinataires du texte biblique ; nous devons d’abord comprendre le texte dans son contexte d’énonciation première afin de voir comment il s’adresse à nous aujourd’hui et dans notre situation. Nous pensons que ceci justifie aussi, la préoccupation de West de mettre l’accent sur la présence des chercheurs en sciences bibliques. Ceci pour apporter, comme les autres participants, leurs compétences à la construction du sens du texte et du contexte.

- L’objectif de l’EBC, c’est de montrer comment la Bible ainsi que d’autres sources de connaissance peuvent être à la fois un ferment de la libération et de l’oppression. Il sera donc question de faire prendre conscience de cette situation, par exemple la manière selon laquelle notre foi, notre culture et même les textes sacrés peuvent promouvoir la justice. Mais c’est aussi l’occasion de mettre l’accent sur les éléments libérateurs de l’Evangile.

- L’EBC doit conduire à la transformation. L’objectif de la lecture communautaire de la Bible c’est la transformation: elle doit être lue de manière à intégrer toutes les parties prenantes, hommes et femmes, grands et enfants dans le processus de la libération. Elle doit donc nous engager au changement, à la promotion de la justice dans un monde injuste et qui ne veut pas changer. En somme, l’EBC doit conduire les participants à l’action.

2. Rapport entre l’Etude Biblique Contextuelle et le monde académique

L’étude biblique contextuelle est un espace de rencontre entre l’Église (comprise comme le peuple de Dieu venant de différentes dominations) et le monde académique. C’est une activité qui ne peut se dérouler avec succès que si dans cet espace sont mises ensemble les connaissances et l’intelligence de toute la communauté. C’est la raison pour laquelle il est important d’étudier la bible en groupe. Citant Fernando, West a bien raison de l’affirmer de cette manière: “Contextual Bible Study is a collaborative process”.5

Ce que nous pensons, c’est que tout le processus de lecture est supposé être fait ensemble, dans l’objectif de comprendre un texte qui a été écrit il y a très longtemps et dont nous ne sommes pas aujourd’hui, les destinataires premiers. L’objectif commun c’est de bien comprendre le texte biblique aujourd’hui et de voir dans quelle mesure il peut nous permettre de promouvoir le Royaume de Dieu que nous attendons.

Le point qui mérite d’être soulevé ici, et qui est la préoccupation de ce paragraphe, est bien la question de savoir comment atteindre l’objectif commun, spécialement dans le sens des compétences diverses qui doivent être mises ensemble?

Le monde académique et l’espace de l’EBC sont deux moyens complémentaires au service de l’Église et du peuple de Dieu. Les deux mondes sont nécessaires pour le compréhension de la parole de Dieu, ainsi

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4 Gerald West, Ibib.
5 Paulo Fernando Carneiro de Andrade, “Reading the Bible in the Ecclesial Base Communities of Latin America: The Meaning of social Context”, in Reading from This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, 237-49 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) commented by Gerald West in his paper tilled “Contextual Bible Study: Practitioners talking among ourselves", Utrecht February 2010.
que pour la traduction de la Bonne Nouvelle dans la vie des lecteurs, prenant en considération leurs contextes, leurs expériences et particulièrement la réalité qu’ils veulent transformer.

En d’autres termes, le monde académique forme des hommes et femmes spécialistes qui entreprennent des recherches fondamentales dans tous les domaines de la théologie ; et l’EBC forme tout le peuple de Dieu. Il apporte la réflexion théologique au niveau de la vie quotidienne. En Afrique du Sud, West se réfère à l’EBC et dit que la chose la plus importante, c’est que les théologiens et le peuple de Dieu ordinaire, les communautés de pauvres et de marginalisés parviennent à se mettre ensemble pour lire la Bible. La raison de ce travail en commun est la difficulté de transformer ce contexte qui recommande une nouvelle lecture et théologie. Dans ce sens, les théologiens africains construisent leurs théologies sur la base de ce qu’ils ont appris, parce que la résolution d’une crise n’est possible que lorsque la Bible est lue de manière critique à partir et avec la perspective des marginalisés et des pauvres. La communauté et les théologiens engagés sont des partenaires égaux dans la lecture de la Bible.

**Domaines qui doivent être pris en considération dans le monde académique**

Le succès de l’EBC dépend de la bonne compréhension des Ecritures, de la bonne compréhension des membres eux-mêmes et de leur environnement. Pour cette raison, le monde académique doit fournir la méthodologie et les informations qui aident le groupe à comprendre le contexte biblique aussi bien que le contexte des lecteurs (sociologie et anthropologie). Etant donné que l’objectif de l’EBC est d’abord la transformation des participants, il arrive très souvent que cet exercice se termine par une situation critique pendant laquelle un membre sujet à des troubles psychologiques, a besoin d’aide ou d’accompagnement. Le facilitateur doit être prévu à ce genre de situation.

Aussi, conscients du fait que nous ne sommes pas les destinataires historiques de la parole de Dieu, le Centre Catholique Romand de Formation Permanente dit à propos de l’animation biblique que: « Pour faciliter le passage du monde biblique à notre monde, trois étapes sont nécessaires: le moment de la projection, le moment de l’analyse du texte et le moment de la contextualisation ». Nous pensons, sans toutefois mettre de côté les autres étapes, que le monde académique, en fonction de ses compétences, sera utile et apportera les moyens de l’analyse du texte.

**Contribution en méthodologies**

Différentes méthodologies peuvent être appliquées aux textes bibliques: l’analyse historico-critique, l’analyse sociologique, la lecture rhétorique, la narratologie, et le structuralisme, etc.

- La distance historique qui existe entre les textes bibliques et nous exige que soient pris en considération des aspects de la critique historique. Le travail de l’académie sera de chercher et de fournir les informations qui permettent au groupe de comprendre le texte dans son contexte historique. L’objectif n’est pas de former les facilitateurs aux méthodologies de l’exégèse, mais de les aider à pouvoir utiliser efficacement les résultats des recherches, et du travail qui a été fait par les chercheurs. Il sera important d’aider aussi les participants à découvrir dans les bibliothèques, les livres nécessaires, ou les documents de référence (Dictionnaires, Vocabulaires bibliques, Commentaires, synopses, atlas, introductions etc.) qui les permettront de résoudre des problèmes particuliers posés par le texte biblique.

6 Gerald West, « Reading the Bible Differently: Giving shape to the Discourse of the dominated », in *Semeta* 73, 1996, 22-23.
7 Gerald West, Op. Cit., 28

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
La formation du facilitateur doit inclure, pour ce qui est de la méthodologie, l’analyse narrative. Certains outils de la narratologie sont déjà utilisés dans l’EBC, par exemple, les personnages. Cette méthodologie est bien accueillie par la majorité des personnes, parce qu’elle n’exige pas que l’on ait fait des études spéciales.

La préparation du matériel technique
En collaboration avec les facilitateurs, le monde académique aidera à développer les moyens d’enseignement comme:

- Les fiches techniques
- Les questionnaires
- Les références bibliques pour des sujets particuliers

L’exégèse du texte biblique est l’une des choses essentielles que l’on fait pendant une séance d’EB. Nous pensons que les groupes le font, même si les membres n’emploient pas ce langage technique pour designer l’exercice. L’effort d’explication et de compréhension du texte, c’est de l’exégèse. A ce niveau, les résultats des recherches du monde académique seront bénéfiques au groupe.

Comprendre le contexte des pauvres/des marginalisés
Il est tout à fait normal de penser que ceux et celles qui vivent des situations particulières ont beaucoup à apporter. Dans le contexte de pauvres et marginalisés, il est toujours très difficile de ressentir et de comprendre des situations qu’on n’a pas expérimentées. Lorsque les chercheurs en sciences bibliques lisent la Bible avec les lecteurs ordinaires, ces derniers gagnent auprès des prendre des théologiens des compétences en même temps, les théologiens à leur tour, sont positivement influencés par les expériences, les intérêts, les questionnements, les ressources et les lectures des pauvres et marginalisés.9

Deux moyens complémentaires au service de l’Eglise
La CEVAA définit l’animation théologique (dont l’EBC) et la formation théologique académique comme deux moyens complémentaires au service de l’Eglise, et matérialise cette vision des choses de la manière suivante:10

Animation théologique

Est nécessaire
1. À la concrétisation de la foi
2. A la croissance de l’Homme nouveau
3. Au témoignage de chacun et de chacune

Formation Théologique académique

Est nécessaire

9 Gerald West, Op Cit, 38.
1. À la présence et à la sauvegarde d’une culture théologique solide dans l’Église et dans le monde.
2. Au dialogue de l’Église avec le monde, particulièrement sur les plans intellectuel, scientifique et académique.
3. À la lutte de l’Église contre les enseignements théologiques erronés et les déviations théologiques.
4. A la formation des personnes spécialistes, des hommes et des femmes qui contribuent à la recherche fondamentale dans tous les domaines de la théologie.

En somme, nous pensons que le monde académique devrait déployer un espace de formation des facilitateurs en EBC, même si ces derniers ne sont pas des étudiants en Théologie. Il y a possibilité de mettre en place un centre qui puisse permettre au peuple de Dieu venant de diverses classes, ayant divers niveaux (pas nécessairement le niveau requis pour s’inscrire à l’université) de se rapprocher davantage de la Parole de Dieu.

### Pourquoi la méthodologie de l’EBC dans l’enseignement théologique

En Afrique francophone, le lieu par excellence de la validation des connaissances et de la transmission de la parole de Dieu aux chrétiens reste encore l’Église. Or dans la majorité des cas, la parole de Dieu est régulièrement annoncée lors des cultes, surtout le dimanche. Et la prédication, le sermon du pasteur ou tout autre prédicateur n’offre pas un espace de dialogue entre celui qui annonce l’Évangile et le peuple de Dieu qui écoute et qui désire en savoir davantage sur le texte. L’EBC est donc cet espace de dialogue qui permet aux chrétiens de discuter, de s’enrichir et de voir comment la parole de Dieu s’adresse à leur problème particulier et les mobilise à l’action pour le changement. La CEVAA, résumant ceci établit que le travail en groupe permet à chaque participant de:

- Réfléchir individuellement ; se faire une opinion personnelle ; prendre la parole à son tour ; pratiquer le dialogue démocratique ; sincère et frатénel ; partager ses idées ; confronter ses choix ; être entendu par les autres ; construire petit à petit une nouvelle manière de penser et de vivre ; devenir responsable des décisions communes ; devenir moteur de la créativité du groupe et construire un projet communautaire.

De nos jours, il existe des méthodologies en EB qui permettent de faire ce travail aisément dans les communautés chrétiennes ou bien, dans les églises. Or dans la formation du pasteur, l’académie lui apporte des méthodes de lecture biblique ou d’explication de la parole de Dieu, mais pas de méthodologie qui puisse lui permettre d’organiser, d’animer les EB et même de former au niveau de sa communauté des animateurs pour l’aider dans sa grande tâche.

Aussi, est-il important de savoir que dans beaucoup d’églises, les étudiants futurs pasteurs, à la fin de leur formation et surtout pendant leurs stages se voient attribués dans les paroisses, l’encadrement des groupes avec pour cahier de charge l’animation théologique dont les EBC. Nous pensons que ces étudiants qui ont des compétences en exégèse et pas en animation d’EBC laisseront toujours apparaître des lacunes dans leur travail.

C’est donc pour cette raison qu’il est impératif aujourd’hui d’introduire la méthodologie d’EBC dans l’enseignement théologique afin de garantir le rapprochement entre la parole de Dieu et les chrétiens et surtout promouvoir la transformation de ces derniers et de leurs milieux pour une amélioration des conditions de vie et le développement de l’Afrique.

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3. Grandes lignes de la méthodologie de l'EBC

Plusieurs institutions ont développé et publié des manuels sur la méthodologie des EBC. Il s’agit entre autres, de la CEVAA 12, Ujamaa Centre 13, Centre Catholique Roman de Formation Permanente 14, CEBI 15, FECCLAHA 16 pour ne citer que ceux-là. En parcourant ces documents, on peut noter des variations qui s’expliquent par le souci de développer une application de la méthodologie à un contexte particulier. Mais en réalité, fondamentalement, la méthodologie est la même. Hormis les dispositions relatives à l’organisation proprement dite de l’EB (nombre de personnes, organisations ou structures de la salle et ou des tables et chaises qui varient énormément selon les contextes, les us et coutumes 17), elle met l’accent sur les qualités et le rôle de l’animateur ou de l’animatrice ainsi que sur la méthode proprement dite de la lecture biblique.

Les personnes responsables

La CEVAA définit deux types de responsable dans le travail de groupe: celui qui assure l’animation et le spécialiste chargé du thème de travail 18.

L’ANIMATEUR/ANIMATRICE

C’est la personne qui assure le service de l’animation, qui prend la parole lorsque le travail commence, présente et explique les étapes du travail. Cette personne est responsable de la structure du travail, de tout ce qui concerne la forme:

• le rappel de l’objectif, l’énoncé de la démarche choisie pour atteindre et annoncer le temps d’évaluation
• le temps consacré à chaque étape
• la donnée et la clarification des consignes
• le matériel nécessaire
• la distribution équitable de la parole
• la régulation des relations interpersonnelles
• la synthèse de ce qui est partagé
• la possibilité que s’expriment aussi les sentiments et les émotions des gens
• l’équilibre entre le travail du groupe et la personne qui est responsable du thème.

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14 Centre Catholique Romand de formation permanente, Boîte à outils pour l’animation biblique, Animation biblique œcuménique Romande.
15 CEBI, La Bible transforme la vie: Lecture populaire de la Bible au Brésil. Le CEBI (Centre d'Études Bibliques) est une entité œcuménique, créée en 1977 pour articuler, approfondir, diffuser et légitimer la lecture biblique que le peuple fait dans ses communautés. L’objectif du CEBI est de promouvoir une lecture libératrice de la Bible, au service de la Pastorale populaire des Églises chrétiennes.
16 Fred Nyabera et Taryn Montgomery, Etude biblique contextuelle: Manuel sur al lutte contre la violence liée au Genre, FECCLAHA.
17 Je ne vais pas m’attarder sur cet aspect dans cet article.
18 Nous allons donner ici, des informations très succinctes sur leurs rôles et qualités: pour aller plus loin, consulter le manuel de la CEVAA.
LA PERSONNE RESPONSABLE DU THÈME DU TRAVAIL

C’est elle qui doit fournir les clés, les informations avec lesquelles les membres du groupe pourront progresser dans leur réflexion. Elle est responsable:

• d’introduire le thème
• de fournir les informations dont les sous-groupes ont besoin pour travailler
• de réagir en reposant des questions après avoir entendu le résultat d’un travail en sous-groupe
• de commenter les points les plus intéressants qui ont été travaillés
• de donner les références théologiques et scientifiques dont les gens ont besoin, en citant les sources
• de partager son propre chemin de réflexion.

La personne responsable du thème du travail ne dit pas aux participants ce qu’ils doivent penser, mais doit partager ses choix. Elle engage chaque personne à être responsable et autonome en faisant ses propres choix, et permet ainsi à chacun et chacune de se sentir pris au sérieux.

La personne qui anime et celle qui est responsable du thème peuvent être différemment une femme, un homme, laïc ou pasteur. Toutes deux se préparent en commun pour intervenir harmonieusement pendant le travail.

Méthode de lecture biblique19

L’EB proprement dite se déroule en trois étapes distinctes qui sont liées les unes aux autres: il s’agit de l’observation du texte, de sa compréhension et de son actualisation/appropriation/interprétation.

OBSERVATION DU TEXTE

Il s’agit ici de regarder le texte, l’histoire, d’écouter ce que le texte dit en s’attardant sur tous les mots du texte. Les questions à se poser pour cette étape sont: Qui ? Quand ? Où ? Qui ? Qu’est-ce qui se passe ? Qu’est-ce qui est dit ? Les réponses se trouvent dans le texte dans le contexte proche.

COMPRÉHENSION

Il est question ici d’entrer dans le texte, de chercher à le comprendre: logique, enchaînements, sens. Bref chercher ce que le texte signifie. Les questions qu’il convient de se poser à cette étape sont Comment ? Pourquoi ? Qu’est-ce que cela veut dire ? Pour trouver la réponse à ces questions il faut se référer au texte d’étude, aux autres textes bibliques, se laisser guider par les notes, les commentaires, la concordance, les introductions, les dictionnaires etc.

ACTUALISATION-APPROPRIATION-INTERPRÉTATION

C’est au niveau de cette étape qu’il convient de laisser le texte entrer en soi, chercher ce qu’il veut dire pour moi, pour nous, pour la communauté. Il faudrait alors l’appliquer au monde d’aujourd’hui. Les questions auxquelles on doit apporter des réponses dans cette étape sont: qu’est-ce que le texte veut dire aujourd’hui, ici et maintenant, pour moi, pour l’Eglise ? Cette dernière étape déploie des questions qui nous renvoient à nous-mêmes, à notre contexte, à la communauté. Les réponses se trouvent en référence au texte, grâce à l’étude du contexte du lecteur (lui-même/sa personne et son environnement, lui et les autres, l’Eglise, le monde (contexte historique, politique, social…)).

L’EB doit déboucher toujours sur une action et des projets à entreprendre sur soi, ou avec les autres dans le contexte, l’objectif est d’emmener le participant à penser au changement et à la transformation qui doivent être pratiques et mesurables.

19 Je propose ici celle qui est développée dans le manuel de la CEVAA.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
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BIBLICAL STUDIES IN SOUTH(ERN) AFRICA: AN OVERVIEW

Madipoane Masenya

Introduction

The initial brief for the present chapter was to give an overview of the discipline of Biblical Studies within the Southern African context. Perhaps such a brief would have been more ‘do-able’ if the focus were to be on the Christian Bible (Bible), the core book around which the subject matter of Biblical Studies rotates. That would have been the case due, in no small measure, to the shared history of blessing and bane of the Bible in many African contexts. However, given my social location as an African in South Africa, the chapter will instead give an overview of the history of the Bible within the South African context, foregrounding its history and function as well as the discipline of Biblical Studies. I will give an overview of the (transitional) history and function of Biblical Studies through African-South African eyes. The latter reading is necessitated, not only by the nature of a handbook which seeks to tackle the discipline of theology as it was/is practised on the African continent, but also, and more significantly, by the apartheid history of South Africa. The latter history implies that the approach to, and content of, the subject matter of Biblical Studies has remained basically foreign to the interlocutors of African descent, both lecturer/teacher/faculty and student alike.

This brings me to African organic readings of the Bible. Masoga writes:

Organic readers are formally produced on the periphery and advanced to the center to learn the ropes in the center, and their sole responsibility is the periphery. They have a task to advance the periphery to become itself and not a copy cat of the center. To be sure, we need organic readers to be empowered by the periphery and with the mandate of the periphery.1

Of more significance perhaps is that African readings point to practical implications of the biblical text that North Atlantic scholars often bracket.2

Biblical Studies in the African Context

Having to write a piece on the Christian Bible (hereinafter referred to as Bible) in a country such as South Africa, a country with a past of a Bible-inspired ideology of apartheid, does not only arouse mixed emotions. It is both taxing and challenging. Having to write an essay on the discipline of Biblical Studies within a context where Christian National Education shaped all higher education offerings, including Biblical Studies, cannot be easy. Such challenges become intensified if the writer’s perspective is of one who belonged to the margins of South African racial history.

The subject matter of Biblical Studies rotates around the Bible. It is therefore fitting that in an essay focusing on Biblical Studies within South African higher education institutions, something is said on what

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the Bible signifies for Africans in South Africa. Smit\(^3\) opines that the definition of the Bible depends on who gives it. The Bible therefore seems to mean different things to different people.\(^4\) As he situates the Bible’s definition within South African history, he, probably borrowing from Mosala\(^5\) describes the Bible as a site of struggle.\(^6\) In the view of Mosala, “…the Bible is rent apart by the antagonistic struggles of the warring classes of Israelite society in much the same way that our world is torn asunder by society’s class, cultural, racial and gender divisions.”\(^7\) Given our divided racial history, it would not be an exaggeration to argue that what the Bible basically meant for Afrikaner students of Biblical Studies and the faculty was not necessarily the same as what it meant for their African counterparts. The latter would have been frowned upon if they dared to challenge the status quo by opting for African-friendly approaches to Biblical Studies. The words of Masenya (ngwana’ Mphahlele) come to mind here:

> It is in such a context (in) which black liberation theologians, being dissatisfied with Western theologies regarding their incapacity and/or unwillingness to challenge the oppressive status quo, emerged. We know very well that doing such theologies in those days could land oneself in prison! Yet, these were theologies that addressed the real needs of the African people.\(^8\)

Such defiant moves would have been almost impossible on the part of both lecturer and student alike. Why? Both the developers of Biblical Studies syllabi and courses were (and continue) to be basically white Afrikaner men. Moreover, most of these belonged (and continue to belong) to the Reformed Protestant tradition.\(^9\) Many of the scholars taught and continue to teach, Biblical Studies through the lens of the West. The words of late Professor Ferdinand Deist (one of the South African OT scholars [SA OT]) come to mind here:

> However, I must confess that I am sometimes irritated by a certain colonial inferiority complex that still haunts our academic work. This complex is best illustrated by a tendency in our work to accept and follow without due critical assessment every ‘latest trend’ from abroad as gospel for biblical interpretation. We are so busy ‘keeping up with the Joneses’ that we do not consciously ask ourselves whether what we are importing has any relevance whatsoever for our own questions, and whether what we are accepting as valid can indeed be viewed as such from our cultural perspective. Our inferiority complex makes it important for us to be ‘one up’ on our colleagues in the next congress. So we feverishly ride our individually imported hobby horses and memorise the latest jaw-

\(^4\) Maluleke’s remarks about the various functions which the Bible serves within the context of Christian Africa is worthy of note: “The Bible has therefore served, and continues in many places to serve, as the most accessible basic vernacular literature text, a storybook, a compilation of novels and short stories, a book of prose and poetry, a book of spiritual devotion (i.e. the ‘Word of God’) as well as a ‘science’ book that ‘explains’ the origins of all creatures.” Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, “The Bible among African Christians: A Missiological Perspective,” in Teresa Okure (ed), *To Cast Fire upon the Earth: Bible and Mission Collaborating in Today’s Multicultural Global Context* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2000), 91-92.
\(^6\) Smit, “The Bible and Ethos”, 61.
breakers of our theory of biblical interpretation (cf also Loader 1988) – only to lose sight of our continent and the contribution we can make from its perspective.10

As Deist continues to lament the South African Old Testament (SA OT) scholars’ detachment from the African context in their teaching of Old Testament (Biblical) Studies, he says, “Today, nearly twenty years later we, as Old Testament scholars, have yet to take cognisance of our African context”.11

Such an African-detached stance to the teaching of a subject that is Bible-based, in a setting where Christianity has been growing rapidly in recent years, is unfortunate. It should however be noted that although the gatekeepers to the discipline of Biblical Studies have historically been white, and even as they basically continue to be white (cf the present face of both the Old Testament Society of South Africa and the New Testament Society of South Africa), there were a few Black theologians and biblical scholars who dared to approach the subject matter differently. These scholars chose to interrogate the subject matter of Biblical Studies against the grain. They allowed the concerns of those on the periphery to shape how they engage with theology and Biblical Studies. More prominent among the African biblical scholars,12 then, was Itumeleng Mosala. Although Biblical Studies as it was done by these scholars did not form a deliberate part of the mainstream “Biblical Studies”, and although these scholars have not written on the discipline of “mainstream” Biblical Studies (as it is being engaged with in the present paper), they contributed in a significant way to the discipline. Theirs was a Biblical Studies that spoke to the masses, the people’s Biblical Studies.

Taking into account the previously stated relationship between Biblical Studies and the Bible, a discussion on the latter is in order at this stage. Such an engagement will hopefully shed some light on the discipline of Biblical Studies in South Africa.

**The Christian Bible in South Africa**

That the Bible has been perceived and experienced as a double-edged sword by many persons of African descent, both on the continent and in the African Diaspora, has been well documented. The following familiar statement from an article written by a former black South African theologian, Takatso Mofokeng, says it all:

“When the white man came to our country he had the Bible and we had the land. The white man said to us ‘let us pray’. After the prayer, the white man had the land and we had the Bible.”13

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12 Regarding the existence of “African biblical scholarship” Maluleke, in disagreement with West argues that there cannot and ought not to be such a thing as “African biblical scholarship” in terms related to that of the western type of training. He says: “Except for a small minority, very few Black and African Biblical scholars have been able to do discipline-specific textual biblical studies.” Although his point is taken, particularly in terms of the broader African continent, in South Africa the possibility of such a specified training in Biblical Studies and Old or New Testament Studies existed, even as it continues to exist today. It is thus pertinent that those who are committed to doing justice to the biblical texts, be encouraged to do Biblical Studies, not as a soft option, but as a discipline that will enable them to be exposed to the worlds of the production of the texts in order to do justice to their interpretation today. Maluleke, “The Bible among African Christians,” 95. See also Gerald O. West, “Finding a place among the posts for post-colonial criticism in biblical studies in South Africa,” *OTE* 10 (1997), 322-342.
In Mofokeng’s view, there is a historical dilemma regarding the Bible’s position in Africa. As he expounds the statement on the perceived role of the Bible within the contexts of African peoples, he contends that:

1. The words reveal the pivotal place occupied by the Bible on the continuing process of colonisation, national oppression and exploitation.
2. They reveal the incomprehensible paradox of Africans being colonised by a Christian people, while simultaneously converted to their religion and its sacred texts. The Bible, in Mofokeng’s opinion, is the coloniser’s ideological weapon of colonisation and oppression.
3. The words also express a historic commitment which is accepted seriously by one generation, transferred to the next; a commitment to bring to an end the dispossession and exploitation of human beings by others.

The Bible is therefore viewed by Mofokeng, and many African scholars (both then and today), as both a problem and a solution. As can be gleaned from the preceding analysis, Black theologians believed that the Bible could be used as a weapon towards the liberation of oppressed peoples. For them, the liberation that was brought by Jesus of Nazareth was already foreshadowed by the liberation of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. Using the Exodus story as a model within their biblical hermeneutics, they foregrounded the notion of the preferential option for the poor, arguing that God was on the side of the oppressed and exploited. Argues Maimela:

Consequently, Black theologians argue, just as God liberated Israel not only from spiritual sin and guilt but also from oppressive political and economic deprivation, God will again liberate all oppressed people not from personal sins and guilt but also from the historical structures that are evil, exploitative and alienating. This according to Black Theology is the message of the Exodus story.

From their interaction with the biblical text, Black theologians thus went beyond the focus on Christianity and the Bible read through the lens of the African culture (cf enculturation theology) to engaging mainly the race and the class issues (socio-political and socio-economic) affecting the oppressed. Some of them (in particular Mosala and Mofokeng) went even to the extent of challenging the Bible, particularly the notion of the Bible as “Word of God”. The latter notion, reasons Mosala, cannot be a helpful starting point for a biblical hermeneutic of liberation that is geared towards the exploited masses. He thus contends: “The social, cultural, political and economic world of the black working class and peasantry constitutes the only valid hermeneutical starting point for a black theology of liberation.”

It occasions no surprise therefore that for Mosala, and those who opt for a materialist biblical hermeneutic, the import of the Exodus story lies not primarily on its inclusion in the canon of the Bible which sets great store by its call to obedience,

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15 Mofokeng, “Black Christians,” 34.
….but because it confirms and challenges the historical struggle of black workers and peasants, and can be appropriated by them in the interests of their liberation.  

Mosala cautions that the unproblematic acceptance by fellow Black theologians of the Bible as “Word of God” may not be an effective weapon towards the liberation of the oppressed as the readers may use elitist (oppressive) texts in their attempt to challenge an oppressive elitist status quo. He provides an example of Boesak’s reading of Genesis 4 in which Boesak associates the oppressor with Cain, the homeless. According to Boesak, “…the story is meant to tell us that the oppressors shall have no place on God’s earth. Oppressors have no home…”.

Apart from challenging the notion that the oppressors have never been homeless, Mosala argues that the oppressed in the story is instead Cain, who, representing the interests of the agricultural (peasant) sector of the economy was challenging Abel who represented the ruling class, the pastoral sector. He says: “Clearly, Cain, the tiller of the soil must be seen to represent the freeholding peasantry who became locked in a life-and-death struggle with the emergent royal and latifundiary classes, represented in this story by Abel.”

His reading of the book of Esther in the context of the struggle for the liberation of black women is another example of how Mosala problematises the notion of the Bible as “Word of God”. He sees the book of Esther as a patriarchal text and raises some objections against it. The book, in his view, uses a female character to achieve patriarchal ends, while it also subordinates gender struggles to national struggles. Through such a reading, the reader comes to grips with patriarchy as it is embedded within the Scriptures. In my view, Mosala ought to be lauded for being one of the few Black theologians who went beyond the categories of race and class to accommodate gender in his biblical hermeneutic, thus coming to terms with the fact that although the Black male theologians were haunted by racism and classism, they were the beneficiaries of the patriarchy embedded within the African culture. The theme of gender within African biblical hermeneutics in South Africa would later be foregrounded by a few African (women) biblical scholars, particularly post-1994.

South Africa went through an important transitional period – from political oppression to political liberation, from repression to freedom of speech, from an indirect imposition by the State of a one-faith tradition to total freedom of religion.

In the following paragraphs I give an overview of the discourses on Biblical Studies particularly during the transition period (1990-1993). Such a discussion will hopefully throw light on the state of the discipline today. During the transitional phase, differing voices (theologians, biblical scholars, religious leaders and the politicians), among others, were heard.

South African Talk about Biblical Studies in/to the Transitional Period and Beyond

On the one end of the spectrum were scholars who suggested that the status quo be retained. The latter would have meant that Biblical Studies and (Christian) Religious Studies continued to enjoy the status which they enjoyed in apartheid South Africa. On the other end were voices that, in the interest of being ‘politically correct’, proposed a radical turn of events. The advocates wished to make sure that a clean break was made with South Africa’s problematic political past. Punt argues:

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It is understandable then that the post-April 1994 government is reluctant to retain educational curricula which might create the impression of perpetuating Apartheid or Apartheid supportive sentiments.24

He reveals how the new South African leaders (both political and non-political) made attempts to rectify the inequities which were rampant during the apartheid era, such as the special role that Christianity, the Bible and Biblical Studies played then. In light of the preceding commitments by Black theologians and other transformation-orientated Bible readers, one wonders why Christianity and the Bible, as they were lived out then, would basically be viewed in negative terms.

Among the scholars who argued for a paradigm shift in the teaching of religious subjects was I.J.J. Spangenberg.25 Concerned that the teaching of religious education and Biblical Studies in the old South Africa was biased, privileging one reformed protestant tradition, Spangenberg argued that there is a need to listen to the call by Canaan S. Banana26 to heed other interpretive voices. The ignored voices included African, Asian and Latin American among others. These voices were previously neglected or ignored by South African biblical scholars. In his opinion, there was a need to move from the paradigm of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God, to that of understanding the Bible to be like any piece of religious literature on the experiences of people about God (the view almost akin to those of the Black theologians in the likes of Mosala and Mofokeng). He refers to Smith’s argument that the Bible’s capacity to inspire should not translate into the traditional understanding that the Bible is inspired.27

Among the scholars who advocated for a specific paradigm shift was Ferdinand Deist. In my opinion, Deist’s views are more relevant for the present essay because of his call for the Africanising of South African Old Testament Studies. He challenges heavily Eurocentric South African Old Testament scholarship to take the African context seriously.28

As he reveals the helpful impact that the discipline of Old Testament studies would witness if studied through an African lens, Deist asks the following profound questions:

What would the history of Israel have looked like had it been written with a profound knowledge of African socio-political traditions? What would the ‘God of the Old Testament’ have looked like had we observed him not through (idealist or materialist) European eyes, but through the eyes of African religions (see Mgadi 1982; Maimela 1985; Daneel1989)? How would we have appraised Old Testament poetry and wisdom literature had we read it against the backdrop of traditional African praise songs, work songs and funeral dirges? How would we have interpreted the book of Lamentations had we read it against the background of South African migrant workers’ songs? How would we have evaluated and interpreted Old Testament ‘myths’ had we not been fascinated by Western rationalist scepticism?29

This aspect of detachment from Africa in South African Biblical Studies is also captured by Masenya (ngwana’ Mphahlele) in her article entitled: “Can White South African Old Testament Scholarship be

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26 Banana argues that God’s revelation, as it appears in the Christian Bible, is not only insufficient in terms of being all inclusive. It is also not necessarily more special than that which God has revealed to other people of God outside of Israel. He therefore reasons that: “Room must always be left for further revelation and growth of understanding. It must be borne in mind that a large number of factors limit the revelation including the cultural environment in which particular communities find themselves. Holiness is a product of human imagination. To define certain areas as holy and by implication others as profane is indulging in a religious game of chess.” Canaan Banana, “The Case for a New Bible,” in I. Mukonyora, J.L. Cox and F. Verstraelen (eds) “Rewriting” the Bible: The Real Issues: Perspectives from within Biblical and Religious Studies in Zimbabwe (Gweru: Mambo Press,1993), 19.
African?”\textsuperscript{30} She details her journey and struggles through the subject of Biblical Studies during apartheid South Africa.\textsuperscript{31} She laments the foreignness, not only of the Biblical Studies which she was made to learn during her undergraduate studies, but also its incapacity to address the concerns of the African continent.

Having glimpsed the discourse about Biblical Studies in and through the transitional period in South Africa, this essay will benefit from a brief discussion of what the content and the perceived function of the subject was/is.

**The Discipline of Biblical Studies: An Overview of its History and Content in South Africa**

In his article entitled “A Panorama of Biblical Studies”, J.C. Malan gives a helpful overview of the general functioning of Biblical Studies in Southern Africa.\textsuperscript{32} To that end, Malan uses the core syllabus for Biblical Studies in the South African higher education institutions; the syllabus which was accepted by the academic society of Biblical Studies, that is, the Biblical Studies Society of Southern Africa, back in the sixties. He gives a short description of the survey which he conducted with many universities and colleges of education which offered Biblical Studies, mainly in South Africa, and one in Namibia. The conclusion Malan comes to is that most of the syllabi do not deviate from the core-syllabus of Biblical Studies as was proposed by the academic society. The content at first year level (present day level 5) includes the following: introduction to the study of the Bible (the historical books); background studies (archaeological, historical, geographical and cultural); basic principles in the exposition of scripture, as well as the Old Testament and New Testament themes in historical perspectives. Such content then served as a basis for further development into the second and third levels of study.\textsuperscript{33} The following observations by Malan are relevant for our engagement:

1. He laments the lack of life-relatedness of the Biblical Studies content in the tertiary education syllabuses, although in his view, the syllabi are of good quality.\textsuperscript{34}
2. He reasons that the primary and secondary syllabi, though providing a potential for good quality, are not as good as they could have been.

Having glanced through the contents of the Biblical Studies syllabi, in the South African tertiary institutions, we now investigate what is perceived as its value.

**The Role/Function of the Discipline of Biblical Studies: Value Formation or Something Else?**

In his article titled “Biblical Studies in South Africa? The Case for Moral Values”, Jeremy Punt, a South African New Testament scholar, considers the role of Biblical Studies in the new South Africa.\textsuperscript{35} He enters the debate on religion and Christianity’s role in a new ‘sensitive’ South African setting. In that setting, argued Punt, various leaders, both political and non-political, tried very hard to be politically correct.\textsuperscript{36} They refused to be viewed as repeating some of the ills of the apartheid era, such as privileging Christianity over all the other religions.\textsuperscript{37}

Punt engages the discourse on Biblical Studies with the aim of revealing what he deems to be the significant role which Biblical Studies, as a course within the arts / humanities / social sciences, can play in

\textsuperscript{30} Masenya, “White South African OT Scholarship?,” 3.
\textsuperscript{31} Masenya, “White South African OT Scholarship?,” 5-7.
\textsuperscript{33} Malan, “The Panorama,” 57.
\textsuperscript{34} Malan, “The Panorama,” 51.
\textsuperscript{36} Punt, “Biblical Studies,” 2.
\textsuperscript{37} Punt, “Biblical Studies,” 3.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
post-apartheid South Africa. He starts by first engaging the issue of ‘political correctness’ in which, as already hinted, the new leaders made efforts to rectify the inequities which typified the apartheid era. The latter included the special role that Christianity, the Bible and Biblical Studies played and how these were used to serve problematic political agendas. Punt warns that such a setting, if given the upper hand, could be detrimental to the place of Biblical Studies as a subject. He says:

Biblical Studies will have to avoid changing into a vaguely defined course with mixed-grill content and becoming a theology of the marketplace: a fad and fashionable course.

In Punt’s view, the celebration of political relevancy or correctness, without substance, will obscure the continuing critical and proven liberating potential of Biblical Studies. He thus cautions the leaders, including the policymakers of the new South Africa, to take cognisance of creating a balance between rectifying the past in terms of how Biblical Studies was usually taught, without throwing out the baby with the bath water. That, in my view, Punt does due to his conviction of the perceived significance of Biblical Studies as a university subject.

In his opinion, Biblical Studies as a course in the arts curriculum can assist in bringing moral values to such a curriculum. Smith shares the same sentiments when he hypothesises that the Bible (which is the central book in Biblical Studies) has the capacity to influence the moral world of the society. It thus has the capacity to influence South African people.

In Punt’s view, without bringing values into play, the possibility of affecting real and sustainable change in the political and constitutional democratic South Africa will be severely curtailed or even made impossible. The challenge is to have the ‘human face of our society’ restored. In this, the humanities, unlike the indirect influences at work in theology and education faculties, have a direct impact on society by addressing the full nature of human life in all its manifestations.

In a democratic South Africa with its large Christian constituency, the ‘ethical formative’ value of Biblical studies cannot be ruled out or discounted. With the formative value of Biblical Studies, the inculcation of values within the South African youth would be carried out.

It is curious though to note that the arguments for the capacity of Biblical Studies for moral formation as argued by Punt in the preceding paragraphs do not quite tally with Malan’s findings on the significance of Biblical Studies during apartheid South Africa. First, the main function of Biblical Studies then (and dare one say even today) was/is to stress the scientific study of the Bible and pursue objectives such as the following: knowledge, understanding, insight and professional equipment. The latter function was noted by ten universities and nineteen colleges of education. Although Deist’s observations regarding the approach to the discipline were based on the syllabi for Biblical Studies at school levels, in my view they can be applied to the teaching of the subject at institutions of higher learning. The basic presupposition underlying Biblical Studies at school level, argues Deist, is that of idealism, if not Platonism. The syllabi focused on the systematic teaching of the contents of the Bible, the biblical message, and the teachings of the church. For instance, in the introduction to the new syllabus for Biblical Studies we read that the cognitive aims of the syllabus are: to conduct an academic, scientific study of the Bible with the following components

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40 Punt, “Biblical Studies,” 1-14

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
among others, a general introduction to the Bible as a whole, as well as an introduction to selected books, a study of literature types in the Bible; a study of the elementary rules of biblical exegesis, a study of stipulated topical biblical themes.46

In Deist’s view, such basic presuppositions as idealism or Platonism would make sense in some sections of the West but not necessarily in Africa. He thus laments the fact that through the teaching of Biblical Studies, Western epistemological categories are imposed on African students. Traditional African thinking, argues Deist, proceeds from a premise directly opposite to that of Platonism. In terms of Western categories, one could call this premise pragmatic rather than idealist, practical rather than theoretical.47

In Deist’s view, we are faced with the problematic simultaneity of different, conflicting forms of consciousness48 in which one form of consciousness was intentionally allowed to dominate the other. Apartheid systems of education were not helpful in negotiating constructively in and through the differences because differences were viewed as insurmountable. It is no wonder, argued Deist, that the present syllabi, instead of bridging the distance, still force African people to receive their education on the basis of Western epistemological assumptions, thereby contributing to feelings of alienation and resistance.49

Second, to a lesser extent though, the formative value of the subject was noted by some institutions. In that regard, Malan observed: “In some cases, the spiritual and generally formative value of Biblical Studies is stressed (3 universities, 5 colleges).”50

In my view, both functions – that of sharpening the cognitive faculties of students as well as enabling their moral formation – need to be welcomed. The call by Deist for redress and for creating a balance must be heeded, particularly in a context where the African knowledge systems and epistemologies were pushed to the background.

**Future in View of the Present?**

When evaluating the role of Biblical Studies in the new South Africa, note was made of the debate on ‘political correctness’ concerning the teaching of religion in subjects like Biblical Studies. Mention was made that the new leaders tried hard to make sure that they made a clean break with the apartheid past. In the process, Biblical Studies became one of the victims. One of the arguments behind the loss of popularity in the subject was that there was an over-production of secondary school teachers in the humanities. Indeed, given the apartheid designated type of education for black students (Bantu Education), with a deliberate emphasis on the humanities, rather than on the natural sciences, and the perceived nature of matric Biblical Studies as one of the soft options, most black students ended up taking the subject at matric level. What is disturbing though is that many students, who then registered the subject at university level, ended up not going far enough with it. Very few of these students proceeded into graduate studies with Biblical Studies. Does it occasion any surprise then, that there remains, even today, very few African South African scholars with a PhD in Biblical Studies? A major setback indeed, particularly given the Eurocentric orientation of the Biblical Studies syllabi as well as the mushrooming of many neo-Pentecostal churches, in which every Tom, Dick and Harry believe that they have the capacity to handle the Bible without proper training in Biblical Studies!

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50 Malan, “The Panorama,” 54.
Particularly in the post-apartheid South Africa, there is a need to construct/reformulate/restructure Africa-conscious syllabi. With a grave scarcity of qualified organic African biblical scholars, who, other such intellectuals, can do more justice to the transformation of such offerings? Masoga is right when he argues, as previously mentioned, that:

Organic readers are formally produced by the periphery and advanced to the center to learn the ropes in the center, and their sole responsibility is the periphery. They have a task to advance the periphery to become itself and not a copy cat of the center. To be sure, we need organic readers to be empowered by the periphery and with the mandate of the periphery.\(^{51}\)

It is therefore heartening to see the works of post-apartheid African biblical scholars, the second / third generation of Black theologians carrying the baton from their brothers and sisters by addressing the pertinent themes of our day. The themes include the Bible and postcolonial hermeneutics as it relates to the context of African women in the post-colonial, post-apartheid South Africa;\(^{52}\) the reconfiguration and rereading of the Book of Ezra-Nehemiah in light of the post-apartheid era;\(^{53}\) deliberately bringing the African context to bear on New Testament texts;\(^{54}\) and the HIV and AIDS sensitive biblical hermeneutic\(^{55}\) among others. Much still needs to be done in this area though. And it is pertinent that in the interests of redress, such works and themes be given a fair share within the revised Biblical Studies syllabi.

Because of such calls to level the ground in terms of religious subjects in the new South Africa, Biblical Studies ended up losing its status as a matric subject. Consequently, universities and colleges of education were depleted of the number of first year Biblical Studies students. The reduction also contributed to lower enrollments for theology and such courses. In the process, many theology faculties were closed down while religion subjects like Biblical Studies were pushed further into the background. The subject continues to be offered in some South African universities, basically as it was offered in the previous dispensation.

In my view, it is unfortunate that Biblical Studies as a discipline met its fate at the schools level and, largely, in the institutions of higher learning before the following occurred:

1. The subject had acquired an African flavour, without its contents and methodologies being deliberately shaped by African epistemologies. However, in the multi-racial, globalised South African setting, the reality of the diversity of races and the impact of globalisation dictate that such dynamics also influence the revised content of Biblical Studies.

2. On account of the androcentric and anthropocentric nature of our university and college offerings through the years, Biblical Studies that are gender-sensitive and earth-conscious would go a long way in contributing constructively to debates on the ecological crisis and climate change.

3. Due to the reality of the pandemic of HIV and AIDS on the African continent and elsewhere, and the multi-faceted nature of the pandemic, so is the need for a multi-sectorial approach in dealing with the challenge posed by it. It is pertinent that the discourse on the pandemic be mainstreamed in all the offerings of higher education institutions, including Biblical Studies.


\(^{52}\) M. K. Nzimande, “Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation in Post-Apartheid South Africa: נק’d in the Hebrew Bible in the Light of Queen Jezebel and the Queen Mother of Lemuel” (PhD dissertation, Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas, USA, 2005).


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Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
4. In a context in which the main focus/aim of teaching Biblical Studies was/is, to a great extent, to scientifically study the Bible, thus pursuing knowledge, understanding and insight, such understanding and criticality should also be brought to bear on real life issues such as post-apartheid racism, patriarchy, xenophobia, HIV and AIDS. Such a combination enables our syllabi to contribute positively to the transformation of our contexts. As we do that, we might find the following words by De Gruchy helpful:

Without claiming to be value-free in our approach, and without playing down religious commitments in any way, the true religious educator will strive to present the history, phenomena and sources of religious traditions in such a way that neither his intention nor the effect of his (sic) teaching will produce puppets, but men and women who may come to full maturity as people, who will have some understanding of the traditions which have so profoundly shaped us and our modern world and who will be able to make their own commitments with integrity.\(^{56}\)

Bibliography


BIBLICAL STUDIES IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA:
SOME METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Lovemore Togarasei

Introduction

The Bible is the basis upon which Christians reflect on the nature of their relationship with God. Although church tradition and reason also play a role in the formulation of Christian doctrine, it is the Bible which has the most profound effect. This is particularly true in Africa where the authority of the Bible is rarely questioned even by those outside the church. Whereas N. T Wright notes the subjective authority of the Bible in the West, in Africa the Bible remains authoritative whether “open or closed,” to quote the words of G. West. Discussing sources of African theology J. Pobee identifies the Bible as the “foundation document of the Church” and argues that African theology has to be rooted in it. Also in discussing theological education in Africa, S. P. Ango argues for the use of the Bible saying, “The curriculum (for African theological education) should integrate the Bible in theory and practice, with the Bible being a vital part of the content and integrated with all subject matter.”

Unfortunately the methodology to be employed in this use of the Bible in African theological education continues to call for further reflection. As Christianity continues to grow in Africa, it is time to reflect on the way the Bible should be studied in theological education in Africa. Whereas African Initiated Churches (AICs) have made great strides in contextualizing the Bible, the same is not true of the historical/mission/mainline churches. J. N. Amanze describes contextualization of the biblical message in these churches as just “cosmetic”. But although Amanze celebrates AICs’ contextualization of the Bible, this contextualization is not without its own problems. Often the interpretation is not guided by specific methodologies. This article therefore reflects on how Biblical Studies should continue to be undertaken in Africa, especially as the numbers of Christians in the continent continue to increase. I specifically focus on the methods of study to be used in agreement with S.O. Abogunrin that “the quest for new ways of interpreting the Bible in Africa is not only legitimate, but also an important part of the development that will lead to authentic Christianity in Africa.” Abogunrin’s sentiments were also expressed earlier by J. Parrat when he noted that the area of biblical studies, although necessary for African theology, was somewhat neglected. I focus here on biblical interpretation for theological education in agreement with K. A.

1 Nicholas T. Wright, Scripture and the Authority of God (London: SPCK, 2005), 11.
Dickson who says the purpose of theological education should be to produce people who are able to “serve and to minister to all people in the various relationships in which they live.”

**The Bible in African Theological Education**

Theological education in Africa is provided at various levels from schools to universities. In a number of African countries, school children are introduced to the stories of the Bible in their Religious and/or Moral Education classes. Whereas other countries have abandoned Biblical Studies for multi-faith and multicultural Religious Education, there are also other countries, e.g. Zimbabwe, which still offer pure Bible Knowledge subjects in schools. Zimbabwe also continues to offer Divinity as an Advanced Level subject with students here studying the Bible from the prophets to the letters of Paul. Other countries like Botswana, however, do not offer such biblical studies subjects.

Apart from schools, theological education is also offered in seminaries. Whereas D. Tutu would talk of countable seminaries in Africa in the 1970s, today Africa can boast of so many seminaries offering theological education to would-be priests and pastors. In such seminaries biblical studies is a key area of study. The study of the Bible in seminaries (especially those of main line churches) is almost similar to its study in most universities. This is also because most of these seminaries are affiliated to some Universities. For example, in Zimbabwe more than six seminaries ranging from Baptist to Roman Catholic and Anglican seminaries, offer the University of Zimbabwe Diploma in Religious Studies programme as affiliates. Biblical studies in these seminaries therefore follow biblical studies at the University of Zimbabwe.

In universities, Biblical Studies is offered in faculties of Theology, Arts, Humanities, Education or other such names. Whereas a few institutions have departments of Biblical Studies or separate departments of Old Testament/New Testament (e.g. University of Stellenbosch), many institutions provide Biblical Studies in departments of Theology and Religious Studies (e.g. at University of Botswana) or in departments of Religious Studies (e.g. University of Cape Town) or some other similar names such as University of Zimbabwe’s department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy. In these departments the field of Biblical studies focuses on biblical content, methodology, theology and the study of biblical languages:—Classical Hebrew and Koine Greek.

**Approaches to the Study of the Bible**

There are basically two approaches to the study of the Bible academically: the historical approach and the functional approach. The historical approach views the Bible as any other historical document, with its theological nature and current value largely ignored if at all reckoned with. On the basis of such a persuasion, the Bible is not privileged as such, nor is there a distinction made between the Bible and other historical-religious literary sources. In addition, and consequently, the Bible is not looked upon as a body of authoritative literature by which Christian communities ought to fashion their lives, values and convictions. The historical approach is also called the scientific approach. The approach rejects all overt religious, sociopolitical or theological engagement. E. Fiorenza thinks this is because the approach arose as a struggle of religious scholarship to free itself from dogmatic and ecclesiastical controls that had

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10 These are categories discussed by E. S. Fiorenza. See Peter Nyende, “Addressing Ethnicity Via Biblical Studies: A Task of African Biblical Scholarship,” *Neotestamentica* 44:1 (2010), 122-139.
dominated the history of the interpretation of the Bible. On the other hand, the functional approach understands the nature and function of the Bible in line with the way it is used by the Church and by society at large. The study of the Bible, according to this approach, is then grounded in the acknowledgement of its significance to Christian communities and perhaps, as Nyende suggests, in the fact that the Bible is too potent and relevant to Christian communities to be left to ignorance. Fiorenza calls this approach theological biblical studies. Because the approach is religious and interested, scientific biblical scholars consider it partial and unscientific.

The two approaches mentioned above are important in discussing approaches to the study of the Bible in Africa. Theological education in Africa was introduced by missionaries from the West. As has long been observed and argued, these missionaries did not only bring the Bible but also brought with them Western culture and civilization. This cultural and intellectual baggage they brought indeed influenced the way they interpreted the Bible and consequently the way they taught theology. Thus the history of the academic study of the Bible in Africa is that of the historical approach. The early African biblical interpreters emphasized the scientific (disinterested and objective) interpretation of the Bible. Today literal and cultural approaches have been added but, more often than not, the historical critical is called for particularly by those trained in Western schools. A distinction is, therefore, made between academic biblical interpretation which is (or better, should be) objective and disinterested and theological interpretation which, by all intents and purposes, is subjective and interested. But although this approach influenced the study of the Bible for almost two centuries, most African biblical scholars are now rejecting it. Even some Western scholars, especially from former marginalized groups (women, blacks/Africans) have also rejected this dichotomisation. Fiorenza, for example, notes that these distinctions are relativised if seen in a postmodern and postcolonial context. She sees scientific biblical scholarship as the same as fundamentalism since both insist that scholars are able to produce a single scientific, true, reliable and non ideological reading of the Bible, an approach she says has for long been dominated by the Western educated clergymen in the interest of imperial, cultural and political benefits.

Whereas the scientific approach would be appropriate in a context where the authority of the Bible is debated, in Africa this approach has been found wanting. This is because the scientific approach results in the eclipse of those biblical readings that are located in religious communities and have as their goal spiritual nourishment and motivation. Numerically, the majority of African readers of the Bible are located in the religious communities. Biblical Studies in Africa and methodologies to be used therefore have to consider this fact. The rest of this article therefore focuses on such methodological considerations.

Methodological Considerations in African Biblical Studies

Above we argued that the Bible remains authoritative in African Christianity today. This, however, does not simplify issues. The authority of the Bible also presents problems as it presents high chances of its abuse. K. Nurnberger talks of the problems of the Bible as its complexity and disorganized form. He says, “There are seemingly alternative versions of the same story, seemingly conflicting worldviews, seemingly

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contradictory theological statements, seemingly untenable scientific assumptions, seemingly unethical commandments...." 18 Biblical Studies in Africa needs to start from this point. Although the Bible remains the authoritative word of God sharing a similar culture with traditional Africa, 19 it needs to be accepted that its world view differs from our world view today. This calls for some level of objectivity in interpreting it. This level of objectivity becomes difficult when specific methodologies of interpretation have not been thought through.

Given the above, the first methodological consideration for biblical studies should be the use of a specific method(s). If the world view of the Bible is different from ours, then the Bible needs to be interpreted for today’s audience with the method of interpretation clearly stated. It is my reading that this is not emphasized by many African scholars who interpret the Bible. This skill should therefore be emphasized in African theological education. But as we have already noted above, that biblical scholars should approach the Bible with neutral and objective tools and methods is no longer accepted particularly by African scholars. N. T. Wright underscores this point saying,

Nobody really believes any more the old idea that biblical scholars, equipped with neutral and objective tools and methods, provide the ‘facts’ about scripture which the systematic theologians can then ‘interpret.’ Anyone who has worked within biblical studies knows or ought to know, that we biblical scholars come to the text with just as many interpretative strategies and expectations as anyone else.... 20

I believe that this, however, should not mean that any interpretation of the Bible should be accepted. Rather I believe as Wright further argues, that integrity in biblical interpretation consists “not of having no presuppositions but of being aware of what one’s presuppositions are and of the obligation to listen to and interact with those who have different ones.” 21 Biblical interpretation, if it is to achieve desired results, should therefore be guided by a specific method(s). In interpreting biblical texts, scholars should declare the methods that they are employing. Yes, today the postmodern/cultural paradigm of biblical scholarship calls for a multiplicity of biblical meanings but each interpretation should be specific of its objectives and therefore of its methodology. G. West calls this declaring one’s social and interpretative interests’. 22 If this is not clearly spelt out there could be a danger of people reading their emotions, culture and personal experiences into the Bible resulting in all kinds of meanings given to biblical texts. This poses a danger as a Bible which can mean anything is a dangerous Bible.

In doing the above, another methodological consideration for biblical interpretation in Africa I would like to suggest is the use of proper methods that achieve the objectives of Africa. It is now clear, as discussed above that it is not possible to interpret the Bible objectively. Each person approaches the Bible with specific questions that arise from one’s time and circumstances. Even the methods of biblical interpretation developed to achieve uninterested interpretation were influenced by “the prevailing modes of thought and philosophical interests associated with the Enlightenment.” 23 Mosala identifies these modes and interests in the emerging capitalist world in the West. 24 For this reason, Nyende advocates for methods

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19 This is a position that has been underlined by Kwesi A. Dickson, “Continuity and Discontinuity Between the Old Testament and African Life and Thought,” in Kofi Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres (eds), African Theology En Route: Papers from the Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1977), 95-108 and Dickson, Theology in Africa.
20 Wright, Scripture and the Authority of God, 11.
21 Wright, Scripture and the Authority of God, 11.
22 West, The Academy of the Poor, 50.
23 Dickson, Theology in Africa, 142.
24 Itumeleng J. Mosala, Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989),

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
that take seriously the historical context of biblical writings as these show that God spoke to real people at
real times and that that message is universal and of permanent value, and thus must be identified for, with
and in, every culture and historical situation. West therefore calls for critical consciousness. I believe
enough has not been done to underline this need for biblical interpretation in Africa. Students in African
theological institutions should be taught to ask structured and systematic questions in the process of
reading the Bible. Honesty in biblical study compels us to ask the historical questions and use all the
available methods at our disposal to address those questions before coming to use answers to these
questions in our context. Thus Dickson is right to say that there are two unavoidable guidelines for the
study of the Bible: knowing the Bible story as it is and asking questions relevant to one’s circumstances.
These guidelines should point to the specific methods to be used for interpretation. No more then should
African theological education continue to be a regurgitation of Western theology. This is true of methods
of biblical studies used in Africa. Yes it is important to learn and use the methods suggested by Western
scholars, but African scholars should proceed to ask questions leading to the study of the Bible that
underscores their circumstances.

Another methodological consideration in biblical studies in Africa is the use of African thought forms
and worldviews in interpretation. To some extent this has been happening for some time now. As early as
the 1970s, African scholars noticed the need to take seriously African traditions and thought forms in
biblical interpretation in Africa. At the Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians held in Accra,
Ghana in 1977, K. A. Dickson and M.A. Oduyoye both presented papers calling for this kind of
approach to the Bible in Africa. Dickson looked at the continuity and discontinuity between the Old
Testament and African life and thought and Oduyoye underlined the value of African religious beliefs and
practices for Christian theology. J. S. Ukpong calls this erecting “bridgeheads” for communicating the
biblical message in Africa. African culture and tradition need to be engaged in interpreting the Bible in
Africa. But unlike in the comparative approach where African culture and religion were seen as
preparatio evangelica, here I am arguing for the use of these in further illuminating the teaching of the
Gospel. In Africa this requires that the African world view, rooted in African culture, be taken into
consideration in communicating theological truth. This position is supported by many African biblical
scholars. C.U. Manus, for example, suggests that “indigenous non-biblical material should be appropriated
as resources for biblical studies in Africa.” He says this is both theologically legitimate and contextually
urgent. He further proposes what he calls “folklorizing” which means a retrieval of indigenous African
narratives, folktales and poetry for reconstructing biblical theology in the context of African cultures.
However, such scholars agree that there are elements of African tradition and culture which are
dehumanising and therefore deserve to be eliminated in the process of interpretation. My consideration
then is that the use of African thought forms should not result in the syncretisation of the religion but rather
should be used to allow Africans to understand the gospel through their our culture. This therefore should
be done together with the next consideration.

43.
26 West, The Academy of the Poor, 46.
27 Dickson, Theology in Africa, 142.
28 Dickson, “Continuity and Discontinuity,” 95-108.
Kubi and Sergio Torres (eds), African Theology En Route, 109-116.
30 Justin S. Ukpong, “Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Africa: Historical and Hermeneutical Directions,” in
Gerald O. West and Musa W. Dube (eds), The Bible in Africa, 11-28.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
To achieve the methodological approach of using African tradition and thought forms suggested above, African biblical studies has to engage fully with African languages. Quoting Wayne Meeks, E. S. Fiorenza notes that language is not literal but cultural-contextual.32 J. S. Pobee makes the same observation arguing that language is more than syntax and morphology as it is the vehicle for assuming culture.33 Thus biblical interpretation in Africa should involve a translation and a relook at how certain biblical texts were translated by missionaries. This is because Western ideas obviously found their way into missionary translations since the missionaries had control of the final published translations.34 This has been established in some studies on missionary translation of the Bible into Setswana and Shona languages.35 Biblical interpretation in Africa should therefore be done with reference to the original languages of the Bible and the African languages to which the Bible has been translated. This is indeed an area that has so far received little attention. There is a need to introduce courses on Bible translation in among other Biblical Studies courses. To do so African biblical scholars need to work closely with scholars in departments of African languages.

Biblical Studies in African theological education should also address the existential realities of Africa: diseases, famine, poverty, witchcraft, gender inequalities, deaths through accidents, and so on. Following K. Stendhal, E. S. Fiorenza refers to this approach as the “public health department” of biblical studies.36 She says there has been a turn from biblical scholars as professionalized disinterested scientists to critically engaged public intellectuals. Citing Martin Prozesky, who discussed the need for Religious Studies to engage the practical needs in which it is done, Fiorenza argues the same for Biblical Studies. She says in doing this kind of biblical studies, the questions to be asked should be,

How has this text been used and how is it used today to defy or corroborate hegemonic political systems, laws, science, medicine or public policy? How has biblical interpretation been used and how is the Bible still used either to challenge or to protect powerful interests and to engender socio-cultural, political and religious change? How is the Bible used to define public discourse and groups of people? What is the vision of society that is articulated through biblical texts? Is, and how is, Scripture used to marginalize certain people, to legitimate racism and other languages of hate, or is it used to intervene in discourses of injustice?37

This should surely be the approach taken by African biblical studies. Africa is home to many challenges that scholars of the Bible cannot afford to concentrate on historical questions of the Bible that have no direct bearing to the needs and challenges of the consumers of their theology. As S. P. Ango says in relation to theology, “Only when Christian education addresses real-life issues in Africa in a practical way will it become a means of improving, developing and nurturing the church in its authentic walk with Christ so that the applied word of God will have a positive impact on our societies.”38 This should also be the case with Biblical studies. African Bible scholars should study the Bible with the aim of relating it to the church and to the life of the society.39 They should engage in hermeneutics that advocate ways of interpreting the Bible which are engaged ecclesially, socio-politically and economically with African issues. West calls this

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32 Fiorenza, The Power of the Word, 49.
36 Fiorenza, Rhetoric and Ethic, 58.
37 Fiorenza, Rhetoric and Ethic, 33.
socially engaged biblical scholarship. He says in doing this socially engaged biblical scholarship, scholars must, however, be cautious to remain critical. To do this he calls for both a hermeneutic of suspicion and a hermeneutic of trust. The hermeneutic of suspicion underlines the subjective nature of any method of interpretation as discussed above while the hermeneutic of trust underlines that empowering and liberating interpretations of the Bible are possible. Elsewhere I argue that biblical interpretation in Africa needs to be justice seeking and life affirming.

The last consideration I will discuss for biblical studies in theological education in Africa is the need to take seriously popular/ordinary readings. This is because in Africa the Bible is studied from homes to Universities. The majority of the users do not fall in the category of scholars of the Bible. It is my contention that if products of African theological education are to be relevant in their communities, they need to approach the community members not as tabula rasa in terms of biblical interpretation but with the full knowledge that these readers have their own ways of reading and interpreting the Bible. This approach has been used by scholars like West and Gabaitse, however, it is an approach that need to be popularized. If we are to be aware of the way people use the Bible, the academy has to take seriously how ordinary readers read the Bible.

Conclusion

As Africa continues to be the centre of Christianity, theological education needs to be strengthened for it to speak to the African Christians. Biblical Studies plays an important part in this process as the Bible remains the foundation document of the Church. In this article I have argued for specific methodological considerations in doing Biblical Studies for theological education in Africa. I focused on the education of those under training for theological work. It has been argued that Biblical Studies in African theological education should be taken as a social-political and cultural practice that takes public responsibility. Theological education has to achieve this purpose. In the words of K. A. Dickson it must be able to bring out a product who, among other things, must be able to interpret scripture relevantly and together with others, design practical plans for individual and common action accordingly, thereby enabling people to be conscious of their situation, possibilities and mission and involving them in the same. However, it needs to be underlined that this approach should not result in a syncretic African Christianity at odds with Christianity elsewhere in the world. Rather, as Abogunrin says, “The task before biblical scholars in Africa is for a Christology (in our case a theology) that is authentically African, but which is at the same time catholic and from which Christians from other continents can draw lessons, inspiration and encouragement.” This is a position that has been underlined in this article.

42 West, *The Academy of the Poor*.
44 Dickson, *Theology in Africa*, 203-204.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Bibliography


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*Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa*


L'HÉBREU BIBLIQUE DANS L’ENSEIGNEMENT THÉOLOGIQUE EN AFRIQUE CENTRALE

Lévi Ngangura Manyanya et Viateur Ndikumana

Introduction

Actuellement, certains facteurs semblent plaider en faveur de la disparition des langues bibliques dans les curricula des institutions de formation théologique en Afrique centrale. Il y a des pasteurs qui, n’ayant pas suivi de formation théologique universitaire mais dont les prédications attirent des foules immenses, doutent de la pertinence de l’apprentissage des langues bibliques et de l’étude scientifique de la Bible. Ils se contentent des textes traduits et surtout des lectures fondamentalistes, relayées par les mouvements sectaires et favorisées par le contexte de crise qui caractérisent la situation sociale, politique et économique du continent. On se demande dans cette situation s’il est indispensable, pour les futurs pasteurs d’Afrique, d’apprendre les langues bibliques pour bien prêcher et édifier le peuple de Dieu. De plus, avec l’énorme travail des sociétés bibliques et les traductions diverses de la Bible dans plusieurs langues africaines, on se pose la question de savoir s’il est toujours pertinent de continuer d’apprendre les langues bibliques souvent jugées difficiles.

Pour tenter de répondre à ces interrogations, il importe d’examiner la place et l’importance de l’étude de l’hébreu dans le contexte africain, analyser les affinités qui existent entre l’hébreu et les langues parlées actuellement en Afrique et voir si les contacts entre les populations qui parlent l’hébreu et les Africains peuvent être un atout à exploiter dans l’apprentissage de l’hébreu biblique en Afrique aujourd’hui. Comment l’hébreu biblique est-il enseigné dans les Facultés de théologie en Afrique centrale et quelles sont les difficultés rencontrées dans ce processus d’apprentissage ? Pourquoi l’hébreu biblique mérite-t-il d’être toujours enseigné et de garder sa place privilégiée dans l’étude de la Bible ?

1. L’hébreu biblique, sa place et son importance dans les études théologiques en Afrique

1.1. Les Hébreux et les Africains: échanges diverses et emprunts culturels ou littéraires

Les relations commerciales entre les populations du Levant et celles de l’Afrique, les habitants de la vallée du Nil notamment, remontent à un passé très lointain, probablement vers la fin du Ve millénaire avant l’ère chrétienne1. Ces échanges qui vont durer avec une certaine intensité jusqu’à notre époque sont aussi attestées par les découvertes archéologiques que par la Bible hébraïque (c’est-à-dire l’Ancien Testament pour les chrétiens). Les tablettes découvertes à El Amarna vers la fin du XIXe siècle attestent le contrôle de l’Égypte sur les cités-États cananéens dont les roitelets étaient des vassaux du Pharaon. Les guerres entre Egypte et Israël sont restées gravées dans la mémoire collective. La fameuse stèle triomphale de Minepah datant de 1207 avant l’ère chrétienne, située à l’ouest de Thèbes et connue sous le nom de « Stèle d’Israël » fait état de la défaite d’Israël et de la Palestine par l’armée égyptienne2.

Dans la Bible hébraïque, différents contacts entre l’Égypte et les royaumes d’Israël et de Judah sont surtout mentionnés à partir du Ier millénaire avant notre ère. On peut par exemple mentionner les

campagnes de Shéshonq Ier jusqu’en Galilée, vers 925, à l’époque de Jéroboam qui, d’après la Bible avait d’abord cherché asile en Égypte (1 R 11, 40) ; on a trouvé aussi une influence égyptienne dans l'iconographie palestinienne (des sceaux égyptianisants en Israël à l’époque des rois). La proximité avec l’Égypte s’exprime également dans ces récits des mariages entre les Hébreux et les Égyptiennes (Hagar avec Abraham en Gn 16, Joseph avec la fille d’un prêtre égyptien en Gn 41,45, Moïse avec une femme koushite, c’est-à-dire une originaire de l’actuelle Éthiopie, en Nb 12, Salomon avec une princesse égyptienne en 1 R 3,1 etc.) ou dans les diverses tentations des rois israélites de nouer l’alliance avec l’Égypte (voir les critiques prophétiques concernant le secours que l’Égypte peut offrir (Os, Es, Jr, Ez)3.

De même, en dépit de la description de l’Égypte comme « la maison de servitude » d’où le SEIGNEUR, Dieu d’Israël, a fait sortir son peuple (Ex 20,2-3 ;Dt 5,6-7), dans la grande histoire qui va du livre de l’Exode à celui de 2 Rois 25, plusieurs passages bibliques présentent l’Égypte comme la terre d’accueil, de refuge et de richesse. Abraham (Gn 12,10-20) et Joseph (Gn 42) y descendent pour fuir la famine qui sévit en Palestine ; les adversaires de Salomon (Hadad d’Edom, en 1 R 11,7 et Jéroboam en 1 R 11,40) y trouvent refuge pour échapper à la mort ; Ouriyahu (Jr 26,20-23) s’y exile mais le roi Yoyaqim, alors vassal de Pharaon, le récupère. On sait aussi qu’après la destruction de Jérusalem par les Babyloniens (587 avant notre ère), une partie des Judéens se réfugient en Égypte (2 R 25 ; Jr 42–44) 4. D’après Jr 44,1 les Judéens s’installent dans plusieurs régions du nord de l’Égypte comme Migdol, Daphné, Memphis et Patros. Les rédacteurs du livre de Jérémie (et ceux de celui d’Ézéchiel) pour lesquels le « vrai Israël » est constitué par les exilés de Babylone critiquent la descente en Égypte (Jr 46,15-16)5.

Les échanges entre l’Égypte et la Palestine ne se limitent pas seulement aux relations commerciales, sociales et politiques. Le lecteur ou la lectrice de la Bible est aussi très frappé par les emprunts culturels et littéraires. La sagesse6 de Juda, consignée par exemple dans le livre des Proverbes, semble être largement inspirée des recueils égyptiens si l’on compare Proverbes 22–23 avec l’enseignement d’Aménémopé. De même, l’histoire de Joseph (Gn 37–50) qui plaide en faveur de la cohabitation entre Israélites et Égyptiens s’inspire en partie du conte égyptien de deux frères, un classique de la fin de la xixe dynastie7. De plus, certains grands personnages bibliques portent des noms égyptiens : le nom de Pinhas, le petit-fils d’Aaron (Nb 25), est égyptien et signifie le « noir » (ou le « nubien »). Le nom de Moïse est une forme hébraïque d’un affixe courant en égyptien qui signifie « engendré par » ou « fils de »8.

Inversement, on trouve dans la littérature égyptienne des emprunts littéraire de la littérature juive. La chronique démotique rappelle souvent les prophéties apocalyptiques du livre de Daniel ; elle édite en outre des prophéties anciennes en les actualisant, un peu à la manière des pesharim (commentaires juifs) de Qumran.

3 Josias, le réformateur du culte judéen, qui ne voulait pas se soumettre à l’Égypte est tué à Megiddo en 609 par Néchao II. On pourrait également évoquer les campagnes militaires des Psammétique II (595-589) en Palestine qui ont précipité la fin du royaume de Juda.
4 D’après les documents araméens trouvés à Éléphantine, en face de Syène, et édités par P. Grelot cette communauté juive trouve son origine dans l’installation des mercenaires juifs aux alentours de la fin du 7e siècle avant notre ère.
5 L’oracle « Memphis deviendra une étendue désolée, brûlée, inhabitable » pourrait refléter la campagne du roi perse Cambysse vers 525 avant notre ère. Plusieurs textes d’Ézéchiel (par exemple les chapitres 16 et 23) accusent les Judéens de se prostituer depuis toujours l’Égypte ; Ez 20 reproche Israël de préférer le culte égyptien aux exigences du Dieu d’Israël ; cette polémique vise peut-être aussi la communauté juive installée à Elephantine qui, encore à l’époque perse, vénère Yahou (Dieu d’Israël) en compagnie de deux autres divinités comme Anat et Ashim-Bethel.
6 Le Nouveau Testament reconnait que toute la sagesse que Moïse a léguée à son peuple avait été apprise en Égypte (cf. Actes 7,12).
8 Thomas Römer, Moïse: « lui que Yahvé a connu face à face ». Paris: Gallimard (2002), 60.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
1.2 Affinités, parenté ou influence entre l’hébreu biblique et les langues africaines

L’hébreu entretient de grandes affinités avec plusieurs langues africaines. L’Arabe, très parlé en Afrique du Nord, et l’éthiopien ou le geez font avec l’hébreu partie d’un groupe des langues que l’on appelle, depuis le XVIIIᵉ siècle, langues sémitiques (Gn 10,21-31) pour remplacer l’appellation trop vague de « langues orientales ». Les caractéristiques qui différencient ces langues des autres groupes de langues peuvent être résumées en trois grands traits: l’existence ou prédominance des sons gutturaux et emphatiques, l’expression de l’idée-racine par trois consonnes et la fixité des consonnes qui forment la racine par opposition aux voyelles qui sont plus ou moins flottantes.

L’égyptien ancien, dont le copie est issu, semble avoir une même origine avec les langues sémitiques, même si par la suite il a connu une évolution différente et des modifications profondes qui s’expliquent par des influences étrangères et une séparation très ancienne avec celles-ci. Il garde de même certains traits communs aux langues sémitiques.

Une parenté probablement très éloignée peut aussi être envisagée entre les langues sémitiques et les langues hamitiques modernes, comme les langues berbères et les langues koushites (Bischari, Saho, ‘Afar, Somali). Les liens et les influences entre les langues sémitiques, l’hébreu notamment, avec les langues parlées en Afrique centrale n’ont pas encore fait objet de grandes discussions dans les travaux récents. Mais on rencontre facilement des mots voisins ou des racines communes entre certaines langues africaines et l’hébreu. C’est surtout le cas du swahili, très parlé dans plusieurs pays de l’Afrique centrale, qui doit avoir subi une influence de l’Arabe. À titre d’exemple, nous allons établir quelques similitudes à l’aide du tableau suivant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEBREU</th>
<th>SWAHILI11</th>
<th>AUTRES LANGUES AFRICAINES12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘ākal</td>
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</table>

11 Le swahili est une langue africaine généralement parlée dans plusieurs pays d’Afrique centrale, en Tanzanie, au Kenya et à l’Est de la République démocratique du Congo (où cette langue fait partie de quatre langues nationales du pays).

12 Les autres langues mentionnées ici sont notamment parlées au Rwanda ( kinyarwanda), au Burundi ( kirundi), au Cameroun ( douala) et en République démocratique du Congo ( mashi, et Tshiluba).
A partir de ce tableau synoptique, on peut bien noter que le rapprochement linguistique entre l’hébreu et certaines langues africaines est indéniable. Nous avons mentionné des mots qui font penser à l’existence des racines proches ou semblables. Mais les affinités linguistiques entre l’hébreu et les langues africaines ne se limitent pas seulement au niveau du vocabulaire. La morphologie et la syntaxe de l’hébreu, bien différentes de celles des langues occidentales comme le français ou l’anglais, trouvent plutôt des similitudes ou des correspondances avec les langues d’Afrique. On sait, par exemple, qu’en hébreu le verbe comprend sept formes de conjugaisons. L’action simple est exprimée par une forme verbale que les grammairiens appellent Qal, le léger, pendant que des schèmes factitifs, intensifs, causatifs, passifs ou réfléchis sont indiquées par des formes dérivées ou augmentées de la même racine verbale : le factitif ou l’intensité de l’action est exprimé par deux formes de conjugaison, le Pi‘el (actif) ou le Pu‘al (passif) ; le sens causatif est exprimé par deux autres formes de conjugaison, le Hiph‘îl (actif) et Hoph‘al (passif) ; l’action réfléchie ou réciproque est indiquée par le Hithpa‘el ou le Niph‘al, mais cette dernière forme de conjugaison peut également traduire le passif du Qal. Pour traduire ces formes de conjugaisons dérivées ou augmentées en français ou en anglais, on est souvent obligé de changer la racine, alors que les langues africaines trouvent des correspondances morphologiques dans la même racine du verbe qui exprime l’idée simple du qal hébreu. Nous allons montrer par les exemples qui suivent comment l’intensité de l’action, le sens causatif et l’action réfléchie du verbe entre l’hébreu et les langues africaines présentent des grandes similitudes morphologiques.

Tout d’abord, notre premier exemple est le verbe hébreu *shabar* qui signifie « il a cassé », dans sa conjugaison simple du *qal*. Lorsqu’on veut exprimer l’action intensive de ce verbe, c’est-à-dire grâce à une conjugaison dérivée du *pi’el*, on garde la même racine en hébreu mais avec le redoublement de la deuxième lettre de la racine ; on a alors la forme *shibber* (« il a brisé »). Dans les langues africaines, contrairement au français et à l’anglais, l’action intensive est exprimée aussi par une forme dérivée de la même racine verbale avec presque des mêmes caractéristiques morphologiques comme l’indique le tableau suivant :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEBREU</th>
<th>Conjugaison simple (<em>qal</em>)</th>
<th>Conjugaison intensive (<em>pi’el</em>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>shabar</em></td>
<td><em>shibber</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUES AFRICAINES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kikuyu</td>
<td><em>kuraga</em></td>
<td><em>kuraganga</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingala</td>
<td><em>kobuka</em></td>
<td><em>kobukakuka</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bemba</td>
<td><em>ugutoka</em></td>
<td><em>ugutobaula</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td><em>kuvunja</em></td>
<td><em>kuvunjavunja</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashi</td>
<td><em>kuber</em></td>
<td><em>kuberabera</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ensuite, le sens causatif est exprimé en hébreu par une forme de conjugaison qui dérive de la racine verbale. Les grammairiens l’appellent *hiph’îl* et il traduit l’idée de faire « faire l’action du *qal* ». Le verbe ‘*akal* signifie « il a mangé » au *qal* alors que dans sa conjugaison *hiph’îl* il signifie « il a donné à manger », c’est-à-dire « il a nourri »

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEBREU</th>
<th>Conjugaison simple (<em>qal</em>)</th>
<th>Conjugaison intensive (<em>hif’îl</em>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘<em>akal</em></td>
<td>‘<em>ekal</em> (nourir, donner à manger)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUES AFRICAINES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kikuyu</td>
<td><em>kuria</em></td>
<td><em>kurithia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bemba</td>
<td><em>ukulya</em></td>
<td><em>uukilisha</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingala</td>
<td><em>kolya</em></td>
<td><em>kolyesa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kikongo</td>
<td><em>kudy</em></td>
<td><em>kudisa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td><em>kula</em></td>
<td><em>kulisha</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luhya</td>
<td><em>khulia</em></td>
<td><em>khulisia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tshivenda</td>
<td><em>ula</em></td>
<td><em>ulisa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isizulu</td>
<td><em>ukudla</em></td>
<td><em>ukudlisa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashi</td>
<td><em>kulya</em></td>
<td><em>kulisa</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enfin, l’action réfléchie du verbe s’exprime par le *hithpa’el* en hébreu. Le verbe *halak* signifie « il est parti » au *qal* et « il s’est promené » au *hithpa’el* :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEBREU</th>
<th>Conjugaison simple (<em>qal</em>)</th>
<th>Conjugaison intensive (<em>pi’êl</em>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>halak</em> (aller, marcher)</td>
<td><em>hitahallék</em> (aller et venir, se promener)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUES AFRICAINES</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kikuyu</td>
<td><em>guthii</em></td>
<td><em>guthururuka</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bemba</td>
<td><em>ukwenda</em></td>
<td><em>ukwendauka</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Le verbe hébreu *shûb* (retourner, rentrer) au *qal* fait *heshib* (amener, faire rentrer ou faire retourner) peut aussi offrir une bonne illustration lorsqu’on compare l’hébreu et les langues africaines.

*Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa*
Outre le vocabulaire et les caractéristiques morphologiques semblables entre la conjugaison en l’hébreu et dans les langues africaines, on peut encore relever des similitudes syntaxiques. Il arrive même en traduisant un texte hébreu en langues africaines de suivre comme telle la morphologie et la syntaxe de l’hébreu, au lieu de vouloir rechercher une traduction dynamique. Une traduction littérale peut souvent, dans le contexte africain, être plus acceptable qu’une paraphrase ou tentative d’explication. Il existe des expressions hébraïques qui se traduisent difficilement en français ou en anglais mais qui sont rendus aisément dans certaines langues africaines. D’ailleurs, sur le plan ethnologique, il y a également des points communs entre la tradition biblique et certaines traditions religieuses africaines. Par exemple, les pratiques qui entourent la fête pascale dans l’Ancien Testament, comme la mise en mort et la manducation de l’agneau, sont plus proches de celles qu’on rencontre dans les pratiques divinatoires dans certaines régions d’Afrique (au Rwanda notamment). De même, la pratique de la circoncision trop chère aux Hébreux est connue dans beaucoup de cultures africaines depuis des millénaires.

Donc, pour les Africains qui apprennent l’hébreu, on devrait suffisamment exploiter les liens qui existent entre les langues africaines et les langues sémitiques puisqu’il est souvent facile de traduire deux langue qui partagent le même substrat linguistique et se rattachent à des cultures proches.

1.3 L’importance d’apprendre l’hébreu pour une étude des textes bibliques

Le principe de la « sola scriptura » reste au centre de la théologie protestante. Or, les premiers manuscrits des textes bibliques qui ont été rédigés, soit en hébreu et en quelques endroits en araméen, soit en grec, sont déclarées inspirées, selon 1 Tim 3,16. S’il faut croire à cette inspiration divine, elle ne concernerait donc que les premiers manuscrits écrits dans les langues de ceux-là qui ont été les témoins directs de la révélation et qui l’ont mise par écrit. Un nombre important de ces manuscrits est actuellement mis à notre portée. Il serait absurde si dans l’avenir, il manque des cadres capables de déchiffrer ces manuscrits en se contentant seulement de suivre les traductions. Et pourtant, l’intérêt de connaître les langues bibliques reste entièrement vif lorsqu’on pense à l’histoire de la transmission des textes bibliques, voire à leur établissement ou à leurs sens et finesse.

1.3.1 LA CONNAISSANCE DE LANGUE BIBLIQUE PERMET UNE EXÉGÈSE ET UNE INTERPRÉTATION PLUS AU MOINS FIDÈLES DU TEXTE.

En 1978, Jean Claude Margot a publié, à l’université de Lausanne, une thèse intitulée « Traduire sans trahir »19. Cette thèse confirme l’idée communément connue selon laquelle toute traduction porte des

16 Par exemple la traduction du relatif « bah (en lui)» dans la dernière partie de Nombres 33, 55 (‘al-hâ’ârèts ‘ashèr ‘attèm yoshbîm bâh) peut paraître redondant en français ou en anglais, alors que dans les langues africaines on trouve la même syntaxe: en swahili on dira « katika hiyo nchi ambayo mwaketi », en Kikuyu « o kuu bururi ucio mutuurite » ou en mashi « g ».
19 Jean Claude Margot, *Traduire sans trahir. Théorie de la traduction et son application aux textes bibliques.*

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
germes de trahison. Puisqu’on traduit d’une langue à une autre, d’une culture à une autre, traduire est toujours « interpréter ». D’ailleurs en araméen, tirgam est l’unique mot qui désigne à la fois le fait de traduire et d’interpréter. D’où le terme targum qui désigne des paraphrases ou parfois des lectures interprétatives araméennes de l’Ancien Testament hébreu.

En grec, le verbe hermeneuô qui a donné en français le nom herméneutique, ou théorie de l’interprétation, signifie aussi traduire. Autant de traductions donc, autant d’interprétations. Pour entrer de façon adroite et décisive dans le conflit des panoplies d’interprétations, il faudrait recourir à une exégèse qui se veut scientifique. Or, l’une des étapes préliminaires et cruciales de cette dernière est la traduction de la langue source à la langue cible qui oblige indubitablement une parfaite maîtrise de deux langues.

C’est pourquoi, une connaissance limitée de l’hébreu crée en soi des obstacles pour analyser profondément le texte biblique. L’hébreu biblique est une langue dont la poésie est dominée par les parallélismes ainsi que les structures chiastiques. Comme à chaque époque, chaque culture est caractérisée par un genre ou une forme littéraire dominant (l’Angleterre du XVIe siècle avait un goûtprononcé pour le sonnet et les Grecs du IVe siècle, en particulier Platon, la dialectique), le chiasme est une forme littéraire courante du monde hébraïque jusqu’au Ier siècle de notre ère. Ces procédés littéraires ne sont pas seulement esthétiques mais aussi elles sont d’une portée théologique considérable. Nombreux sont des exemples de parallélismes directs que nous rencontrons dans la Bible hébraïque et qui n’apparaissent pas aussi clairement dans les traductions que dans le texte hébreu (Proverbes 15, 1 ; Esaïe 55, 8 etc.)

En outre, déceler le noyau d’un chiasme ou les membres d’un parallélisme peut permettre le lecteur de comprendre l’élément sur lequel l’auteur du texte a voulu insister et par conséquent de pénérer le socle théologique de son message. Cette démarche n’est possible que dans la mesure où on ait suffisamment acquis une bonne connaissance de l’hébreu biblique.

On sait aussi que l’hébreu contient de nombreux idiomes caractéristiques aux langues sémitiques, des idiomes souvent difficiles à traduire ou à percevoir avec une lecture qui se base sur des textes déjà traduits dans d’autres langues. Il use souvent de l’euphémisme, lorsqu’il y a déguisement d’idées désagrables ou s’il faut atténuer une certaine réalité.

Face à toutes ces difficultés linguistiques, l’exercice d’une exégèse respectueuse du texte biblique réclame une bonne connaissance des langues bibliques. Certains estiment que dans les meilleurs commentaires se trouvent déjà des solutions de ces difficultés. Certes, à sa juste valeur, le grand travail abattu par les commentateurs est appréciable, mais est-il qu’un commentaire explique l’avis d’une autre personne, ses sensibilités et ses convictions. Dans la mesure du possible, il serait mieux de diminuer la dépendance des avis des commentaires et d’apporter la contribution d’une exégèse faite à partir du contexte africain au grand rendez-vous du donner et du recevoir une interprétation du texte biblique. On prêche avec plus d’enthousiasme et de conviction sur un point quand on est parvenu à déceler ses méandres théologiques par un travail exégétique personnel.

1.3.2 CONNAISSANCE DES LANGUES BIBLIQUES FACILITE LA COMPRÉHENSION DES THÈMES BIBLIQUES ET LEURS ENJEUX THÉOLOGIQUES

La Bible hébraïque contient des thèmes et des termes clés qui parcourent la trame de l’histoire biblique et véhiculent l’essentiel de sa théologie. Leur traduction dans certaines langues est souvent approximative et ne rend pas compte de leur profondeur théologique. Le caractère polysémique de l’hébreu fait qu’un même terme puisse revêtir des acceptions différentes selon le contexte dans lequel il est utilisé. Prenons l’exemple de thèmes comme « élection », « étranger », et condamnation du meurtre. La racine verbale qui exprime

Lausanne: L’Age d’Homme (1979), 40.


Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
l'idée de l'élection en hébreu est bâhar. Ce verbe apparaît environ 154 fois dans la Bible hébraïque. Sa signification première est celle de « regarder de près » d'où la traduction approximative de « choisir » ou « élire ». On remarque que dans le livre du Deutéronome seulement, ce verbe apparaît 28 fois (Dt 4, 7 ; 7, 6, 7 ; 10, 15 ; 12, 5, 11.14. 18. 21.26 ; 14, 2, 23. 24.25. …), soit 20% des ses occurrences dans tout l'Ancien Testament21. Cependant, le terme bâhar est absent du cycle d'Abraham et dans le livre du prophète Amos. Chez Amos, l'élection d'Israël est mise en exergue mais l'auteur préfère utiliser le verbe yâda' qui signifie connaître (Cf. Am 3, 2). Ceci pourrait laisser envisager que le vocabulaire de l'élection serait relativement tardif, mais que la conscience de cette conduite divine est aussi ancienne que l'existence d'Israël comme peuple de Yhwh depuis l'époque prémonarchique en commençant par l'élection des patriarches.

Un autre thème qui nous permet d'insister la connaissance de l'hébreu est le terme étranger. Nous avons en hébreu trois mots qui sont souvent traduits par étranger: gër, nokrî, zâr. Il y a des nuances en hébreu lorsqu'on utilise chacun de ces termes alors que le lecteur/lectrice francophone se contentera de parler de l'étranger en général. Le terme « gër » qui vient de la racine gour qui signifie habiter au milieu (d'un peuple avec qui on n'a pas des relations de sang), habiter, rester, demeurer, séjourner…22 Normalement, chaque personne désignée par le terme gër était attachée à une famille israélite où il passait tout son temps.23 C'est pour cette raison que le texte du décalogue nous parle « de l'étranger – entendons ici le gër – qui est dans tes portes » (cf. Ex 20, 10 ; Dt 5, 14). Le gër a des droits et des devoirs. La torah demande qu'il soit traité avec bienveillance (Dt 10, 31 ; Lv 19, 33). Dans les textes sacerdotaux le gër est aussi soumis aux mêmes interdictions que l'Israélite (Ex 12, 9 ; 20, 10 ; Lv 16, 19 ; 17, 10 ; 17, 15 ; 18, 26 ; 20, 2 ; 24, 6). L'étranger n'est pas seulement traité avec respect et amour, mais il a aussi droit de citer et peut totalement intégrer la communauté. Mais le code deutéronomique distingue, à côté de l'étranger établi, résidant au milieu d'Israël, deux autres sortes d'étranger. Il s'agit du zâr24 et du nokrî. Ce dernier désigne un inconnu (cf. Pr 20, 16 ; 27, 2, 13), quelqu'un avec qui on n'est pas familier (Jb 19, 15 ; Ps 69, 9)25. C'est une personne de passage. C'est un terme pris pour désigner les idoles ou les dieux étrangers par rapport à YHWH, Dieu d'Israël, (Dt 32, 12 ; Ps 81, 9 ; Mi 2, 11) ou une autre chose insolite, étrange, hors du commun (Es 28, 12). Dans le livre des Proverbes, le terme féminin nokriyâh est technique et désigne une prostituée, une femme dévergondée (Pr 2, 16 ; 5, 20 ; 6, 24). La Septante utilise le terme « αλλοτριος », qui signifie « autrui »26, pour nokrî. Il est donc un étranger dans le sens général et vague. L'étranger, en tant qu'idolâtre et ennemi d'Israël, est aussi désigné par ce terme (Ne 9, 2 ; Ab 11). (Et écrire aussi un paragraphe sur « zar » ?)

1.3.3 L'APPRENTISSAGE DES LANGUES BIBLIQUES FACILITE LA MEILLEURE COMPRÉHENSION DE LA CULTURE D'ISRAËL ANTIQUE.

La langue détermine la manière dont les membres d’une communauté se représentent le monde. A travers l’étude d’une langue, on appréhende la vison du monde de la communauté qui l’emploie comme moyen de communication. Il est communément connu que le véhicule de la culture est bel et bien la langue. La connaissance de la langue biblique est un accès inéluctable à la connaissance de la culture d’Israël antique.

Elle permet de découvrir certains aspects de la culture du peuple d’Israël qui ne sont pas souvent prises en compte.

Prenons l’exemple du terme torah. Dans la Bible hébraïque, ce terme possède un sens plus large moins strictement juridique que le grec nomos de la Septante. Ainsi, dans le texte massorétique, torah désigne un enseignement donné par Dieu aux hommes pour régler leur conduite. Le terme s’applique avant tout à l’ensemble législatif promulgué par Moïse après l’expérience de la théophanie sinaitique (cf. Ex. 20-22, Dt 5). Ailleurs dans la Bible, nous avons les expressions comme la torah de Dieu, la torah de Moïse, les paroles de la Torah.

En lisant, Pr.1,8 on est frappé par l’expression « torath `imkâ », rendu par l’enseignement de ta mère. On dit souvent que dans la culture biblique la femme était méprisée. Or, la considération de la valeur du terme torah en hébreu et sa fonction dans ce verset, bouscule complètement la conception qu’on avait du rôle et de la valeur de la femme dans la société d’Israël biblique. Dans ce verset, le terme torah constitue un parallélisme synonymique avec le terme mousad qui signifie discipline, correction. La torah de la mère et le mousad du père constituent un parallélisme synthétique pour que l’éducation de l’enfant soit complète. Ce qui est étonnant ici est de constater que c’est à la mère qu’on attribue la torah au lieu du père, alors que nous savons que dans l’Ancien Testament, il revient au père d’enseigner aux générations montantes la torah et la tradition des pères (cf. la catéchèse de Dt 6, 20). Malheureusement, certains exégètes, en suivant la Septante qui a rendu le mot torah par thesmous, postulent une traduction s’écartant de l’idée de la loi divine transmise à Israël. Ainsi, ils proposent qu’il ne s’agisse pas de la loi dont le prêtre est l’interprète mais tout simplement la loi des parents. Mais dans notre texte, nous avons la torah de la mère que le fils ne doit pas oublier car son mépris irait au-devant de la malédiction comme dans le livre du Deutéronome (cf. Dt 19, 26; 20,20; 30,11,17).

1.3.4 POUR UNE ASSURANCE INTELLECTUELLE DANS L’EXERCICE DU MÉTIER PASTORAL.

Au XVIe siècle de notre ère, les réformateurs ont remarqué un piétisme anti-intellectuel semblable à celui qui cherche à s’installer actuellement dans nos sociétés africaines. Avec le retour aux sources, les humanistes comme Erasme, ont permis au peuple de Dieu d’accéder à la richesse et à la complexité de la parole de Dieu. La Bible était plus lue et plus étudiée dans ses langues originales alors qu’il n’y avait pas à l’époque plus d’exigences de la formation comme il en est le cas aujourd’hui. La personne qui maitrise les langues bibliques est en mesure de participer aux débats exégétiques et théologiques sans complexe.

Travailler la lettre du texte, essayer de le comprendre et de le traduire à nouveaux frais, c’est se donner les moyens d’entrer avec sa raison critique dans le concert ou le dialogue de la tradition vivante. Apprendre à lire et comprendre quelques mots hébreux peut aussi décomplexer certains responsables d’Eglise qui souhaiteraient effectuer un voyage en Israël, la terre même de la Bible. Dans le cadre de dialogue interreligieux la connaissance des mots hébreux peut aussi permettre de mieux comprendre le judaïsme et d’assister à un office à la synagogue.

2. L’enseignement de l’hébreu aux Facultés de Théologie d’Afrique centrale

Dans nos Facultés de théologies les cours sont en général organisés dans trois cycles. Tout d’abord, un premier cycle de trois ans (ou deux ans au Rwanda) qui vise à donner une formation générale des disciplines théologiques. Ensuite, il y a un deuxième cycle de deux ans qui cherche à approfondir les enseignements théologiques dans une des grandes orientations (biblique, systématique et éthique, histoire du christianisme, pastorale). Enfin, un troisième cycle qui commence avec un programme d’études supérieures ou approfondies en théologie pour aboutir à la présentation du doctorat. Ce cycle n’est encore organisé que par une petite poignée des Facultés francophones.

La grande difficulté que les professeurs d’hébreu biblique éprouvent dans nos Facultés en Afrique centrale relève souvent des moyens financiers limités des étudiants. Ils ne peuvent pas se procurer des instruments de travail pour suivre les cours et, souvent, les bibliothèques ne disposent qu’un seul exemplaire de manuels de grammaires, dictionnaires, concordances ou des textes bibliques en hébreu. Dans ces conditions, Les enseignants se sentent obligés d’élaborer de notes polycopiées en s’inspirant des manuels de Paul Joüon, Jan P. Lettinga, J. Touzard, J. Weingreen etc. (Il termine sa présentation avec un débat et il a oublié de tirer une conclusion) ?

3. Outils de travail pour l’étude de l’hébreu biblique

Bible hébraïque


Les dictionnaires


Grammaires


**Concordances**


**Guides de la Bible Hébraïque (BHS)**


**Histoire de la langue hébraïque**


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*Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa*
BIBLE TRANSLATION AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA:
A HISTORICAL AND A PAN-AFRICAN OVERVIEW

Aloo Mojola

Introduction
The first President of post-colonial Kenya, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, often reminded his people about the Mau Mau struggle, the guerilla war that contributed to the liberation of Kenya from the shackles of British colonialism. The Mau Mau guerilla war was essentially about land. Kenyatta, in retelling the story of his people, never failed to broach the land question. He would say: “When the Whiteman came to our country he had the Bible and we had the land. The Whiteman said to us ‘let us pray’. After the prayer, the Whiteman had the land and we had the Bible”. This story is reported to have been retold in a meeting where Bishop Desmond Tutu, the former Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town was a participant. He is said to have retorted that “we had the better deal”.

This anecdote is helpful in suggesting that the Bible is not always perceived or received in a neutral way. The Bible generates a whole range of complex and often ambiguous attitudes. For some the Bible is perceived as an oppressive tool, a tool that has historically been used to alienate and to dehumanize. It has been viewed as an instrument of empire, of colonial and cultural domination, of conquest and subjugation. Karl Marx captured it in that memorable phrase, “the opium of the people”. The Bible has been used by some to provide a basis for the discrimination and oppression of minorities, and of non-western peoples, including women and other marginalized groups. The Bible is obviously not neutral. Its entry into a culture sends mixed and contradictory messages. Where some see loss – others see gain. Where some see dispossession – others see empowerment. Where some see conquest – others see freedom. Where some see foreignization, cultural dispossession and alienation – others see a call and challenge to reclaim our true humanity, a return to our divine image and values. For the Christian Church, the Bible is a transformative tool, indispensable to the life and work of the Church. It is the Church’s foundational and guiding document, central to the formulation of her creeds and to the formation of her faith and practice, to the fostering and nurturing of just and loving communities.

The Educational and Theological Impact of the Translated Bible in the Diverse Tongues and Cultures of Africa
Most of us meet the Bible in one or other of its numerous translations. However, the Bible was originally written in the ancient languages of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek that are no longer spoken in their original form. Bible translators are called upon to provide access to this ancient text. Indeed without translation the Biblical writings and their rich treasures would remain forever closed and inaccessible to the millions whole lives are touched by them. For the vast majority of people, the Bible that they know and read or hear is a translated Bible written in a language that they speak and understand. It is, so to speak, a domesticated Bible that by means of translators’ mediation has crossed boundaries of time and space, of language and culture, of ancient political, economic, historical and religious environments to those of our own time and place. Undoubtedly, Bible translation in African languages laid the foundation for education in most places in Africa. It opened the key to the babel of African languages and made them a tool for missionary evangelism, education and theological practice.
It is thanks to the indefatigable labours of Bible translators that many African languages acquired their first alphabets and writing or orthographic systems. Among the many acknowledged benefits that accompanied Bible translation we may note the following:1 the invention of Alphabets; the creation of a literary and a literate class (for example in many places the first readers were often Christian, in East Africa Christians were in referred to as ‘asomi’, ‘wasomi’ or variants of the same); the development of national languages; the emergence of national literatures; the consolidation and propagation of faith; the writing of dictionaries and grammars; the transmission of cultural values; the preservation of languages; the revival of languages in contexts where these are threatened or dying; the facilitation of cross-cultural/intercultural communication; the spread of Christian revivals, new reinterpretations of the Bible in new cultural contexts and the emergence of new sects or denominations including the so-called African ‘independent’ or ‘instituted’ churches, etc. It is the translation of the Bible into the ancient language of Geez in the 5th/6th century CE, that established the Ethiopic script, literacy and writing in Ethiopia from ancient times to this day. The old scrolls of the Biblical text and its interpretation, found in the ancient Ethiopian monasteries in places such as Gondar, Lalibela, Axum etc are a testimony to this fact.

In more recent times the example of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther of Abeokuta, Nigeria who translated the Bible into his own Yoruba tongue in the mid 19th Century – shows the role of translation contributing to laying the foundations for the growth of a language. Prof. Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian and African Nobel laureate, as well as other Yoruba scholars and speakers are no doubt indebted to the contributions of Samuel Ajayi Crowther. There is no gainsaying the monumental role of Crowther’s translation to the Yoruba language and culture. It is comparable to that of Martin Luther’s German translation, or to that of the King James Bible translators.

Similarly, the Swahili Bible in East Africa has played the key role of laying the foundations for a standard form of the language. Coinciding with the era of pax Britannica, the Swahili Bible and Swahili were assisted by the government enforcement of a standard orthography and lexicon, the turning of Swahili into a school language equipped with standard texts and a publishing house, and its use in the mass media in print and audio. As a lingua franca or trade language of the entire East African region, currently spoken by around 50 – 80 million people, with 9 complete Bibles translated into Swahili, with five centuries of written poetry, this language has greatly benefited from the gains that came with Bible translation. It is no wonder that Tanzania’s first President, Julius Nyerere made Swahili the official language of government communication and of parliamentary debates so as to include everyone into the discussion. Swahili is also the medium of instruction in schools, the language of the church, of the press, radio, etc.

The contribution of these developments to national pride, national identity and national unity – went beyond all expectations. Among the Bahaya of North West Tanzania, the Ruhaya Bible which was dedicated and launched in November 2001 was what was needed to create a unified liturgical and theological terminology – where before each church or confessional group followed its own tradition with respect to its theological, biblical and liturgical terminologies in the one common language. In the Indian Ocean Island nations of the Seychelles and Mauritius off the African Coast – Bible translation has recently caught the imagination of church and society. These islands have much in common with the Caribbean Island nations. Whereas in the Seychelles – the Marxist government provided the impetus for finally giving honour, respect and recognition to the national tongue, in Mauritius the process is people driven. The government still gives primacy first to French and then to English. Both Seselwa Creole and Mauritian Creole have settled the problem of a writing system – of a suitable and acceptable orthography – and are currently busy working on the translation of the Bible itself.

1 See for example Jean Delisle & Judith Woodsworth (eds), Translators through History (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995), for a detailed discussion of these contributions.

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
African Bible Translations

African Scripture translations in the modern period took place in the context of events and happenings on the 19th Century European scene. The European waves of exploration and discovery, conquest and colonization marked a period of turbulence and rapid change world wide. Within a very short period most of Africa had been taken over by the European powers. Christian missionary expansion necessarily followed in response to the Great Commission. Missionary pioneers and explorers such as the legendary David Livingstone justified their presence and activities on the continent in terms of the three C’s of “Christianization, civilization and commerce”. In order to carry out these aims successfully, intensive interaction with local African cultures was essential. There is no doubt, for example that a reasonable knowledge of the local languages and cultures was needed to facilitate effective communication and implementation of these goals. That Bible translation was enlisted in this endeavour makes perfect sense.

The First African Translations

Even though some of the first translations of the Holy Scriptures actually took place in Africa, at such locations as the ancient city of Alexandria in North Africa, in Nubia and in Ethiopia; these had no impact on the modern Bible movement in Africa, except perhaps in offering inspiration and example. The Septuagint is perhaps the mother of all Bible translations. The Jewish diaspora, the original intended audience of this first translation of the Holy Scriptures, were widely scattered throughout the Greek speaking world and could no longer speak their Hebrew tongue. The need for them to have the Scriptures in a language they could understand was urgent. Alexandria was a vibrant intellectual centre, and the famous library of Alexandria was at the time the world centre for translation. The ambitious imperial plan to have every known book translated in the lingua franca of the time was aggressively followed and implemented. It was here around 200-300 BC that the Hebrew Bible (now widely referred to as the Old Testament), was translated from the Hebrew tongue into Greek. This Greek translation is known as the Septuagint due to the belief that it was translated by seventy (LXX) Jewish elders. It became the major Bible version used during the Hellenistic era, including the time of Jesus and the early church. Christianity was born in a Greek speaking milieu and the New Testament was consequently written in Koine Greek. But as Greek influence waned and as Christianity spread beyond the borders of the Hellenistic world, the need to translate the Holy writings into new languages for the new evangelized and Christianized communities grew.

The Coptic Translations

The first parts of Africa to be reached with the Gospel were naturally in North Africa. It will be recalled that Mary and Joseph sought refuge in Africa to save the life of our Lord from the hand of Herod. In the first century AD there were already Christian communities, for example in the city of Alexandria. These early Christian communities created translations of the Bible in their own tongues. Before the end of the second century AD there already existed a translation of the complete Bible into Sahidic, an (Egyptian) Coptic dialect spoken in Upper Egypt. Translations of the Bible in the (Egyptian) Coptic dialect of Bashmuric also appeared during this period. Later it appeared in the Bohairic dialect which was adopted as the official Bible of the (Egyptian) Coptic Church. Meanwhile in the city of Carthage it is said that the

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Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
romanized Christian community did not create any Scriptures in their native Punic dialect but created translations in the imperial Roman Latin tongue. It is thought that Jerome’s famous Vulgate may have depended on some of these early Roman Latin versions. It has been argued that the failure of the Carthaginian Christian community to develop the faith in terms of its own culture and language may partly explain why it did not survive in the same way the Alexandrian Christian community did. The story of St Antony (who died in AD 356) has been widely narrated to underscore this point and to illustrate the power of the vernacular Scriptures in the life of Christian faith communities. St Antony was born in Southern Egypt. He was not schooled in the imperial Greek tongue, the lingua franca of the period. He was however able to make phenomenal progress in his Christian growth, thanks to the availability of Scriptures in his Coptic vernacular. Antony’s contribution to the emergence of Christian monasticism and his impact on such leading church fathers of the period as Athanasius is testimony to the power of the Word in the language of the people.

Christianity in North Africa has since the Islamic onslaught lost its dominant position. The ancient languages of this region have become extinct, and in time their place has been taken over by Arabic. The use of Coptic is now a preserve of the priests and scholars. The minority Coptic Christians and those of other Christian denominations access the Christian Scriptures through the Arabic translations or those in other international languages.

The Ethiopian and Nubian Translations

Ethiopia and Nubia were the next major centres of Christianity in Africa. Both maintained contacts with Jerusalem dating back to the Old Testament era, and both were greatly influenced by the Coptic Orthodox Christianity of their northern neighbour. Byzantine influences in Nubia seem to have been also particularly significant. Of Nubia and her three river kingdoms of Nobatia to the north with its capital at Faras, Makuria in the middle with its capital at Dongola and Alwa in the south with its capital at Soba, Mark Shaw correctly observes that: “Before there was a Nubia, there was a Meroe. And before there was a Meroe, there was a Kush. The Kingdom of Kush was known in the Old Testament times. Its successor kingdom, Meroe, was represented in the New Testament by the eunuch of Acts 8”.

Archaeological excavations have revealed evidence of a thriving faith beneath the ruins of the great cathedral at Faras and at other notable sites. Nubian Christianity however thrived until its conquest by Islam in the 16th Century. However no translation of the entire Bible in the Nubian tongue has survived, except for lectionary readings and inscriptions in the Greek, Coptic and Nubian tongues. In modern Sudan the Arabic translations are now widely used in the Muslim north by the minority Christian population while in the South where Christians predominate a number of new translations in the indigenous languages are widely used. For example the Dinka have had Scriptures in their language from as far back as 1866 with the publication of the Gospel of Luke in the Dinka-Kyec dialect. New Testaments followed in 1940 in the Dinka-Bor dialect and in 1952 in the Dinka Padang dialect and later the complete Bible. The Nuer only saw their first Scriptures with the arrival of the Gospel of Luke in 1935 for the Western Nuer and the Gospel of John in 1936 for the Eastern Nuer. The first NT came in 1968 and later a complete Bible. Translations in the languages of the southern Sudanese are currently ongoing for example the Zande or recently completed for example the Moru, among others. The many decades of war in Sudan naturally caused untold suffering and was a veritable obstacle for Bible work. There is no doubt that the

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7 See Hastings, The Church in Africa, 68.
establishment of the new nation of Southern Sudan will inspire and lead to a strengthening and spread of Bible work in that country.

The emergence of Ethiopian Christianity had its roots around the ancient city of Axum. The conversion of King Ezana of Axum by two Syrian missionaries, Frumentius and Aedesius helped lay a firm foundation for the establishment of the Christian faith in Ethiopia. It was however the translation of the Bible into Ge’ez by nine Syrian missionary monks in the 5th century that helped ground Christian faith in the local culture among the people. The names of these nine monks or saints are given as Abba Aregawi, Abba Guerima, Abba Aftse, Abba Penteleon, Abba Likanos, Abba Alef, Abba Tsihma, Abba Yma’ata and Abba Gouba. The Bible in Ge’ez is written in the Ethiopic script. Its OT canon of 54 books has continued to this day to be the authoritative text of the Ethiopian Orthodox church. A modern Amharic translation of the complete Bible however made its first appearance in 1840. This was the work of Abu Rumi, an elderly Ethiopian monk. It was edited by Thomas Bell Platt of the CMS and published in London by the BFBS. Thereafter, translations in other Ethiopian languages have appeared in ever increasing numbers. Thus the Tigrinya first Gospels first appeared in 1866, the NT in 1909 and the complete Bible in 1956. As elsewhere many of these older missionary translations are in the process of being revised or supplemented with modern common language translations as well as with Study Bibles and other aids to facilitate a better understanding of the biblical text. It must be acknowledged though that the older translations undoubtedly continue to have a lasting influence and impact on the life of the church in Ethiopia and have contributed significantly toward a solid basis for subsequent translations and theological discourse in modern Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya and other modern Ethiopian languages.

The development of Study Bibles in some of the major languages of Ethiopia such as the Amharic and Tigrinya Study Bible projects, based on recent common language translations, or the Anuak, Arsi-Bale, Borana-Oromo, Guji-Oromo, Gurage, Hadiyya, Kambatta, Konso, Koreere, Maale and Sidama common language translations in one way or another draw on the legacies of the earlier and ancient translations. These newer translations and Study editions of the Bible are intended to serve the liturgical and educational needs not only of the majority Orthodox Christians but also of the newer churches in Ethiopia such as the Catholic and the Lutheran Mekane Yesus, among others.

Translations in the Rest of the Continent

Unfortunately Coptic, Nubian and Ethiopian Christianity failed to advance beyond their borders. Their impact on the rest of the continent is an empty slate. Christian advance in the rest of Africa together with the accompanying translations of the Christian Scriptures in local African vernaculars had to await the 19th century European evangelical revival and the missionary movement associated with it. Indeed the ongoing Bible translation story in many lands owes much to the same. This movement riding on the colonial-imperial waves of European global expansion, conquest and colonization was the vehicle for Christianity’s global outreach. Strangely, the Christianization of the rest of Africa during this period was more a direct result of the political and religious ferment in Europe than of the home grown faith in the north and northeast of the continent!

The Early European Period in Africa

Except for selections from the Bible which appeared in a Kikongo catechism published in 1548 and another one published in 1624 or a Kimbundu catechism published in 1642 – very little else happened. The

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pioneer Portuguese Christian missionary work of this period failed miserably. It remained foreign and was unable to develop any indigenous roots. Neither did it create any Bible version or significant portion of it in the local languages. While the first Christians took advantage of the infrastructure of the Roman imperial rule and its so-called pax Romana, the 19th Century missionary movement rode on the back of the infrastructure created by the conquering European colonial powers. Missionary expansion in Africa closely followed the colonization of the continent and the establishment of European settlements and hegemony.

**Translations in West Africa**

Translations in West Africa went hand in hand with the arrival of missionaries and the colonization of the area. Matthew’s Gospel in the Bullom language of Sierra Leone published in 1816 by the BFBS in London, was the first Scripture to be printed in an African language during the modern missionary period. It was the work of a German CMS missionary, Dr G R Nylander. Another first was the founding of Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone in 1827. Its first student was Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who was later to establish his name as the translator of the Yoruba Bible in Nigeria. The Mende tongue which is more widely spoken in Sierra Leone had its first Scripture, the Gospel of Matthew in 1867, the New Testament only in 1856 and the Bible in 1959. Temne the next largest language spoken in Sierra Leone had its first Scripture in 1865 a year earlier than for Mende, and the New Testament in 1955. In neighbouring Liberia the Kpelle Gospel of Mark only appeared in 1922 and the NT in 1967. The Bassa is the next widely spoken language in Liberia. Although they had their first Scripture in 1844 (i.e. Matthew, John and Acts), it is only in 2005 that the Bassa people finally received their first complete Bible. They had to wait for more than 150 years!

The dynamic church planting and growth in Ghana naturally impacted the work of translation. The first Scripture in Ghana which appeared in 1843 was the work of A.W Hanson, an African clergyman. The Gospel of Matthew in the Ga language spoken around Accra was translated by him. Hanson also participated together with J. Zimmerman and I. Nikoi in completing the Ga NT in 1859 and first Bible in 1866. Revisions of these followed, with another complete Bible in 1909. A modern common language translation in Ga has been completed and is slowly gaining popularity. It is likely that a revision of the old Bible will soon follow in line with the current wave to revise the pioneer missionary translations. The story of the Twi Akwapem Bible is interesting. It highlights the work of Johannes Gottlieb Christaller whose work epitomises the best in translation practice. Christaller of the Basel Mission collaborated with J.A Mader to produce the Twi Akwapem version of the Bible. The Gospels were completed in 1859, the NT in 1870 and the first Bible in 1871. Revisions followed in 1878 and 1897 for the NT and in 1900 for the Bible. An attempt to replace this with a union Akan translation in the early 1980s proved unsuccessful. The churches in collaboration with the Bible Society of Ghana embarked on a careful revision of the beloved missionary version. The Ewe, another major Ghanaian group received their first Scripture in 1858 (Hebrews, 1-3 John and Revelation) while the NT was the work of the translators from the Bremen Mission – J. Merz, J. Binder, J.B Schlegel and H. Weyhe. This Bible has served the Ewe community in Ghana and Togo for all these years. An attempt to produce a contemporary Ewe translation started in the early 1980s took over 30 years to complete, but was well worth the effort.

The above mentioned pioneer and predominantly missionary translations have served the needs of the local churches and communities for many years. New translations or revisions of these texts are slowly taking their place and offering alternative readings in contemporary speech of the Biblical text. The case of the Akan translations which include the Twi Akwapem and the Fante versions is of interest. It was thought by socio-linguists in Ghana that these pioneer and established translations could be replaced by a modern “union” translation that could serve all the speakers. A project set up in the early 1980s was discontinued after nearly twenty years of work due to lack of ownership, interest and support from the intended...
audiences and churches. The decision to revise these older translations and give them a new lease of life was popular and unanimous. The idea of a union translation died a natural death.

Nigeria has probably more languages than any other country in Africa. The number usually given is 400, sometimes even higher! This makes for a complex linguistic situation. This babel of Nigerian languages is dominated by four major languages – Hausa in the north, Yoruba in the west, Igbo in the East and Pidgin English in the urban centres of the south but especially the eastern oil areas. The Calabar area in the south eastern corner of Nigeria was the site of the first translation activity and the Efik language set the ball rolling under the leadership of the Scottish Presbyterian missionaries and translators, namely William Anderson, Hugh Goldie and Hope Waddell assisted by Aye Ayo and other native speakers. The Book of a Thousand Tongues notes that the Efik New Testament published first in 1862 was unusual in that it was bound together with the book of Genesis in one volume. It is also interesting in that its publication was financed by black Jamaicans who claimed ancestry in the Calabar area. The Old Testament was completed in 1868 with revisions of the NT in 1910 and 1947 and of the Bible in 1952. This Bible is still in use in the Calabar area of Nigeria and is seriously in need of a revision.

The Yoruba Bible was unique in having Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1807-1891), a native Yoruba speaker and a former slave, as the principal translator and leader of the translation team. The slave ship on which he was being transported to slavery was captured by the anti-slavery forces leading to his subsequent freedom. He was resettled in Sierra Leone where he grew up and studied at the newly founded Fourah Bay College in Freetown. After further studies in theology in England, ordination into the priesthood and later consecration as an Anglican bishop, Ajayi Crowther eventually returned to serve in his native land of Nigeria. He clearly understood the power of the Holy Scriptures in the vernacular and the need to have them translated in the everyday idioms and speech of the common people. He immediately commenced work on his own mother tongue, the Yoruba. His work in Bible translation was outstanding and had widespread and long term impact. It laid the foundation of future literary work in this major language and served as a model for others. The first Scripture texts into Yoruba prepared by Crowther appeared in 1850 (Romans) with Luke, Acts, James, 1 & 2 Peter appearing in 1851. The first complete NT appeared in 1862, with revisions in 1865 and later in 1957. The first complete Bible appeared in 1884, with revisions in 1890 and later in 1930. This Bible still remains the “King James Bible” of the Yoruba speaking community. A new common language translation in modern Yoruba is currently in press and is eagerly expected. It is however unlikely that it will meet the wider acceptance and popularity of the Crowther version. Various minor corrections and orthographical revisions of the Crowther version have been undertaken to keep it abreast of the times. No doubt another contemporary revision of the Crowther version will be called for sooner rather than later.

The Hausa language is one of the most widely spoken languages in West Africa. It is the lingua franca of northern Nigeria and of numerous communities spread throughout the region. It is spoken all the way from northern Ghana to as far as Chad. Native Hausa speakers are predominantly Muslim, but the majority of speakers are now second language speakers. Hence the new contemporary common language Hausa translation sponsored by the Bible Society of Nigeria was intended precisely for this huge audience. The first translation of the Bible text in Hausa was by James F. Schon who is said to have studied Hausa but never visited any Hausa speaking area! His translations of Matthew, John and Acts appeared in 1857 and

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10 Nida, Book of a Thousand Tongues, 114.
his NT translation in 1880. Another Hausa NT appeared in 1912. It was the work of W.R.S Miller of the CMS assisted by Mallam Fate, W.A. Thomson and others. The complete Bible appeared in 1932. Other revisions followed. Revisions of these have since been called for as well. So has the need for Study Bibles and other readers’ helps.

Translations in other Nigerian languages have steadily followed. The complete Bible in Igbo (union) came in 1906, a translation done by T.J. Dennis with the assistance of T.D. Anyaegbunam and others. The first Tiv Bible appeared in 1964 while a new translation in contemporary speech in this language is now in use. Among others, the Nupe Bible appeared in 1953, the Ijo Bible in 1956 and the Igala Bible appeared in 1958 as well as NTs in Eggon in 1932, in Bura in 1937 and in Kanuri in 1949, among others. New contemporary translations in such Nigerian languages as Agatu, Gura Edo, Esan, Etsako, Idoma, Igala, Isekiri, and Rubassa among others are eagerly expected. The Bible Society of Nigeria has also developed Study Bibles and other readers’ helps in the three major Nigerian languages, namely Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. These were however translations of existing English counterparts. Indigenous Study Bibles developed by local Bible scholars who are native speakers of these languages with more contextually sensitive study notes are long overdue. A need to investigate possibilities of starting work in Pidgin has been recognized but has not received much support. It is interesting to note that New Testaments in Sierra Leonian creole and Cameroonian pidgin have already appeared and proved very popular.

Cameroon, Nigeria’s eastern neighbour is similarly the home of numerous languages and dialects. The number given for example by the Ethnologue\(^{12}\) is 267 languages or dialects. Here as everywhere Bible translation and missionary work went hand in hand. The first Scripture in a Cameroonian language was the Gospel of Matthew in Douala which appeared in 1848, the New Testament in 1862 and the Bible in 1872. This was the work of Alfred Saker, a pioneer and remarkable Baptist missionary, together with his collaborating language assistants. Work in other languages soon followed in response to missionary penetration and expansion in the interior of the country. Today translation work continues full speed in many of the languages of this country under the umbrella of the national Bible Society, the SIL/Wycliffe Bible Translators, the Lutheran Bible Translators as well as other Bible agencies.

The Democratic Republic of Congo boasts of more than 200 languages (the Ethnologue lists 221). However the major languages of communication and basic education are Lingala, Swahili, Otetela, Ciluba and Kikongo. Translations of the Bible in these languages as well as numerous others were already completed in the early years of the 20th century. Thus Kikongo (in the widely used Kifioti dialect) had the first book, the Gospel of John, in 1885 and the Bible in 1905 (being a translation of Swedish, American Baptist and Christian Missionary Alliance missionaries in collaboration with native speakers). The Ciluba spoken in the south eastern DRC, by more than a million speakers had its first book in 1913, the first Bible in 1927, and a second Bible in 1964. The Otetela already had the first complete Bible in 1966 and the Lingala in 1970 while the Swahili in 1960 (even though Bible versions in East African Swahili were widely available in the DRC – the first one in 1891, others in 1937, 1952, 1996 as well as several NTs). These have all been followed by contemporary common language translations of the complete Bible. Many decades of political instability and civil war have contributed to much suffering and a tragic loss of life, which have undoubtedly impacted negatively on church life and translation work.

Missionary penetration of the countries of the Sahel, mostly colonized by the French was not as effective. Consequently, translations of the Bible in the languages of this area are few and far between, among them the Bambara/Bamanan Bible (1961), the Moore, the Wolof, the Jula and the Mandinka. It is only now that the Bible agencies are focusing attention on this area, which has large communities of believers in traditional African religions as well as Islam. Work is currently in progress in many of the region’s languages. The major challenges include the rapid advance of Islam and the limited literacy.
Translations in Southern Africa:

In Southern Africa, the pioneer work of missionary translator Robert Moffat (1795-1883) stands out as a model of missionary practice in the area of Bible translation during this period. The secret of his success has been traced to his identification with the people among whom he worked, his efforts to understand and speak the local languages and his Bible translation labours. He was sent by the London Missionary Society in 1817 to Southern Africa and worked mostly among the Batswana. Luke’s Gospel in Tswana in 1830, the New Testament in 1840 and the complete Bible in 1857 were the fruit of his missionary labours. Stephen Neill\(^{13}\) notes about Moffat that “once the language had been learned the attitude of the people towards him seemed completely to change, the Gospel began to take hold, something like a religious revival broke out…”

The best known communities in this region are the Xhosa and the Zulu. Work among the Xhosa was pioneered by missionaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society including William Boyce, William Shaw, W.J. Shrewsbury and Richard Haddy who translated the Gospel of Luke as the first Scriptures in Zulu in 1833 followed by the book of Isaiah in 1834, Joel 1835, Matthew, Mark and John in 1836. The first Xhosa NT appeared in 1846, and the first Bible in 1859. The pioneer work among the Zulu was done by the American Zulu Mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. They arrived in Durban in 1835 but the first Scripture translated by this group, the Gospel of Matthew, did not appear until 1848. It was soon followed by the Psalms in 1850, Romans in 1854 and the Gospel of Mark in 1856. The New Testament did not appear until 1865 and the first complete Bible until 1883. The controversial Zulu translations of Bishop J.W. Colenso of Natal, notably his Gospel Harmony of 1857 and his NT in this version which first appeared in 1870 including some OT books generated much debate and discussion on certain key biblical terms including the name of God in Zulu.\(^{14}\) These naturally laid the foundation for the work that was to follow in the area of Christian evangelism, education and Church growth. Other translations and revisions were soon to follow among them the Nama (Bible 1966, NT 1909), the Shona (Bible 1980, NT 1907) and Ndebele (Bible 1978, NT 1968) the Chichewa (Bible 1936, NT 1906) and Yao (Bible 1920, NT 1907), Kimbundu (Bible 1980, NT 1922), the Pedi or northern Sotho (Bible 1904, NT 1898), Sotho or Suto (Bible 1878/1881, NT 1855), Venda (Bible 1936, NT 1923), Kwanyama/Oshiwambo (Bible 1974, NT 1927) among others.

The many years of civil war in southern Africa, notably in Angola, Mozambique, and Namibia as well as in South Africa during the anti-apartheid struggle were both difficult and tragic in every way, not least for the Bible cause. Similarly, the current difficult situation in Zimbabwe has made life difficult for everyone. In such circumstances progress is severely hampered. In spite of all this, it is gratifying to note that Bible work did not come to a standstill in these countries.

Translations in the Indian Ocean Islands

The beginnings of Christianity in Madagascar are inextricably tied to those of Bible work. They go back to the work of David Jones and David Griffiths, missionaries of the London Missionary Society. Jones arrived in Madagascar on October 3, 1820 and Griffiths on May 30, 1821. Soon after their arrival they immediately embarked on a serious study of the language with a view to translating the Bible in this Malay-Polynesian language. By March 1823 an alphabet for the language had been agreed upon. The first Scriptures appeared in December 1827 – Genesis 1:1-23 and Exodus 20. The Gospel of Luke followed in November 1828, the New Testament in March 1830 and the complete Bible on 21\(^{st}\) June 1835. The story is told

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\(^{14}\) For a discussion of this see Eric Hermanson, “Missionary Translators of the Bible in Zulu” in Yorke & Renju, eds. (2004), 41-58.
how between the years 1831 and 1861 the Malagasy church experienced extreme persecution due to the deadly hostility of the reigning Queen Ranavalona. During this period Christianity was outlawed, missionaries expelled, Christians imprisoned and executed and Scriptures burnt. The appearance of the complete Bible in 1835 came at a time when all the missionaries had left the island. The young church had no consecrated ministers. Christians turned to the Bible with extreme zeal, read it in hiding, distributed it secretly and memorized it. Instead of Christianity disappearing – it grew from strength to strength. More people became Christians during this period and Christianity developed local roots and heroes. This story is often told to illustrate the power of the Scriptures in the life of individual Christians and of the Church in general. No wonder this Bible is loved and revered! With the exception of minor corrections in 1855 by David Griffiths and T. Meller in the UK and further corrections in 1865 the integrity of the 1835 version has been preserved and continues to be used to date. A new inter-confessional common language translation in modern Malagasy was dedicated in 2004. This is steadily gaining wide popularity especially among the youth. Nevertheless, a major revision of the historic 1835 version long overdue is expected to give it a new lease of life.

In the neighbouring Indian Ocean Islands of Mauritius and Seychelles, the English and French tongues had established themselves as the official tongues for use in government, in church and in business. However, parallel to this are the widely used popular home grown language varieties, the closely related Mauritian Creole and Seychelles Creole. These are used in homes, in the non-formal social spheres as well as in everyday mundane life. Resistance to have the Bible translated in the Seychelles Creole broke down when this popular idiom was declared the official tongue. The translation of the complete Bible is nearing completion (at the time of writing). The New Testament was completed and dedicated in August 1999. In Mauritius, resistance to the use of Creole in formal and official religious contexts was stronger and contributed to the delay in rendering the Holy Scriptures in this idiom. Pressure from below eventually led to an acceptance of the inevitable – the translation of the Scriptures in Mauritian Creole. The complete New Testament in New Testament Creole saw light day in 2011, under wide national acclaim and celebration.

**Translations in Eastern Africa**

Missionary work in East Africa and concomitant translation labours were pioneered by Johann Ludwig Krapf of the CMS in Kenya, Bishop Edward Steere of the UMCA in Tanzania and George Lawrence Pilkington (also of the CMS) in Uganda. Arriving on the East African coast in 1844, Krapf immediately turned his attention to language study with a view to Bible translation. His efforts bore much fruit. Within a short period he had prepared word lists of a number of Kenyan coastal dialects as well as the Kikamba language spoken in the hinterland. His grammar and dictionary of Kimvita Swahili as well as his draft of the Kimvita Swahili New Testament (1846) laid a firm foundation for further linguistic studies of these languages and for Bible translation in the various Swahili dialects. Bishop Edward Steere was the immediate beneficiary of Krapf’s ground breaking work. He arrived in Zanzibar in 1864 and immediately immersed himself in language study. He learned the Swahili of Zanzibar which he used as a basis for his grammar books and for his translation of the Swahili Bible. The first portions of Steere’s translation – Ruth and Jonah – came out in 1868. The Gospel of Matthew and the complete NT were published in 1869. Bishop Steere died in 1882 but his colleagues and collaborating language assistants pushed forward the work he began, eventually completing the entire Bible in 1891. This was the first Bible in any of the East African languages. Steere’s Swahili Bible naturally laid the foundation for all the translations that followed. This was particularly so for the Luganda Bible in Uganda – the work of George Pilkington and Duta Kitaakule which appeared in 1896, (first portion, Mathew appeared in 1886 and was translated by missionary pioneer A.M.Mackay and R.P.Ashe. The NT appeared in 1893). Given the extensive use of
Swahili throughout the region, it is not surprising that Bishop Steere’s translation exercised much influence and served as a model for translations in the region, even secondarily through such translations as the Luganda which in turn were enormously influential in their domain.

Translations of the Bible in such major East African languages as Gikuyu, Sukuma, Cigogo, and Luo among others followed. Thus the Cigogo New Testament which appeared in 1899 was the first on mainland Tanzania (Tanganyika). The work of CMS missionaries – H. Cole, J.E. Beverley and J.C. Price and their indigenous Gogo assistants helped to open up Central Tanganyika for the Christian Gospel. The complete Bible in Cigogo did not appear until 1962 and the second Bible in Cigogo in 2002. The Wasukuma who inhabit the region around Lake Victoria are among the most numerous ethnic groups in Tanzania, indeed in East Africa. The first Scripture in Kisukuma, the Gospel of Matthew appeared in 1895, the work of a team of CMS missionaries who also translated a number of NT books. The first New Testament in Kisukuma which appeared in 1925 was the work of Africa Inland missionary T.G. Marsh and his local assistants. Zacharia Baleli, a Sukuma native speaker, however played a major role in completing the Old Testament and the entire Bible in 1960 assisted by AIM missionaries. The Kamba Gospel of Mark which appeared in 1850 was the first Bible text to appear in any East African language. It was the work of Johann Ludwig Krapf with the help of informants.

The New Testament did not appear until 1920 and the complete Bible which appeared in 1956 was spearheaded by AIM missionaries. Gikuyu is one of the most widely spoken languages in Kenya. John’s Gospel was the first Scripture in Gikuyu in 1903, the work of A.W McGregor a CMS missionary. Interestingly, the second Scripture to appear in Gikuyu – Mark’s Gospel in 1909 was the work A.R.Barlow, a Church of Scotland missionary, while the third Scripture the epistle to the Philippians in 1912 was the work of F.H. McKenrick, an AIM missionary. Thereafter all these missionary groups joined forces to produce a common first NT in 1936 and a complete first Bible in 1951. The Luo of Kenya and Tanzania who live along the shores of Lake Victoria, received their first Scripture – the Gospel of Mark in 1911 which was translated by J.J. Willis and A.E. Pleydell who were part of the first CMS missionary team in the area. The New Testament appeared in 1926 and the Old Testament in 1953. The appearance of these Scriptures marked a watershed in the life of the young churches that were being built. The hunger for literacy and modern education increased. The growing number of Bible readers started grappling with questions of Biblical interpretation from the vantage point of their own cultural traditions and practices vis à vis the prevailing missionary interpretations and practices which did not always seem to conform to biblical norms as understood by some of the new believers. The ensuing clash of cultures, traditions and interpretations is still ongoing. One of the initial responses to this clash was the emergence of new churches with local leadership, attempts to develop new liturgical forms and practices, debates on questions of relevance and of contextualizing or indigenizing the faith in conformity with local cultural forms and practices.

Translation as Missiological, Educational and Incarnational Practice

Missionary educational work, church planting and Bible translation in the vernacular went together. The missionary could only communicate the Gospel effectively in the language of the people. Doing so in a foreign tongue proved to be ineffective. It was the Bible in the vernacular that gave power to the Gospel, for thereafter the evangelized could now hear God speaking to them in their own languages. This further laid the ground work for the contextualization, indigenization and inculturation of the Gospel. It empowered the new Christians to master the art of reading and interpreting the Word for themselves, which in turn enabled them to free themselves from the monopoly of missionary preaching and biblical

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15 For detailed information on Bible translation in East Africa, see Aloo Osotsi Mojola, God Speaks in Our Own Languages: Bible Translation in East Africa 1844-1998 (Nairobi, Dodoma, Kampala, Bible Societies, 1999).
interpretation. The founding of the so-called African independent churches or African instituted churches was a consequence of the Bible in the native tongues.

Bible translation exemplifies the missionary, educational and incarnational nature of Biblical communication. This follows from the imperative to go beyond the borders of the primary original audiences and their socio-cultural-linguistic contexts in order to embrace new audiences in their diverse socio-cultural-linguistic contexts. In the new contexts the biblical message is expected to take on new forms that are relevant and consistent with the varied and complex realities encountered there. One speaks here of indigenization, contextualization, inculturation, etc as a pointer to this reality. The crossing of borders and the taking of the Word to other cultures and other peoples is the missionary imperative while the transformation of the Gospel into the indigene or the local is the incarnational imperative. “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as a father’s only son, full of grace and truth” (John 1.14, NRSV). The Biblical message and its interpretation has always tended to take the form of the receptor culture. In the Hebraic-Judaic culture, it took on the forms of that culture and expressed itself in the Hebrew and Aramaic tongue. In the Hellenistic culture, it took on the forms of Hellenism and expressed itself in the Greek tongue. In the Roman-Medieval European culture it took on Roman forms and expressed itself in the Latin tongue, etc. Similarly in other continents wherever the Gospel has gone it has penetrated and transformed local cultures by means of the vernacular. This is a point that has been well articulated and explored by Lamin Sanneh and others.16

There was a natural tendency on the part of the European missionaries to export their own culture-specific and culturally determined forms of Christianity to their respective European colonies and new missionary lands. However the incarnational dynamic within the Christian message and its demand for local relevance and the use of indigenous cultural forms and language runs counter to the above logic of a foreign cultural hegemony. “The hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem…But the hour is coming and now is, when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth…..” (John 4.21b-24,NRSV). Christian missionary growth and expansion contains within it the seeds of sidelining the center and giving priority to the periphery, of highlighting the importance of the margins and of decentring the metropole. This partially explains the historic and ongoing shifts in the various Christian centres of gravity, for example from its original home in the Middle East to Europe, and from Europe or the so-called West to the Southern continents.17

The Educational and Ecumenical value of Bible Translation

The first translations of the Bible in Africa were in the vast majority of cases the work of Protestant missionaries and translators. The Catholic, orthodox and African independent/instituted churches, by and large, used and continue to use these Protestant-Christian initiated translations. Naturally these translations originally intended for a Protestant readership did not include the additional books of the Christian Old Testament normally considered as the Deutero-canon by the Catholic church or the further additional books of the Ethiopian orthodox church. However, the era after the Second Vatican Council saw a marked rise in Christian cooperation and partnerships in many areas. Bible translation was one of the beneficiaries of this wind of change. Thus the United Bible Societies formally signed an agreement with the Catholic Church that officially encouraged such cooperation around the world. A number of translations in Africa that were undertaken on this basis not only included the usual Christian Bible of 66 books but also the one

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of 73 books. In places such as Ethiopia where such partnerships extended to the Orthodox Church, it became necessary to commit the additional books of their special canon to translation in a modern idiom. Partnerships among the various Bible agencies have also contributed to avoid duplication and competition, to a better understanding of one another and to better use of resources and personnel. Ecumenical or interconfessional Bible translations are now the norm among Bible Societies both in Africa and elsewhere. They contribute to providing a solid basis for inter-church dialogue and partnership.

Some Challenges that Currently Confront the Work of Bible Translation in Africa

The progress made in the remarkable story of translating God’s Word in African languages is enormous. Yet much still remains to be done. Thus for example as of December 31, 2012, out of an estimated number of Africa’s 2000 or so languages nearly 200 or so now have complete Bibles, and just over 300 have New Testaments. Nearly 250 or so have at least a portion or book of the Bible translated in their tongues. This means that around 750 or so languages in Africa have at least a portion, an NT or a Bible. The rest of the languages or dialects in effect have no access to the Bible, in whole or in part through their own vernacular, but perhaps possibly through a second language. This is no doubt a major challenge to the Christian churches and their partner agencies. Whether every language or tongue in Africa can hope to have the complete text of the Christian Bible or a part of it remains in doubt. But at least it is possible to aim to have this in the major languages of communication – the African lingua francas, the trade languages, the languages of the major ethnic groups, or those spoken by large numbers of people.

The Bible translation enterprise can hardly afford to see itself as the saviour of languages on the way to extinction, or as a museum piece or depository of archaic or key words in the various languages that are no longer in current use. Yet the presence of the Bible in any language makes possible the availability of a major theological and educational resource, a veritable library of books in one’s own language. The availability of a Bible in a people’s language is a tool of enormous power to the local church, the local Christian leaders as well as the laity. African theologians, pastors, evangelists and Christians in general are indebted to the work of translators who work at the frontiers to develop new metaphors and terminology in the vernacular for use in Christian theological education and liturgical practice as well as evangelism and Church growth. In the past and even today the translation enterprise has been dominated by men. It is hoped that it will sooner rather than later see a greater number of women. It is widely recognized that our mothers are central to the process of passing our languages to the next generation and control our tongues better than men, no wonder we speak of a mother tongue. Westernized and educated African elite including especially biblical scholars and linguists have tended to ignore the Bible in African languages preferring the Bible in Western languages. In the process their influence on African translations has been minimal. Current critiques of African Bibles as being Eurocentric, male dominated and insensitive to African realities represent marginal voices. Research by African biblical scholars on African Bibles is slowly gaining ground and yet to have impact on the work on the ground. The need for scholars to engage with Bibles in their own languages, to do theology in their own languages, to develop theological and educational programmes and agenda or discourse in their own languages for the benefit of their peoples is more than ever urgent. The challenges are enormous but the future is bright and exciting given the shift of Christianity’s centre of gravity to the southern continents.

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Introduction

This article focuses the attention on the relatively neglected areas of Lusophone and Spanish-speaking (Hispanophone) Africa in relation to the discussion of issues of Bible translation and theological education. The article intends to demonstrate that the basic narrative which characterizes this sector of the continent is but a microcosmic reflection of a much larger story, to wit, the relative autonomy with which both Bible translation and theological education have operated and the postcolonial emergence of a long-overdue convergence between the two disciplines for the good of both. This ongoing convergence is exemplified in the first-ever attempt of the United Bible Societies (Africa Area) to enter into a creative partnership arrangement with one of the degree-granting and accredited tertiary institutions in the city of Lubango in southern Angola.

Given the history of the church in Africa and, perhaps, particularly its genesis and growth in the Lusophone and Spanish-speaking sectors of it, it might seem somewhat surprising that we are, in this chapter, seeking to juxtapose the ministry of Bible translation and the discipline of theological education. This might appear surprising if for no other reason than that one of the notable ironies of the modern history of the church in Africa is the apparent lack of serious and sustained interaction between Bible translation and theological education at a time when both processes were running concurrently on the continent.

The period within which we witness the post-independence proliferation of mission schools and seminaries, Bible colleges and Institutes, and even the explosion of Religious Studies Departments in state and private universities across Anglophone and, to a lesser extent, Francophone Africa, is precisely the time during which we witness the proliferation of Bible translation projects meant to bring the Bible into being into the various African languages as well. And like parallel train tracks, these two processes of Bible translation and theological education operated largely independent of each other.

It has not been unusual, for example, to have entire Bible translation projects organized, coordinated and completed in the various African languages without the direct involvement of African biblical scholars and Christian theologians themselves. In many cases churches would be invited to relinquish some of their pastors and other members adjudged to be competent mother-tongue speakers and considered to be reasonably knowledgeable in the Bible so that the local Bible Society or Bible Office could facilitate their further training as translators. And while all of this is being done in and through the church, serious theological education, reflection and formation, for the most part, have been (and to a large extent, is still being) done in academia where Bibles published in the Indo-European languages of English, French, Spanish and Portuguese are still generally given pride of place.

The tendency has also been to have the launching of the translated product (be it a New Testament or the complete Bible) done amidst great celebration, amidst a joyous African “song and dance”, within the church and larger speech community but then have that Bible product relegated to the church and the home where it is then put to catechetical, homiletical, liturgical and devotional use. Seldom has it been the case that such a product would make its way into a university, seminary or similar setting and therein critically examined in terms of its faithfulness to the original languages, its accuracy and clarity in the target language, and integrated into the theological curricula so that meaningful and relevant theologizing can
occur within an African context where, presumably, concerted attempts are being made to ground the Gospel in the African soul and soil.¹

Of course, another constraining factor governing the use of the end-product is that, many times, there are relatively few speakers of African languages who are capable of competently reading the Bible in the African language into which the Bible is actually being translated since literacy in the mother-tongue is relatively low on a continent which, to a large extent, is still very orally wired. It is principally for this reason that there is usually a need for the oralization, visualization or transmediatization of the translation process in that the Bible is made available in non-print formats so that the illiterate can still access the Bible via the mediums of video, audio and film. It is true that times are changing across the continent in this regard, but it is against this historical and contemporary backdrop that Bible translation in both Lusophone and Spanish-speaking (Hispanophone) Africa is still to be situated.²

A Brief Background to Spanish-speaking or Hispanophone Africa

Spanish Sahara was the name given to the territory of Western Sahara when it was first ruled by Spain between 1884 and 1975. The territory represented one of the last remnants of the Spanish Empire and was abandoned following both international and internal pressure as well as external claims, especially by Morocco. Today, the territory goes by the name of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic and its sovereignty remains under dispute. This was demonstrated, for example, at the first-ever African Union African Diaspora Summit held on May 25, 2012 in South Africa. On that occasion, a strident appeal for the support of the African Union and its Diaspora against ongoing Moroccan occupation was presented to the delegates.³

In terms of Bible translation, however, it is Equatorial Guinea to which we must turn since the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic does not have such a tradition. A relatively small but oil-rich country, Equatorial Guinea is about the size of Switzerland and is located just south of Cameroon and northwest of Gabon. It consists of Rio Muni on the coast and a number of islands in the Gulf of Guinea. The largest island is called Bioko which was formerly called Fernando Po, named after one of the Spanish explorers. The capital city, Malabo, with a population of approximately 40,000, is located on Bioko. The entire country boasts a population of some 400,000.⁴

Both Bioko and Annobón, another of its many islands, came under Spanish influence in 1778. However, Britain managed Fernando Po⁵ with Spanish consent from 1827-1844. In 1845, Spain resumed control of Bioko (Fernando Po) and in 1885 Rio Muni was given to Spain in the Treaty of Berlin. As a country Equatorial Guinea finally gained its independence from Spanish rule in 1968⁶.

In terms of its linguistic profile Equatorial Guinea has Fang as its major language with Bubi mostly spoken on Bioko and a pidgin-English widely spoken in both Malabo and the northern corner of the country. In Malabo itself, however, Bubi is the most widely spoken language, with about six dialects.⁶

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³ One of the authors (G. Yorke) served as Head of Delegation for his Caribbean Government (St. Kitts-Nevis) at the African Union African Diaspora Summit.
⁴ Fernando Po is an island in Equatorial Guinea, now called Bioko, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fernando_Po
⁵ Omanson, 71.
⁶ Omanson, 71.
belongs to the Bantu family of languages with their characteristic prefixes, noun class concordance, complements and so on.

**Bible Translation in Equatorial Guinea**

Illustrative of the little that has been done in Bible translation in Equatorial Guinea is the Bubi translation project. Started in 1993, it was initially funded by the Swiss Bible Society and, of a team of three translators, two (one female and one male) were students at a local Pentecostal missionary-managed Bible school, the Centro de Estudios Bíblicos. After many fits and starts, the New Testament was finally translated. However, given the relatively low levels of literacy in the language and the powerful influence of Spanish as the official and, therefore, High or H language, the translation is not being widely used, especially by the élites. Instead, one still finds a marked predilection for the various Spanish versions of the Bible such as Reina Valera, Nueva Biblia Española, Versión Popular and Biblia Jerusalén. This means, essentially, that theological education is not being sufficiently impacted by the translation itself, at least, not in its current print format, and that it might not do so in the foreseeable future. Since its publication, however, SIL International, another Bible translation agency operating throughout Africa, has responded to this context of illiteracy by opting for the film format.

**A Brief Background to Lusophone, i.e. Portuguese-speaking, Africa**

The story surrounding the initial contacts between Portugal and Africa extends to the mid-fifteenth century and is inextricably linked to the name and navigational exploits of Vasco da Gama. Early contacts include Mauritania, Morocco, the Canary Islands and the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa.

Today, the lingering Portuguese influence is most keenly seen and sensed not merely in the Portuguese-sounding names of many individuals who are nationals of the five former Portuguese colonies but more so, perhaps, in the policies and politics of language that have now come to characterize the self-same countries in their post-independence period.

The five former Portuguese colonies alluded to above encompass Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe. In terms of location, Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe are both in the Atlantic Ocean; Guinea-Bissau in West Africa; and Angola and Mozambique in Southern Africa. Boasting a combined population of some 45 million, these five former colonies are generally grouped together under the Portuguese acronym, PALOP, meaning *Os Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa* (the African Countries with Portuguese as the Official Language).

**A Brief Linguistic Profile of Lusophone Africa**

There are no fewer than ninety languages, including creoles, spoken within Lusophone Africa or the PALOP. Angola boasts about forty-one; Cape Verde, three; Guinea Bissau, twenty-three; Mozambique, anywhere between ten and twenty; and São Tomé and Príncipe, one. The vast majority of the languages found in Angola and Mozambique fall within the Bantu family and, on a larger scale, within the Niger-

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Congo group. This means, essentially, that, in linguistic terminology, the languages spoken there are SVO typologically\textsuperscript{11} and CV in terms of their syllabic structure\textsuperscript{12}.

As for Guinea-Bissau, it is the only one within the PALOP that enjoys the use of three distinct levels of language, namely, Portuguese as the official language, a widely spoken Portuguese-based creole (Crioulo) as the national language, and several indigenous languages as mother-tongues such as Balanta and Manjakos—both falling within the Atlantic family. In Angola and Mozambique, we have only Portuguese and indigenous languages—no creoles; and in the other two countries (Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe), we have only Portuguese and creole—no indigenous languages.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Bible Translation in Lusophone Africa}

Until fairly recently, Bible translation in Lusophone Africa was done mostly by missionaries. And there is an historical explanation for this. Taking Mozambique, for example, Matusse documents the well established policy of the Portuguese to not educate Afro-Mozambicans in large numbers. As a case in point, Liceu 5 de Outubro (now Josina Machel Secondary School) opened in 1910 in Maputo, the nation’s capital, with no Afro-Mozambicans enrolled. In 1960 the same institution had only 30 Afro-Mozambicans out of a total of some 1,000 students. When the national university, the University of Lourenço Marques (now the University of Eduardo Mondlane), was opened in 1963, only five of the 300 students were of African origin and who had one of the indigenous Mozambican languages such as Cicopi, Gitonga or Xirhonga as a mother-tongue.\textsuperscript{14}

This scenario was replicated in Angola with the establishment of the national university, the University of Agostinho Neto. As for Guinea-Bissau, the more recently established national university, the University of Amilcar Cabral, has not yet generated sufficient graduates speaking the indigenous languages to make a substantial contribution to the work of Bible translation and, ultimately, to theological education.

As indicated earlier, times are changing in terms of the increased level of interaction between the National Bible Societies and Offices and the various tertiary institutions found within their territories, such that, over time, the quality of translator training and, therefore, Bible translation will improve and theological education within an African environment and language will be the richer for it.

Illustrative of this ongoing interaction between Bible Society/Bible Office and Seminary (or its tertiary equivalent) in Lusophone Africa, as of 2011, is the following list indicating Bible societies and Seminaries that have been interacting with each other:\textsuperscript{15}

1. Bible Society of Angola:
   - Escola Bíblica de Kalukembi
   - Escola Bíblica de Kitoboko
   - Seminário Baptist de Luanda
   - Seminário da Igreja de Cristo
   - Seminário Teológico Metodista de Angola
   - Instituto Superior de Teologia Evangélica em Lubango (ISTEL)

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} SVO refers to subject-verb-object languages, see: http://lingwiki.com/index.php?title=List_of_SVO_Languages
\item \textsuperscript{12} C stands for a Consonant and V for a Vowel sound; on the so-called CV languages see: World Atlas of language structures, http://wals.info/chapter/12
\item \textsuperscript{13} P.Bull, \textit{O Crioulo de Guinea-Bissau: Filosofia e Sabedoria} (Lisboa, Portugal: Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa, 1989), 95.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Matusse, 501.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Much of this information was drawn from a Report given by one of the authors (E. K. Nsiku) at the 8\textsuperscript{th} Meeting of the Global Lusophone Group (encompassing Brazil, the PALOP and Portugal). The Meeting was held June 9-10, 2011, in São Paulo, Brazil.
\end{itemize}
• Universidade Agostinho Neto
2. Bible Society of Mozambique:
• Escola Bíblica das Assembleias de Deus
• Instituto Superior de Teologia Evangélica em Moçambique (ISTEM)
• Seminário Unido de Rictatla
• Universidade Eduardo Mondlane
3. Bible Office in Guinea-Bissau (coordinated by the Bible Society of Senegal):
• Instituto Bíblico da Guiné-Bissau
• Universidade Amilcar Cabral

In terms of some of the languages and translation projects which are benefitting, to varying degrees, from this ongoing interaction between Bible Society/Office and Bible College/Seminary/University, are the following:
1. Angola—Cokwe, Cuanhama, Kikongo, Lucazi, Nkumbi, Nyaneka, Songo, Umbangala and Umbundu;
2. Mozambique—Changana, Chuabu, Cicopi, Caswa, Ciyaio, Elomwe, Gitonga and Xirhonga; and,

As mentioned earlier Bible translation in Lusophone Africa (and on the continent generally) was driven mostly by missionaries and later by the local churches themselves through their pastors and others who were adjudged to be sufficiently endowed, intellectually, spiritually and interpersonally, to undertake the arduous but intensely satisfying task of Bible translation. It was not until around 2005, for example, that Bible translation and formal theological education in Lusophone Africa had finally come together in some meaningful and historic way. This became possible when the United Bible Societies (Africa Area) decided to enter into a partnership arrangement with a degree-granting inter-denominational evangelical Seminary. Reference is here being made to the Instituto Superior de Teologia Evangélica em Lubango (ISTEL) is listed above.16

The pioneering nature of this Angola-based UBS (Africa Area)/ISTEL partnership merits some elaboration. The hope is that such an arrangement in which Bible translators and theological educators are made to interact intensely (and not just periodically) with each other and within an accredited academic setting—for the ultimate and long-lasting benefit of both Bible translation and theological education—will be replicated throughout Lusophone Africa.

How the UBS (Africa Area)/ISTEL Translation Partnership Programme Began in Angola

Given that a substantial number of people from the Afro-Lusophone community were denied access to quality education by their erstwhile colonizer (Portugal), and the legacy that this bequeathed to the contemporary generation, it proved to be a real challenge to create an institution-based translator-training programme at first-degree level. It meant, among other things, searching Lusophone Africa for a reputable and accredited tertiary institution with the relevant theological and biblical studies curriculum and one which was sufficiently ecumenical or inter-confessional and interested in Bible translation as a ministry. There was also a need for an institution that was willing to partner with UBS (Africa Area) without insisting that UBS subject itself to a particular Confession of Faith since UBS is not a church but seeks to be a servant of all churches. Therefore, it is, by its very nature, inter-confessionally all-inclusive in its orientation, outlook and modus operandi.

16 Much of what is to follow first appeared in G. L. Yorke, “Institution-Based Translator Training in Lusophone Africa: The Dawning of a New Day,” The Bible Translator: Practical Papers 57:2 (2006): 74-78. It should also be mentioned that one of the authors (G. Yorke) was among those who initiated this partnership arrangement and that both authors (G. Yorke and E. K. Nsiku) were the first two (former) UBS Translation Consultants to teach in the programme.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
In this regard, ISTEL (Instituto Superior de Teologia Evangélica em Lubango), located in southern Angola and representing some 11 different evangelical denominations, proved sufficiently suitable for that “joint venture”. The programme commenced officially on September 26, 2005 and was structured so as to make it possible for various UBS Translation Consultants and Bible Society-sponsored translators to be at the institution for two or more weeks at a time during which various intensive Bible translation courses were offered. In addition to having UBS Translation Consultants teach in the programme and in the overall curriculum structure of the host institution, other suitably qualified consultants from partner organizations were involved (e.g. SIL International).

Perhaps rather predictably, one challenge that was confronted initially was to generate enough of the requisite teaching materials in Portuguese so that the Lusophone translators could have ready access to the academic information in their official language rather than having to struggle with English or French as had been occasionally their experience elsewhere on the continent. In addition to drawing on the available resources of the Bible Societies of both Portugal and Brazil (e.g. a Greek Grammar written in Portuguese, an Interlinear Greek-Portuguese New Testament and a Polyglot Hebrew Bible), this meant translating various manuals, Bible handbooks, commentaries and other translators’ aids from French and/or English into Portuguese.

In terms of the overall pedagogical strategy, the programme was operated on two parallel tracks, namely, the regular teaching track, which adhered to the general policies and guidelines undergirding a full four-year degree programme, and one in which the appropriately qualified full-time faculty member of the host institution would teach (e.g. teachers of the Biblical languages) and the consultant-coordinated Bible-translation oriented intensive track already mentioned. Advantages of this programme were that it was less costly overall to operate, permitted the sponsoring Bible Societies to benefit from the ongoing training of their translators who would return to their Bible Societies upon completion of their various intensives, and allowed translators who did not have secondary school-leaving certificates (and, therefore, were not eligible to enrol in a full degree programme) to be exposed to some extent to structured academic training at the tertiary level. The latter would then be eligible to enter the full degree programme after demonstrating that, in addition to their maturity, motivation, academic record and potential, they were capable of performing at that level. This approach is similar to the North American “Mature Entry Policy” among others.

With regards to the Bible translation component of the curriculum, the translators, in their first two semesters, are exposed to the following modules: 1) Introduction to Bible translation; 2) Hermeneutics for translators (incorporating the rudiments of syntax, pragmatics, etc.); 3) Linguistics (part one—some articulatory phonetics and phonology); 4) Linguistics (part two—some morphology and semantics); 5) The use of computers in Bible translation; and 6) Sociolinguistics (with the student-translator taken to his/her relevant speech community for a day or two to engage in some field-based research).

Another anticipated outcome of such a programme is for each translator to engage in some exit-type exercise in which s/he embarks on a small research project grounding the research in his/her mother-tongue, and is then challenged to reflect more deeply on what it means to be a good translator (and theologian).

Conclusion

Given the history of the continent as a whole, and that of its Lusophone and Spanish-speaking sectors in particular, and based on the settled determination of a continent to forge ahead on all fronts—be it in the realm or domain of the political, the economic, the academic or the theological, the hope is that this pioneering UBS (Africa Area)/ISTEL attempt and arrangement, in spite of whatever teething problems the programme might have had or any challenges it might have encountered, can be so refined and replicated...
throughout Lusophone and Hispanophone Africa that it will continue to benefit from this sort of synergy that ought to have been fully exploited long ago but one which, unfortunately, has not been, to wit, a synergy between the ministry of Bible translation and the discipline of theological education in Africa.

However as with so many things worth doing on a continent that is committed to its renaissance or rebirth but which continues to struggle with various perplexing postcolonial challenges—be it peace, poverty or anything else—and in the language of Lusophone Africa itself, the following slogan seems destined to remain entirely appropriate for some time to come: *A Luta Continua* (the struggle continues).

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Introduction

The United Bible Societies (UBS) has been a major partner in translating and distributing the Bible in Africa. This article will first address the issue of the contribution and challenges of the Bible translations to theological education in Africa from the perspective of a UBS experience that strives to be ecumenical, scholarly and yet missionary. Secondly, it will present some relevance and practical implications of Bible translation for theological education. Postcolonial criticism and courtesy both require authors to introduce themselves to their audience. The present author is a citizen of the Democratic Republic of Congo, black, male, Roman Catholic, middle class, theologian, Biblical student, teacher, husband, father and a former UBS translation consultant (March 1997-May 2012). These details might help the reader to better understand the backgrounds, insights and limitations of this paper. The UBS is a movement whose roots go back to 1804 and whose major activity consists of translating and distributing the Scripture. In 1968, the UBS and the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity signed a document, revised in 1987 as “Guidelines for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible.” In 1993, the UBS Executive Committee (UBSEC) “discussed ‘UBS Relations with the Orthodox Churches and Translation Projects’ and adopted a resolution (93.27) which allowed for the use of the Church text as the base text for translations under specific circumstances” (UBS Global Board 2004). The UBS has thus built up an international reputation for its scholarly and inter-confessional commitments and contributions. This is both an honour and a challenge! An educated reader expects the UBS to keep up the standard it has set for itself in providing more Scripture and related materials whose contents are both scholarly and inter-confessional, even when these contents are presented in a common language.

Combining scholarship and interconfessionality is a high and commendable standard. But it is not easy and there is always the temptation of giving up or "adapting it", especially if the adaptation suits some narrow economical and missionary reasons. I would argue that it is more economical to think and act consistently, in season and out of season. I use the word “economical” (and its noun form “economy”) to refer not to something cheap, but rather in the sense which it bears in the frameworks of Business Ethics and of Systematic Theology. In Business Ethics, an economy means an asset that can bring benefits in short, medium and long terms (e.g. education, land, people, services). In Systematic Theology, the expression “economy of God” is used first for God’s internal being as the one triune God, but also for God’s external manifestation through the mysteries of creation, incarnation, resurrection, Church, sacraments, ethics, pastoral care or governance, and many others. The internal being of God and his external manifestation are the two poles of what is also known as the economy of salvation. Even if this study will expand more on a technical sense of “economical” or “economy” in business and theological terms, it is still inspired by the etymological sense of economy as house rule (oikos nomos). Fortunately enough, the UBS is endowed with its own translation policy or its own house rule on translation!

In UBS circles and beyond, Scripture translation theories and practices have been driven mostly from linguistic, missionary and electronic perspectives with less emphasis on business ethics or theological inputs. Interactions between linguistics and information technology, coupled with biblical exegesis, have produced and are still providing the best biblical source texts. Missionary concerns have pushed translation communities to publish Scriptures that are easily understandable by the majority of the readers (non-
Christians and Christians alike) without any mediation (i.e. no need of footnotes or trained ministers). This is one of the presuppositions which lie behind the theory of functional equivalence, as it specifically promotes Scriptures in common language. Nevertheless, what is being somehow overlooked is that the functional equivalence theory as developed by Eugene Nida highly recommends the use of the best source texts. It goes without saying that some computer programmes have been contributing tremendously to speed up the work of the Scripture translation or adaptation (e.g. Paratext, Adapt It, etc).

While the positive impacts of the linguistic, missionary and electronic approaches are obvious, they still need to be handled with care. If insufficient attention is paid to the use of basic exegetical tools (such as the best source texts), it is certain that Scripture translations will be laid on shaky foundations. Material foundations for good translations include the best source texts, namely the latest editions of the *Biblia Hebraica* for the Old Testament, the Septuagint (LXX) for the “deutero-canonical” books, and the Greek New Testament. The *spiritual* foundations, Jesus himself as the cornerstone (1 Cor 3:10-11) and the twelve apostles as foundation stones (Rev 21.14), will not be addressed here.

In a critical and competitive era like the twenty-first century, failing to translate from the best sources may incur devastating consequences, both in terms of business and theology. One negative business outcome would be a progressive loss of trust in versions that are based on other translations rather than the best available sources. Such versions are referred to as “translations of translations”¹, “secondary translations” and even “tertiary versions”², or simply “adaptations” and “second hand translations.” Loss of trust in such translations might also affect the theologies of the target audiences, as they may not be taken seriously in theological discussions, except for exposing them as evidence of unfortunate and uncritical renderings. Nowadays, young people, interested in knowing how Scripture translation is carried out, often want to know whether this is done from “original” sources. If the answer is negative or unclear, they are disappointed, wondering whether they are being cheated. Instead of engineering justifications to appease our conscience, why shouldn’t we directly address these deeply felt needs of such potential young readers? Otherwise the increasing number of readers who question the technical value of “translations of translations” might become disastrous in the long run. In addition, Bible Revision and Study Bible projects planned for translations that were based on the best source texts can run faster than the others. Furthermore, new words coined in a target language based on non-original source languages bring more problems linguistically and theologically.

Such potentially disastrous consequences do not imply that there won’t be salvation for the majority of Christians who rely on these secondary translations. They have been vital in the spread of the gospel both in the past and for the present time. But the issue at stake is that some readers have started doubting them. Besides, the main motive for translating the Scripture should not be the idea that translation is the only way of attaining salvation for the majority of people. The salvation process can also be trigged by Scripture in a different language, or by another aspect of Christian life (e.g. sacraments, ethics, and pastoral care). Moreover, the Word of God is more than the canonical writings; it consists of the love of God made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. He is not totally entangled in the Scripture, be it original or translated text. But if Scripture is the best venue for mediating the encounter with Jesus, it should also be handled in the best possible way in terms of content, form and format. The task of translating the Scripture becomes more meaningful when it aims, not necessarily at initiating faith and salvation, but most specifically at maintaining the salvation and sanctification processes, while representing more faithfully and attractively

² Wendland, R. Ernst, Contextual Frames of Reference in Translation. A Course for Bible Translators and Teachers (2008),120.
the founding texts. Therefore, the maintenance of faith by a translated Scripture requires it to meet a high standard, lest it confuses the readers, nurtures suspicions or provokes derision.

It is important to address at least the two following questions. What kind of business is Scripture Translation? Which type of theology does it rely on or propagate? The working hypothesis of this study suggests that translating the Scripture from the best sources can be supported by translation business ethics and translation theologies. This hypothesis is motivated by a simple and yet painful fact: Adaptations or “translations of translations” continue to be produced and distributed unceasingly in Africa, even after 23 centuries of first translation on the continent that took place in Alexandria around 250 AD (LXX) or after two centuries of UBS movement that started in 1884. Positively, I wish to promote more of what Wendland calls “primary translations” (translations done directly for the “original” biblical sources). Arguments supporting this hypothesis are presented in three sections. The first section describes a current understanding of Scripture translation. The second section deals with a few historical landmarks of Scripture translation practices (LXX translators and Saint Jerome). The third and last section engages in exploring the meaning of Scripture translation in the light of the Newport Declaration and in relation to concepts of business and theology.

**What is a Scripture Translation?**

Translation is whatever a society recognises as translation. It is found almost everywhere, to the extent that everything can be called translation, though may not be recognised as such (e.g. a brain that is changing thoughts into words, or a literary translation that has overshadowed its original). There is no clear-cut distinction between what is labelled as translation and what it is not, but it is important to keep in mind the distinction between “primary translation” and “secondary translation”. Primary translation may involve the transformation of a thought into words or some microscopic chemical elements, invisible to ordinary sight, into their physical equivalents that are visible with the naked eye (e.g. water produced from the combination of two molecules of hydrogen and one of oxygen). Secondary translation seeks to represent an existing source text by a target text. Both primary and secondary translations can overlap in a single human activity, as when a person conveys thoughts and signs received from a source text, by creating a new but similar target text. In this example, the actual target text is the secondary translation, while the conversion of various signs and thoughts into coordinated set of ideas in the mind of the human mediator is the primary translation. The source or the target text might be either sensual (oral, aural, visual, tasteful, tangible, and imaginary) or intellectual, mechanical, artistic, literary and electronic. Scripture translation involves each of these aspects. Moreover, translation (primary or secondary) often becomes unconscious, or just a part of the “collective unconsciousness” and “cultural dynamics.” This distinction between primary and secondary translations is abstract, while others, such as Wendland, deal with more concrete and practical primary translations (based on the “original” source) and secondary translations (based on other translations).

Scripture translation is not limited to one mode of transfer, though a single medium has dominated the print era. It can also involve transferring from one medium to another, such as from an oral text to a written one, from a written text to a painted one, from a printed text to an audio-visual one, or from one script to another (e.g. transcription, transliteration or digitisation). The original languages of Scripture are Hebrew and Aramaic for the “First Testament”, and Greek for the “Second Testament”, though Greek also serves as the most reliable secondary language for the so-called “deuter-canonical” books. John 19.20 mentions an interesting case where three source languages (Hebrew, Latin and Greek) were simultaneously used in delivering a message (compare this with the European Union which simultaneously issues original

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3 Wendland, R. Ernst. Contextual Frames, 120.
documents in all official languages of the community). This highlights the importance of Latin in Scripture translation studies, not only because of this single mention, but also because of Latinism found in the New Testament, particularly in the Gospel of Mark. Moreover, Latin is the first language in which the translation of the full Bible (Old and New Testament) was ever done in the history of Christianity. However, it is worthwhile to acknowledge that the first full New Testament translation was done in Coptic language, making Egypt as the unique land that hosted the first translations of both Old Testament and New Testament books.

Any translation process includes some degree of deletion, distortion, generalisation, specification, similarity and dissimilarity, equivalence or functionality. Translation is not a one-way process; it is an inter-cultural phenomenon, which achieves its mediation through negotiations between the stakeholders (human, textual and divine). Scripture translation aims at sharing information and fostering communion between the sender, the messenger and the receiver. Furthermore, it might refer to a prophetic act of communicating a “divine” message through a living person (John 1.14, 18; Ac 15.12) or that of transforming human nature into a “divine” one (cf. 2 Kings 2.11; Rom 6.5-11; 1 Cor 15.42-54; Gal 2.20).

In short, translation is a complex endeavour, a mediated communication, framed by numerous contexts within which it takes place. “Contextual frames” for Scripture translation include cognitive, socio-cultural, organisational, textual, lexical, analytical and communicational frames. All the important stakeholders and translation frames can be well apprehended from three sets of cultures (original biblical cultures, Church cultures and contemporary cultures). When dealing with the original biblical cultures, the source texts need to be those which are critically established, not other previous translations. The history of Bible translation is full of inspiring examples of which we will examine only two, owing to their impact on the mainstream churches: the LXX translators and Saint Jerome.

Some historical landmarks of Scripture Translations

The Septuagint

The history of Bible translations goes back to the fifth century BC when scribes were commissioned to interpret orally the Hebrew text into Aramaic, the common language at that time (cf. Neh 8:8). Sometime between the fifth and second century BC a revision called the “Samaritan Pentateuch” was produced. Hebrew-Aramaic Bible translation (paraphrase) can be traced back to the 3rd century BC (e.g. Pentateuch Targum of Onkelos). Aramaic and Samaritan versions are similar in that their source texts and target audiences belong to the same Semitic culture, despite the use of different languages or dialects.

From the third century BC onwards, Scripture translation took an unprecedented step, from being a single culture event to becoming an inter-cultural business. The LXX translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, constitutes a historical and literary landmark, bridging two different cultures (Semitic and Hellenistic), although the main target was still the Jewish community. According to the apocryphal Letter of Aristeas (39, 43,121) and Josephus (Ant 12.2.13), seventy-two elders (six representing each of the 12 Israelite tribes) carried out this translation at the request of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, king of Egypt (287-47 BCE), on behalf of the Jewish Diaspora in Alexandria. In addition to this political dimension, the letter also indicates an important cultural aspect whereby LXX was to enrich the Alexandrian royal library with Jewish sacred writings. In terms of ethics, the translators were to be, according to King Ptolemy, “men of noble life, skilled in law” (i.e. Torah) and “able to interpret it” . Were there seventy-two translators (Aristeas), or seventy (cf. Ex 24.1, 9; Num 11.25 and Church Fathers) or five according to Sopherim (c.i)? No reliable source has been able to settle the matter. Nevertheless, it is certain that LXX was the work of a team of highly skilled and well equipped scribes: “The High priest selected men of the finest character and the highest culture … They were men who had not only acquired proficiency in Jewish literature, but had

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
studied most carefully that of the Greeks as well" (*Letter of Aristeas*, 121). Josephus has recorded that the LXX translators, on the order of the king, were treated in such a way that “they would suffer nothing to interrupt them in their work” (*Ant*. 12.2.13). Let the reader understand! More objective studies show that the LXX was not a single initiative, but the work of many scholars over many years. Yet it is critically established that every piece of this translation was done from a Hebrew or Aramaic text, except for a few books or additions which might have been written directly in Greek. Jewish and Gentile Christians considered it as their own Bible, until separation progressively prevailed between them during the first four centuries of the Greco-Roman period. In spite of it being a non-Christian enterprise, Christians did not reject this translation, though they did some revisions in the third and fourth centuries, following second century revisions by Jewish scholars. For much of the early Church, the LXX served as the only sacred Scripture, to which New Testament books were added to have a complete Christian Bible. Of course that was not the end of the story for Scripture translation, and before long, for many different reasons, other competitive translations such as the Vulgate began to appear.

**The Vulgate**

Many early versions of the First Testament were based on the LXX, namely the Old Latin (2nd century), Syriac Peshitto (2nd century), Egyptian or Coptic (2nd century), Ethiopic or Amharic (4th century), Gothic (5th century), Armenian (5th century), Georgian (6th century), Syriac (7th century) and Slavic (from 9th century) versions. The proliferation of these second hand translations eventually faced among other challenges the issue of the “original” and most credible source text. Consequently, the Syriac Peshitto and the Vulgate soon gained the prestige which until then was enjoyed only by the LXX among most Christians. But with the support for the Latin language in the post-Constantine Roman Empire, the Vulgate superseded both the LXX and the Syriac Peshito versions, particularly from the ninth century onwards. However, after the schism of 1054, the LXX regained more weight in the Orthodox Church while the Vulgate continued to be authoritative in the Catholic Church even after Luther’s Reformation in the sixteenth century. As Bruce M. Metzger⁴ puts it:

> Whether one considers the Vulgate from a purely secular view, with its pervasive influence on the development of Latin into Romance Languages, or whether one has in view only the specifically religious influence, the extent of its penetration into all areas of Western culture is almost beyond calculation. The theology and the devotional language typical of the Roman Catholic Church were either created or transmitted by the Vulgate. Both Protestants and Roman Catholics are heirs of terminology that Jerome coined or baptized in fresh significance – words such as salvation, regeneration, justification, sanctification, propitiation, reconciliation, inspiration, Scripture, sacrament, and many others.

Jerome himself states that “he who is ignorant of the scriptures is also ignorant of the power and wisdom of God: ignorance of the scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (cf. the prologue of Jerome’s commentaries on Isaiah). Clearly, Jerome is confident in the Scripture either in its original form or in translation. In the case of a translation, the confidence is based on both spiritual foundations (Christ and the Apostles) and solid material foundations (the best available source texts). The Vulgate had both. Amazingly, even though it is a common language version (*vulgus* meaning common in Latin), both the translator (Jerome) and the commissioner (Pope Damasus) chose to base their work directly on the “original sources.” It was not an easy task, as Jerome had to spend years of preparation in Palestine, to be able to translate from the best sources, after realising that the inspired texts are those in the original languages. This implied that any serious translation had to be directly based on, or revised from, the

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
original texts. The context of antagonism between Jews and Christians during Jerome’s time meant that any serious handling of the Biblical texts had to be based on their best source texts, but also on clearly formulated principles. Jerome’s Vulgate is accredited with the honour of being “the first translation to be done by someone who formulated and discussed well developed ideas on translation, such as the conflict between literal translation and idiomatic rendering of the meaning.”

While the LXX exemplifies team-work translation, the Vulgate was a single handed translation. But both were based on the most reliable sources. The translators were selected by the highest authority of the faith community concerned (High Priest Eleazar for the LXX, and Pope Damasus for the Vulgate). The translators had to master both source and target languages and literatures. The translators were entitled to the most conducive conditions of work. As a result, the impact of their work is simply beyond calculation and imagination! The UBS knows and even owns the best Biblical sources, has the support of the highest Church authorities, can select the most gifted translators, and it provides professional translation principles and scholarly handbooks. On what account, then, can the UBS continue producing translations of translations in some parts of its worldwide constituency? What can we learn from the 2004 World Assembly, which produced the Newport Declaration?

**Scripture Translation as Business and Theology**

*Translations and Adaptations*

Before tackling Scripture translation as Business and Theology, it is important to draw a clear distinction between translation and adaptation as officially viewed in UBS circles. The UBS approach to translation “is based on a policy of achieving accuracy in meaning and faithfulness to the source language texts, and by the charter of the national Bible Societies, the publishers, to serve all the churches by meeting their Scripture needs for worship, nurture and mission”

This same document views “adaptation” as a synonym for “localised version.” Localised versions are explained as “derivative products prepared and published for different linguistic communities from the original product,” and in “a narrow definition localised version is taken to be translation” (Ibid.). This remark is useful, as the majority of ordinary readers might not perceive the technical difference between a translated text and a localised one. However, the document notes that “in computer terminology ‘localisation’ means translating software instructions and information from one language to another so that software prepared for use in one locality, that is, for one speech language, can be used in another community where a different speech language is spoken” (Ibid.). Two examples of localised products are given. First, the Swahili Congo Bible (Bukavu Swahili *Biblia Maandiko Matakifukwa Watu Wote*) is an example of an adaptation of an existing Scripture translation, namely the Swahili Good News Bible of Tanzania and Kenya (Swahili *Biblia Habari Njema*). Second is an example of a children’s Bible.

Taking as its model, “The Children’s Bible” published by Scandinavia Publishing House (1989), an adaptation of the *Biblia Habari Njema* was made to produce a Swahili Children’s Bible. The changes from the original version consisted mainly in selecting texts from the full Bible and placing them in the format of the Scandinavia Children’s Bible. A more extensive adaptation was made in the French version *La Bible pour Enfants* (2000) that was based on the new version of the Bible in simple French called *Parole de Vie* (2000). This adaptation included not only text selection but also the introduction of bridge material and discourse transitional material.

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In some cases, the adaptations are facilitated by computer software, such as SIL’s programs “CARLA (Computer Assisted Related Language Adaptation) and CADA (Computer Assisted Dialect Adaptation). This approach uses computer software to make a machine adaptation of a base text in one dialect into a related dialect or language. This basic draft version is then edited by a mother-tongue speaker of the second dialect to ensure that both translation accuracy and linguistic style meet the required standards for Scripture translation.” Similar in intent but simpler in function is the more recent development of computer software known as “Adapt It”, which “provides tools for translating text from one language to a related language” (SIL Software Catalogue).

From what precedes, it becomes clear that translations and adaptations are not necessarily the same thing, even if the terms can be used interchangeably in some contexts. However, for economical and theological reasons, translation projects based directly on the best biblical original sources and not on other versions or adaptations need to be seen as top priorities. Nevertheless, an adaptation tool like “Adapt It” would be more appropriate when a given community would like to test the degree of similarity and difference between the existing literal and common language “translations” in a same or another related language. The results of such comparison may lead to the undertaking of a revision or a new translation project, after the data have been compared with the latest editions of the best biblical source texts, the most recent developments in the target language and the current theological trends in the Church. In this case, “Adapt It” will be very useful and can be safely recommended. There is no doubt that Adapt It offers great potential for revision projects, which are set up for some specific reasons such as old fashion or unnatural style, unsatisfactory principles and inadequate textual bases, and unacceptable theological features. At the moment Africa strongly needs a strategy to ensure that Scripture is translated or revised with uncompromising adherence to translation policy. Thus African translation projects will be continuing the commendable tradition which started with the LXX and Coptic translations in Egypt and was more recently taken up by those of “The Gospels of Matthew and John in the Ga Language” (1843), “Afrikaans Bible” (1933), “Swahili Habari Njema Bible” (1995), or “Malagasy Common Language Bible” (2003). The story behind the Afrikaans Bible is an interesting one. Hermanson (2002:8-9) reports: “The first attempt to translate the Gospels and Psalms from the State Bible met with such adverse criticism when it appeared in 1922, that it was decided to start a completely new translation from the original languages.” It is also amazing to realize that the first two Gospels in Ga were translated by a catechist who had an impressive command of the New Testament Greek and his mother tongue. Likewise, it is encouraging to realize that all current UBS translation projects in Congo-Brazzaville (Congo) and a half of those in Congo-Kinshasa (DRCongo) are directly based on the best available biblical source texts. This constitutes the beginning of a better understanding of the policy of the UBS core business in both Congos. UBS translation policy agrees with the majority of professional translation communities worldwide, for whom any credible translation ought to be done from the best existing source text, from which the translator has “to follow strictly the author’s intent and style, and … make the sentences smooth and readable”.

**Translation as Business**

The Newport Declaration has introduced a revolutionary concept in how the UBS perceives its own identity not only as regards mission, and leadership, but also as business. All UBS major operations, including translation need to be carried out in light of these new insights. The term “business” might be considered shocking for a movement which for 200 years has defined its identity in terms of Christian mission. This is not a contradiction, but it shows a qualitative growth in the understanding of the identity and mission of the organisation and its major operations. Applied to Scripture translation, “business” needs

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9 Whang, Y.C. “To Whom Is a Translator Responsible – Reader or Author?” (1999), 200, 49.
first to be understood against the background of translation as mission and leadership in the UBS. With regard to translation and business, the Newport Declaration states:

In fulfilling our mission to achieve the widest possible, effective and meaningful distribution of the Holy Scriptures, we affirm that:

Translation remains at the heart of our task. Faithful translation of the original text, meeting the highest standards of accuracy and professional integrity, in words that speak to the hearts and minds of readers, is a major pillar of our UBS mission.

As for leadership, Newport states that “leadership inspires and encourages the organisation to fulfil its purpose, set strategies, pull people and concepts together and responds to challenges and threats…. The declaration thus shows, firstly, that the UBS top governance body fully endorses the position that Scripture translations are to be based on “the original text” and meet “the highest standards of accuracy and professional integrity”. The same position is taken in the UBS Guidelines for Scripture Translation: “In conformity with UBS policy, the best and most reliable original language base texts should be used”. Secondly, the top governance is committed to support executive decisions which will lead to fulfillment of this purpose, based on right strategies, people and concepts. It is not the responsibility of the governing body to enforce such decisions, but executive officers must be aware of them and implement them with their staff.

The Newport Declaration does not make explicit reference to translation when dealing with business section, but requires any task in the UBS to be conducted with efficiency, transparency and mutual accountability:

Our business processes exist as means of fulfilling our mission. In the context of our business, we affirm that:

Efficiency, transparency and mutual accountability must characterise our way of working. We are all stewards of God’s resources whether these are provided by our own initiatives, by Bible Society supporters or through the worldwide fellowship. Proactive provision of information to and from donors creates the best environment for generous giving and mutual trust.

It is worth noticing that efficiency, transparency and mutual accountability are all ethical categories, especially those of business ethics. Applied to Scripture translation, efficiency would entail preparing and delivering Scripture products which rigorously respect the established policy and the market demands. Efficiency, transparency and mutual accountability would require the existence of a system which can allow a translation product to be checked against its own policy and the demands of the market. Whether this kind of quality control is put in place by UBS or other institutions, or both, does not matter much, though it would be more beneficial for UBS to be involved. In any case, the quality assessment of UBS translation products has already begun, as can be noted in the book Translating the Bible10. Furthermore, a quality control system would encourage the UBS to take more seriously its commitment toward managing its translation operations with business-like rigour, while assuming at the same time its leadership role. Besides, mission and leadership are essential features of a proper business. Any successful business entails a clear mission and the cultivation of leadership virtues such as courage, self-control, justice, decision making and implementation, generosity, sympathy and understanding, care and responsibility. In the light of the translation business ethics of the Newport Declaration, translation executive and technical staff ought to promote business-like rigour in all respects. In UBS circles, however, the concept of translation mission is also theologically loaded.

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Translation as Theology

The Newport Declaration reaffirms the UBS mission as consisting of “the widest possible, effective and meaningful distribution of the Holy Scriptures.” What is the theological basis of this statement?

Knowing that the UBS works in close partnership with churches, it is likely that the UBS mission statement has been phrased to give support to the great commission (Mat 19:16-20). According to Bosch, “three terms in the ‘Great Commission’ summarize the essence of mission for Matthew: make disciples, baptize and teach”. These terms indicate that the UBS cannot carry out this mission if it does not cooperate with the churches, as making the disciples, baptizing and teaching are exclusively church prerogatives. In other words, the UBS mission is to be understood as participating in the fundamental mission of the churches. More theological thinking is needed to establish boundaries and areas of active cooperation between church mission in general and the UBS role in particular. At the moment, it is enough to note that through Scripture translation and distribution, the UBS contributes to making disciples, nurturing the baptized with Scripture, and engaging Christians to learn or do theology on the basis of the best Scripture source texts and/or contextually most accurate translations.

Moreover, theological models (or paradigms) for mission keep shifting. In Africa today there are at least four such models: inculturation, liberation, reconstruction and post colonialism. Inculturation theology supports the incarnation of the Gospel in a given culture and the evangelisation of that culture. Liberation theology struggles to free people from unnecessary burdens. Reconstruction theology argues for the rebuilding of all aspects of human life. Postcolonial criticism seeks to understand the full impact of the colonial enterprise and free people from the mind-sets which created both coloniser and colonised, in order to be who they really are. Each of these different theological trends deserves more research to investigate its implications for Scripture translations. One thing is certain: all these theologies are scholarly works and only Scripture translations that are critically sound will provide a secure basis for necessary and fruitful interactions with theological schools. In this way a competitive Scripture translation will achieve its broader goal of being an active part of church mission and theology. Then UBS translation business will become more meaningful and more relevant. Adaptations or translations of translations cannot take the UBS to that level, either globally or locally, because the adaptation hermeneutic favours a great deal of colonialism, which the current theological trends in Africa would hardly tolerate. Still, a colonial situation is being or can be (re)produced any time in Africa when a given linguistic community happens to use an African or a non-African Bible translation as the basis for an adaptation or for a second hand translation. In such case, translators and target readers – whether they like it or not- are mentally forced to internalize and communicate foreign meanings that might be relevant to the contexts of those who had produced them but not necessarily to the other contexts. This view does not mean that any type of interaction with every translation should be avoided, it just underscores that no translation should preferably serve as the basis for another translation while best sources are accessible.

How does the 2004 New Port Declaration resonate with the 2010 Seoul Statement on business and theology? One might argue that Seoul reaffirms the business stand of UBS particularly in the following terms: “Bible Societies in the Global South need help to improve their sustainability through local fundraising” (Statement 8). Each UBS department, including translation is therefore encouraged to perk up its business skills. Concerning theology, Seoul opens up a new venue for UBS identity and ethos, as it calls upon strategic alliances with “theological education institutions” (cf. Statement 6a). Moreover, Seoul urges UBS to “actively seek to engage with young people, in a spirit of respect and humility, within their own youth culture” (Statement 15). As a result, when UBS translators undertake to interact with young people from theological institutions, they should be prepared to give relevant contribution based a proper command of Biblical languages and contextual theologies, to name but the two. Furthermore, if the

question about their project funding is raised, they can gain more credibility if they confidently show how they participate in fundraising activities to sustain their ministry.

Relevance and Practical Implications of Bible Translation for Theological Education

Majority of Christians read the Bible in translated texts while few of them use the original languages. All the Christians trained as theologians would be among the few who confidently read the Bible in both originals and translations, but the reality shows a different and sad picture. These are few general remarks to stress the relevance and practical implications of the Bible translation for theological education. First, theological education is expected to value the Bible both in translations and in original languages. Parker and Hess correctly point out that, “the translation and understanding of the Bible, whether by rendering it in the vernacular or through careful study of the original languages in which it was written, is an essential step in study and interpretation of the text. For this reason, it is surprising that more studies are not devoted to the question involved in the process and the final product.”¹² There is need – even an urgent one – to bridge the gap between translation studies and Biblical studies through an appropriate programme where the two twin disciplines are given equal consideration and balanced cross-fertilisation. Second, theological education ought to be inclusive in terms of gender and Church status, meaning that it has to integrate both male and female, lay people and clerics. Third, minimum requirements and skills for undertaking theological education should be the same for every person involved and in every place where this education is provide (university, college or seminary) so that theologically trained Christians can confidently interpret and promote the same Bible in both original and translated texts. Contextual theological trends like inculturation, liberation, reconstruction, post colonialism and others will gain more credibility as they engage with the Scriptures in original languages and translations. In short, interpreting Biblical texts from original language and translation perspectives enhances its understanding¹³ on one hand, and on the other hand it prevents “making theological statements about the text without reference to the nature of the text”, which is an “arbitrary attempt to impose dogma on reality.”¹⁴ Once the relevance of the Bible translation for theological education has been fully recognized, it would need a more precise policy, such as restating the communality between Bible translation and biblical exegesis, repositioning the biblical languages and exegesis at the centre of any theological education, reviewing the issue of canonical books, promoting intercultural approach to both Biblical exegesis and translation, and creating structures that connect Bible translation agencies, academic institutions and churches leaderships.

Re-stating the communality between Bible translation and biblical exegesis

Any translation task generally involves at least two types of texts: a source text (ideally a text in an original Biblical language) and a target text (translated text), even if a Church “canonised” translation might rightly be a third reference text. In the academic institutions, the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Bible are mostly studied for the sake of exegesis with little reference to translation theories and practices. In other words, the focus is put more on the source text than on any translated text. Yet, exegesis and translation are intrinsically linked, as both can be traced back to a same verb stem ἔξηγε·μαι which means explain, interpret or translate. Besides, inasmuch as an exegete starts his or her task with establishing the best text, “one of the first issues that a translator must confront is the general question of the Scripture text that one translates,” namely “the type-text that is translated… and the principles by which a particular variant in the text is adjudicated”.¹⁵ Unfortunately, even where expertise in both biblical exegesis and translation studies

¹² Porter and Hess Translating the Bible, 13.
¹³ Porter and Hess Translating the Bible, 13.
¹⁴ Parker, David, “Textual Criticism and Theology,” (2010), 41.
¹⁵ Porter and Hess Translating the Bible, 3.
is available, these research fields are often treated as separate disciplines operating under different departments. Translation is assumed to be at the receiving end of exegetical work while the exegesis is conceived to be the authority to guide translation decision. This view seems to undermine the role that the target text plays in interpreting the source text through its own cultural lenses. A comparative study of the source text language and that of the target text can contribute in bridging the gap that is progressively widening between exegesis and translation, as well as reviewing both exercises as integral parts of a same interpretive task. Yet, it needs to be kept in mind that:

Translation is distinct from exegesis, as the former strives to communicate the most salient meaning of the source text in a receptor language, using formal or functional equivalence. Exegesis on the other hand endeavours to display as many as possible meanings of a given text from historical, literary or contextual perspectives. Every translation presupposes an exegesis, but every exegesis does not necessarily require a translation, though the latter is the climax of the former.\(^\text{16}\)

No climax can be reached without the supportive steps. Brief, exegesis and translation should go hand in hand in theological education.

**Repositioning the Biblical languages and Exegesis at the centre of any theological education**

Theology is a scientific discipline that deals with God inspired discourses. It has developed into many disciplines: Systematic Theology, Biblical Studies, Spirituality, Pastoral or Practical Theology, Moral Theology or Christian Ethics, Christian Liturgy, Church History, etc. Majority of churches correctly consider the Bible as the heart of theological studies and Christian life. But, it is painful to note that even the majority of Christians who have gone through theological education are not able to interpret the Bible or substantiate their biblical arguments from both original and translated Scripture texts. A scientific and spiritual discourse in any theological discipline cannot base its argumentation only on translations nor should it be grounded only on original texts. If the major contribution of theology is to lead in the knowledge of God in both spiritual and scientific ways, then any theological education that cannot deliver such input is cheating itself and misleading the commissioning community. That has been the case for many theological institutions and their graduates. A positive change is urgently needed, as Christianity needs to grow deeper both in Africa and elsewhere. All the disciplines that improve human knowledge and behaviour are needed for Church growth and all Christians should be encouraged to embrace any of them, as far as the person concerned can demonstrate the minimum of required skills. In theological education, a very good command of original Biblical languages and translation languages should be regarded as minimum requirements. Chrys C. Caragounis clearly articulates this point: “Because we want to know exactly what John or Matthew or Paul wrote, in Bible colleges, seminaries, and universities we study the language of the original writings of the NT. In fact, a seminary or university education in theology without Greek is unthinkable.”\(^\text{17}\) The same applies OT books *mutatis mutandis*. But, it is not the Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek languages that are the final authority for the meaning of the texts expressed through them. It is more complex than that. Mastering “original” biblical languages is part of minimal requirement for both exegesis and translation alongside the expertise in target languages and Church traditions.

**Reviewing the issue of the canonical books**

What is theology without the Bible? What is the Bible without canonical texts (i.e. texts that are regarded by the faith community as inspired by God or as norm for faith and conduct)? Biblical exegesis and Bible translations are equally confronted with the issue of canonical books. Some of the books in the Christian Bible are unfortunately called apocryphal or deuteran-canonical as if they were hidden or belong to a second rank canon, or as if they are just a mere preference of particular denominations (Catholic, Orthodox

\(^{16}\) Loba-Mkole “Exegesis and Translation of Mark for Audio-Visual Culture” (2009b), 77-79.

\(^{17}\) Chrys C. Caragounis, *The Son of Man: Vision and Interpretation* (Wipf and Stock, 2011).
It is often forgotten that the content of the Christian Bible was determined and fixed before the Church division between Western Church/Roman Catholic and Eastern Church/Orthodox in 1054 AD or much more so before the split inside the Western Church between Roman Catholic and Protestant in 1517. African Christian Churches should be in front line for promoting the unity of Biblical Canon that was confirmed by Councils of Hippo and Carthage in 393 and especially Carthage III in 397 (see *Codex Canonum Africanae Ecclesiae* of 419 AD). This codex states the following:

Canonical Scriptures are these: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua the son of Nun, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kings, two books of Paraleipomena, Job, the Psalter, five books of Solomon, the books of the twelve prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Tobit, Judith, Esther, two books of Ezra, two books of the Maccabees. Of the New Testament: four books of the Gospels, one book of the Acts of the Apostles, thirteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul, one epistle of the same [writer] to the Hebrews, two Epistles of the Apostle Peter, three of John, one of James, one of Jude, one book of the Apocalypse of John.

The four books of Kings include 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 2 Kings; the two books of Paraleipomena refer to 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles; the five books of Solomon to Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom and Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), while the two books of Ezra imply Ezra and Nehemiah.

The fact that the authenticity of the Hebrews as Pauline epistle or that of any other biblical book is questionable does not exclude it from the canonical list nor does the issue of original variants or any particular theology. However, the canonicity can be enlightened by studies of the real author (authenticity/literary criticism) and that of the earliest reading (text criticism). These distinctions are important for both exegesis and translation. Likewise, each of them is entitled to contribute in finding more considerate view about the canonical books of the Christian Bible such as that shared by the *Codex Canonum Africanae Ecclesiae*. With regard to this codex, the terms of deuterocanonical or apocryphal books, as well as catholic, orthodox or protestant Bible are misleading and detrimental for the unity of Christian sacred writings, which constitute the founding texts for Christian faith, conduct, liturgy and theology. Studies in Biblical canons together with text criticism and historical-literary criticism are highly recommended for Biblical exegesis and Scripture translation.

Promoting intercultural approach for both Biblical exegesis and translation

At times, Biblical exegesis and translation entertain some confusion about original biblical texts, church tradition interpretations and contemporary views. None of them is wrong, but they need to be systematically integrated in a critical endeavour such as exegesis and translation. Intercultural mediation is an interpretive approach that attempts to methodically connect a triple set of cultures relevant to the work of exegesis and translation of the Bible, as well as for other research fields. In the area Biblical exegesis and translation it consists of engaging a constructive dialogue between an original biblical culture, a church tradition culture and a contemporary culture. Culture here is understood as a totality of human experience in a given time and space, though only a tiny portion of it can be apprehended through the knowledge of relevant languages. The specificity of intercultural mediation resides in its epistemological privileges and values, which are equally but distinctively distributed to each of the cultures concerned. The biblical original culture is given its unique epistemological privilege because of the canonicity of its texts; the traditional Church culture deserves its peculiar epistemological privilege due to its elderliness compared to the contemporary culture, and the latter is granted its own epistemological privilege for being young and alive with the responsibility of connecting the past, present and the future. The epistemological value of intercultural mediation is assessed from a triple angle: what is true is that which is in consonance with the message of historical Jesus, as well as with a critically established Church tradition and with the most respected worldview of a given contemporary culture (e.g. life, active solidarity, self-reliance, work, etc.)
On practical level, an intercultural exegesis will invite the three cultures to dialogue, as it displays similarities and differences between them after examining a given text within the framework of contemporary interpretations, Church tradition exegesis (e.g. Church Fathers’ views) and original biblical text analysis. In the case of translation, an intercultural approach produces a target language text as a result of negotiation between the best original biblical text, the Church “canonised” text (e.g. LXX, Vulgate, Coptic, Amharic, or King James, etc.) and the best contemporary version. The New Testament in Lari language of Congo-Brazzaville is an example of negotiations between the UBS Greek New Testament (4th edition), the Vulgate and the Kikongo Bible.

Connecting Bible translation agencies, academic institutions and churches
Exegetical publications and Bible translations or Scripture mediation works are meant to be at the service of the churches without ruling out the possibility of interacting with non-Christians. Similarly, some church issues are supposed to be critically examined by academic institutions and may also be addressed through Bible translations where applicable. There is a perceived need of putting up some structures that can facilitate connecting Bible translation agencies, academic institutions and churches, so that each of them can give and receive appropriate support within a framework of partnership. The importance of collaborative efforts is illustrated by the fact that a translation can rightly be considered as the climax of exegesis and even be “canonised/institutionalised” by a given church and society. It would be unfortunate if such institutionalisation takes place outside a supportive and sound structure that illustrates the importance of collaborative efforts across the translators, target readers and academics. If such collaboration is effective, even a translation might become prestigious like the case of the LXX which Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva (2005:19) call “a fascinating treasure from the ancient past” and go on to state:

Whether you are Christian or Jewish or neither, whether you are only generally interested in religious studies or are an aspiring biblical scholar, it is worth your while to become acquainted with it. Because the Septuagint was the first translation made of the Hebrew Bible (or of any literary work of comparable size) into another language, it makes milestone in human culture. Any knowledge of the ancient world would be incomplete without understanding the significance of the Septuagint and the history that brought it into existence.

A Bible exegesis work as well as a translation ministry is at the service to the humanity. They need to be safeguarded and endorsed by appropriate structures where Bible translation agencies, academic communities and churches play their respective roles. “Initiative Francophone” and “Institute of Scripture Studies” could constitute a trial experience of structures or fora that facilitate and monitor the impact of the Bible in the society.

Conclusion
The option for translating the best original Biblical texts into target languages might not hold if it is not backed up by a proper theological education. Nevertheless, the benefits of this option can be substantiated by translation business ethics and translation theologies. First, the UBS translation business policy, as enshrined in the Newport Declaration (see also Seoul Statement), the Manual for UBS Translation officers, and the Translation Guidelines, all argue for Scripture translation made from “original” biblical source texts. Second, adaptations or translations of translations are not ideal solutions to people’s need for Scripture, and can be tolerated only in very limited cases, as exceptions to the general rule. Third, translations directly based on the best biblical source texts are economically more sustainable both in

business and theological terms, as they are in consonance with their house policy and prone to inter into fruitful dialogue with theological schools. Practically speaking, when a translator is asked the question, “What do you actually do?,” a simple but economically and theologically sound answer from an inter-confessional perspective would be “I am basically working with a team, translating the Hebrew Bible, or the LXX and the Greek New Testament into my mother tongue.”

Beyond paving the most appropriate way for translation business ethics and translation theologies, the practice of translating the best original biblical texts carry further relevance and implications for theological education. These include restating the communality between Bible translation and biblical exegesis, repositioning the biblical languages and exegesis at the centre of any theological education, reviewing the issue of canonical books, promoting intercultural approach to both Biblical exegesis and translation, and creating structures that connect Bible translation agencies, academic institutions and church leaderships.

**Bibliography**


MISSION AND DIALOGUE

(49) RESTORING MISSION TO THE HEART OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Michael McCoy

In an influential article written more than twenty years ago, South African missiologist David Bosch lamented that little attention was given to missiology – the formal study of mission – in traditional programmes of theological education (Bosch 1982).

The theological curriculum in Western Europe was typically arranged into four ‘streams’: biblical, historical, systematic, and practical. This pattern, Bosch noted, was canonised “when the church in Europe was completely introverted” (Bosch 1982: 26). If mission was studied at all, it was usually as part of practical theology, as if it were largely a matter of technique or practical application; or it was offered as a totally separate subject, as if it had little to do with the other ‘streams’; or it was an optional subject, competing with preaching, pastoral counselling, or liturgics for the student’s attention (:17 -19).

This pattern of theological education was exported to the rest of the world in the wake of the missionary expansion of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and uncritically adopted and implemented in the formation of generations of local Christian leaders in what is now the Majority World. Even the occasional critical analysis of this pattern – such as Bosch’s article, or the 1985 Latin American consultation on new alternatives in theological education (Padilla 1986) – made little impression on the way missiology was regarded in seminaries and colleges around the world.

This was particularly true in Anglican institutions, where, for various reasons to do with our distinctive history and ethos, missiology was not really taken seriously at all – except, perhaps, for practical courses in evangelism in colleges and bible schools in the evangelical tradition.

Thankfully, the situation of neglect is changing – not everywhere, and not consistently, but theologians of many persuasions increasingly agree that mission lies at the heart of the theological task, and therefore at the heart of theological education. Martin Kähler’s oft-quoted saying that “mission is the mother of theology” (written in 1908) has won wide acceptance. From a few lone voices at the end of the nineteenth century, to the wide ecumenical consensus that had emerged a hundred years later, a sense of the foundational nature of God’s mission for all theological work has grown.

Bosch’s proposal in 1982 was that missiology be neither incorporated into the familiar theological streams as simply a dimension of each (though it certainly needs to be seen as integral to all other theological disciplines), nor left as a quite separate subject (though it deserves to be taken seriously as a discipline in its own right). Instead, he argued, missiology needed to be both dimensional (that is, integrated into, and in close dialogue with, biblical studies, church history, systematic theology, and

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1 This article is an edited version of a paper prepared for the January 2006 meeting of Theological Education in the Anglican Communion (TEAC).
3 This was my experience as a student at an evangelical college in England in the late 1970s, where practical workshops on evangelism were offered in the week or two between the end of exams and the start of the summer vacation.
practical theology) and intentional (maintaining a critical distance from the other disciplines, bringing its own distinctive perspectives to bear on the theological task).

Latin American theologians, meeting in the early 1990s, went further. They called for “a drastic revision of the curriculum of theological institutions patterned after the Anglo-Saxon system”, allowing it to be shaped by “a rediscovery of the missionary nature of the church”.

This is much more than simply adding a missiology course to the curriculum. It means a reformulation of the disciplines by placing the mission of the church at the center of their object of study. (Samuel Escobar, in Woodberry et al. 1996: 108)

That is just what is now happening in South Africa. Profound changes in the national educational system in South Africa since the mid-1990s have forced theological educators to redesign the curriculum. They have been given the opportunity to restore a missional focus to theological education.

This article focuses on how one institution, the Theological Education by Extension College of Southern Africa, has developed its new Diploma in Theology and Ministry and the Bachelor of Theology degree in order to put missiological perspectives at the center of its curriculum.5

An educational revolution

I cannot give a full account here of the changes that have swept through the South African educational system since the first democratically-elected government began to transform the educational system it had inherited from apartheid in 1994. In one sentence: the discriminatory educational framework that had been in place for more than fifty years was replaced with a vision for a system that offers equal opportunity to all, fosters critical learning, and focuses on a style of learning that integrates knowledge, skills, and values/attitudes – widely known as Outcomes Based Education (OBE).

These far-reaching changes to education in South Africa have forced virtually every educational service provider, from primary schools to universities, to undertake a whole-scale revision of their curricula. All learning in South African educational institutions must now be based on the principles of Outcomes Based Education.

Reinventing theological education

Theological educators in the region have had to come to terms with this fundamental shift. For a century or more, we and our predecessors have mostly offered content-based courses built on the inherited Western model of cognitive (knowledge-centred) education.

This model asked: What must students know and understand in order to gain this qualification? The required knowledge was delivered through lectures and written texts; it was assessed through assignments and exams; and it was validated with a degree, diploma or other qualification. In theory (and too often in practice) a student could complete a theology diploma or degree, and satisfy the requirements for ordination, with little or no direct personal experience of ministry and mission, and few demonstrable skills in Christian leadership.6 That the system has in fact produced many outstanding pastors and theologians is a

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5 TEE College, an ecumenical distance education institution founded in 1977, is a major player in the delivery of theological education in Southern Africa. In 2005 it had 2,768 students registered for 5,877 courses. Of those students, 219 were taking the BTh Degree, 681 the Diploma, and 1,114 the Certificate in Theology. The rest were registered for Award-level courses.

6 I recognised only some years later that I was largely lacking such experience when I was accepted (in the early 1970s) as a candidate for ordination!
cause for deep gratitude; but it has often happened *despite* the formal educational process, rather than because of it. I am reminded of Mark Twain’s definition of education as that which you must acquire without interference from your schooling.

The challenge of OBE is quite different. The question that now has to be answered is: *What competence does the student need to gain in order to be able to fulfil this or that task / job / vocation?* The competence is gained through an integrated process of learning that addresses the head (knowledge), hands (skill), and heart (values); it is formally assessed through a range of tools that include written work, practical projects, field research, workshops, and the like; and it is validated when the student is able to demonstrate her/his capacity to carry out the required tasks, using all the intellectual, practical, and attitudinal resources that have been acquired.7

But who defines the tasks in which competence must be shown? And how is the competence demonstrated and measured?

There must be many possible ways to define the required standards. In South Africa, it has been done by the field-specific Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs), whose chief work has been to write the Unit Standards that make up their respective qualifications.

The Theology and Ministry SGB was genuinely creative in designing the new qualifications. The detail of the qualifications they designed – for example, the ‘titles matrix’ that gave them their structure – need not detain us here.8 The key thing is the fact that, in deciding what outcomes they sought in properly-equipped students of theology and ministry, *they made a missional focus foundational to the qualifications.*8

They did this by requiring every student to complete a number of compulsory core Unit Standards, including one that equips new students with a missional perspective for all theology and ministry.

**Getting to grips with mission in theology**

1. **Mission as foundational**

Long before the new qualifications came into existence, I provoked my colleagues at TEE College by insisting that mission was – or should be – the touchstone of all theology. As a relatively late convert to the discipline of missiology, I enthusiastically repeated Martin Kähler’s dictum. I believed that it needed to be heard by biblical scholars, church historians, systematicians, and pastoral theologians, even if this sounded to them like theological imperialism. After all, the Joint Board Diploma in Theology,9 as offered by TEE College for nearly thirty years, was structured in the classic non-missional Western way, with two courses in Missiology included as electives in the Practical Theology cluster of subjects. TEEC offered only Missiology 1, and relatively small numbers of TEEC’s students ever took it. As a discipline, missiology was marginalised. As a theological framework, the *missio Dei* (the mission of God) was largely ignored.

Thankfully I was not a lone voice in lamenting this state of affairs. My colleagues at TEE College, and several educators from other institutions that participated in the Joint Board, also had a vision for a model of theological education that was genuinely transformational, equipping people in our subcontinent for forms of ministry that make the good news of God’s reign, the *basileia* that Jesus proclaimed and fulfilled,

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7 TEE College’s principal maintains that it had adopted the principles of outcomes-based education long before OBE was formally required.

8 An early version of the matrix can be seen on the SACTE web site, www.sacte.co.za. The matrix eventually registered with SAQA is different in several respects from the one still on the SACTE web site. The earlier version is nevertheless worth a look. The senior academic staff of TEE College played a key role in drafting the Unit Standards for the new Diploma in Theology and Ministry and the Bachelor of Theology degree.

9 The role of the Joint Board is also described in the Appendix to the TEAC version of this paper.

*Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa*
more of a reality. We wished to offer educational materials that would enable students to bear faithful witness to the mission of God in our world.

And so we worked long and hard to understand how this new educational framework would impact our lives and those of our students, and what it would demand of us to make it work well. And as we worked together at TEEC to shape courses for the new Diploma and Degree, the vision was written into the course materials. To revisit the terms used by David Bosch: we sought to build the mission dimension into the qualification, in large measure by placing a course rich in mission intention at its point of entry.¹⁰

A closer look at the mission Unit Standard may help both to clarify some of the terms used in this new approach to education, and to illustrate how theology is being renewed as a missional enterprise.

The Unit Standard is entitled Demonstrate understanding of mission throughout church history and define personal mission. The title states the competence that this Unit Standard offers. When students have successfully completed it, they will be able to demonstrate an understanding of mission throughout church history, and define their personal sense of mission in relation to it.

It has three specific outcomes:
1. Outline the changing understanding of mission in church history.
2. Describe and evaluate mission-focused churches.
3. Define personal mission in relation to the mission of Jesus.

Each specific outcome describes an area of knowledge, skills, and/or values that the student demonstrates as a dimension of the overall outcome (expressed in the title of the Unit Standard) before the credits can be awarded. Each specific outcome also has its own range statements and assessment criteria. The first, for example, is assessed according to these ranges and criteria:

**Specific outcome 1:** Outline the changing understanding of mission in church history  
*Range:* from Biblical times to the present day.  
*Assessment criteria:*  
1.1 Key historical mission events are described in sequence.  
1.2 Models of mission are compared in context. The comparison highlights key differences in the understanding of mission in church history as revealed within the various models.  
*Range:* At least three models in two different periods and two different contexts.  
1.3 Descriptions are provided of key shifts in understanding of mission over church history.

Notice that the emphasis is not on content. Nowhere does the Unit Standard specify, for example, that students must analyse mission in the letters of St Paul, or study the evangelization of Central Africa in the 15th century. The content of any course that is built on this Unit Standard is determined by the institution that offers it. An Anglican college is free to spend time on Anglican models of mission, just as Pentecostals, Methodists, Catholics, and others can emphasise their own historical and theological models – as long as they fulfil the requirements of the range statements and assessment criteria. The important thing is that students gain the competencies – the combination of knowledge, skills, and values – that they need to in order to achieve the outcomes.

The mission Unit Standard is not particularly original. It covers the basic missiological ground that one might expect to see included in a rounded course of study. It requires the student to give attention to a range of biblical material, to mission history, to aspects of mission theology, to the life and witness of local churches, and to the student’s own context and personal engagement with it.

¹⁰ The mission intention is found in the course I describe more fully below; the mission dimension is present in other new courses. For example, Chapter 2 of the core half-course called “Practising Christian Leadership and Management” locates management and leadership issues within the context of the church’s role in mission.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
The really notable thing is that it is a **compulsory core part** of the new qualifications. In fact, in earlier versions of the SGB’s titles matrix, this Unit Standard was called *Recognise mission as basic to theology and ministry*, and it was located on the titles matrix as an entry level course on which rested the four ‘pillars’ – Sources in Context, Faith for Life, Ministries in the Church, and Faith into Community – that the SGB once thought should make up the qualifications.\(^{11}\) The title of the Unit Standard and the layout of the titles matrix have changed since then, but the original intention has been preserved. And it is in that spirit that TEE College has turned the Unit Standards into teachable courses in distance education mode.

### 2. Mission as transformational

Unit Standards are not courses. They are statements of outcomes that students need to achieve. They are the starting point for course design. They are, so to speak, the frame around the canvas on which theological educators must create their work of art.

At TEE College, in common with other members of the Joint Board, we realised that the eight credits assigned to the mission Unit Standard made it too small to be turned into a stand-alone course for our purposes. So we joined it with a larger Unit Standard, also from the compulsory core, called *Implement transformation in a community using Christian principles*, worth 18 credits.\(^ {12}\) Together the two Unit Standards make up a substantial 26-credit introductory course that focuses on the missional nature of transformational ministry in context. We called it “Doing Ministry for a Change”, and I was contracted to write the course materials during 2004. In 2005 nearly 600 Diploma or Degree distance students around Southern Africa registered for this course.

### Our roots are in the future

The new courses have been in place for just a year, overlapping with some of the older elective courses that a few students needed in order to complete the old Diploma in Theology before it is phased out. Those who have registered for the new qualifications are still trying to get to grips with this unfamiliar way of studying, in which the familiar subjects of the old curriculum – Old and New Testament, Church History, Ethics, Systematic Theology, and so on – have apparently disappeared, and in which ‘what you know’ (and therefore, passing exams) is less important than *achieving competence* in a range of important outcomes. For them, and for us who oversee the courses, this is uncharted territory. It is often scary. It is sometimes tempting to turn back and return to the safe and the familiar.

But the old way of studying theology – or the way it was done through TEE College, at least – is dying or already dead. It is being raised to new life in an integrated, cross-disciplinary approach, one that stands or falls on the conviction that it is the mission of God that gives coherence, direction, and purpose to all Christian ministry.

I am fond of an image used by the Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas, who pictures the church as a tree with its branches in the present and its roots in the future.\(^ {13}\) It accurately captures the current state of theological education too. Even as we deal with the day-today realities of designing courses and learning new skills and serving our students, we must keep our vision fixed on what is yet to come – and be ready for it. We must be rooted in God’s future: as we equip God’s people to serve God’s mission in the world,

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\(^{11}\) TEE College has adapted the ‘pillars’ idea for its own qualifications, arranging elective courses into three streams called “Working with Sources”, “Engaging with the Christian Faith”, and “Applying Theology in Ministry”.

\(^{12}\) Each credit represents 10 notional hours of work on the part of the student.

\(^{13}\) John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), page 59, quoted in Dietterich et al. 1998: 2.8. I have often used this image in workshops with theological educators to emphasise the eschatological, *basileia*-centred focus of the church as sign, foretaste, and instrument of God’s mission. (Note that Zizioulas’ surname is also sometimes spelt Zizoulas.)

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**Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa**
and as we seek the fulfilment of the *basileia* that Jesus proclaimed and embodied and inaugurated, we need to be nourished by the life-giving Spirit who invites us into that future, and who journeys with us into it.

The transformation of theological education in South Africa has happened relatively quickly. It has been driven, in part, by the national agenda of ridding it of an outdated, ineffective, and discriminatory educational system; and, in part, by the growing conviction among key players in theological education that we had to change. Good theological education will not be satisfied merely with ‘banking’ education (Freire 1972). It will seek to *form* people in effective, faithful mission and ministry. The times and the tasks demand that we teach and learn in new ways.\(^\text{14}\)

That is the context for the rediscovery of the missional core of theological education in South Africa. There is no reason why it should not happen elsewhere in the Anglican Communion. The Archbishop of Canterbury’s well-known concern for theological education gives us a clear mandate to seek a thorough transformation of Anglican institutions and programmes.

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**The renewal of Anglicanism?**

Call me naïve, but I cherish a hope that the recovery of a mission-centred approach to theological education will make a significant contribution to rebuilding our rather tattered ‘bonds of affection’. Before the tensions over human sexuality became so acute at Lambeth 1998, I wrote an article called “Going in peace, or breaking in pieces? Anglican unity and the mission of God”. In it I argued that we needed to recover a shared vision for mission if our Communion was to find genuine unity. I won’t repeat that argument here, except to quote its closing remarks.

We need to recognise that our commitment to the universal *missio Dei* through the community of God’s local people will lead to great diversity in mission models, strategies and practices. This will test our self-image as a diverse Communion. I think it may well reveal just how nervous we are of genuine diversity. But it’s the only way in which mission will be faithfully done in the third millennium, enabling us to ‘go in peace’ – that is, to do God’s mission differently from one another, yet with a common mind…

All of this assumes that, far from breaking into pieces, the Anglican Communion needs to hold together; that it can hold together; and that the only viable source of unity will be a full-blooded commitment to the *missio Dei* as the basis for our life together as a Communion. I subscribe to those three assumptions with all my heart. I hope that others in the Anglican Communion – what Desmond Tutu once described as ‘this messy but lovable family’ – will agree, and that we can continue to journey together in the peace-making mission of God. (McCoy 1998: 31-32)

In its response to the Windsor Report (Lambeth Commission on Communion 2004), ANITEPAM noted how important it was that African Anglican programmes of theological education got to grips with all the issues that the human sexuality debate has thrown up, including those relating to Anglican history, theology and identity – if the Church in Africa is to contribute to the enrichment of the Communion rather than to its fragmentation.

Theological education is one of the keys to the renewal of Anglicanism.\(^\text{15}\) If it is to be an agent of such renewal, Anglican theological education needs to be rooted in the *missio Dei*, and to be made accessible to

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\(^\text{14}\) See Andrew Wingate’s study of theological education in India and Britain over two decades or more (Wingate 1999) for his assessment of its effectiveness.

\(^\text{15}\) See McGrath (1993), especially chapter 7, for a discussion of this theme. I feel that McGrath pins too much hope on the role of the traditional seminary.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
any of God’s people who wish to grow in the faith, not just to ordinands and clergy (cf McGrath 1993: 149-150).

Of course, being Anglicans, we shall find diverse ways to put this into practice. But diversity is not a problem, even though we sometimes make it one. The real issue is the discovery of a common purpose in theological education. And that, I suggest, is to equip all God’s (Anglican) people faithfully and courageously to embody, enact, and announce the good news of God’s realm of peace – the long-awaited reign of God made present in Jesus Christ.

That’s why we need to rediscover a passion for serving God’s transforming mission, and give it its rightful place at the heart of our endeavours in theological education.

### Bibliography


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16 Bevans and Schroeder (2004) remind us that diversity has always been a feature of Christian theology. While there are clearly ‘constants’, each context demands that they be addressed appropriately.
Introduction

Christianity is a religious system and, as any other religion, can only exist in a cultural matrix and attain expression through the medium of cultural resources. The introduction of Christianity into Africa by European Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century meant an encounter of two cultures – African and European – with the European culture dominating. In the encounter, Africa’s response went in four directions. One was a total rejection of Christianity by a small number of Africans after initial acceptance represented in Godianism and Afrikania religions in Nigeria and Ghana respectively. These are not Christian but modern forms of African indigenous religion established by ex-Christians. Another response was the rejection of the Western form of Christianity (not Christianity itself) by the African Instituted (Independent) Churches which replaced it with an African form of Christianity. A third response is manifested in what missiologists call “syncretism,” a situation whereby Africans that have accepted the Western form of Christianity occasionally resort to indigenous religion to satisfy religious needs perceived as not being satisfied in the Western form of Christianity. Lastly is the response of those that have accepted the Western form of Christianity but seek to transform it from within and make it attain African cultural expression through the process of inculturation. This was the initiating impulse of inculturation theology.

Until recently, the resources of Western culture provided the dominant influence in interpreting Christianity in Africa and the rest of the Third World. Today, however, other cultures have been recognized to provide such resources as well. Though started in Africa, inculturation theology has become an important focus of attention for the churches in Asia, Latin America and even the Western world. Francis George refers to it as the “special gift of the African Church to the Universal Church in this generation;” and today, Latin American liberation theology is articulating a new emphasis on inculturation.

Meaning of Inculturation Theology

Inculturation theology is essentially a grassroots theology that was started by ordinary African Christians particularly in West, East and Central Africa soon after Christianity was introduced into sub-Saharan Africa. 

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3 See for example K. Tanner, Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997) which presents a useful survey; Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (eds), Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1999) which studies inculturation in Africa, Asia and Latin America; Mark R. Francis, Shape a Circle ever Wider: Liturgical Inculturation in the United States (Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications, 2000); Diego Irazazaval, Inculturation: New Dawn of the Church in Latin America (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2000).
Africa in the nineteenth century. It had existed for a long time without a name until professional theologians came on the scene later and gave it a name. Originally it was called “African theology” to identify it as a reflection on God (theology) from an African context (African). However, it is not a discrete theological discipline like Practical Theology, Systematic Theology; nor is it a branch of any of these theological disciplines, nor yet a theological theme. Rather, it is a way of doing Christian theology, a method of reflecting on the Christian faith in relation to the African context using the mediation of African cultural resources.

Today, the understanding of this theology has undergone some transformation beyond what it was at inception. Based on the received Western understanding of theology as a reflection on religious issues, this theology initially focused on religious issues only. Hence, only such topics as the Liturgy, Christology, Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue, etc. were discussed. However, since the 1990s, its horizon has expanded to embrace secular issues as well. According to this new approach, which I call integrative inculturation theology, this theology may be defined as a dynamic on-going process of conscious, critical and mutual interaction between the Christian faith and the religious and secular aspects of cultures such that the Christian reality becomes appropriated from within the perspective and with the resources of these cultures to challenge and transform society and bring about a re-interpretation of faith. It seeks to open up new understandings of faith and lead to recreating culture and society.

To be noted here is that inculturation is a two-way process of interaction between the Christian faith and a culture that affects a transformation of the culture and a re-interpretation of faith. In appropriating new insights from a culture, the Christian faith becomes more universal, and in opening up to the Christian faith, a culture becomes enriched and transformed, and conventional religious and secular conceptions and practices are challenged and the Christian faith is re-interpreted.

Two incidents in the early Church demonstrate this two-way process of inculturation. One is Cornelius’ conversion to the Christian faith and his meal sharing with Peter (Acts 10). In view of the fact that Jews and Gentiles did not share meals, the incident involved a big shift in religious and social perspectives for both Peter and Cornelius: Cornelius’ conversion to Christianity also meant Peter’s “conversion” into accepting uncircumcised Gentiles into the Church and eating with them. Another example is that of Paul and his Law-free Gentile mission. Jewish Christians normally understood acceptance of the Good News by Gentiles to include observance of the Mosaic Law. However, when Paul brought the gospel in contact with Gentile culture, this understanding changed. Paul did not require the Gentile converts to be circumcised; he also advocated abolishing social discrimination between Jews and Gentiles (Gal 3:28). This represents a shift in both religious and social perspectives for Paul and the Gentile converts.

In terms of theological reflection and biblical hermeneutics, inculturation theology involves engaging societal issues whether religious or secular with the Good News of Christ appropriated with the people’s cultural resources, and actualizing the creative power of the gospel within the society in both its religious and secular spheres. In the context of practical Christian life, it provides a dynamic orientation for integrating faith and life, and for interpreting reality, both secular and religious, in a way that is nurtured by the Christian faith.

### Origin and Use of the Term “Inculturation”

The term “inculturation” arose within the Roman Catholic Church circle. However, it has not been possible to establish where, when or by whom it was coined or first used. According to Herve Carrier writing in 1988, the term had been used among Catholics for over 50 years. At the 29th Missiological Conference in

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Chapter (50)

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa

Louvain in 1959 the word was used to express the process of rooting the Church in a culture.\(^7\) Also in the Final Statement of the First Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Catholic Bishops’ Conference in 1974, the term appears in the phrase: “a church indigenous and inculturated.”\(^8\) At the 32nd General Congregation of the Jesuits in 1975, the term was introduced as an alternative to “adaptation.”\(^9\) It appeared also in the discussions at the 4th General Synod of Catholic Bishops in Rome in 1977, and at the Extraordinary Catholic Bishops’ Synod of 1985 in Rome.\(^10\) From that time the term became popular. Though not coined in Africa, the term has been used for a modern practice of African origin.

**Related Terms**

What we know today as inculturation theology has been previously known by many other names. I shall here briefly describe some of the important ones.

*Afrikische Theologie* (Theologia Africana)/ *African Christian Theology*

Inculturation theology was, in its early days called “African theology.” Those wanting to emphasize its Christian character used “African Christian theology.” Some scholars also proposed the Latinized form *theologia Africana*. However, with the emergence of other theologies in Africa in the 1970s, it became misleading to continue to use the term and its Latinized form in this way. Therefore, today “African theology/theologies” is used as a general term for all contextual theologies in Africa.

*Indigenisation/Africanisation*

These terms were popular in the context of personnel whereby indigenous clergy replaced expatriates. They are no longer being used as they express a unidirectional understanding of the encounter between Christianity and African cultures and not the interactive encounter denoted by “inculturation.”

*Adaptation*

In concrete terms, adaptation involves substituting local cultural elements for foreign ones in Christian life and thought. It is seen today as inadequate as it lacks the interactive encounter that “inculturation” implies.

*Christianisation*

This conveys the idea of the host culture accepting elements of the culture that bears the Christian message in the process of evangelization. The term has been found to be inadequate and is no longer used.

*Interculturation and Interculturality*

*Interculturation* was proposed by Bishop J. Blomjous in 1980 while *interculturality* was proposed by Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) in 1993 as alternatives to inculturation. Both express what inculturation is about. They have however been overshadowed by inculturation and are not in common use today.

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\(^7\) See Mission et Cultures non-Chrétiennes: Rapports et Compte Rendu de la 29e Semaine de Missiologie (Louvain: Desclee de Brouwer, 1960), 5, 50, 219-223, 311-315.

\(^8\) *His Gospel to our Peoples* vol. II (Manila: Cardinal Bea Institute, 1976), 332.


*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Translation

The term was introduced and propagated by Lamin Saneh in his writings. However, it lacks the deeper meaning and the two-way process that “inculturation” implies.

Contextualization

The term originated within the World Council of Churches (WCC) circle, specifically its Programme on Theological Education. It is understood today as an umbrella term for all the theologies that consciously and explicitly relate theological reflection to contemporary contexts whether in Africa or outside Africa.

Early Beginnings as Grassroots Theology

Credit for the early grassroots beginnings of inculturation theology in Africa is to be given to the local Christian women and men, the catechists and choirmasters who, at their association meetings outside the church assembly and without the pastor, created for themselves the space to sing and dance to the rhythm of local tunes and drums that were forbidden in the church. Christian missionaries saw African cultures as primitive and “pagan” and therefore needing to be uprooted before Christianity could be planted on African soil. Therefore, African music, African symbols, etc., could not be brought into the Christian church. Thus, while African people had accepted Christianity, it turned out that the only songs they could sing in the church were hymns translated from European/ American hymn books. Though the words of some of these hymns were vernacular, the music remained European. Besides, the images some of the words evoked were foreign and made no impression on the singers. John S. Pobee gives an example: “Fancy singing ‘In the bleak mid-winter’ on a hot African evening – most of the singers would not have seen snow or winter, nor could they imagine it.”

However, whenever African Christians assembled outside official church service, the songs they sang were not the hymns of imported western hymn books they were taught to sing at church services. They sang improvised local tunes that their choirmasters, musicians and group leaders had composed with words taken from the Bible or Christian teaching. These were accompanied with local drums, hand clapping and dancing. In this way the people circumvented and subverted the official Church by creating their own space to interpret Christianity for themselves using their cultural religious idiom. They carried this to the marketplace and the fields. This was indeed a protest against missionary Christianity; however, it goes deeper than a mere protest. It was a resistance movement involving a protest and an affirmation of the people’s identity and personhood in the religious context as a matter of their faith commitment. This is at the heart of inculturation theology. Africa’s professional theologians are familiar with it as Africa’s oral theology and acknowledge it as the starting point of their own theology of inculturation.

In many ways this theology has ruled and continues to shape and transform the lives of African Christians in both the rural areas and the cities today. We find it in popular songs, dramas, sermons, paintings, carvings and in the use of various symbols with Christian meaning. It would be difficult to imagine the ordinary African Christians in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa (even in South Africa where Black theology has reigned) living out their Christian faith commitment without this theology which they have spun themselves. It is one important factor that has contributed to the rapid growth of Christianity in Africa.

Africa. It would be right to say that the extent to which it is nurtured, promoted and encouraged by professional theologians and the institutional Church will determine the continued success of Christianity in the continent.

**Beginnings as Academic Theology**

As I have shown above, soon after Christianity was introduced into Africa there was a yearning to affirm African cultural identity within the church. By the turn of the twentieth century, this had become visible. In the secular sphere also the same yearning was present in the African Cultural Revolution that found expression in the ideology of *negritude* of the 1930s which focused on criticism of colonialism and paved the way for Africa’s political independence in the 1950s and 60s.  

It is within this context that Placide Tempel, a Roman Catholic Belgian Franciscan missionary in the then Congo (Democratic Republic of Congo) seeking to respond to the people’s aspirations, took the initiative to develop academic inculturation theology. Coming from the Scholastic theological tradition that saw philosophy as the hand-made of theology, and theology as application of a philosophical system to explain Christian doctrines without engaging social, economic and political issues, Tempel initiated research into African Philosophy and published his well known *La philosophie bantoue* in 1945 as a hand-made of African theology. In his pastoral writings he applied the principles he laid down there to pastoral situations among the Bantu of the Congo region.  

It was in 1955, when a group of 13 Black Roman Catholic priests from different countries in Africa who were then studying in Rome met and presented papers on the issue of missionary evangelization in Africa, that a serious discussion of the issue of affirming African cultural identity within the church took a critical turn. The papers, which were published in Paris in 1956 with the title *Des Prêtres noirs s’interrogent* (Some Black Priests question themselves), took a critical look at missionary evangelization of Africa. The authors criticized missionary Christianity in Africa for being a copy of that of Europe and its expectation of African Christians to become copies of Europeans. They criticized the hightandedness and superiority complex of the missionaries and the centrism of the Church's polity and administration. They called for the recognition of African identity within a Church unity that admits of plurality – a unity in which Africans would not be reduced to silence but recognized to speak for themselves, be heard and taken seriously. They called for a new approach to evangelization that would seek not the expansion of the European Church but the implantation of Christianity in Africa in the form of local churches and the expression of the Christian message in a way congenial to the mentality and world-view of African peoples. The first Congress of Black Arts and Writers held in Paris in 1956 and subsequent ones in Rome in 1959 and Dakar in 1966 not only confirmed but also boosted the courage of the authors of this book.

This publication, which has remained historic in the development of African inculturation theology at the academic level, is significant for two reasons. One is that hitherto it was missionaries that spoke on behalf of Africans in matters relating to the evangelization of Africa, but for the first time Africans took the initiative to speak for themselves on the issue. Second, the publication was not a mere reflection of what the missionaries had been saying but engaged in a critique of missionary Christianity itself as experienced.

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14 The revolution was initiated by Aimé Césaire (Martinique), Léopold Senghor (Senegal) and Léon Damas (Guiana) who were studying in France at the time.


by Africans while at the same time pointing the way forward for the inculturation of Christianity in the continent. The decades following the publication of *Des Prêtres noirs* saw numerous studies by other African theologians such as T. Tshibangu, Harry Sawyerr, E.B. Idowu, John Mbiti, Kwesi Dickson, John Pobee, Charles Nyamiti, Benezet Bujo, that have crystallized in what is known as inculturation theology today.

Absence of Secular Issues

In its initial stage, inculturation theology did not engage secular issues of political, economic and social oppression as did Black theology in South Africa, but drew its inspiration mainly from religious issues. This may be explained in the following four ways that should be taken together not separately.

First, the type of Christian theology developed in any part of Africa is bound to reflect the basic characteristics of the Christian theology that was brought there by the missionaries. In West, East and Central Africa, the Bible and Christian theology were not openly used by the missionaries to support the political, economic and social oppression of the people. However, in South Africa, an ideological and unethical reading of the Bible was openly used to support apartheid. The Exodus story whereby the Israelites, God's chosen people, were liberated from oppression in Egypt and given the land of Canaan as the promised land was read by the South African Boers in the light of the British-Boer war and their successful liberation from British rule in South Africa. The Boers then saw South Africa as their own promised land and themselves, who were Christians vis-a-vis the non-Christian African owners of the land, as God's chosen people. Just as the Israelites took over the land of Canaan, so the Boers saw themselves justified to take over the land in South Africa reducing the local African population to subjugation under them. Afrikaner nationalists later commemorated God's covenant with them at memorial sites across the country.17 Another apartheid theology was that there was a God-given multiplicity of nations, cultures and languages and that people grow to full humanity only when they identify with their different “nations.” Black Africans who belonged to a different “nation” than the Whites were therefore to live separately within their own “nation” to attend their full humanity. Many texts of the New Testament including Acts of the Apostles chapter 2 narrating the Pentecost event, the missionary command of Matthew 24:14; 28:19, and Revelation 5:9; 7:9 were used by theologians to support this. These ways of reading the Bible were not experienced in those countries where inculturation theology was developed.

Second and connected with the above, theological reflection comes as a response to social, cultural, religious and historical situations. The Blacks in South Africa experienced acute racial discrimination at the hands of the Whites. They could not interact with the Whites, they could not sit in the same buses with them, and their children could not attend the same schools with White children. In the countries where inculturation theology developed, people did not experience this type of discrimination. This difference in social context made a great difference in the development of both theologies.

Third, even though the ordinary African people that started inculturation theology were poor and colonized, their overwhelming pre-occupation and common daily discourse was not about poverty and subjugation but the menace of spiritual forces such as witchcraft, sorcery, the divinities and evil spirits. Unlike hunger and subjugation which they could fight with physical means, this situation was negotiated only at the religious level with their traditional religion. Having accepted Christianity, these people sought to make it an ally in the fight against these forces the way they used their traditional religion. This has been a common pastoral challenge in Africa even till today. The development of inculturation theology by

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ordinary African Christians was a way of bringing Christianity in touch with their daily spiritual concerns. Academic inculturation theology followed this path based on the received western understanding of theology that did not engage secular issues which also led to a narrow understanding of culture in terms of its religious aspects.

Fourth, academic inculturation theology emerged in the context of African Cultural Revolution of the 1930s to the 70s. However, in the 1960s and 70s when inculturation theology started to mature, this Revolution turned against Christianity branding it colonial and foreign to be jettisoned by African nations at the gaining of political Independence. For that reason, this theology devoted its energy to clarifying the African identity of Christianity against the onslaught of the Revolution. Besides, engaging secular issues such as colonialism at this time would have meant capitulating to the Revolution and becoming also anti-Christian. Indeed two other African responses to Christianity mentioned earlier – Godianism in Nigeria and Afrikania religion in Ghana – did this: they broke away from Christianity to become modern forms of African Traditional Religion.

**Inculturation Theology and Secular Issues: Emergence of New Awareness**

As pointed out above, the early grassroots and academic beginnings of inculturation theology in Africa focused on religious issues. However, in the course of the 1980s, the situation began to change so that today inculturation theology engages not only religious but also secular issues, an approach that I refer to as *integrative inculturation theology*. At the grassroots level, this came about through a socio-political movement that swept across Africa in the 1980s and 90s which created a new awareness about social, economic and political issues as matters of faith commitment. At the academic level, the continued exposure to liberation theology paved the way for this new awareness.

**Grassroots Level**

During the years 1980-2000, a political wind of change swept through those countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Cameroon, the Congo, etc.) where inculturation theology flourished concurrently with similar movements for democracy in other parts of the world that Huntington calls the “third wave” in the movement for democracy. This time in Africa, the movement was not against foreign rule but home-grown dictatorial and corrupt regimes. Governments faced serious uprisings and protests of different forms by the common people and labour movements, and criticisms by professional bodies. There were calls for a return of the rule of law and justice and equity, constitutional reforms, establishment of democratic polity, removal of dictators, and accountability in governance. There was a strong awakening of critical consciousness against political, social and economic oppression, and a committed struggle for human rights and fulfillment among the common people. By this time, a large percentage of the African population had become Christian and urbanized far more than in the 1960s the formative years of inculturation theology. Hence there was a ready and sufficient urban Christian population to carry on the movement. Supporting these popular movements, the Officials of Christian churches in these nations strongly resisted the repressive governments through criticisms and downright condemnations. In doing this, they provided religious and theological motivation and inspiration for the people's struggles – a role through which they helped the common people to overcome the oppression and achieve their liberation.

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19 According to Samuel P. Huntington, the first wave of democratization occurred between 1828 and 1926, the second between 1943 and 1962, and the third started in 1974. See his *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 16.
that has, in a significant way, made the generality of the people come to see their struggle for justice as a matter of faith commitment and to develop a new theological consciousness oriented towards theological involvement in secular issues. I shall briefly refer to Nigeria in West Africa, Kenya in East Africa and Malawi in Southern Africa as examples in this respect.

In Nigeria, the years from 1983 to 1999 are popularly referred to as the dark years of the country's political history during which were successive military dictatorships and such great government repression that had never been seen before. The Christian churches both as organized groups (the Christian Association of Nigeria and the Christian Council of Nigeria) and individual denominations responded by strongly resisting the repression. The most outspoken and influential organization was the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) which, from year to year and with dogged determination, criticized and denounced various governments and their policies that repressed the people.20

In Kenya, Christian leaders and organizations were key players in the debates and processes that led to the transition from a one party to a multiparty system of government there. Since there was no political opposition in the country, individual bishops and Church leaders were the most articulate critics of the government. The most influential criticism came from the National Council of Churches of Kenya. As a reprisal, government authorities shut down the magazine, Beyond – The Christian Leadership Magazine, that this group used in attacking the government.21

Our final example comes from Malawi which, since it became independent in 1964, had become a one Party State. In March 1992, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Malawi issued a Pastoral Letter with the title, “Living Our Faith.” The Letter called for drastic changes in the nation. It referred to the great disparity between the living conditions of the large majority poor and the few rich in the country. Among other things, it called for freedom of the press and the judiciary, free associations of citizens for social and political purposes, and government accountability.

According to Kenneth Ross, with the publication of the Letter, “popular excitement spread, the sense of liberation was palpable, and there emerged a consensus that Malawi could now never be the same again;” and “practically overnight the mode of discourse being used in everyday conversation was changed.” Ross attributes the power and dramatic effect of the Letter to “the fact that it simply voiced what everyone knew but no one had ever dared to say”; it reflected “what the Malawian Catholics have been saying to their priests over the years.”22

The Letter has had such enormous impact on the political life of Malawi that since then, according to commentators, the political history of the country is commonly divided into “before the Pastoral Letter” and “since the Pastoral Letter.”23 According to Ross, “Rarely in modern times can any Church document have had such an immediately explosive effect in the life of the nation.”24 Though the Pastoral Letter was not the only instrument that led to a multiparty state in Malawi (the other churches and religious bodies joined forces afterwards), it was the first shot that opened the way to breaking down the political monopoly

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20 Some examples of such Statements are “Politics as a Sacred Duty”, February, 1984; “Recent Political Events in Our Nation”, August 28, 1993.
22 Kenneth Ross, Gospel Ferment in Malawi,14; 16, 17.
24 Kenneth Ross, Gospel Ferment in Malawi, 14; 37.
in the country. The result of the revolution was the holding of a national referendum in June 1993 that led to the first general election since independence and the formation of other parties.

It is important to emphasize that these struggles for justice and democracy in the society were people's movements: it was not simply the official churches' declarations and statements that made the people undertake the struggle. The statements of the Church leaders were responses to the people's yearnings, and therefore played the role of theologically authenticating and empowering the people's struggle as an expression of their Christian faith commitment.

Though the same dramatic effect of the Bishops' intervention on Malawi polity did not occur in other countries, the impact of these interventions on the Christian population was practically the same in the other countries. Whether in Nigeria or Kenya or Malawi, or for that matter the other countries not mentioned, Christians whether of Roman Catholic, Protestant or African Instituted churches hailed and identified with the statements and actions of the Church leaders. A high degree of consciousness had thus been raised among the generality of the ordinary African Christians and they had now come to see action for justice in society as a matter of faith commitment.

In view of the fact that all this took place in those countries where inculturation theology was the dominant theology at the grassroots, this indicates a radical shift in perspective whereby the ordinary African Christians now came to see the realm Christian theology to extend beyond religious issues and embrace secular issues as well. A new phase in the understanding and practice of inculturation theology was thus born. Academic inculturation theology would only ignore this grassroots expression at its own peril.

**Academic Level: Development of Integrative Inculturation Theology**

At the academic level, since the 1970s, African theologians of the inculturation orientation had begun to interact with liberation theologians. The first gathering of Third World theologians which led to the formation of the Ecumenical Association of Third World theologians took place in Tanzania in 1976. Its continental branch, the Ecumenical Association of African theologians was formed in Accra, Ghana in 1977. These two bodies have facilitated intercontinental, continental, regional and national meetings that bring Third World theologians together at different levels.

Naturally, the initial encounter of theologians of diverse backgrounds, orientations and hermeneutical interests who were not sufficiently knowledgeable about each other's background and point of view led to a painful experience of displacement for all. Those who were engaged in inculturation theology found it difficult to appreciate the “revolutionary and political” tone of liberation theology, while those engaged in liberation theology considered inculturation theology “evolutionary” in tone without a sharp critical edge. However, out of this initial tension have emerged today mutual understanding, acceptance and dialogue. Today both theologies are recognized as complementary and as concerned to articulate the gospel of Christ as Good News in Africa but with different starting points; and a shared general methodological format has been worked out.25


The exposure of inculturation theologians to liberation theology has created a strong awareness of the need for academic inculturation theology to engage secular issues. Many African theologians have championed this cause among whom may be mentioned Jean-Marc Ela (Cameroon) who has argued that the religious aspect of the life of Africans should not be divorced from the economic and political conditions in which they live, and has offered theological reflections on both aspects.27 Indeed such separation is artificial and comes from the influence of western culture given that in African culture social and religious issues are integrated not separated. Emmanuel Martey (Ghana) has also argued that African theology must be “informed and shaped” by African world-view as well as the socio-political and economic realities of Africa. For him, Christ in the African context is not either an ancestor or a liberator, but ancestor-liberator.28 Benezet Bujo (Democratic Republic of Congo) has called attention to and offered reflections on the social and religious roles of ancestors as a starting point for an African Christology and ecclesiology that would take account of social issues.29 Englebert Mveng (Cameroon) has pointed to the secular dimension of religious language and the need for inculturation theology to engage secular issues.30 As an exegete working with inculturation methodology, I (from Nigeria) have called for this sort of approach to inculturation theology.31 Employing a social historical paradigm, I have used the inculturation approach in a way that addresses social issues in my exegetical work.32 There are many others that have also published along these lines. Today, academic inculturation theology is no longer what it was in the 1970s. It is no longer correct to see it as focused on religious issues only: it engages both religious and secular issues.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I want to relate integrative inculturation theology to the other African theologies – Liberation theology, Black theology, African Women theology and Reconstruction theology.33 It is important to note that all these theologies seek to do basically the same thing – articulate the Christian message as Good News in Africa’s differing contexts – and that they arose out of different situations, serve differing needs and complement each other. No doubt, as the years go by, they will face new challenges, undergo transformations and develop new emphases, but none of them should be considered useless or irrelevant: they all have something to contribute to the proclamation of the kingdom. How does integrative inculturation theology differ from each of them? I shall discuss this from the following perspectives:

28 Emmanuel Martey, African Theology, 84-86.
30 Englebert Mveng, “Theology and African Art,” in African Theology en Route, 137-142.
Method. The basic methodological difference between integrative inculturation theology and the other theologies lies in its critical use of African cultural resources in appropriating the Christian message and relating it to the African context. The other theologies do not require the use of specifically African cultural resources in their reflection. For example, initially liberation theology used Marxist tools of analysis. In addition, integrative inculturation theology takes its inspiration from both the religious and secular cultures of Africa whereas the others take their inspiration (presently at least) from the secular culture.

Conceptual Framework. Inculturation theology is rooted in African culture (religious and secular). The use of an African conceptual frame of reference that makes African people and their contexts the subject of the reflection is essential to this theology. Also, the root categories used in this theology are different from those used in western theology. An example is the category of ancestor used to describe Christ.³⁴ On the other hand, the other theologies do not demand the use of African conceptual framework or specifically African root categories in reflection. For example, the root category of liberator used to describe Christ in liberation theology is not specifically African.

Theological Orientation. Two major theological themes – Creation and Salvation – used to depict God in the Bible constitute the major orientations of Christian theology.³⁵ Anyone familiar with the gospels will notice that there is a difference between the Synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) and John’s gospel. The difference lies not in that the Synoptics are historical while John is theological as is sometimes thought. Both are theological. Rather, the difference lies in their orientations in presenting the story of Jesus. The Synoptics are salvation oriented while John’s gospel is creation oriented. Liberation theology, Black theology, African Women theology and Reconstruction theology are salvation oriented theologies. They are rooted in the biblical theology of salvation understood as God's action in salvation history in respect of concrete social realities in the life of God’s people as seen in the Bible. They are anthropocentric. Most classical western theology is salvation oriented. For example, the dictum: “without the Church/Word no salvation” characteristic of classical Catholic/Protestant theology betrays this.

Inculturation theology, on the other hand, is creation oriented and cosmocentric. It is rooted in the biblical theology of Creation understood as one continuous process of creating and recreating with Salvation as an aspect of that process. It sees God as already offering Salvation to people through their cultures before the introduction of Christianity. This is the orientation used by Karl Rahner when he referred to non Christians as “anonymous Christians.” Creation orientation in theology should not be confused with ecological theology which is a theological theme aimed at addressing the issue of ecological degradation and thus redressing the anthropocentric overemphasis in western theology.

Locus and Goal. Liberation theology and African Women theologies construct Africa’s context in terms of injustice/oppression, and their goal is to articulate the Christian message of justice for the attainment of people's self-worth and freedom. Reconstruction theology sees society in terms of social dysfunction, and theology as a resource for societal reconstruction. On the other hand, integrative inculturation theology sees more than injustice/oppression and social dysfunction in society, and more than justice and reconstruction in the Christian message. It constructs African context in terms of its entire cultural/societal matrix with the religious, economic, political and social dynamics that give rise to various societal issues and tensions including injustice, societal dysfunction, etc. and seeks to address them with relevant Christian messages that include peace, reconciliation, dialogue, justice, community building, etc. Its goal is the empowerment of people and communities for cultural identity and creativity to respond to various societal issues with the Good News of Christ interpreted from African perspectives. It is sometimes referred to as liberation theology, but it is more fundamental than liberation in that it seeks to answer the question: Liberation for what?

³⁴ See for example Charles Nyamiti, Christ as Our Ancestor (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984).
The above point to different orientations, starting points, emphases and directions in these theologies and, rather than make them mutually exclusive, show them to be complementary.

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Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
THE CONTRIBUTION OF MISSIOLOGICAL THEOLOGY TO THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Paul Isaak

In this essay I want to proceed on missionary theology and its contribution to theological education in Africa in the following manner: In Part One I pay special attention to the issue of the relation between the gospel and culture. Without question the issue of African spirituality and African anthropology come to play a central role here. At the same time I am highlighting how the Christian gospel was polluted by the four Cs: Christianity, Commerce, Civilisation, and Conquest.

In Part Two, I am moving from the colonial church to the contemporary African Church by outlining how theology of mission transforms and empower the Church to be the missional Church and what its missionary praxis is. In particular the focus will be how God’s people being sent into the world to bring the breaking in of God’s reconciling, healing, transforming and empowering reign in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

In Part Three, I am highlighting the emerging missionary paradigm for the African missional Church, namely God’s mission as praxis for healing and reconciliation. Today, a spirituality of healing and reconciliation is called for in order to face the challenges brought about by damaging effects of colonialism, sexism, racism, and cultural and religious clashes.

Introduction

It is important to start my contribution on missionary theology and its contribution to theological education in Africa at the right place, namely the proper place of any contemporary ecumenical missionary theology. To be concise mission is God’s job description, capturing both who God is and what God does. Perhaps, the understanding of missio Dei (Mission of God) was best expressed by an African American ex-slave, Sojourner Truth, who said, “Oh, God, I did not know you were so big.” This earthshaking fact of God’s big heartedness is the heart of the beginning of Jesus’ mission and ministry of transcending religion, economical status, gender, ethnicity, race, and class and in line with the model of God’s mission as praxis for healing and reconciliation today, namely “…to bring the good news to the oppressed…to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, and let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Isaiah 61 and Luke 4).

The original theological basis for Christian mission is, therefore, based on the doctrine of the Trinity. The Triune God is a missionary God. According to Bosch “mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the Church is viewed as an instrument for that mission….To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people….Mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people.”

From such a Trinitarian understanding of mission the Church can never remain static or satisfied with the status quo. Martin Luther once called the Church the “mouth house” of God, that is, the concrete way that God’s word is spoken in the world. The message of the Bible is something to be proclaimed: the

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3 As quoted in Stephen B Bevans and Roger P Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission Today*
joyous news of salvation and liberation that requires the *viva vox* of the Church as a *Mundhaus* (mouth house). In other words, the Church is the place of the mouth where the Gospel is shouted by the preacher in the prophetic tradition; it is not merely a *Tintenpalast* (Ink Palace), a domain of politicians, theologians and institutions of higher theological learning (universities and seminaries). The Church remains both a place of *studying* and *doing* theological studies, mission, ministry and diaconal services (diakonia). It is a place of continual accompaniment that is reflective of the interaction between context, theology and practice while proclaiming, announcing, serving and teaching the good news to the oikoumene, the whole inhabited earth.\(^4\) From these four basic perspectives I shall address the topic in three parts:

In Part One shall pay special attention to the issue of the relation between the gospel and culture. Without question the issue of African spirituality and African anthropology come to play a central role here. At the same time I shall highlight how the Christian gospel was polluted by the four Cs: Christianity, Commerce, Civilisation, Conquest. I shall explain that with the start of Protestant missionary work since Enlightenment, people argued that they should take human initiatives in mission by sending missionaries and along with colonial powers, sending traders, soldiers and settlers. Thereby mission was reduced to conversions, church plantings, and gaining “a place in the sun.”\(^5\) The main tenet of this line of thought was based on a Western *Weltanschauung* that was a combination of Darwinism and pan-Europeanism, namely the uncritical acceptance of the notion of nation (*Volk*) to the “strongest”, the “most highly developed”, and suggesting that the “underdeveloped” nation needed colonial protection and therefore they have to be subjected to mental slavery, cultural dominance, and colonialism.\(^6\)

In Part Two, I shall move from the colonial church to the contemporary African Church by outlining how theology of mission transforms and empower the Church to be the missional Church and what its missionary praxis is. In particular the focus will be how God’s people being sent into the world to bring the breaking in of God’s reconciling, healing, transforming and empowering reign in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. I shall maintain in this essay that innovative, creative, and more effective forms of evangelism and dialogue, diapraxis and diakonia must be explored and implemented as a witnessing, worshipping, nurturing, serving, reconciling and healing community within the spirit of ecumenical, dialogue, economical, political, and ecological engagement.\(^7\)

In Part Three, I shall highlight the emerging missionary paradigm for the African missional Church, namely God’s mission as praxis for healing and reconciliation. Today, a spirituality of healing and reconciliation is called for in order to face the challenges brought about by damaging effects of colonialism, sexism, racism, and cultural and religious clashes. Particularly significant has been the 2005 Conference on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) which met in Athens, Greece, for bringing together participants from various churches. The resulting report contains a statement on mission as healing and reconciliation “in the power of the Spirit” in the context of a broken world. Truth, memory, justice and forgiveness are understood as four essential aspects, needed both within the Church and in society at large, in the dynamics of the reconciliation and healing process.\(^8\) I shall now address these three key issues:

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The issue of the relation between gospel and culture is not new in the discourse of Christian Church since its inception. The first debate on the issue was between some Jewish Christians who asserted that circumcision was essential for salvation and Paul and Barnabas opposed it and consequently “no small dissension and debate” broke out (Acts 15:2). The case was brought to Jerusalem and the outcome was an apostolic letter sent to the gentile Christians conveying the decision “to impose on you no further burden than these essentials: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication” (Acts 15:28-29). The issue of circumcision has been resolved, but that of “food sacrificed to idols” was not.

As Christianity spread from Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8) the question of circumcision receded into the background. But the question of “food sacrificed to idols” came to the foreground and for generations of Christians this phrase came to stand for idolatry, and idolatry stood for religions other than Christianity. It is in this context that the missionaries rejected African culture at the expense of what was assumed as “Christian” Europeans culture. Let be briefly explicate.

The most influential work, Christ and Culture, was published in 1951 by H Richard Niebuhr and should be understood against above background. In light of the analysis of Niebuhr, let me focus on one aspect that will be relevant here. Most of the European missionaries saw African culture as Christ against culture. It was assumed that Jesus Christ will be against African culture because the latter was viewed as promoting heathenism. Missionaries did not, for example, think of African religion, philosophy, languages, proverbs, songs, poetry, and stories as the loci of insights into matters such as forgiveness and the mystery of life that could enrich the universal church’s understanding of the fundamental mysteries of faith.

However, at the start of the second half of the twentieth century, the inculturation theology reasserted itself and it became obvious for all Christian churches that a world under the sole influence of Christian religion and culture could never have existed, and Christianity had to face other cultures and religions asserting themselves with new vigour.

One of the key African theologians who did excellent research on gospel and culture is Lamin Sanneh. Sanneh in his book, Translating the Message, highlights two basic paradigms of mission. He calls them mission as diffusion [or mission as cultural dominance] and mission as translation [or mission as inculturation]. The first paradigm, mission as cultural dominance, makes the missionary culture inseparable carrier of the message. This implies that the message, which is carried to other peoples and cultures, can be extracted from the culture of the carrier, the missionary.

The second paradigm, mission by translation, is characterised by making the recipient culture the locus of the proclamation. In this paradigm the message needs to be translated into the language and cultural context of those who receive the message. Consequently, there is neither holy language nor a God-chosen cultural tradition to be implanted in other cultures. According to Sanneh, this principle of translatability is the vintage mark of Christianity. In short, translation by mission means the process whereby Christianity...
itself becomes Asianised or Africanised by following the four-self formula: self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating, and self-theologising.

Under the four-self formula it is acknowledge that African spirituality, anthropology, and culture are rich in values and do not conflict with the central message of the gospel. On the contrary, such values enhance people’s understanding, application and contextualisation of the gospel. Therefore they need to be seen as positive, to be retained and integrated into the life, mission, and ministries of the Church. Indeed, African spirituality, anthropology, and culture are points of contact for the reception of the gospel. This is not new because any Christian theology draws upon a number of points of contact, such as reason, tradition, and experience, in order to construct contextual theologies.

In the case of African spirituality and anthropology there are values that include a deep religiosity in which God is central; in which the spiritual world is very close to the physical world and in which life is seen in a holistic perspective. In contrast to some Christian views on spirituality, which considered it to be separated from earthly concerns, African spirituality fully embraces the phenomenal world and enter passionately into its affairs.

In the history of Christianity the word “spirituality” is as challenging, if not as threatening, as the word “social activism.” Both are subject to misunderstanding and misuse. When we speak of a spiritual person, we generally understand this as being someone whose “head is in the clouds.” When we speak of an activist, we sometimes intend it as a warning: here is a person at the forefront, inevitably causing problems.

But such thinking is out of place. According to Thomas Merton there is a close link between spirituality, theology, and ethics, which must be affirmed and recognized for the mutual good of each. Contemplation, far from being opposed to theology, is in fact the normal perfection of theology. We must not separate intellectual study of divinely revealed truth and contemplative experience of that truth as if they could have nothing to do with each other. On the contrary, they are simply two aspects of the same thing. Unless they are united there is no fervour, no life and no spiritual value in theology; no substance, no meaning and no sure orientation in the contemplative life.

Today there is a fascinating growth of and widespread interest in spirituality. The fact that spirituality is generating so much interest all over the world today provides an interesting perspective on the limitations of contemporary theology as a discipline and on the needs of those who are involved in the Church. In some ways, significant correctives to traditional Western theologies are to be noted in this regard. Today, spirituality or orthokardia (right heartedness) has become a prominent word of theological reflections within the ecumenical circles, along with orthodoxy (right belief) and orthopraxis (right action).

The basic theological and anthropological principles here are: Spirituality or orthokardia refers to a lived experience of God (thirst for God), and the life of prayer and action which results from this. At the same time, it cannot be conceived apart from orthodoxy and orthopraxis. All these three aspects are essential, so that the divine human encounter might acquire greater depth and meaning. Therefore, a true understanding of the nature of spirituality will effect personal, societal and structural transformation, and help to bring about more united, peaceful, reconciling and healing communities.

In contrast to former views of spirituality, which considered it to be separated from earthly concerns, contemporary spirituality together with orthodoxy and orthopraxis fully embrace the phenomenal world and enter passionately into its affairs. We cannot separate spirituality apart from the synergia (that God has chosen to work with people on earthly matters).

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It is this shared experience of spirituality that is directly linked to the anthropological, known as *Ubuntu*. In this ubuntu or anthropo-ethical principle, it is said, that a person is a person through other persons. It is not one of “I think, therefore I am”. Instead it says, “My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours”. A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, and does not see the other as an enemy, but as integral part of co-humanity.17

Unfortunately, according to George Steinmetz there was no positive appreciation of African religion and culture because “there were no footholds for carving out opposing ethnographic stances” [or *theo-moral discourses*].18 The reason that colonial missiological discourse did not recognise the African discourses was because the leading Euro-American theologians and church leaders were in support of it. According to Julius Richter, the first full professor of the University of Berlin, the “right” of “Protestant missions” to save people from other faiths should be part and parcel “of the cultural expansion of Euro-American peoples.”19 Therefore, David Bosch claimed Christian missions, trade and colonization or the three Cs (Christianity, commerce, and civilization) that have been initiated by David Livingstone, did not happen by accident.20 On the other hand, Bosch correctly states that the aim of colonialism and mission was to make “the whole tribe”, that is the colonised, “English or German in their language, civilized in their habits, and Christian in their religion.”21 According to Jean and John Comaroff, “this culture, the culture of European capitalism…had, and continues to have, enormous historical force, a force at once ideological and economic, semantic and social.”22

But more should be said about the four Cs, especially the fourth C, namely conquest. The fourth C gradually predominated the other three Cs. Livingstone’s three Cs were not sufficient enough to colonised Africa because it was built on the spoken and written word and it soon proved to be inadequate. Soon the maximum of colonialism was introduced: the gun. From that moment we have a new element in the colonisation: the brutal use of force; whatever the cost. According to a Namibian theologian, Lukas de Vries, the proclamation of the gospel and its work for peace were no longer in forefront. Instead “violence and murder enjoyed the full consent of mission workers....”23 Thus, in an attempt to destroy African spirituality and Ubuntu the unholy alliance of the four Cs were formed.

In light of the fourth C the use militaristic language was highly familiar among the eighteenth to the twentieth century Western Christianity. According to Bosch “...mission stood in the sign of world conquest. Missionaries were referred to as ‘soldiers’, as Christian ‘forces’. References were made to missionary strategies and tactical plans. Military metaphors such as ‘army’, ‘crusade’, ‘council of war’, ‘conquest’, ‘advance’, ‘resources’, and ‘marching orders’ were abound.”24 Furthermore, hymns such as “Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war” were highly popular among Christians those days, and even during the World War Two among the British and American soldiers25 and even today in some of the African protestant churches.

This is underlined by Carl-J Hellberg when he noted the following: The Rhenish Mission Society in South West Africa [today Namibia] had taken active part in the process of colonisation, especially when

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18 George Steinmetz, “The Devil’s Handwriting: Pre-colonial Discourse, Ethnographic Acuity, and Cross-Identification in German Colonialism” in *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History*, 45:1 (January 2003), 85.
19 As quoted in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 292.
one of the missionaries, Brincker, demanded that Germany send an army to Namibia in a letter dated 13 March 1889. Brincker argued that it was:

…a matter of applying the language of force in defence of what is right. The country [Namibia] seems to be rich in gold deposits…added to which the land in a moral sense belongs to our native country [Germany], since the Rhenish Mission already has invested thousands of Marks in it; here, you will also find the graves which have been dug for your own fallen missionaries. If any gain is to be made out of this colony, a European power must be based in this country with a military force (…), to ensure immediate retribution for any likely form of arrogance and insolence. 26

I am now in the position to throw down the gauntlet. My dominant motif was to tell the story of cultural dominance and mental slavery from the perspectives of the colonised. On the one hand, the predominant type of Euro-American missionaries’ theology was based on saving “souls” or saving the “poor heathen.” When missionaries were imbued with such a theology they went forth to preach the gospel, they carried with them a sense of their own superiority and condescension towards the “other” to whom they had been sent. But the irony was that the missionaries who preached the gospel of saving souls could not touch the soul and spirit of African spirituality and Ubuntu. Let me use the following story as an illustration: When the missionaries and colonialists came the missionaries gave the Bible to Africans and the colonialists took the land. They thought, based upon their strategy of the four Cs that the story had ended. But Africans were conscious about the colonisation strategies and started to employ their own discourse based on African spirituality and ubuntu-principles. They sang loudly, praised God, closed their eyes in prayer, and listened diligently to the word of God. At the same time their ears and eyes were wide open to contextualise the gospel, while their hands and feet were ready for liberative action. 27 Such missionary theology in theological education in Africa is a combination of orthodoxy, orthokardia, and orthopraxis. It is about God’s acts and commitment to liberation and transformation and the Church is called upon to participate in its own context in the world today. 28

Part Two: African Missional Church and its Missionary Praxis

I am now turning to the contextual and practical implications of such a missionary theology in the theological education in Africa. At the outset I wish to state that missional Church is called into the missionary praxis. For the missional Church, mission is not only what the Church does (missionary activities), but also how the Church is at work in specific contextual praxis. Word empowered and Spirit led, the Church knows that mission flows from its nature as a witnessing, reconciling and healing community. 29 The Triune God creates the Church and sustains it through the gifts of Word and Sacrament by the power of the Spirit. It could also be said that the being-ness (the missional Church) and sent-ness (the missionary praxis) of the Church are inextricable linked.

26 Hellberg, Mission, Colonialism, and Liberation, 92.
27 For further details see Paul John Isaak “Towards Black African theology” (unpublished MA thesis, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, 1978). In this Master’s thesis of 1978, I have linked the importance of African religiosity with African ubuntu. Thus, the understanding of missionaries that religion only has to do with “spiritual” matters was a strange idea to the African Weltanschauung. Africans were aware that the missionaries and settlers took their “daily bread” away. Knowing about the whole affair and refusing to cultural dominance and mental slavery they hold on to the message of their African theology of commitment to liberation and transformation.
28 Bevans and Schroeder, Constants in Context, 61-63.
29 For further insights on the missional Church and the missionary praxis of the Church see the outstanding studies on the understanding and practice of mission and diakonia by the Lutheran World Federation’s document, Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment (Geneva: LWF, 2004). See also the document, Diakonia in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment (Geneva: LWF, 2009).
Such missional Church understands its participation in missio Dei as contextual, addressing faithfully the challenges of ever changing and complex contexts and, thus, in a comprehensive and holistic way. Mission is contextual with regard to its aim, practice, and location. Its aim encompasses the whole of creation (ecological concerns), the whole of life (spiritual, social, political, economic, and cultural), and the whole human being (i.e., soul and body). Its practice calls for the participation of the whole Church, women and men, young and old. Being contextual, the Church seeks and works for reconciliation and healing.

For the missional Church to be engaged in such missionary praxis it needs to follow mission as a prophetic practice in faith, courage, bold humility, dialogue and proclamation. Such mission as action of the Church is based on Micah 6.8, “He [God] has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God”? These words are echoed in the Letter of James 2. 14-17: “What good it is, my brothers and sisters, if you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,’ and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.” This is the biblical and prophetic mission which the Church ought to follow in faith and works. Karl Barth is highly specific on the nature and theological orientation of such a task, as can be appreciated when he states that “God always takes His stand unconditionally and passionately on this side and this side alone: against the lofty and on behalf of the lowly.”

To rephrase the statement of Karl Barth, I wish to state that Jesus Christ is the Saviour, Victor and Liberator, and people are minor liberators engaged in securing provisional and relative yet joyful victories of establishing healing and reconcile communities that are a reflection of God’s reign here on earth. This is an indication of the concrete political tendency of the biblical message; nor can this message be heard and believed without awakening a sense of social and spiritual responsibility to follow in that direction today in the sense to provide structures and processes for a fractured society to be reconstructed as truthful and just and rebuilding of shattered lives so that kindred live together in unity and in a very good and pleasant household (Psalm 133. 1-2). That is what it means to live together in harmony within healing and reconcile communities. The following section turns to the issue of God’s mission as praxis for healing and reconciliation.

**Part Three: God’s Mission as Praxis for Healing and Reconciliation**

The Christian understanding of mission since eighteenth century is not only far removed from its original use, but also has been described as in a state of crisis and has been harshly criticized. For example, a common criticism of Christian mission is that it has been too closely aligned with colonialism as I have stated above. In light of the crisis, Bosch identifies three possible reactions. The first reaction is to become burdened by guilt and simply withdrawal from mission altogether. The second reaction is to ignore the criticism, dismiss the crisis, and to continue mission in the same model as before. The third reaction is to construct a “different kind of involvement” by calling for “a new paradigm for mission.” My interest involves this third reaction and I think this reaction deals with healing and reconciliation, because it confronts the past in order to create a new model of mission. Therefore, I believe a timely and relevant

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paradigm for missionary theology in theological education in Africa centres around the themes of healing and reconciliation. I now address these two topics.

1. God’s mission as praxis for healing

Let me start by affirming the definition of the World Council of Churches (WCC) on health. Health is a dynamic state of well-being of the individual and society, of physical, mental, spiritual, economic, political, and social well-being – of being in harmony with each other, with the entire created world and with God. Such a holistic view underlines that health is not a static concept in which clear distinction lines are drawn between those who are healthy and those who are not. Every human being is constantly moving between different degrees of staying healthy and of struggling with infections and diseases. 33

Such a holistic view has also consequences on the understanding of the Church’s mission: The Christian ministry of healing includes the practice of medicine (addressing both physical and mental health) as well as caring and counselling disciplines and spiritual practices. Repentance, prayer and/or laying on of hands, divine healing, rituals involving touch and tenderness, forgiveness and the sharing of the Eucharist can have important and at times even dramatic effects in the physical as well as social realm of human beings. 34

At the outset let me ask: Is the emerging paradigm of healing suitable for Africa today? Let me answer this question with the following parable.

A visitor interrupted me. “Excuse me,” he said. “Could you tell me the way to Africa?” “Easy,” I said. “You’ll recognise Africa from the people. They’ll all be crying.” “That’s funny,” said the man. “When I was a little boy and a refugee there, Africans were smiling. They were full of hope. They had leaders who promised them that if they worked hard and loved another they would prosper.”

As we were coming to Africa, I asked him a question. “By the way,” I remarked, “What is your name?” “My name is Jesus,” he said. Soon Jesus and I came to a lake in Africa. We sat down, took off our shoes and washed our feet. Jesus’ feet were soon sparkling clean but I couldn’t wash the dirt off mine. The more I washed, the dirtier they got. The dirt ran into the lake and soon the lake was completely covered in green scum and everything started to die. Fish gasped for air, water snakes writhed in agony, and rats lay on the surface, feet up, breathing their last.

Jesus stood up, waved his arms, looked to the sky and shouted, “Long live Africa!” And at that the waters cleared, the fish recovered, and elephants, lions, rhino, springboks, goats, sheep, cattle, dogs, and cats came to the lake to drink. Then Jesus said, “Look, the giant is awakening! It is now your turn to make sure the giant is walking.” 35

Such stories contain the age-old message of ora et labora (pray and work). As religious people and citizens of this world, we are called upon to pray and to work simultaneously by linking orthodoxy, orthokardia, and orthopraxis or having a missiological theology in Africa where God is not de-emphasised, faith not neglected, and praxis not avoided. From this particular perspective I now focus on the emerging paradigm of mission as healing and reconciliation.

The following is an anecdotal story once told by John Mbiti, one of the African theologians. It is a story about the return of an African theology graduate to Africa after many years of study in Europe. 36

34 Matthey, editor, You are the Light of the World, 139.
36 For further details see especially the article, ‘Critical issues facing the ELCRN’ in Paul John Isaak (ed), The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia in the 21st Century (Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan, 2000), 101-109.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
He learned German, Greek, French, Latin, and Hebrew, in addition to English, as one part of the requirements for his degree. The other part, the dissertation, he wrote on some obscure theologian of the Middle Ages. Finally, he got what he wanted, A Doctorate in Theology. He was anxious to reach home as soon as possible, so he flew, and he was glad to pay excess baggage, which, after all, consisted only of the Bible in the various languages he had learned, plus Bultmann, Barth, Bonhoeffer, Bruner, Buber, Cone, Küng, Moltmann, Niebuhr, and Tillich.

At home, relatives, neighbours, old friends, dancers, musicians, drums, dogs, cats, all gather to welcome him back. People bear with him patiently as he struggles to speak his own language, as occasionally he seeks the help of an interpreter from English.

Suddenly there is a shriek. Someone has fallen to the ground. It is his older sister. He rushes to her. People make room for him, and watch him. ‘Let’s take her to a hospital,’ he calls urgently. They are stunned. He becomes quiet. They all look at him bending over her. Why does not somebody respond to his advice? Finally a schoolboy says: ‘Doctor, the nearest hospital is 100 kilometres away and there are few buses that go there.’ Someone else says, ‘She is possessed. Hospitals will not cure her!’ The chief says to him, ‘You have been studying theology overseas for ten years. Now help your sister. She is troubled by the spirit of her aunt.’

He looks around. Slowly he goes to get Bultmann and reads again about spirit possession in New Testament. Of course he gets his answer: Bultmann has demythologised it (i.e. according to Bultmann such thing does not exist in reality). He insists that his sister is not possessed. The people shout, ‘Help your sister; she is possessed!’ He shouts back, ‘But Bultmann has demythologised demon possession’.

It is crucial to note that the basic stance of the author in this story was the praxis of the African Church, African theology, African Christian counselling, its priests and pastors, and laity. For example in the story the African student has only books of the European theologians like Barth, Bultmann, Tillich, and Moltmann (all of them white and male) and sadly not a single African theological book and only one African American theologian, namely James Cone. What a pathetic picture.

Pathetic because there is a ‘punch line’ of the anecdote that challenges ones methods and methodologies in applied Christian healing ministries. The sister of the African theologian is struck down by a spirit—the spirit of her dead aunt. How can he be of help to her? How can he be an effective pastor to her? How can he carry out his pastoral counselling ministry? In order to answer these questions he goes to Bultmann! But he fails to think contextually. For example, when spirits of the dead visit the living they are not meant to be cast out—but to be spoken with, to be reasoned with and to be bargained with. The theology of Bultmann has neither vocabulary nor grammar for this. Even more seriously his knowledge of Bultmann denies him the African reality, which is staring him in the face. This is a classic denial.

Today, Christians need a paradigm shift in the pastoral and healing ministries of the Church. They have to learn the art of hearing the questions being asked ‘on the ground.’ For example, during my theological studies, I have been informed that proper pastoral counselling takes place in an office, to guarantee privacy and quietness and suitable atmosphere. We were even advised by our professor that there should be a table and at least two chairs.

But when I started my pastoral duties at Bethanie in Namibia, I experienced that many people talked to me about their burdens in public places. Mindful of my pastoral counselling education I always told them to go to my office for pastoral counselling sessions. Later I discovered that majority of the members did not come. They were consulting me on their daily problems and burdens wherever we met, whether in an office, on a street, at a football stadium, or in the Church. The point is that healing and diaconal ministries of the Church is provided in any place and is not reserved to a specific venue.

Another aspect, which often props up in the discussion of health issues in Africa, is the search for a metaphysical cause. In most African societies it is not enough to limit the treatment to the manifest symptoms of illness and disease, but the question why this happened must be answered. Bishop Peter Sarpong from Ghana writes that the Ghanaian knows very well that there are natural causes and events, and
that they know that there are rules of cause and effect. But it is the particular conditions in a chain of causation, which relate an individual to natural happenings. These, it is felt, require different explanation. Bishop Sarpong gives the following example to illustrate this point:

One may explain scientifically to a mother that her child died of a sickness caused by a hepatitis virus, which he got from someone carrying the virus. The mother has no problem with this explanation. She accepts it. But her question remained unanswered. Why did the infection enter the body of her child? Many people went near that sick person, why did they not get jaundiced, too? The doctor who explains her child’s death to her has handled many such patients. And why do others who get jaundice recover? For the woman, the scientific explanation has only succeeded in revealing that witches really exist and are indeed powerful. In order to fight against such powerful spirit, she has to contact the traditional healer to explain to her why her child is dead.37

To put it differently, this is an example that healing includes transformation of life locally and contextually as well as by crossing cultural and religious boundaries.38 In this connection it becomes important for the Church to realise that its calling is a response to the charismatic gifts of healing which equip it and enable it to fulfil that role.39 In short, Jesus’ healing is a model for the Church today. Jesus entrusts the apostles with preaching to and healing the sick. According to Jesus’ instructions, the gospel cannot stand without the concrete salvation illustrated by healing, and the healing loses its meaning if it is not seen within the framework of the gospel of God’s reign. I now focus on the emerging ecumenical paradigm of mission as reconciliation.

2. Ecumenical paradigm of God’s mission as reconciliation

Next to the theme of healing in recent years and at the start of the 21st century missiological studies concentrate on the paradigm of mission as reconciliation. According to Jacques Matthey since 1980s a change began to occur around the time of the world mission conference of San Antonio, USA, in 1989 when mission has been increasingly connected with reconciliation.

Today it is crucial to affirm reconciliation as key elements of an emerging ecumenical paradigm of mission because the language of reconciliation has come to the fore in many different contexts and catches the imagination of people inside and outside the Churches. Further evidence is the fact that 2009 has been proclaimed International Year of Reconciliation according to the resolution calendar of the United Nations (UN).41

One of the leading theologians in the area of reconciliation as a new paradigm for mission is Robert Schreiter. He acknowledges that there is no single understanding of reconciliation among people but that every culture and language has concepts of who needs to be involved in reconciliation, how it should be accomplished, what constitutes justice in the new situation and what marks the end of reconciliation process. Moreover, there is no single Christian understanding of reconciliation, as the concept has developed various nuances depending on the context and circumstances. Schreiter therefore contends that

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37 As quoted in Gerry Ter Haar & Ambrose Moyo (eds), *African Traditional Religions in Religious Education* (Utrecht: Utrecht University, 1992), 168-169 (emphasis mine).
41 On 20 November 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations decided to proclaim 2009 as the International Year of Reconciliation (resolution 61/17).
the best approach is to merely outline elements that must be considered in any process of reconciliation. In light of Schreiter’s statement I believe reconciliation is a process. As Robert Schreiter writes:

Victims of violence and suffering must tell their story over and over again in order to escape the narrative of the lie. As they recount their own narrative, little by little they begin to construct a new narrative of truth that can be include the experiences of suffering and violence without allowing those experiences to overwhelm it. This includes, in the first stage, establishing a kind of geography of violence and suffering; that is, bounding it so as to tame its savage power. The more that the violence is so bounded, the less formidable it becomes. Without such boundedness, it roams at will in the life of the victim devouring, like the roaming lion in 1 Peter 5.8, whomever it will. The ministry of reconciliation at this stage is the ministry of listening.

Therefore, the activity of reconciliation is an ongoing process and a combination of elements such as witnessing and telling of the truth; exposing the lie; the shaping and healing of memories, justice and forgiveness. If one of these components were missing, then it would not be a true picture of reconciliation.

From a biblical perspective reconciliation is primarily and fundamentally the work of the triune God bringing fulfilment to God’s eternal purposes of creation and salvation through Jesus Christ: “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross” (Col. 1. 19-20). In the person of Jesus Christ the divine nature and the human nature were reconciled, united forever. This is the starting point for human reconciliation with God. Christians have to actualize by God’s grace and our efforts, what they already have in Christ, through the Holy Spirit. In short, the term “reconciliation” thus becomes an almost all-embracing term to articulate what is at the heart of the Christian faith.

Consequently, the ministry of reconciliation (Latin re-conciliare, to bring again together) refers more generally to the process of bringing into relationships of mutual benefit and enrichment various different parties in order to live in a model of unity in diversity. Reconciliation refers more specifically to the healing of broken relationships, the resolving of conflicts and wrongs of the past in order to re-establish restored relationships, by promoting peace, justice and solidarity.

Conclusion

At the conclusion let me highlight the following three issues: First, my methodology on missiological theology is contextual and is focusing on theology, context, and practice. Mission as sending and accompaniment needs a theological education that is reflective of and developed in the context in the life of the Churches. That is the being-ness and the sent-ness of the Church.

The second issue is on reconciliation. Reconciliation is one of, if not the most compelling way of expressing the meaning of the gospel today. In the midst of violence, pain and indelible scars on people’s memory, the Church as God’s minister of reconciliation proclaims that in Jesus Christ and in his

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45 Matthey, Editor, You Are The Light Of The World, 96-98.
community, reconciliation as well as healing is possible.46 To put it differently, the Church must be in the thick of the process of reconciliation.

In the third place the spirituality of reconciliation should be linked to the mission and ministry of healing. Healing as the restoration of right relations with God is the source of reconciliation with oneself, with people of our own faith and other faiths, and with the whole creation. In the act of healing there is transformation for those who harbour pain; those who nurse hurt, and for those whose memories keep them bound. They are transformed into reconciled and healing communities. In short, God’s mission as praxis of healing and reconciliation means to proclaim the good news, to administer the sacraments, and being of service to the wounded and broken humanity.

Bibliography

46 Bevans and Schroeder, Constants in Context, 390-391.
DOING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FROM THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: A THEOLOGY OF RECONSTRUCTION IN MISSIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Chammah Kaunda

Introduction

The subject of migration poses a critical challenge to theological education in Africa. As an instrument of missio Dei, theological education prepares women and men to effectively struggle in addressing contemporary existential challenges of their society by helping the Christian community envision an inclusive society. Yet, African theology which has critical resources from African religio-cultural heritage has not responded adequately to the situation of migration. The migrants are human beings (African) and as such their experiences deserve an inclusion in theological education.

The majority of migrants, especially those whose unfortunate circumstances (such as a food shortage, war, religious conflict, flood, etc.), lead to their migration continue to struggle with integration into new communities in which they are constantly perceived as competitors for insufficient resources. Although this paper is dealing with the migrants who have been forced from their countries, which includes refugees, illegal or undocumented involuntary migrants, victims of trafficking and smuggling, and internally displaced persons, it is nevertheless, significant to clarify that there is no such thing as “strictly voluntary migration”. This is because every individual who migrates has an ulterior motive, even the so-called missionaries.\(^1\) Here I only focus on the former because they are the ones who undergo traumatic experiences of discrimination, abuse and at times, gross inhuman hostility like in the case of xenophobia in South Africa.\(^2\) In some parts of southern Africa, the migrants have been reduced into a “thing” or non-persons by the laws of the countries of migration. It is my contention that like in the context of HIV and AIDS, a situation which has received enormous attention from African theology,\(^3\) the challenge of migration yearns for an urgent theological education response.

This article briefly explores migration as a critical challenge to theological education in Africa. First, I deal with migration in its historical context as inherent in African worldview. Second, I argue for the applicability of African theology of reconstruction in the context of migration. Third, I contend for the option for the migrants as a theologicus locus for contextual theology in Africa. Finally, I argue for an African theological education that promotes the principles of inclusive community as an alternative in the context of migration.

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The Mobile Pre-Colonial Africa: Historical Explorations

Historians and anthropologists have long described Africa as an immensely mobile continent and it continues to be viewed in this manner. The mobility nature of African people is not a new phenomenon. In fact, it has been a feature and remains a part of historical process and religio-cultural development of the people. To a large extent, the religio-cultural, socio-political and economic landscape of the Sub-Saharan continent has been shaped and continues to be reshaped by these continuous historical moments and processes. John Anarf et al. highlight that early historians in Africa have documented the trans-Saharan caravan routes as among the earliest evidence of major interaction that took place within the sub-continent. These historians have mentioned a peaceful movement of people across ethnic groups. In a similar way, Chaloka Beyani argues that to understand the phenomenon of migration in Africa, one has to take into account the fact that “the history of Africa is one of migration in time and space in the Northern, Western, Eastern, Central, and Southern parts of the continent”. Beyani observes that since slave trade was barred within and outside pre-colonial Africa, “migration had positive effects in resolving protracted conflicts as defeated communities” could decide either to be integrated or just migrate to another place of their choice. This is not to say that there were no conflicts that resulted in bloodshed for as the Bemba proverb affirms, “imiti ilipamo taibula kushenkana”, meaning the trees close to each other will always experience friction.

Essentially, all the ethnic groups in present Africa claim to have emigrated from somewhere other than their present location. For instance, the Bemba people of Zambia still insist that they came from kumasamba (west) and they are going kukabanga (east). Although they are confined to a particular locality, they still feel they are in transit. According to Anarf et al., this perception is still part of African understanding of themselves as migrants from some other places. In fact, these interactions were perceived as significant for cultural enrichment and social development. This implies that the contemporary segregation and marginalization of the migrants could be perceived as merely social construction that was engendered by colonialism. Although, as Joy Alemanzung rightly stresses, colonialism cannot be blamed for ‘creating’ multi-ethnic states in Africa, rather for using hatred based upon ethnic differences as a weapon to secure its rule, thereby destroying the original cross movements and interactions that were a cultural feature of African people. Beyani observes that:

The demarcation of Africa into territorial entities based on the Westphalia model of statehood after the Berlin Conference in 1884 meant that the newly created boundaries became obstacles to open migration. Paradoxically, colonialism itself constituted migration from the global North to the global South in search of territory, space, resources, and new opportunities for economic expansion on the part of colonial powers.

Clearly, in pre-bordered Africa, migration was an aspect of African cultural identity. It seems that colonisers feared that the African tendency of migration had potential to jeopardise the colonial project or

8 Anarf et al. “Migration from and to Ghana,” 5.
9 Anarf et al. “Migration from and to Ghana,” 5.
affect negatively their power to control the continent in their direction. Indeed, there was a possibility that African people could have formed an alliance and conquer the invaders and their political oppression. Consequently, colonial administrators worked tirelessly to find the means to disrupt the potential effects of migration on their colonial endeavours. In neo-colonial Africa, this perspective has been viciously advanced and utilised as an excuse for exclusion and segregation. It is within this understanding that theology of reconstruction becomes crucial in responding to the situation of migration in Southern Africa.

The Relevance of Theology of Reconstruction in the Context of Migration

The Kenyan theologian Jesse Mugambi, developed his theology of reconstruction under the basic premise that Christian faith is crucial for the reconstruction of the African continent. He perceived the emergence of the New World Order as an essential historical moment that presented opportunities and challenges to develop a new vision for Africa beyond mere liberation to reconstruction.12 The theology of reconstruction is one of the paradigms that have sparked enormous debates within African theology. Mugambi’s proposition has been critically analysed by various African theologians such as Tinyiko Maluleke,13 Elelwani Farisani,14 Julius Gathogo15 and many others. He has since responded to the criticisms and demonstrated that liberation always leads to reconstruction.16 In other words, liberation and reconstruction are intertwined and cannot be mutually excluded from each other. Mugambi called for African theology to shift from the motif of exodus to the reconstructive motifs. The motif of theology of reconstruction is borrowed from the disciplines of engineering and social sciences and implies remodelling or redesigning and reorganization of certain aspects of society in order to make it more responsive.17 Mugambi stresses that reconstruction implies change at three crucial levels covering all aspects of societal life. The first is personal. This is significant because the community is made up of persons, and thus, reconstruction of individual attitudes, motives and intentions is crucial. The second is cultural reconstruction in its aspects of politics, economics, ethics, aesthetics and religion. The third is ecclesial reconstruction in all its aspects and orientation.18 One significant aspect of this paradigm lies in Mugambi’s understanding of the theological education as crucial in the process of reconstruction. He argues that in Africa today, theological education is an education of alienating students from their way of life of the communities in their respective contexts.19

The paradigm also finds justification in Charles Villa-Vicencio’s argument that theology of reconstruction must apply itself to the current religio-cultural, political and socio-economic conditions facing African people.20 In another place, Villa-Vicencio argues that theology of reconstruction is about the

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17 Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, 40.
19 Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, 171.
well-being of God’s creation through restoration of infinite dignity of humanity by fair access by all to the material resources, communal solidarity and protection of the natural order.\textsuperscript{21}

In defending theology of reconstruction, Ka Mana also called for envisaging an alternative African destiny outside the determinism of the contemporary crisis through the theology of reconstruction.\textsuperscript{22} He believes that the major task of theology of reconstruction consists in re-adapting the ethical standpoint offered by the Christian faith as a means to explore new perspectives of creativity, energy and dynamism with regard to the problems of African societies.\textsuperscript{23} The question is what kind of theology of reconstruction is needed for theological education in the context of migration?

The foregoing discussion shows a need for African theology to go beyond the dichotomy between liberation and reconstruction. The inner unity of liberation and reconstruction must be maintained and they cannot be applied in isolation but function together like the biceps and triceps in the arm. The tendency to overemphasize one renders both paradigms inadequate. Thus, to maintain the mutual influencing or dialectical or ‘biceps-triceps’ relationship, the two motifs should be utilised together in a symbiotic manner.

Perhaps the question to ask is: in what ways is the theology of liberation-reconstruction relevant to the situation of migration as it relates to the needs of African theological education? First, theology of liberation-reconstruction emphasises the fact that God is on the mission in Africa in order to demonstrate God’s liberating and reconciling love and consequently humanize the social order by overcoming inhumanity that human beings have brought on others. Second, it is based on the fact that the existing social conditions in Africa are a human construction and as such, by participating in God’s mission, humanity can become an agent of the transforming and renovating love of God within their societies. Third, it is holistic in the sense that it is aimed at the promotion of reconciliation and just peace in societies dominated by hatred, violence and segregation. In this sense, it does not separate between the Christian faith and praxis, women and men, human and nonhuman creation, migrants and non-migrants and so on. Rather, all are perceived in their mutual interaction and collaboration for a more human society. Fourth, it is grounded in African religio-cultural heritage, with its community orientation. The African understanding of community was and remains the basis for openness, sharing and accommodative attitudes to newcomers. Fifth, it is grounded in the biblical tradition where the Hebrew migrants with the help of God struggled for their liberation from the oppression and exploitation by the natives, and reconstruct their own future with dignity. This is further developed in the New Testament through the teaching of Jesus who reveals that all the people are included in the kingdom of God because they treated the migrants with justice and hospitality.\textsuperscript{24} In this sense, theology of liberation-reconstruction is relevant in the context of migration.

Theological Education with an Option for the Migrants

From the onset, it is important to understand the meaning of \textit{option} and its implications for theological education in Africa. The option for the migrants means following Jesus in his preferential, critical solidarity and in his work for a kingdom of righteousness, justice and peace for the excluded and the wretched of the earth.\textsuperscript{25} It is calling for a preferential option for the migrants as being much more than a

\textsuperscript{24} Matthew 25:35.
\textsuperscript{25} Matthew 25:31-46.
way of putting migration on the agenda of theological education. It is about conscientizing African theologians about the need to live theologically in the sense of becoming critically concerned about migration as a *locus theologicus* of doing theological education by promoting principles of an inclusive community (I will return to this argument below). It is an indictment to African theology to give a more adequate response by emulating the Theologian of all time, Jesus Christ, who lived theologically, served theologically, fed the poor theologically, and tended with special concern the poor and the weak theologically. Thus, an option for the migration has clear political consequences because it has to do with issues of social justice. Migration has been exacerbated by socio-political and economic injustice. In the words of Musa Dube, the contemporary migration in Africa “is an epidemic within social epidemics of injustice”.26 No one wants to be a migrant. It is the current social injustice that has led many individuals to migrate.

Thus, a preferential option for the migrant theology summons African theologians to amass African theological resources and wisdom in order to help African communities to engage in self-retrospective and critical reflection about what has gone wrong in the African communities that has made them become enemies to themselves. Nyambura Njoroge establishes that in the context of migration, contextual theological education should be based on “exploring biblical concepts of repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, peace, just relationship (justice) and community healing and wholeness “in the continuum of violence in independent Africa from the legacies of colonization, apartheid, neo-colonialism, western Christian imperialism and economic exploitation”.27 It is such multi-dimensional violence(s) that have led the majority of African people to become destitute and aliens within their own nations and continent.

It is my contention that theological education should not merely be concerned about affirmation of the experiences of migrants as valid, but should include them in the structures and contents of theological education. In other words, the migrants should not just be perceived as people “at risk” but also as people who take “risks”28 to overcome oppressive and exploitative conditions by reaching forth to life. Such an understanding can challenge theological education to search for alternative ways of doing theology from blind spot migration theology to migration friendly theology. It must be emphasized that the God of Israel showed special concern for the migrants and is sharply against native oppressors.29 The preferential option for the migrants also calls for a political theology of migration. Indeed, if the “personal is political”,30 then, by its very nature, to be a migrant is to be political in defiance of any life-denying socio-political orders. In this sense, a political theology will expose the systemic structures of inequality that reinforce the push and pull factors contributing to the contemporary epidemic of migration within Southern Africa. Having said that, one thing remains crucial; perhaps, retrieving some of the life-affirming aspects of African understanding of inclusive community could be one of the major elements for envisioning a migrant accommodative and integrative society.

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Towards an African Theological Education for an Inclusive Community

At the heart of theology of liberation-reconstruction is a critical integration of Christian faith with life-affirming aspects of African religio-cultural heritage so that the two discourses can mutually and critically dialogue to mould a uniquely African Christianity as an end product. This emerges from an understanding that Christianity is always in the process of translating and reconstructing itself within the hosting local cultures in order to validate its authenticity. Accordingly, one of the crucial elements that Christianity continues to grapple with is its quest to fully establish its credentials in African soil. One way this can be addressed is to mutually dialogue with an African concept of inclusive community. This notion encapsulates and conceals the kernel that is enshrined in what it means to be African. First, the notion runs in the veins and is deeply rooted in the African religio-cultural epistemology. Second, it has an affinity with the Christian notion of trinity. In what follows I unveil some of three crucial elements of the notion of the African inclusive community as a basis for a theological education for an inclusive community in relation to migration. I relied on the Bemba people of Zambia’s worldview, being a Bemba and raised within this community I feel that in some ways I am more familiar with their expressions of the notion of an inclusive community.

1. Stressing Reconciliation, Love, Justice and Peace

African theological education for an inclusive community will stress reconciliation, love, justice and peace as a basis for reconstructing an alternative social order. Reconciliation, love, justice and peace stand not only at the heart of African inclusive community but also at the heart of the gospel through Jesus Christ who is perceived as the love of God coming to reconcile creation (human being included) to God and creation to one another and thereby establishing justice and peace. There can be no justice in the world without peace, there can be no peace in the world without justice, there can be no justice and peace in the world without reconciliation and ultimately there can be no reconciliation, justice and peace in the world without love. Thus, love is an element that binds other elements together in ordering an alternative society. African people, because of their holistic notion of the universe as an interpenetration of the spiritual and physical, held the element of reconciliation as one of the highest values of the inclusive community because it was perceived as the only means to maintain and restore an equilibrium in the universe. They believed that through reconciliation, love, maintaining justice and peace, they can live harmoniously in the community which includes the living and the dead, the born and yet to be born, God and all creation, the visible and invisible. Therefore, living in harmony was a moral obligation demanded by God and reinforced by ancestors for the promotion of life which is the centre and essence of the community.

John Mbiti captures well the ethical imperative of African inclusive community in his dictum “I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am”.

Laurent Magesa explains that every single member of this community was accountable to every other member to maintain harmonious relationships with all the members of the community and to do what is necessary to repair every breach of harmony and to strengthen the community bonds, especially through love, justice and maintaining peace. This was also extended to the strangers. Thus, participation in life flow through reconciliation with God, family, clan, community, the cosmic order and the whole creation was perceived as crucial for the wellbeing of the community. In this sense, theological education in Africa will give emphasis on preparing candidates as agents for promoting the principles of an inclusive community such as reconciliation, love, justice and peace in their society.

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2. Focusing on Enhancing African Hospitality

African theological education for an inclusive community will focus on enhancing African hospitality. Hospitality was the grounding principle of the inclusive community that helped to maintain loving and compassionate relationships. African societies believed in living in critical solidarity with one another and also extended their hospitality to the strangers. The concept of hospitality is also a gospel imperative as perceived in God who through giving Jesus has included the strangers and aliens as heirs together with God’s people into the kingdom. Besides, one can also argue that Jesus himself who is truly a human migrant from the earth has been accepted by the Father and the Holy Spirit not as a demigod but as God of very God equal with the Father in essence and being. Coming back to the point, among the Bemba people of Zambia, to receive a stranger was perceived as a great honour because it demonstrated the community’s generosity. This is captured in the proverb, “ig’anda (nangu umushi) ishipokelela beni itani”, which literally means a house (village) that does not receive strangers is greedy. They would emphasis, tulibantunse, which means to be human, is to be vulnerable with open arms to others in sharing, acceptance, respect and love. Another proverb says, “umweni, muntu ushilakumanya”, a stranger is a person you have not yet met, once you meet them, they are no longer strangers. This value enabled young people to know that every human being you meet is a relative by virtue of being a human being. The implications of this are that one should not just show hospitality only to those he/she knows but to be kind to anyone for every life is special and deserves to be affirmed.

Thus, the Bemba hospitality means more than just welcoming strangers but accepting and integrating them within the community by embracing them with companionable love as bearers and participants in the essence of life. Contrary to the contemporary perception of difference as a threat, in this world-view, difference was not perceived as a threat but as strength and enrichment for the community. Julius Gathogo stresses that “a hospitable person is one who is generous in providing food and shelter for the needy and services for whoever needs help”. Through hospitable activities, the Bemba community was held together like a drop of oil on water because in every activity the whole community was involved, that is in joy and sorrow, in prosperity and calamity, at birth and in death. The ethnic groups they fought against, like the Ngoni people of Eastern province of Zambia, were turned into infimbuya (cross-cousins) as a basis for peace, mutual acceptance and integration. It is this kind of understanding that becomes crucial in reflecting on theological education from a migration perspective.

Gathogo cites Obengo in explaining that among the Luo people of Kenya “a hospitable and generous person is termed as “ja ngwono,” which means ‘a gracious person’. This is also in agreement with the Kikuyu word “mutugi” which means ‘a gracious person’ or/and ‘a hospitable person’. Among the Bemba, the word utilised is ichipokeleshi which has several meanings, including acceptance, grace, compassion, caring, being hospitable and accommodating or a person who is willing to extend love and kindness to others, especially to strangers. Thus, hospitality in the Bemba sense is an expression of the very nature and being of God. It is not that God has hospitality, but that God is hospitable. The apostle Paul reminded us that all non-Jewish people were once excluded from citizenship in Israel and were foreigners (visitors without legal rights) in a foreign land. But then their status has historically changed. Now they belong in a way they never did in the past. For through Christ’s hospitality which he brought through his death on the cross, they have been accepted and integrated with God’s people and are truly members of the household of God. Jesus reconciled everything through the cross, by which he overcame hostility within

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33 Ephesians 2:19.
creation. Thus, to be hospitable is to participate in the mission of God’s hospitality in the world. In other words, a person could be perceived as hospitable when he/she participates in God’s exceedingly abundant and unmerited activities in the world by liberating and reconstructing the socio-political and economic orders in a way that they become viable in expressing justice and peace to all, especially migrants. Therefore, theological education for an inclusive community will give more attention to understanding different metaphors of African notions of an inclusive community and help students to comprehend and appreciate its rich heritage of love, accommodative nature, integration and acceptance.

3. Ecumenism with an Emphasis on Diapraxis

African theological education for an inclusive community will be imbedded in ecumenism with an emphasis on diapraxis (dialogue in action). Diapraxis is a deliberate and conscious encounter between people of diverging religious traditions and orientation willing to try and understand and transform the reality they share. It is premised on the fact that theoretical dialogue alone cannot bring about social transformation. Thus, by sharing life, responding to social challenges together and focusing on what matters most, there is hope for creating a more human society. It is important to understand that not all migrants are Christians. Anselm Min argues that diapraxis is more than the mere dialogue and dialectic pluralism that develops the historical dialectic inherent in the social interaction of various religions. It is about developing a common praxis of linking the best understanding of the common social challenges and best wisdom nourished and represented by various religious traditions. The priority here is justice and peace making. This means that in reflecting theologically with scholars from various religious traditions and orientations, there is a possibility to make headway especially because some migrants from certain parts of the continent have migrated as a result of religious conflicts which may have been propelled by socio-economic and political exclusion in their particular countries. The Bemba proverb says “umunwe umo tsaalanada” which means one finger cannot pick the lice. The implication of this moral-ethical principle is that overcoming oppression and exploitation involves everyone willing and available to engage in the process of transformation. This also means that working together (inter-religious cooperation) is the precondition for progress and development in Africa. It seems to me that Christian commitment to inter-religious diapraxis in Africa could be strengthened by focusing attention on the actual needs of the continent, “its pain and suffering”. In actual fact, the goal of inter-religious diapraxis is to create a more peaceable society that can allow life to flourish in its abundance.

Inter-religious social praxis is based on an understanding that God’s household allows for differences. A Bemba proverb says, “munda ni muchabu,” meaning within the family there are possibility of immense differences but these differences cannot be used as reason for rejecting one’s siblings. Africa is a continent of plurality and it will remain this way. The only thing that Christians can do is to rally with other religions, by acknowledging their validity in their own right, as well as their differences, and affirming the fact that all religions are housed in a common oikos, Africa. This is the meaning of an inclusive community. It is important that theological education gives critical attention to exploring relevant contextual elements within African cultures for interfaith engagement and collaboration. This also means that African theological education and theology will be constructed in a manner that values and takes

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36 Ephesians 2:11-22 (my paraphrase).
plurality seriously so that the scholars from other religious orientations who read African Christian theological discourses will have no reason to accuse African Christianity of discrimination and segregation. In this sense, African theologians should endeavour to write a theology that will pave the way and allow both Christians and other religious orientations to celebrate and to participate in the diversity around and to add their own particular stories to enhance social justice. This does not suggest that the inter-faith relations should replace the ecumenical interaction and collaboration within Christianity. The future theological education in Africa would need to collaborate with other religions on the continent in students and teachers exchange and even take the risk to bring the Muslim and Christian students together in sharing special courses that relate to issues of peace and justice as a way of developing a collaborative theological reflection, especially in the context of peace, justice and harmonious co-existence. There is a need for religions in Africa to be willing to learn from each other and to help one another in articulating a multi-religious theology of *diapraxis*. African inclusive community was based on affirmation of relationship of differences by recognising the worth of human beings as created by God no matter their persuasions. Indeed, to build *koinonia*, communion, or an inclusive community, involves learning by doing in response to the needs of the challenges of migration. The question is: to what extent is theological education in Africa ready to give attention to issues of interreligious *diapraxis*? It seems, *diapraxis* as practical and problem solving oriented, “is often superior, especially in response to all those – *isms* that distort” African inclusive community and result in inhuman treatment of the migrants, such as xenophobia and oppression. This implies that migration is a new framework for *diapraxis* theological discussion. African theological education is best placed to facilitate a theological rethinking with critical attention to the fact that other religions also have a valid and adequate contribution to make to the African Christian search for human dignity and in the quest for peace and harmony on the continent.

**Conclusion**

This article has explored migration as a critical challenge to African theological education. First, I have argued that African people are inherently mobile people. Second, I have demonstrated the relevance of African theology of reconstruction in the context of migration, arguing for maintaining inner coherence in the motif of liberation-reconstruction in its interpenetrative functioning as a more plausible and effective approach to migration. Third, I argued for the option of the migrants as a *locus theologicus* for African theological education. Finally, I have given a provisional suggestion for an African theological education that promotes the principles of inclusive community as an alternative in the context of migration. This does not imply that the inclusive community will resolve all the challenges involved with migration, but by adding a voice to African theological discourses on the theology of migration and perhaps by putting together different pieces of theological reflections on the subject, there may be the feasibility of envisioning an alternative, life-affirming African society.

**Bibliography**


Tabona Shoko

Introduction

This chapter discusses the manner in which African Traditional Religion (ATR) course is taught in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ). The subject ATR has often been seen as ‘dead’ or ‘static, but this is far from the truth. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the subject has received considerable attention in Departments of Religious Studies and Theology in African Universities. In Zimbabwe, the subject came on the spotlight soon after the attainment of independence in 1980, when the Zimbabwe government, through the Ministry of Education, Sport, and Culture, recommended the teaching of African Traditional Religion in the schools. The rationale for the recommendation was twofold. On one hand, it was in recognition of the multi-religious nature of the new sovereign and democratic society, whereas on the other it was aimed at championing the teaching of African cultural beliefs and practices to its future leaders. The newly independent nation was in search of its own genuine culture. At the University of Zimbabwe, the course is taught at both under and postgraduate studies. This chapter makes a survey of the ATR course, by examining the style and approach of teaching the course at University. The course explicates the methodological and theoretical approaches to the study of the subject and then treats in depth a selection of major themes in African Traditional Religion by making special reference to the Shona and with a view to achieve knowledge and understanding of the significance of African traditional religious systems. The chapter explores the challenges and constraints of teaching ATR and recommends that the subject must be given due attention in University curricula.

Misconceptions of African Traditional Religion

Negative publicity from travellers, missionaries and explorers has contributed immensely to misconceptions and distortions of Africa and African Traditional religion. Naturally this ruinous programme labelled the continent of Africa with misleading terms such as “primitive”, “savage”, “native”, “paganism”, “animism” “fetishism”, “superstition”, “dark continent” and many more. In Zimbabwe Shona traditional religion has faced similar purge by missionary travellers and ethnographers under colonial administration. However it is recognised by modern scholarship that connotations of misleading terms used in the study of African Traditional Religion can easily derail and distort all efforts to understand African Traditional Religion. Surprisingly most of these people did not have the requisite knowledge and necessary tools to adequately articulate the religions of the Africans.

In view of the foregoing this study sought to establish the degree to which African Traditional Religion is being taught at University of Zimbabwe. The study is premised on the view that in the post-independent Zimbabwe, as occurred during the colonial times, Christianity has been and is still being associated with civilization whereas African Traditional Religion is associated with backwardness.1 According to G. ter Haar, Christianity “only allows for a European type of thinking, acting and reflecting which basically

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ignores the cultural and religious traditions of the peoples of Africa”. So there is need to decolonize the African religious mindset so that it can appreciate the value of Africanness.

Scholars on African Traditional Religion

This chapter starts by explaining the background and rational behind introduction of ATR by reappraisal of African Traditional Religion in Zimbabwe. Then it provides the basis of teaching ATRs in the university. Then it articulates the course components of the subject namely theory and methodical issues before it treats selected themes in the study of ATR. Finally the chapter provides a conclusion.

Reappraisal of African Traditional Religion
The attainment of Zimbabwe independence in 1980 saw a positive recognition of African Traditional Religion in Zimbabwe. The ruling government, Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) adopted a “generous religious policy” which promoted religious liberty in the country. One of the indicators of recognition of tradition is manifest in power and potency of the spirits in the liberation of
Zimbabwe from colonial rule. *Midzimu*, (ancestor spirits), particularly the spirits of Nehanda and Chaminuka are widely recognized as prime movers of the Chimurenga wars 1896-7, and 1962-79 that influenced the struggle for Zimbabwe.\(^{11}\) The other element is the phenomenon of healing. In line with generous religious policy, Parliament passed the Traditional Medical Practitioners Act in 1981 that saw the reappraisal of traditional medicine in Zimbabwe. As a result the first Cabinet Minister of Health, Dr. Chris Ushewokunze, himself a medical doctor, approved within the medical fraternity, the introduction of a body of traditional medical practitioners called Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA) on 13\(^{th}\) July. Prof. Gordon Chavunduka, was appointed the first President of ZINATHA. The association set as its aims; to unite traditional healers into one body; to promote traditional medicine and practice; to promote research into traditional medicines and methods of healing; to promote training in the art of traditional medicine and spiritual healing; to supervise the practice of traditional medicine to prevent abuse and quackery; to cooperate with the Ministry of Health and other Ministries and organizations that are involved in the field of public health; to preserve and promote beneficial aspects of African culture; to cooperate with Traditional Medical Practitioners Council.\(^{12}\) Traditional medical practitioners in Zimbabwe are expected to register and obtain registration after payment of registration fees and obtain certificates and badges as in Western scientific medicine. This encouragement saw the mushrooming of traditional healing practices in Zimbabwe.

**Teaching African Traditional Religion at University**

At the University of Zimbabwe the ATR was introduced in 1984, initially to Bachelor (BA) students of average size 250 students in undergraduate classes and later to Masters (MA) students in 1987. The first PhD in ATR enrolled in 1988-2004. The author became the first student to do MA (1987) and DPhil (2004) in ATR and has since lectured the subject in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Zimbabwe. Aspects of the course have also been researched upon by students writing dissertations and thesis and by lecturers working on publications on ATRs. The course ATR makes a survey of methodological and theoretical approaches to the study of the subject and then treats in depth a selection of major themes in African Traditional Religion by making special reference to the Shona and with a view to achieve knowledge and understanding of the significance of African traditional religious systems.

In teaching ATR at UZ, the objectives are; to acquaint the students with a variety of methods used in the study of African Traditional Religion; to provide an idea about the African traditional religious world; to cultivate an appreciation of traditional religion in Africa; to try to develop a sense of African identity; and to promote an understanding of the significance of African religious conviction in a pluralistic context.

**History, Methods and Theories of Study of African Traditional Religion**

The first part of the course is meant to equip students with the history, methods and theories in the study of African Traditional Religion. This comprises the following content:\(^{13}\)

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Definition of African Traditional Religion

This part defines African Traditional Religion in its singular form. But also weighs the usage of the term in its plural forms. Whilst the singular use ATR as used by John Mbiti (1975) and Bolaji Idowu (1973) means unity of religions more or less in the way in which Christianity is perceived, the argument is influenced by similarities of African religions. But the other school of thought which highlights ATR in its plural form notes more of differences of aspects of the religions of Africa. Proponents of this school of thought are Benjamin Ray in his book on African Religions. Overall the debate between singular and plural formatives tilts towards the plural that argues for different ethnic and dialectical groups in Africa. The issue of Africans living in Diaspora further complicates the debate and the usage of the term African Traditional Religion. Several scholars in African religion tend to place weight on the use of indigenous religions which means a heritage of the past rather than the use of the term ‘traditional’ which has connotations of backwardness, primitive and static religions. Rather ATR are seen as dynamic religions that are prone to change, and that they have been and continue to be transmitted across generations.14

Methods and Theories in Study of African Traditional Religion

The emphasis in this section of the course has been placed on the different methodologies that have been used by scholars in the study of ATRs. These include records of traveler-missionary-explorers’ accounts such as D. Livingstone, ethnographical data, anthropological method such as E. E. Evans Pritchard (1965), M. Douglas (1966), M. Gelfand (1947), sociological approach such as G. Chavunduka (1978), theological approach such as G. Parrinder (1954), J. Mbiti (1975), E.B. Idowu (1973), comparative approach e.g Fr Placide Tempels (1959), historical approach e.g T. Ranger (1967), Phenomenological approach such as J.Cox (1992), E. Chitando (1997), T. Shoko (2007).16

History and Method in the Study of Shona Traditional Religion

In this section we evaluate the history and method in the study of Shona Traditional Religion by discussing books and periodicals on illness and healing.17

In Zimbabwe, studies by Michael Gelfand (1947), Michael Bourdillon (1976), Hubert Bucher (1980), Hebert Aschwanden (1987), Gordon Chavunduka (1978) and Martinus Daneel (1977), have demonstrated, using different approaches, that health and illness behaviour and health and medical care systems are not isolated but are integrated into a network of beliefs and values that comprise Shona society. As a result, we have a reasonable number of high quality studies that cover the more important aspects of the Shona medico-religious beliefs and practices. In this respect certain basic facts from previous research may bear significantly on my findings about the Shona views of healing and the curative system.

The studies by the late Michael Gelfand, an empathetic medical doctor and lay anthropologist in Zimbabwe dealing primarily with religion, medicine and culture in the Shona context feature as the earliest contribution in this field.18 The bulk of his material appeared at the peak of colonialism when little had been done in medical anthropology. In discussing the Shona mode of living, especially that which pertains to the Shona medical system in Zimbabwe, Gelfand pays attention to the theme of the Shona “hygiene” which includes food and dietary habits in the traditional context.19 Of special interest is material about the

14 Shoko, “Teaching African Traditional Religion at University of Zimbabwe,” 53.
16 Shoko, “Teaching African Traditional Religion at University of Zimbabwe,” 54.
17 Shoko, “Teaching African Traditional Religion at University of Zimbabwe,” 54.
Shona “hygiene” which shows knowledge of how these people generated their own ideas of cleanliness in order to promote health in a Shona tropical environment which is rife with numerous diseases. Having lived for a considerably long time among the Shona and possessing the advantage of his medical background, Gelfand seems to demonstrate ample knowledge about the Shona problems of disease causation and health restoration mechanisms.  

Michael Bourdillon, an anthropologist who has conducted extensive research among the Shona, has also written material on their medical beliefs. In The Shona Peoples (1986), Bourdillon basically distinguishes between two kinds of illness conceived of by the Shona, the “natural” and “serious” illnesses. Bourdillon asserts that he is not an expert on Shona culture but says the Shona themselves have provided him with the observations. He then applies his training in social analysis to interpret Shona social life and behaviour. On the whole, Bourdillon has covered a wide range of Shona activities and beliefs.

Hubert Bucher, a Roman Catholic Bishop in Southern Africa, adopts a sociological approach in assessing the Shona cosmology. In his book, Spirits and Power (1980), Bucher argues that the whole traditional cosmology has been seen to be a “philosophy of power”. He contends that the Shona believe that spirits live, act and share their feelings toward life, well-being and sorrow. As such, spirits are “symbolic representations or conceptualisations of those manifestations of power which are looming large in their daily lives.” Shona chiefs, spirit mediums, ancestral spirits and stranger spirits, witches and diviner-healers as well as Independent Churches are, according to Bucher, subject to one basic notion of “power”.  

Another influential source of information relevant to this study is Herbert Aschwanden's Symbols of Death (1987), in which he looks at the causes of death on the nature of disease among the Karanga people who are part of the Shona. He brings it under the cosmological perspectives of the Shona people; “For the Karanga, God is the fons et origo (source) of everything, and that includes disease and death”. However, since evil is an impossible attribute of God, disease is normally attributed to humans and spirits who are regarded as active carriers of disease.  

An important contribution to this subject has been made by Gordon Chavunduka. In one of his influential works, Traditional Healers and the Shona Patient (1978), his major preoccupation was “to discover some of the important sociological determinants of behaviour in illness”. The believed social causes of “abnormal” illness, Chavunduka maintains, are the displeased ancestors, an aggrieved spirit and the shave (alien spirit). Witchcraft is also perceived as another cause of ailments. Chavunduka's subdivision of traditional healers into four main types is very informative and pertinent to this study. He enumerates the types of traditional healers thus; diviners, diviner-therapeutists, therapeutists and midwives. He says the diviner is only concerned with the cause of illness although other diviners may treat patients. The therapeutists are mainly oriented towards the treatment of physical symptoms and not the cause of the illness. Chavunduka's research is full of informative case studies and statistics. His overriding conviction in undertaking such research is brought out clearly, “The object of this book has been to call attention to the barriers to communication between scientific and traditional healers, and between

20 Shoko, “Teaching African Traditional Religion at University of Zimbabwe,” 54.
21 Shoko, “Teaching African Traditional Religion at University of Zimbabwe,” 55.
22 Bucher, Spirits and Power, 13.
23 Shoko, “Teaching African Traditional Religion at University of Zimbabwe,” 55.
24 Aschwanden, Symbols of Death.13.
25 Shoko, “Teaching African Traditional Religion at University of Zimbabwe,” 55.
26 Chavunduka, Traditional Healers and the Shona Patient. 1.
27 Chavunduka, Traditional Healers and the Shona Patient. 21.
scientific healers and their Shona patients”.28 His tabulation of the data is quite helpful in the analysis of the options taken by the patients.29

Research on Independent Churches in Zimbabwe is inspired by the missiologist Marthinus Daneel who treats the Shona medical beliefs and conceptions in the context of these indigenous religious trends. His assertion that Independent Churches are an attempt to link traditional practices and Christianity is crucial. The following has been said of them, “They represent on the whole a positive effort to interpret Christianity according to African insights, especially at the point where indigenous customs and world views are challenged by the new world of the Bible”.30 Daneel says the greatest contributory factor to the growth of these churches is the healing treatment by African prophets. He maintains that this healing is modelled on traditional patterns. He compares the diagnosis and therapy in healing treatment of the n’anga and of the prophet and notes striking parallels.

**Characteristics of African Traditional Religion**

In this section we discuss key characteristics of ATR. The religions are based on oral tradition, meaning they are not written down; there is no missionary zeal to evangelize the religions as compared to Western religions; the religions are secretive, implying the information is discreet and kept in secret by elders; the religions are ‘this worldly’ as opposed to the ‘other worldly’. Here the emphasis on ATR is life here and now (Platvoet 1988).31

**Selected Themes in African Traditional Religions**

The course ATRs also examines selected themes in African traditional religion such as the Religious Worldview; the Spirit World; Religious Practitioners; Sacred Places and Objects; Belief Structures, Myths, Rituals, Omens, Dreams, Taboos; Traditional Religion and Christianity; and Traditional Religion and Politics.32

**The Traditional Religious Cosmology**

The Shona believe in a tripartite view of the universe. This entails belief in the sacred world which is the abode of God and all spirits. In this part of the world are aspects of the firmament that include moon, stars, clouds which are representations of the sacred entities. The second part is the human world in which humanity is dominant. Here lies the anthropocentric view of the universe. Humans exist in their categories as men and women, chiefs, practitioners, and children. Animals also form a part of this world. Nature is also a component of this human world. And this includes rivers, mountains, trees, grass and all forms of vegetation. Certain types of animals and species of trees animals are symbolic representations of some spirits especially guardian spirits. The last category is the underworld which is land below the earth. This is the abode of water creatures like the mermaid which are sacred creatures. Human beings who die on earth are also buried underneath the earth. So this underworld is also associated with spirits. Overall the universe may appear as separate compartments that comprise sacred, human and underworld. Both all are

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29 Shoko, “Teaching African Traditional Religion at University of Zimbabwe,” 55.
32 This section is a modified version of Shoko “Teaching African Traditional Religion at University of Zimbabwe”, 53-65.
interlinked through ritual activity. And human beings are central thereby portraying the Shona religious world as anthropocentric.

**Spirit World**

This spirit world of the Shona comprise numerous spirits that populate the universe such as *Mwari*; the Supreme Being who is the creator of humanity. Other spirits include tribal spirits (*mhondoro*), ancestral and family spirits (*midzimu*), who are guardians of the land and people; alien spirits, *mashavi* and angry or vengeful spirits, (*ngozi*). It also explains the activities of spirits associated with witchcraft, (*zvidhoma*), (*zvitupwani*) or goblins (*zvikwambo*) and nature spirits, ghosts (*magoritoto*), spooks (*zvipoko*) and *tokolotches.*

**Traditional Religious Practitioners**

The Shona believe in host of elders that include the chief as the custodian of tradition. He deals with judicial and cultural issues. The medium is a host of particular spirit who mediates between the living and the dead. The *n'anga* is another practitioner who serves a triple role as diviner, herbalist and or diviner-herbalist. The role of leaderships is not only a male monopoly. Women also play a crucial role in Shona traditional religion. There are female *n'angas* in the Shona religion and culture. A midwife is a female practitioner whose function is to help women deliver babies. A *mbonga* is a female ritual attendant who brews beer for spirits at national or regional functions. She also supplies medicine for both mother and child. Shona practitioners play a multiple role as councilors, advisers, legal practitioners and medical specialists.

**Sacred Places and Objects**

The Shona hold certain beliefs about places and objects. In their understanding, there are certain places that are attached with religious significance. The places can accommodate spirits and are sacred. Examples of such places in Zimbabwe are Nyanga mountain, Buchwa mountain in Mberengwa. Here the mountains are believed to be the abode of spirits. Visitors are cautioned to respect the ‘owners of the land’ who are the spirits or autochthons that once lived in the area. They are also warned not to utter obscene words lest they risk disappearance in the mountains. There are cases of people who violated these norms and ended up entangled in all sorts of misfortune. Some have disappeared forever for failure to honour the dictates of the spirit world. Great Zimbabwe, now the national monument in Masvingo has ancient ruins and is of traditional significance. The Zimbabwe bird, and stone structures which are traditional symbols on Zimbabwe coins and paper money, are traditionally connected to Great Zimbabwe. There are important caves in Zimbabwe that include Chinhoyi caves, Matopo hills. The Matopos are believed to be the abode of the Shona Supreme Spirit, Mwari whose cult is consulted on rain oracles by the Shona across the country. There are also big rivers such as Zambezi that are associated with big snake called Nyamininyami. The places are of great significance since they have a traditional spiritual attachment accorded them.

The Shona also believe in sacred objects. These include ritual objects such as *hakata*, (divination sticks used by diviners). Other ritual items are beer pots, millet, rapoko, sorghum that are used in brewing beer for ancestors. The items are kept in special enclosures that should be kept secret and only accessible by

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
ritual elders. There are other ritual items that include ritual dress. Colour symbolism matters for the Shona people. Whilst lack is associated with ancestral spirits, red is connected with shavi spirits.\textsuperscript{35}

\textbf{Myths, Rituals, Omens, Dreams and Taboos}

The Shona have strong beliefs in myths. These are sacred stories that are told from one generation to another.

The Shona express belief in a system of omens interpreted by a specialist. The underlying belief is that spiritual beings can manifest themselves in numerous forms and signs with a purpose to reveal to the Shona recipient his impending fate of either illness and disease or misfortune and death. For instance, an owl hooting at rooftop at night signals the presence of a witch. A ndara (file snake) arriving at home indicates Impending illness and death.\textsuperscript{36} But they are also good omens. Dreams are sometimes viewed as instrumental in the Shona belief system. They impart messages from the spiritual world. For instance dream about fire symbolises Illness, ngozi or death. A person stuck in mud is indicative of impending illness or trouble.\textsuperscript{37} However there are also good dreams experienced by the Shona.

The Shona likewise also share belief in taboos. These are rules of behaviour that govern their existence. The underlying belief is that there are certain rules that must be observed by the living and violation of these can meet with punishment from the spirit world. Examples of such taboos are prohibitions against sting on a log lest the wife dies, licking a cooking stick lest the man develops breast like a woman. Taboos also include venturing into prohibited forests, rivers, pools and mountains without clearance by elders.\textsuperscript{38}

\textbf{Interaction with Christianity}

African Traditional religions are not static but dynamic. In that sense the onset of colonization has brought with it new elements that include Christianity. Grappling with the problem of conversion in Zimbabwe, the Shona people have found themselves torn between traditional religion and cultural beliefs on one hand and Christian faith on the other. The resultant pattern has been that the Shona partially assimilated Christianity, dealing with their traditional chores 6 days a week and attending to Christian church services on Sunday. Or as someone puts it, sticking to the Bible during the day but resorting to tradition at night.\textsuperscript{39} The ultimate result has seen the formation of African Independent Churches epitomized by the Zionist and Apostolic Churches. The product has been Christianized version of tradition or a traditionalized version of Christianity.

\textbf{Traditional Religion and Politics}

On the political front, Zimbabwe inherited a religion that has been predominantly Christian from the colonial powers. The colonizers and missionaries suppressed ATR and relegated the religion as superstition, savage, barbarism and native religion. ATR was not given space in public and religious life. But with the attainment of Zimbabwe independence in 1980, the government adopted a generous religious policy. This meant that the Shona people are at liberty to practice any religion of their choice, such as ATR, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Bahai and others. In the study of African Traditional Religion, it is important to highlight the fact that African Traditional Religion is equal to other world religions in that it

\textsuperscript{39} Ngwabi Bhebe, \textit{Christianity and Traditional Religion in Western Zimbabwe 1859-1923} (London: Longman, 1979), 20.
has myths, rituals, sacred practitioners and beliefs. The religion must be accorded its due place and be studied *sui generis*, as a religion amongst religions of humankind.  \(^{40}\)

**Challenges of Teaching African Traditional Religion**

The major challenges of Teaching African Traditional Religion in the University are that at the moment the syllabus in secondary and high schools and the resource books, which form the form the foundation University education, do not promote the teaching of African Traditional Religion. Students in primary schools take Religious and Moral Education, whilst in secondary schools they study Bible Knowledge and Divinity for Advanced Levels. As a result Religious Studies is still functionally Christocentric. As a result some students develop negative attitude towards ATR in comparison with other courses like Theology, Biblical Studies, or subjects like History and English. Others are on the extreme and prefer Sciences rather than enrol for Arts and Humanities. There is somehow perpetuation of the missionary and colonial administitve onslaught against African Traditional Religion and culture deemed demonic and pagan. This impacts negatively on the incorporation of African Traditional Religion in the curricula. Lecturers also lack adequate information on African Traditional Religion as there are not many texts written on African Traditional Religion. In order to enforce the uptake of African Traditional Religion, the Department of Religious Studies has made the subject a core course at BA Honours level, thus making it compulsory.

However the challenges are not insurmountable. Generally, there is a positive attitude by lecturers toward the teaching of African Traditional Religion. The lecturers have shown great zeal and determination to promote the values of African Traditional Religion. This is shown by the growing number of researches and publications of materials by Zimbabwean scholars in ATR. And the call for a multi-faith approach to Religious Education in Zimbabwe’s schools that highlights different cultures, including African traditional cultures, is an indication of the government’s support of the multi-religious character of the Zimbabwean society.  \(^{41}\)

**Conclusion**

This study has shown that African Traditional Religion has been marked by negative perceptions that affect study of the subject, but of late the subject has received considerable attention in Zimbabwe. The government has adopted a multi-religious policy which asserts the values of tradition and culture. The University of Zimbabwe’s Department of Religious Studies has taken the study of African Traditional Religion to greater heights by incorporation into the curricula. The teaching of the subject in an academic institution has increased its value. The university applies the course at all levels that range from under to postgraduate levels. And the course on ATR has been designed to match a scientific study of the subject that integrates issues of history, methodology and theory of the study of the subject. And this has been capped by selection of key themes in the subject such as Shona traditional cosmology and spirit worldview. Since teaching and research are integrated, materials have been integrated into dissertations, thesis and scholarly publications in the field. This has significantly elevated the status of African tradition religion and culture in Zimbabwe.

\(^{40}\) Shoko, “Teaching African Traditional Religion at University of Zimbabwe,” 63.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Bibliography


THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND THE RELEVANCE OF AFRICAN WORLDVIEWS – SHIFTING THE PARADIGM

Tony Balcomb

Introduction: African Responses to the Christian Mission

Christian theology in Africa has faced a conundrum ever since missionaries set foot on the continent. The question that Africans asked then is still being asked by them today – is the God worshipped by the West the same as the God worshipped by Africans? The answer to this question is as ambiguous today as it was in the heyday of the Christian mission a hundred years ago. There have indeed been those who have embraced the God of the West with such ardency that for them African Christianity is a species of European Christianity writ large. There have also been those who have completed rejected European Christianity and created their own indigenous species of the faith. But such responses to what is now the dominant religion of sub-Saharan Africa always have their unintended consequences. These are brilliantly captured by Chinuah Achebe in Things Fall Apart.1 Enoch, one of the new converts to Christianity, boasted that the Egwugwu – the masked ancestors of the tribe – could do nothing to Christians. When the ancestors of the tribe beat him to show that they still had authority Enoch tore off the mask of one of them, thus killing an ancestral spirit (1986:134). This form of symbolic suicide of the cultural identity of the Umuofian people by one of its own threw the community into disarray. At the other end of the spectrum in Achebe’s story was its central character, Okwonkwo, who refused to the end to accept the God of the missionaries and ended up committing suicide because there seemed to be no way out of the double bind in which he found himself. This God apparently needed either to be embraced totally or not embraced at all. To choose this God was to reject his own, because rivals could be entertained by neither. Clearly the writing was on the wall for his African Gods. And just as Enoch was the kind of person who intuitively foresaw the consequences of rejecting the God of the missionaries, Okwonkwo was the kind of person who intuitively foresaw the consequences of accepting this God. He was also, tragically, the kind of person who would articulate an uncompromising allegiance to his culture in a manner that would lead to his own destruction as well as that of his culture.

Of course the reality of the situation is that there was also a far more nuanced approach through a whole range of transactions and compromises between the wholehearted embrace by Enoch and the total rejection by Okwonkwo. But while Achebe hints at these the stark simplicity of the issues at stake would be clouded in his story if he began to explore them. As it is, the story is freighted with significance. Christianity has arrived; Africa will never be the same again; not responding is impossible; there are a range of responses possible; how one responds will determine one’s identity and future; there will be serious unintended consequences of one’s choice with respect to one’s culture; etc., etc. The brilliance of the story lies precisely in the ambivalence of its message. Christianity is both good news and bad news. It can liberate but it can also destroy. Culture too, is ambivalent. It can serve not only as a cohesive and creative force in society but it can also have elements that are cruel and inhuman such as, in Achebe’s story, the killing of twins. But for me the most significant innovation in this brilliant story is the punch line of its ending. Achebe presents us with the chilling probability that the story of Christianity in Africa will not be told by the Enoch’s and Okwonkwo’s of this world, though it should be, as well as the numerous adherents and non-adherents of the faith that are to be found between these extremes, but by the bureaucrats and the

administrators who fix all with their unswerving gaze and let the record show that civilization has prevailed and that native savagery has been overcome. The novel ends with the thoughts of the District Commissioner who intends to write a book entitled “The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger” (1986:150). In this book the story of a native who hanged himself will also be included. Having been introduced to Okwonkwo caused us to get into the skin of this powerful, as well as supremely vulnerable individual, to sympathize with his convictions and feel the utter shock of his death by his own hand, we are now left with the inconceivable possibility that his story, now the story of some anonymous Nigerian African, and by extrapolation the story of Christianity in Africa, will be left in the hands of ideologues and bureaucrats; that the Christian story will be told not by those whose very identity is at stake in the telling of it, but by those whose agenda it is to demonstrate the “civilizing” potential of the Western worldview. It is out of this concern that I wish to address in more detail the issue of theological education and the African worldview.

What are Worldviews?
In his sweeping depiction of the evolution of the Western worldview from Plato to postmodernity Richard Tarnas describes how the Western worldview has developed from its early Greek and Jewish influences through Christianity to the Enlightenment, to modernity, and finally to postmodernity. The significance of this depiction is how it demonstrates the initial deeply embedded nature of one worldview within the habitus of another preceding worldview, the subsequent gradual transformation of the categories of the preceding worldview into the new framework of meaning which, in turn, itself might change and give way to another worldview in a similar fashion if its plausibility structures begin to collapse.

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3 One of the best descriptions of the dynamics of such change are to be found in Berger and Luckman’s The Social Construction of Reality – A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge (London: Penguin, 1971). “Berger and Luckmann build on Schutz’s ideas but introduce the crucial dimension of experience of the Other in the socially constructed reality. Every day face to face experiences, they say, are constantly being subjected to a process of objectification, sedimentation and accumulation which roughly means that everyday experiences are detached from their contexts in the form of symbols and become part of the stock of knowledge of the culture. It is a process whereby meaning or sense is constructed from the apparent ‘non’ sense of everyday reality. It results in the construction of a symbolic universe that serves as ‘the matrix of all socially objectivated and subjectively real meanings; the entire historic society and the entire biography of the individual are seen as events taking place within this universe’. The symbolic world has not only to be constructed, it has also to be maintained, or serviced, to make sure that it still ‘works’, that it still can be used to explain, predict, and control a perennial tendency towards chaos or meaningfulness. Berger graphically describes how this symbolic universe is applied in the spatial locations of everyday life. My ‘here’ is your ‘there’; your ‘there’ is my ‘here’. What is important is that the experiences occurring in the immediate space around me are ordered and meaningful. Unusual behaviour by colleagues at work, for example, will be explained in terms that are familiar to me. If they cannot be explained then my colleagues will be deemed to have gone ‘mad’ in some way. Alternatively I might have gone mad in which case my symbolic universe is in a state of serious disrepair. A similar, and just as shocking a possibility, is when I encounter an ‘other’ understanding of reality, quite different from my own but by all accounts very effective in that its power to explain, predict, and control reality appears as good, if not better, than my own. Such occasions, Berger argues, usually call not so much for an overhaul of my own symbolic universe as an (irrational) assertion of the superiority of mine over that of the other. So intimately intertwined has the symbolic construction of my universe become with my very identity that my survival, in some strange way, has become dependant on its continued existence. This is because along with the construction of the world there is the construction of the self. ‘The processes that internalise the socially objectivated world are the same processes that internalise the socially assigned identities.’ (1971:16) Thus the data of the individual’s objective world become the data of his or her own consciousness and the ‘institutional programmes set up by the society are subjectively real as attitudes, motives, and life projects’. (1971:17) In other words the identity of the individual is embedded in the symbolic universe – built

*Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa*
Tarnas’ overview is instructive in many ways. I will mention only four. Firstly, human beings cannot do without the meaning that worldviews bring to their universe; secondly, worldviews can change, though this is usually gradual; thirdly, new worldviews “take up residence” within the habitus of older existing ones and gradually transform them; fourthly, the worldviews of a culture often constitute the essential identity of that culture.

There are many ways to define worldviews. Worldviews are more fundamental than beliefs in that they influence the way beliefs will find expression. In physical terms worldviews are to beliefs as lenses are to light – they bring focus. In Heideggerian terms worldviews cause things to appear or “show up” on the “radar screens” or our consciousness. The same things will not show up on the radar screens of those who have different worldviews. We will be looking for things (for example things that we especially value) because our worldview causes us to do so. We will not find things that fall outside the purview of our worldview. If our worldviews are similar enough to allow us to experience the same phenomena as others we will still probably interpret, experience, or understand such phenomena in a different way if our worldviews differ even slightly. In Kuhnian terms worldviews are the paradigms in which a certain kind of knowledge is allowed. A different kind of knowledge will take place within a different paradigm. The paradigm determines what knowledge is relevant, significant, or appropriate for those working within the paradigm. In philosophical terms worldviews are equivalent to epistemologies – systems that guide our thinking down particular, well worn, paths. We refer to different epistemes as particular ways of thinking. In terms of the sociology of knowledge worldviews are the templates that govern the social construction of a symbolic universe in which the savant lives and moves and has his or her being. In Aristotelian terms the worldview is the habitus – that dynamic fund of experience and knowledge that allows interaction with the world and serves as a guide towards the telos of a fulfilled existence.

All of these definitions denote something fixed enough to allow thinking, living, and interacting to take place within a lived environment and flexible enough to allow adaptation in an existential manner to such an environment. It is these two properties of stability/security/equilibrium and change/momentum/dynamism that are essential to a working worldview. What then of an African worldview?

An African Worldview – Fact or Fiction?
The existence or otherwise of an African worldview is a topic of hot debate. As with much of these debates it is not so much the issue itself that is important but who is doing the debating and why they are doing it. Some might argue on the basis of the multiplicity of worldviews in Africa that there is no such thing as an African worldview in the essentialist sense of the word. One should rather talk of a Yoruba worldview, a Zulu worldview, a Shona worldview, or a Kikuyu worldview, for example. Such ethnicizing of African worldviews satisfies the postmodern sensibility and is obviously true to some degree, but it is equally true to say that, while worldviews in Africa differ in detail, they all have the same core characteristics, in the same way that, while there are differences between western nations, these also have core characteristics into this universe in the process of construction. It is therefore no wonder, within this schema, that the symbolic universe needs to be maintained, legitimated, and even sacralized (which for Berger is the role of religion) and threats to destroy it will be greeted with profound alarm. In such circumstances, argues Berger, initial encounters with those who understand the world differently would be to convert them to my understanding. Failing this, however, the next reaction would be to turn to violence – in other words the forced assertion of my symbolic universe over that of the Other’s. Berger describes this as ‘nihilation’ or, simply, the denial of the validity of anything outside one’s own symbolic universe and the assignment of it to an inferior ontological status.” (Anthony Balcomb, “Rediscovering the Shock of the Other’s Gaze – Constructing Identity in the Era of Postcolonial and Post-Apartheid Africa, and in a Globalized World”. *The Other Journal – An Intersection of Theology and Culture*. theotherjournal.com/2005/08/08.)
that justify the use of the term “Western”. It is disingenuous, in my opinion, to argue that there is no such thing as an African worldview. The issue is not so much whether such a worldview does or does not exist but, on the one hand what the arguments for and against such a thing are, who is doing the arguing, and why they are doing it, and on the other hand what an African worldview is, what purpose it serves, and, especially for our purposes, how it shapes Christian theology. I will not address the former set of issues because they are not the purpose of this article. My attention to the latter set of issues will focus especially on showing how some African theologians have used an African worldview to shape an African theology and of demonstrating that the way that one uses an African worldview, more specifically how one valorizes it, depends on the paradigm one employs when using it.

African worldviews and African Theology – Establishing an Identity

The association of worldviews with identity is especially noticeable in the theologies of the first crop of African theologians in the post missionary era. Without exception scholars such as Mbiti (1969), Idowu (1973), Setiloane (1988), Bediako (1999), Nyamithi (2005), and others, produced a form of inculturation theology that focused on the uniqueness of the African contribution to Christian theology by emphasizing the “otherness” of an African worldview/culture with respect to the Western worldview. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized because it indicates not only the intimate connection between identity and worldviews but how, in the face of the hegemony of the Western worldview in theology, an alternative worldview was used to establish a distinct African identity.

Before mentioning these characteristics it is important to note that one cannot describe a worldview except in terms of another worldview. A classical example of this is the seminal book by Placide Tempels entitled, simply, Bantu Philosophy (1949). This was the first attempt at articulating an African philosophy and caused the beginning of a debate on the issue of what constituted an African worldview for decades to

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4 Amongst African philosophers the issue of an African worldview is hotly contested. There are basically five positions that are taken on the matter. Firstly there are those who affirm, in the wake of the encounter with the west, an African identity that they believe has always existed, continues to exist, and needs to be recognized and nurtured in the face of western epistemological imperialism. One could call these the primordialists. The project of the primordialists is to essentialize in some way the African weltanschaung and build around it an African metaphysic. On the philosophical front these include Placide Tempels (1949), Cheikh Anta Diop (1996), Alexis Kagame (1956), and Leopold Senghor while on the theological front most of the African Christian theologians can be included, of note especially are Mulago (1973), John Mbiti (1969) and Kwame Bediako (1999). Secondly there are those who believe that African identity has been obliterated by the western weltanschaung and that every attempt to assert an African identity is doomed to reification of western categories. The best one can do is recognize this fact and work toward liberation of the African mind by subverting the western episteme that has co-opted it. One could call these the anarchists. The project of the anarchists is to essentialize the western weltanschaung and discern the extent to which it has insinuated itself into the African habitus. These include Aime Cesaire (2000), Frantz Fanon (1969), Chinweizu (1987), Okot p’Bitek (1970), and Paulin Hountondji (1997). Thirdly there are those who believe that western philosophy qua the rationalist paradigm is not only the most sophisticated but it is also the most powerful and therefore must be appropriated. They reject the ethnophilsophy of the primordialists as backward chasing after dreams and advocate the entrance of Africa into the modern arena equipped with the epistemological tools of modernity. Only this way can Africa hope to compete. One may call these the pragmatists. These include Kwasi Wiredu (1996), Marcien Towa (1983), and Eboussi-Boulaga (2002). A fourth group recognizes some validity in all of the above and advocates a Foucauldian archaeological approach to the systems lying beneath the project of identity formation. They could be called the advocates of the idea of the invention of Africa. The leading exponent of this position is V.Y. Mudimbe. (1995) A fifth group is interested in the dynamics of the encounter between the west and Africa as the locus of identity construction in the processes of othering. One could call these the postcolonial critics of ethnography. These include Marlene van Niekerk (1996), Ton Lemaire (1976) and Johannes Fabian (2002).

5Significantly African Woman theologians such as Mercy Odoyuye made their own unique contribution by offering a critical assessment of African culture with respect to the issue of patriarchy.
come, with scholars both hotly agreeing and disagreeing with its contents. One of the most articulate of all African philosophers, Alexis Kagame, used it, for example, as the launching pad for his massive research on Bantu ontology.\(^6\) However what is conspicuous by its absence in the debate around Tempels’ book is the observation that it is inspired by the ideas of the 19th century French philosopher Henri Bergson, who is recognized as one of the leading exponents of the Romantic reaction to the rationalist tradition of Descartes.\(^7\) This does not mean that his characterization of African philosophy was necessarily wrong – indeed many Africans agreed with it – however it illustrates rather clearly the embeddedness not only of worldviews but of descriptions of worldviews.

There is no such thing, therefore, as the disinterested or objective description of a worldview. The best one can do is accept the definition that scholars in the field have accepted and endorsed. The late Kwame Bediako, recognized as one of the leading contemporary African theologians, used Harold Turner’s six feature analysis of what he preferred to call the primal worldview.\(^8\) These are:

- First, a sense of kinship with nature, in which animals and plants, no less than human beings, have their own spiritual existence and place in the universe, as interdependent parts of the whole.
- Second, the deep sense that humankind is finite and weak and in need of a supernatural power.
- Third, that humankind is not alone in the universe, that there is a spiritual world of powers and beings more ultimate than itself. This is a personalized universe where the appropriate question is not what causes things to happen but who causes things to happen.
- Fourth that human beings can enter into relationships with the benevolent spirit world.
- Fifth an acute sense of the afterlife usually expressed in belief in and respect for the ancestors who may be referred to as the “living dead”.
- Sixth that humans live in a sacramental universe where there is no dichotomy between the physical and spiritual and that the physical can act as a vehicle for the spiritual.

Bediako uses Turner’s synopsis as a starting point to demonstrate a rather radical hypothesis. In his seminal work on theology and identity Bediako works from the premise of an African, or what he calls, primal, worldview.\(^9\) He favours the word “primal” because it is more generic than the term “African” and denotes a worldview that pre-existed the modern worldview within the territories where modernity now prevails. The Scottish missiologist Andrew Walls understands the term “primal” as signifying the “basic, elemental status in human experience … all believers and non-believers are primalists underneath”.\(^10\) In his provocatively entitled *Christianity in Africa – the Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (1995) Bediako evokes the primal worldview as the original framework from which Christianity has emerged. The worldview in which the Hebrew bible as well as the Christian scriptures were written was, he argues, a primal one. The advent of the Enlightenment and its subsequent dominance in the Western world has meant that the West has lost the initiative of the Christian message which can now best be understood and acted on by those who still work within the primal worldview. This makes Bediako the most radical of all the exponents of an African worldview when doing African theology. In his opinion the west has “lost the plot” when it comes to authentically articulating the Christian faith which informs his conviction that the “centre of gravity” of Christianity has shifted from the North to the South – a theory I think first expounded by Andrew Walls.

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\(^6\) The *Bantu-Rwandese Philosophy of Being* (Presence Africaine, 1956).

\(^7\) See Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western mind*, 374.


\(^9\) Bediako, *Theology and Identity*, 5-6.

The question must be asked, however, whether Turner’s analysis continues to be appropriate in the face of the modernization of Africa. Can we really say that the average urban African, or the modern generation of African youth, entertains the primal worldview? While on the face of it this seems not to be the case there are those who argue that a primal worldview continues to be alive and well in Africa. Indeed if the numbers of Africans still consulting traditional healers, who patently work within such a worldview, is anything to go by then this is indeed the case. Adam Ashforth argues, for example, that “Most black South Africans consult traditional healers … at some time in their lives” 11 More important for the purposes of this paper is the number of Africans adhering to various forms of indigenous Christianity, also strongly influenced by an African worldview, which continues to exceed those of the orthodox Western variety.12

But while attempting to essentialize an African worldview and then using this as a heuristic device to gauge its influence within the contemporary context is a valid approach, arguably a more feasible approach would be to investigate the ways in which such a worldview has encountered and transformed, or been transformed by, the Western worldview from the early Christian mission to the present. The value of Tarnas’ approach with respect to the Western worldview is precisely the way in which he traces its origins to the Greek world and then describes its various permutations through neoplatonism to the present. By the fourth century, with the conversion of Constantine and the writings of Augustine and the early church fathers, Latin Christianity had begun thoroughly to permeate the Western worldview and displace the Gods of Greece and Rome. This situation continued right up to the time of the rationalist and empiricist revolutions culminating in the Enlightenment and the birth of science, when this worldview began to be displaced by secularism.

The significance of this is that such a history belongs very specifically to the west. Africa has no such history. Arguably the Christian mission in Africa began a new revolution of worldviews on the African continent that finds its counterpart in the early development of the Western worldview where the Christian God had begun to challenge the Gods of Greece and Rome. All the indications are that the Christian God has begun to take up residence within the habitus of the African worldview, at least south of the Sahara, and the process of transformation has begun in Africa that began to take place in the west in the first few centuries. But an Enlightenment, in the Western sense of the word, has not arrived. Secularism is as implausible in Africa now as it was in Europe for centuries prior to the Enlightenment. The universe continues to be permeated with spiritual forces; ancestors continue to play an important role; human beings continue to live in what Max Weber called an “enchanted” universe; what Charles Taylor calls the “porous self” of an enchanted universe, as opposed to the “buffered self” of a disenchanted universe, continues to prevail.13 The “war in the heavenlies” between the Gods of Africa and the God(s) of Christianity, Islam,

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13 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007). Taylor describes the premodern self as “porous” and the modern self as “buffered”. These expressions are to do with the boundaries, or lack of them, between the self and the world in which the self is situated. For the porous self the boundary could be likened to a permeable membrane through which things could pass relatively unhindered, for the buffered self it was a series of obstacles which resisted penetration. These boundaries, or lack of them, had a profound effect on the kind of interactions that took place between the self and the world. The fluidity between the inner and outer lives of porous selves in the enchanted universe meant the interpenetration and fusion of life worlds between entities. Separate existences were impossible. The self was intensely vulnerable to the influence of others at a variety of levels of intensity. This influence was exacerbated by the fact that the enchanted universe had an animated existence, that is objects within it were charged with meaning. This had profound epistemological implications. “In the enchanted world”, says Taylor, “charged things can impose meanings, and bring about physical outcomes proportionate to their
and, indeed, modernity, continues to rage. There is not yet a resolution of this conflict, as there has been, more or less, in the west. If the *Atlas of World Christianity* coming out of the 2010 Edinburgh Conference is to be believed then the Christian God is rapidly displacing the Gods of Africa. But the apparent decimation of primal religion in Africa at the hands of Christianity should not be taken at face value. Africans continue to envision the Christian God in an African way. African Christian prophets are far more powerful than their European counterparts. African custom has, in many parts, become African Christian custom. Indeed rather than conflict between the two there is also often a happy mix of African values, customs, norms, and beliefs with those of modernity and Christianity. The African penchant for syncretism is alive and well. Why exclude Western technology, education, and political practice when these have proved so useful? Why exclude Christianity when this offers salvation and, in so many ways, resonates with African religion? But, equally, why forsake one’s identity as an African?

The African worldview, in other words, continues to shape African Christian theology and there are a host of implications of this for Christian theology in general and theological education in particular.

**African Worldviews and Theological Education – Shifting the Paradigm**

Christian theology has been dominated by a Western agenda since the fourth century because Christianity has been the dominant Western religion since that time. The Eastern Orthodox agenda, while profoundly important, has had little impact globally. If there is any substance to the claim that the centre of gravity of Christianity has shifted from the north to the south (and texts such as the *Global Atlas* lend extraordinary weight to the theory) then there surely must be a paradigm shift in the theological agenda of the South and the first port of call for such a shift should be theological education. A particular brand of Western theology, that which has been influenced by the European Enlightenment, arguably continues to dominate the agendas of the major universities, whether in the North or South. Such theology cannot be ignored. Great minds have been exercised in the shaping of it. Much can be learned from it. It is an escapable part of the history of Christianity. But it needs consciously to be located in the context of the Western worldview and seen for what it is – Western theology. Theology in Africa needs to be done with at least some level of consciousness that the African situation is different and that a paradigm shift needs to take place. This has implications on many levels, two of which are worth mentioning – epistemology and culture.

**Epistemology**

Epistemology is not simply to do with the nature and grounds of knowledge and the extent of its validity but also with belief. Knowing and believing are activities that philosophers have struggled to disentangle. The epistemology of the modern, Western tradition has been profoundly shaped by the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment did three things. Firstly it established the centrality of the “organized habit of criticism” and the “political demand for the right to question everything.” Credulity, the penchant easily to believe, was the pet aversion of the scholars of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. Secondly it carried forward what had already begun in the previous century concerning the disenchantment of the universe. It had to be rid

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
of what Charles Darwin called “caprice”; in other words of any magic, or agency of and in itself in the world. In other words the world had to be inanimate, objectified, if it was to be understood correctly. Thirdly the Enlightenment elicited a passionate concern for equality and justice. All three of these things have constituted the core of the intellectual legacy of the west ever since the eighteenth century. And all three have been potentially lethal for theology. Reason was set against faith, truth had nothing to do with religion, and belief in God was considered inimical to equality and justice. But theology, as it was being done then, could not have been done without credulity, which is faith. This is not to say that theology up to this point had been done without reason. On the contrary there had been up to that time much and profound reasoning about the world and about God. But it was a kind of reason that was based on a theistic premise. It was faith seeking understanding. After the Enlightenment theology had to be done in a way that was shown to be incredulous, disenchanted, and committed to social justice. In other words it could no longer be assumed that God existed just as it could no longer be assumed anything existed that could not be shown to exist. And it was no longer possible to appeal to any authority other than the authority of empirical evidence or rationality. And it was no longer acceptable to indulge in thinking that did not have a direct ethical consequence. The French philosophers of the eighteenth century despised the scholastic philosophy of earlier decades that had no social or political consequences for the poor and oppressed, and it was this that finally led to the French revolution from where we get most of our ideas about democracy. Incredulity, the penchant not to believe easily, would guarantee a methodology that was critical; disenchantment, the ridding of the universe of all subjectivity would guarantee an epistemology that was rational; and ethical commitment would guarantee an outcome which was just.

The impact of such thinking on the entire Western intellectual tradition has been profound, especially in theology, which would never be the same. Theology had to reconstruct the faith in terms that were intellectually acceptable to what was now called “modern man” (sic). Essentially it meant thinking and talking about God in the absence of God – not a very easy thing to do. This was not simply like thinking and talking about, say, grandmother who was here but who has now passed on. It was thinking and talking about grandmother who you were sure was here and who has passed on but now you are beginning to wonder whether she was here in the first place. But if she was never here how is it that that you still had such intense memories of her? Modern theologians did theology without having God, but they did have the void that was left by God. And they thought and spoke about this void with extraordinary eloquence. Tillich remembers God as the ground of all being (1977); Schleiermacher remembers God as the feeling of absolute dependence (1976); Bultmann remembers God in the decision to live authentically (1983); Kierkegaard remembers God in the absurd (1987); Rahner remembers God in humankind’s latent consciousness of the transcendent (1993); Von Harnack remembers God in the moral teachings of Jesus (1989); Dietrich Bonhoeffer, awaiting trial and final execution at the hands of the Nazis, sums it all up in this quite astonishing assertion: “The world that has come of age is more godless, and for that very reason nearer to God, that the world before its coming of age”.16 These are some of the giants of the Western theological tradition, without whom Western theology would not be the same.

It is hardly necessary to state that such theology makes absolutely no sense within the context of a worldview that has not had the treatment that the Enlightenment gave to the Western tradition; where credulity continues to remain the norm, where it is far more plausible to believe in God than not to, where the universe continues to remain, to various degrees, “enchanted”, and where ethics continues to be strongly shaped by theism and social tradition. For the Enlightenment paradigm to begin to make any sense in such a context the entire plausibility framework of the African worldview will need to be dismantled.

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Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
Culture

There are numerous issues with respect to differences in culture that are relevant to this discussion. I wish to mention only one, and that is secularism. The Enlightenment, amongst other things, propelled the west into what has come to be known as secular culture. In his tome of some six hundred pages Charles Taylor (2007) wrestles with the processes that have taken place to produce such a culture. The basic question he asks is how it is that in the year 1500 in Western society it was “virtually impossible not to believe in God” but in the year 2000 “many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable”. The essence of this shift has been from transcendence to immanence – a change that has led to the move away from an emphasis on God, the supernatural, and the afterlife to the human person and his or her material circumstances in the present life. The word that he uses to describe the process involved in this shift is the one coined by Max Weber – disenchantment. While Weber emphasized the need for disenchantment in the formation of the modern (secular) worldview Taylor’s emphasis is on the processes of disenchantment, the actual “disenchanting” of an enchanted universe. He thus starts his discussion with an attempted description of the enchanted universe. “Attempted” because, as he frequently points out, it is very difficult for the modern person to understand the nature of how the universe was understood in the fifteenth century.

Two things seemed to dominate Weber’s reflections around the rise of modernity. The first was how religious faith translated into economic practice and the second of how economic practice itself became rationalized, that is purged of influences extraneous to the forces internal to the processes of production. Taylor’s interest is more in the philosophical and theological shifts that took place. Essentially the shift from a pre-modern to a modern worldview involved a series of disengagements – God from the world, mind from the body, church from politics, individual from society, spiritual from the material. For Taylor disenchantment involved a number of processes on a multiplicity of levels three of which are worth noting. First there was a change in the relation between the self and the world, second there was the imposition of human control over what was formerly perceived to be a world beyond human control, third there was a shift in relation between the individual and society. Each one of these were undergirded by a theological shift – that is a shift in relation between the individual and God. The first Taylor calls the shift from the “porous” to the “buffered” self, the second he calls the “rise of the disciplinary society”, and the third he calls “the great disembedding”. The theological shift that undergirded these was from a kind of imminent theism to providential deism.

In reading Taylor’s A Secular Age one cannot help feeling that the process that he is describing is one that simply has not taken place in Africa. For example the series of disengagements that were fundamental in the formation of modern Western culture have not happened in African culture. God and world, mind and body, individual and society, and the spiritual and material cannot be seen in dualistic terms. Needless to say the implications of this for theology in general and theological education in particular are profound. Theologies of engagement need to be foregrounded over against disengagement, holism over against dualism, the body over against the mind, enchantment over against disenchantment, communitarianism over against individualism. Theology needs to be done on the basis of the assumption not of a secular but

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18 Weber’s theory of rationalization is especially important to this discussion. He identified four types of rationality. Practical rationality which is to be found in people’s mundane, day-to-day activities and reflects their worldly interests; theoretical rationality which involves “an increasingly theoretical mastery of reality by means of increasingly precise and abstract concepts” (1958:293); substantive rationality involves value postulates, or clusters of values, that guide people in their daily lives; and formal rationality which involves the rational calculation of means to ends based on universally applied rules, regulations, and laws. These types of rationality are key ingredients of the bureaucratization of society and are all characteristics of the disengaged, autonomous self-motivated by the need for control. See George Ritzer “The Weberian Theory of Rationalization and the McDonaldization of Contemporary Society”, George Ritzer http://www.corwin.com/upm-data/16567_Chapter_2.pdf (accessed on 05/06/2011).
of a non-secular culture. Both the problems as well as the advantages of non-secularism will need to inform theology. What are the implications for theology of belief in the imminent and engaged presence in everyday life of a host of agencies, including God, demons, angels, ancestors, and other people who, through an interconnected universe, themselves have access to the supernatural? What are the implications for theology of the kind of vulnerability that humankind finds itself in without the assumption of control that modernity brings – a universe that functions not on the basis of mechanical agency but on the basis of spiritual agency, not on the basis of the question of what causes things to happen but who causes things to happen? What are the implications for theology of a culture that tends to be patriarchal? What are the implications for theology of a culture that tends to value the community over the individual? What are the implications for theology of a culture that does not see human rights as absolutely essential to religious belief?

These, amongst a host of other possible questions, will need to be taken into consideration when doing theology in the African context. I wish finally to say something about a possible agenda for theological education that an African worldview might dictate.

Towards an Agenda for Theological Education in the Context of an African Worldview

I have argued in this paper that a paradigm shift in the agenda for theological education in Africa should take place in the light of the difference in worldviews between Africa and the west. As it is, the hegemony of the Western agenda in schools of theology in universities, whether in the west or in Africa, leads to some profound contradictions for African students of theology. The basis of these are often to do with the fact that whereas religion in general and Christianity in particular is no longer associated in the west with progress and development (the Enlightenment put paid to this), in Africa the link is fundamental because of the association of the Christian mission with Western education. This means that Africans arriving to study theology at Western universities (whether in or out of Africa) are faced with an unexpected surprise in the form of a profound hermeneutic of doubt. The historical critical method in the discipline of biblical studies is but one of a host of anomalies and contradictions they can expect to find, this in spite of the postmodern interrogation of such a method. All the theological disciplines will come with a heavy dose of the social sciences (another consequence of the Enlightenment) and they can expect to do little in the form of the Anselmian definition of theology – that is faith seeking understanding. At best it will be the faith of others seeking understanding and not their faith. The end result will be a huge disjunction between their faith and their theological education and they will probably go back to their places of ministry (if they go back) with a degree that would put them in high esteem amongst their people but with no tools to meet their needs and increased suspicion of the “godless” west.

These are the kinds of issues that need to inform an agenda for theological education in the context of an African worldview.

The question needs to be asked, in the light of the above observations, what would constitute the data for such an agenda. One could start with the theoretical construct of an African worldview, as in Turner’s six feature analysis. However such a construct, as helpful as it is, does not take into account how such a construct is working out in practice on the ground. A better approach would be to work empirically with the recognition that a process of “translation” of the Christian faith from a European to an African context has been taking place ever since the missionary first set foot on the continent. Such grassroots activity “in the field” should provide the data for such an agenda if the African context, and therefore the African worldview, is to be taken seriously. The first issue in the debate on an African agenda for schools of theology could well be the reasons why it is that an indigenous African theology has not found its way into the university when it has existed in a multiplicity of forms outside the university in the streets of African cities, in the market place of African villages, and on the paths of the African countryside, for more than a
hundred years. An African agenda for theological education needs to be informed at the start by the voices of those who have been interpreting, appropriating, negotiating, transacting and transforming the Christian gospel in their daily lives for at least two generations. A wide diversity of forms and shapes of Christianity, all informed in some way or another by an African worldview, would constitute a rich resource for theological reflection and development of an African paradigm. Amongst these would be the various forms of African Indigenous Christianity such as Zionism and Ethiopianism, Pentecostalism in the many expressions that are sweeping the continent, the many expressions of African Traditional Religion, especially in its dialogical forms with Christianity, other forms of community based contextual, women’s, and peoples’ theologies that might be found in urban, township, and rural contexts, as well as African interpretations of the faith within the traditional and mainline churches.

This implies that a concerted effort should be made to identify as wide a range as possible of indigenous theologies within the region, both in the oral as well as written traditions. While these indigenous expressions of faith could form the basis of a theological agenda they need to be brought into dialogue with theologies that are informed by alternative worldviews, including those within the Western worldview. Especially important here would be the various forms of contextual and liberation theologies, notably feminist theology – this because feminism has undertaken the single most comprehensive overhaul of the Western worldview, exposing not only its patriarchal tendencies but also its shortcomings with respect to holism and enchantment and thus serves as a role model for projects that involve the reconstruction of alternative theological models.19

Such a process, that is identifying and analyzing theologies at the grassroots level in African communities and setting them in dialogue with each other and with other theologies, should constitute the beginning of the process of constructing an agenda for an African contextual theology. However there are a number of other dimensions to be considered. Implicit in the discussion above is the translatability of the Christian faith from one worldview into another. This has been the focus of attention of some major African scholars, notably Lamin Sanneh (2009), and Kwame Bediako (1999). Translation happens as part of the process of interpretation. Not only is Christianity translatable from a conceptual point of view but, obviously, also from a linguistic point of view. If worldviews are embedded in language then translation from the language of sender into that of receiver is obviously part of the whole transactional process of shifting from one worldview to another. Vernacularization, therefore, becomes an essential part of the entire process of transformation and needs to be factored into the agenda planning process.

While the “grassroots” dimension discussed above arguably constitutes the most important aspect of the project of reconstituting Christian theology within an African worldview and could be described as an initiative that recognizes the contribution “from below” there is also the need to recognize the scholarly contribution that has been made to the project, cautiously describable, perhaps, as the initiative “from above”. The writings of the first, post missionary, generation of African theologians and philosophers need to be given rigorous attention, as well as a growing space that is opening up for second generation African theologians. The intimate link that has always existed between theology and philosophy – one that has been better recognized in Catholic than in Protestant theological education – has continued on into the African context. It is no accident that most of the leading African philosophers were first trained in the church, and

19 “Considered as a whole, the feminist perspective and impulse has brought forth perhaps the most vigorous, subtle, and radically critical analysis of conventional intellectual and cultural assumptions in all of contemporary scholarship. No academic discipline or area of human experience has been left untouched by the feminist reexamination of how meanings are created and preserved, how evidence is selectively interpreted and theory molded with mutually reinforcing circularity, how particular rhetorical strategies and behavioral styles have sustained male hegemony, how women’s voices remained unheard through centuries of social and intellectual male dominance, how deeply problematic consequences have ensued from masculine assumptions about reality, knowledge, nature, society, the divine.” (Tarnas, The Passion of the Western Mind, 408)

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
all credit should be given to the Catholic traditions of theological education which demanded substantial training in philosophy. However, arguably the most important contribution has come from the Protestant theologian Kwame Bediako. His award winning *Theology and Identity, the impact of Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa* must be considered seminal in any scholarly discussion of the shift in paradigm that needs to take place from Europe to Africa. It is this paradigm shift that I would like to make final comments about.

**Conclusion – Things Fall Apart or Things Come Together – A Postcolonial Postscript**

This paper began with Achebe’s depiction of how, when the missionaries came, things fell apart for the Umuofian people. But is it not also true to say that things fell apart for the missionaries? Once their message was delivered they no longer had control of how it was going to be interpreted. It was freighted, from the beginning, indeed from its earliest beginnings in Palestine, with the potential for multiple interpretations. Clearly the missionaries did not only bring the gospel. They brought their worldview as well as the gospel. That they failed to distinguish between the two is certain. That we all do this is equally certain. If the Umuofian worldview was about to fall apart then so was the missionary worldview. Neither was ever going to be the same after their encounter and something new was to emerge through this encounter. The history, however, of this story was still to be written. The writing of history is in the hands of those who can write. When the district commissioner undertook to write Okonkwo’s story there is no doubt as to whose side of the story would be told. By default the record would show that the west had prevailed, even though in reality, that is in the minds of the “conquered”, this would not have been the case. The significance of this cannot be overemphasized. The imperialist project of civilizing the savage would take on a multiplicity of forms, including either to ignore the indigenous worldview or to attempt to recreate it in the image of the conqueror. Postcolonial resistance to such a project is the task of postcolonial discourse. Such discourse, so articulate in literature studies, has not yet found its way fully into theological studies. If it had, the agendas of schools of theology in Africa would look considerably different.

Postcolonial studies attempts to “place the shoe on the other foot” by seeing things from the perspective not of the colonizer but the colonized. I would like to use this idea with respect to the discussion on worldviews by suggesting that an entirely different perspective is waiting to be taken if the processes of transformation that the missionary event elicited is seen not to be a Westernization of the African worldview but an Africanization of the Western worldview. The former perspective offers a paradigm that will dictate an interpretation of the entire process of the Christian advent in Africa as being to do with the colonization of the African mind. In this paradigm the Christian mission is merely the watchdog of European imperialism, Christianity itself is seen as an alien religion that the imperialists have used to rob Africa of her true religious identity, and the success of the Christian mission in Africa spells the success of the Western conquest of Africa. The latter perspective, that is, that what was happening was in fact not a process of Westernization but of Africanization, offers an entirely different paradigm in which to interpret the facts. Christianity is not a European religion but an African religion; what the missionaries brought is also what they found; what the Africans received is also what they had. Such a paradigm elucidates the historical evidence that when Africans themselves took on the task of mission they did it far better and with far greater effectiveness than did the Western missionaries. It supports the idea that African expressions of the faith have burgeoned throughout the subcontinent not because Westerners are exceptionally good at selling their product but because Christianity is an African religion. It explains why there is a demise of the faith in Europe and an explosion of the faith in Africa. It suggests that we need not bewail the loss of African identity because of Christianity but can rejoice in the flowering of African identity because of Christianity.
These two paradigms, in other words, offer completely different interpretations of Christianity in Africa. When Bediako entitled his book *Christianity in Africa – the renewal of a non-Western religion* this was precisely what he was attempting to do. The implications for theology are, of course, profound. The Word is among us. It has become flesh, and the colour of its skin is black.

**Bibliography**


(55) THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN SCIENCE

Peter Barrett

(1) Introduction

This article is written from the perspective of Trinitarian theology and makes use of ideas in the worldwide science-and-theology discourse of the past four decades – an activity that has been located mostly in North America and Europe through hundreds of tertiary-level courses and numerous conferences and publications, but also in a few parts of sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. We are concerned here with the challenge faced by theological education in its various settings to make creative use of the scientific knowledge of this multi-levelled world of nature and humanity. The interaction of such knowledge with the realm of theological thought is the main concern of science-and-theology, in which the initiative has come mainly from the scientific side.

In his *Theology in the Context of Science*, physicist-theologian John Polkinghorne remarks that much theological construction arises as a response to particular experiences and challenges – that is, as a contextual theology, usually of an emancipatory type such as liberation, feminist or black theology. Yet, apart from a few notable exceptions, theologians are reluctant to think of science-and-theology as itself an exercise in contextual theology, just as worthy of attention as any of the other forms.\(^1\)

There is, of course, a qualitative difference between morally driven theological thought within an oppressive *socio-political* context on the one hand, and the theological search for understanding within the *intellectual* context of scientific inquiry on the other – a distinction which has tended to keep theologians from spending time on what may seem a less pressing field. Nevertheless, the very heartbeat of theology is surely weakened if it fails to seek a deeper level of understanding through engagement with the knowledge of our multi-levelled world offered by the sciences. Theological education in Africa needs, then, to take account not only of the main issues pertaining to local contexts but also those of the worldwide realm of modern science.\(^2\)

We may note, for example, a warning sounded by Anglican scholar David Edwards after encountering the secularizing impact of science on Chinese culture and traditional belief:

> Christian Africa has sent out rebukes to a decadent West. And yet the awkward question must be asked about the future of Christianity in Africa and Asia alike, as in the Americas: What will come when modernization has developed further, when modern education spreads and breeds scepticism about all traditions?\(^3\)

A different warning has been sounded by Kenyan theologian Peter Nyende who states that “the numerical growth of Christianity in Africa should not be cast uncritically in positive image and hope, but ought to be examined critically, with its limitations and weaknesses acknowledged.”\(^4\) The main idea in his article is that the interface between the Christian faith and Africa’s vision of an ‘enchanted’ (spirit-filled)

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\(^2\) Here we deal with the knowledge that science produces, rather than its application as technology. On the subject of Religion and Technology see Barbour 1992 and Cole-Turner 2006. ‘Modern Science’ is the name given to that which arose in Europe about five centuries ago, beginning in the areas of physics and astronomy.


world is what predominantly gives shape to, and accounts for, Christianity in Africa – and he claims that this needs to be understood more deeply by African theologians.

Here we are concerned not only with such internal awareness on the part of African theologians but also with the question of their approach to the knowledge of the world offered by science. Will the education they provide equip their students for an appropriate understanding and philosophical underpinning of their faith? Will it prepare them for intra-church encounters with the highly active purveyors of the ‘gospel of prosperity’ (in Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe, for example) and of other enticing distortions of the Christian faith? And will it prepare future theological scholars for optimal engagement with the basic philosophical questions of human existence, the urgent need for serious dialogue across religious divides, and the broad sweep of ethical issues in public life?

In his brief text, *Theology: A very short introduction*, David Ford uses the term ‘ecology of responsibility’ to refer to the three constituencies traditionally served by Christian theology in the Western world: the church, the academy, and society at large. It is the third of these, he writes, that is often ignored. He continues:

Religious and theological concerns are essential to many debates about politics, law, economics, the media, education, medicine, and family life. But where is high-quality theologically informed attention being paid to such matters? It is unlikely their complexity can be done full justice to unless there is collaboration across disciplines, faith communities, and nations (emphasis added). This is probably the greatest lack in the world theological scene at present.5

Perhaps the issues of science-and-theology should be added to Ford’s list because there seem to be many Christian thinkers, writers and leaders throughout the world who have yet to come to terms with the theological significance of the scientific knowledge acquired during the past five centuries (especially the last two) – knowledge which can enrich Christian thought and perhaps usher in a new era of constructive theology. And at the heart of this inter-disciplinary engagement there is a quest for an over-arching account of the universe, drawn from both sides – a grand creation narrative that could act as a basis for discussion of crucial interfaith, ecological and nation-building issues.6

The next section gives a brief outline of the cosmic scene within the context of a theological world-view. Section 3 deals with a new-style natural theology and an associated creation narrative that are emerging from recent science-and-theology discourse. Section 4 discusses the significance of these ideas for theological education in Africa.

(2) A Scientific World-Picture Within a Theological World-View

One of the great scientific discoveries of the twentieth century is that the universe itself has a history – a 13.7 billion year process of continuing expansion and cooling from a ‘big bang’ starting point when space was super-compressed and matter was super-hot and super-dense. Cosmologists offer a speculative but coherent account of the first three minutes and a well-reasoned account of subsequent cosmic development.

We see a universe that is vast and old, dark and cold (the temperature of its background radiation is -270 C), containing many billions of solar systems, in at least one of which an astonishing variety of life has evolved. This includes human beings who can reflect upon the nature and meaning of it all. We now know that we are among the latest products of the vast process of cosmic and biological evolution, almost all the

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6 Given the general post-modern aversion to meta-narratives with their tendency to claim superiority over other accounts of the world, we may note the concern of Ronald Michener (2007) to present the Christian gospel as a non-dominating meta-narrative that is open to new insights and other traditions, and therefore open to re-formulation in order to include new truths.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
atoms of our bodies having originated in the nuclear burning processes of the larger stars – see the Addendum at the end of this article. Thus the story of the universe is the story of our cosmic ancestry.

Furthermore, the earth itself has a remarkable 4.6 billion year history of development from its early molten state. Earth scientists speak of our planet as a dynamic entity that operates from its innermost core to its outermost atmosphere as a single inter-connected system – one that gradually acquired the layers of sea, land and air that constitute an environment superbly hospitable for complex life to evolve. It seems that ours is a very special planet, encircling an ordinary medium sized star, the Sun. A chronology of the stages of evolution on Planet Earth is given below in Table 1, showing something of the complexity-increasing process that has preceded the emergence of humankind.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stages of evolution</th>
<th>billions of years ago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>formation of molten planet</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oldest rocks formed</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first bacterial cells</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and fermentation/photo-synthesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tectonic plates, continents</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first nucleated organic cells</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oxygen build-up in atmosphere</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>earth’s surface &amp; atmos. established</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first moving life-forms</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>early animals</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>early plants</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>dinosaurs</td>
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<td>mammals</td>
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<td>early primates</td>
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<tr>
<td>early hominids</td>
<td>0.004</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>homo sapiens</em></td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Terrestrial and biological time-scales

Scientists sometimes wonder if the universe could have been arranged differently and still achieved such life-forms – which is first a scientific question but also a theological one. It is scientific in that the whole system is so interlinked that if any of the starting conditions or key physical parameters had been slightly different, this would almost certainly have rendered it unsuitable to support complex life – it is on a knife-edge of being just right to produce life at least somewhere in its vastness. And it is theological insofar as one thinks of the universe as a divine experiment and, indeed, a vast work of art which has had to meet the exacting conditions necessary for the emergence of the responsive beings desired by a loving God.

Furthermore, probably the majority of those working in the natural sciences assume that the emergence of complex life has occurred simply through the steady outworking of the ‘laws’ of physics, chemistry and biology – that is, through the regularities of physical process. Scientists who are theologically inclined are likely to see this as a brilliant way of divine creation.

Table 2 shows a list of successively produced physical components and the subsequent array of co-evolved mental capacities that have made for the emergence of human beings. Here it is assumed that the ongoing physical processes led seamlessly to the development of cognitive abilities in some of nature’s life-forms – the result of neural systems reaching high levels of complexity and organizational capacity, thereby allowing the emergence of consciousness and, eventually, the full range of operation of the human mind.

In the upward direction one deals with that which is increasingly complex and, at the highest levels, aspects of personhood emerge which are perhaps unique to human beings – in particular the soul, regarded here as ‘the real me’ within a person’s psychosomatic make-up, the inner being at the heart of a person’s
complex web of relationships (to God, the natural world and other persons), and the *imagination*, viewed as the high-level integrating power of the whole mind as it brings together ideas through the interplay of reason, perception, intuition and emotion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soul</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
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<td>Imagination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason and conscience</td>
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<td>Neurosciences</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Physical systems and mental capacities in the evolutionary creation of humankind

The table also shows a broad brush lay-out of the disciplines involved, among which there is, of course, a considerable variation in the way of rational inquiry. This ranges from the application of mathematics in the physical sciences to the use of metaphor and symbol in the humanities. What is common to these disparate areas of inquiry is the search to know, understand and express the way things are, in each case using epistemic tools appropriate to the nature of the object.

In doing their day to day work, scientists operate from within a purely naturalistic frame of thought – that is, they deal with *what and how* things exist and happen in the world, without referring to any supernatural agency. For many of them, however, questions arise about *why* things happen – questions of a philosophical or theological nature concerning the origin, destiny and meaning of life and, indeed, of the universe itself. Many are open to the broadening of understanding offered by a theological world-view. As Jesuit theologian Christopher Mooney put it in a notable essay:

> The universe that science studies is not a mere sequence but a story, a struggle upwards through matter, life, thought, history, and culture. Only a narrative can really capture what is going on. And it is precisely this need of humans for meaningful narrative that allows theology to complement the causality of science.

Mooney also points to the need for theologians, in the light of science, to re-think key Christian doctrines: “Christology, original sin, redemption, the theology of death, and the material character of the afterlife are the most obvious areas raising new questions which theologians must somehow confront”.  

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
this list we must add ‘the fall’ (Genesis chapter 3), the most problematic of Christian doctrines in the light of modern science.\(^8\)

In addressing the cosmic scene, philosophers may speak of God as the source of it all, who creates it out of nothing and keeps it in existence with properties and conditions that allow it to develop in all its variety and complexity. Christian theologians may speak also of the ‘kenosis of God’ – the self-emptying and self-giving that involves a divine ‘letting go’ and ‘letting be’ that is costly to an extent that is hardly imaginable. As W H Vanstone remarks, the phrase ‘kenosis of God’ contains something of the limitlessness, the vulnerability and the precariousness of authentic love. He argues that such graciousness does not hold back any reserves of power or wisdom or love; all is poured into the creating and sustaining of the world and the bearing of all consequences.\(^9\)

Theologians may also wish to invest in the premise that the Holy Spirit is ever at work in nature and humanity – as the ‘Go-Between God’ whose great gift to human beings is to open our eyes to both the beauty and the harsh reality of the world.\(^10\) This is in keeping with ideas of Irenaeus of Lyon (second century CE) and Basil of Caesarea (fourth century CE) that the Holy Spirit acts as the life-giving beautifier and perfecter of the creation\(^11\) – a richer and much wider role of the Spirit than is often assumed in Christian thought.

There remains the difficult theodicy question of why, if God the Creator is all-loving and omnipotent, there exists such horrendous suffering in the world, whether caused by human action or natural disasters. John V Taylor approaches the question thus: Given that the triune God is eternally limitless self-giving love, it follows that God had to create a universe because it is in the very nature of God to do so, seeking some ‘other’ on which that love may be lavished. Echoing Vanstone’s sense of the cost involved, he continues:

> There will be accidents and casualties by the million every step of the way. Yet with all the risks, its agonies and tragedies, there is no other conceivable environment in which responsive self-giving love, to say nothing of courage, compassion or self-sacrifice, could have evolved.\(^12\)

Responsive self-giving love, we may add, requires the exercise of human free-will that is genuinely free – and it may well be that this in turn depends on there being a genuinely ‘free process’ in nature (free from any breaking of nature’s laws), however harsh the consequences. On the other hand, Christian belief includes the strong hope that ultimately, in a great divine act of transformation and resurrection of the world and its creatures, there will be a resolution of the sufferings endured.\(^13\)

These scientific and theological ideas have been explored in detail in science-and-theology and have pointed to the need for a widely embracing account of the creation – what some might call a grand narrative or ‘gospel of creation’ or even a ‘theological theory of everything’. This is the central aim of a ‘new-style natural theology’\(^14\) which no longer seeks arguments for the existence of God in terms of the appearance of design in nature’s life-forms. Instead, it begins with the foundational postulate that the world

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\(^13\) This is the central theme of Polkinghorne’s *The God of Hope and the End of the World* (2002).

is the creation of an all-loving omnipotent creator whose power of agency is self-limited to make room for free-will and free process in the creation. It seeks to show that there is a plausible, unified understanding of God, humanity and the cosmos that takes account of the evidence of design in the universe as a whole, not least through the brilliant way in which mathematical theories describe the elementary particles that constitute nature’s building blocks.

(3) New-Style Natural Theology and its Grand Creation Narrative

In their quest for unity of knowledge some writers in the science-and-theology field seek to link the scientific account of the universe to revelation-based theology – to harmonize the generalities of the scientific world-picture with the particularities of Christian tradition. They aim to provide an outline of the ongoing story of the creation that can act as a resource for theological thought and exploration, alongside Scripture and tradition.

This interdisciplinary collaboration often evokes surprise, not only among members of the public but even within Christian communities, for it takes place against a background of popular belief that the relationship between science and Christian tradition is one of unremitting conflict – a misapprehension that is often fed by fundamentalist rhetoric from the areas of both science and religion.

Here we may note that metaphysical ideas are deeply involved in the construction and analysis of theology. In formulating a creation narrative a systematic theologian would need to proceed from some organizing idea or theme about the nature and purpose of God as Creator – a starting point drawn from either the experientially based, richly detailed theism of one of the monotheistic religions on the one hand, or a more abstract and restricted theism characteristic of philosophy on the other.

Cosmologist George Ellis, for example, adopts the idea of divine kenosis as a foundational assumption, regarding it as the basis of a ‘cosmology’ that unites the physical and the ethical – that is, he takes ‘the good’ to be an inherent part of the make-up of the creation, not merely a human construct. Bearing in mind the life of Christ, together with other human lives that have shown costly self-giving leadership, he begins with the following postulate:

There is a transcendent God who is creator and sustainer of the universe, whose purpose in creation is to make possible high-level loving and sacrificial action by freely acting self-conscious individuals.

Our knowledge of the way the world is in all its cosmic and biological unfolding, he argues, excellently matches this foundational statement. He points out that the divine purpose requires not only a universe that is life-bearing (as discussed briefly in Section 2) but also one in which divine intimations of moral goodness may occur, together with the free response of the receiving mind – that is, free from the coercion of an overwhelming divine presence.

Taking Ellis’s axiomatic statement further, it seems reasonable to suppose that the aim of divine creation is to give rise to το καλον – ‘the good-beautiful-just right’ – that is, to create conditions for the

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15 In the first place metaphysics addresses questions of ontology, that is, questions about the basic categories of existence (such as the mental and the physical), the structure and essence of things, and the existence and nature of the world as a whole. Then, with respect to human existence, the field of metaphysics can be considered to include issues of epistemology (on the nature and ways of knowing and understanding) and axiology (concerning values and the meaning of things).


17 Kittel, G & Friedrich, G, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 402-405. The term το καλον (or the adjective καλα) carries this richly textured meaning. In the Greek text of Genesis 1, “God saw that it was καλα”.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
emergence of freely acting, self-aware individuals who, in concert with God and one another, can strive to create το καλον. And if we suppose that this term represents the keynote of divine creativity on every scale of its operation, it surely applies to the world itself – assumed to be good, beautiful and just right to become, ultimately, the kingdom of God in all its fullness.

In this view, the qualities of kenosis and το καλον are not simply constructs of the human mind but have their place within a wide-ranging multi-levelled reality (the totality of what actually exists). Some Western writers claim that reality consists simply of the physical world, nothing more. In contrast, Ellis lists six natures or levels of existence: (i) the physical world of energy and matter; (ii) the contents of the human mind; (iii) the set of possible physical and biological forms (those in our world would then constitute a subset); (iv) a world of abstract realities such as mathematical forms, physical laws and powerful symbols; (v) the set of values, meanings and purposes underlying the created order; and (vi) the fundamental meta-level of the being of God. Levels (ii) to (vi) are considered real in that each can affect what happens at level (i).18

Altogether, with multi-levelled existence in mind, our cosmic story needs to link Christian belief about the creation not only to the natural and human sciences but also to the humanities – not only to the realm of logic and reason, but also to a realm in which aesthetics and imagination are the more dominant.19 And we may think of it as a ‘gospel of creation’, centred on the nature and meaning of the ‘Word made flesh’ and embracing the entire sweep from creatio ex nihilo (out of nothing), through creatio continua to an eschatological creatio ex vetere (out of the old).

(4) The Place of a Creation Narrative in Theological Education in Africa

Here we consider ways in which a scientifically informed creation narrative may take effect in Theological Education in Africa (TEA) – as a theological resource from which to address issues in each of theology’s customary service areas: church, academy and society.

Such an interdisciplinary narrative immediately raises the question of epistemology. Given today’s worldwide scientific awareness, TEA needs to create some understanding of the basis of both scientific and theological knowledge if it is to relate creatively to theology elsewhere. In other words, it seems important that theologians and their students be informed about the ways of thinking and knowing in science so that they may perceive more clearly the ways of thinking and knowing in theology.

Furthermore, it also seems important in TEA to consider whether the build-up of knowledge and understanding occurs in the same way in an African context as in the West, given the contrast between world-views developed via literacy (Western/modern) and via orality (African/primal) – concerning knowledge of what the world is and how it works.20 A key difference lies in the relationship between subject and object, between the knower and that which is known. In Western thought there is a relatively sharp distinction between subject and object, whereas in much African thought the two are more intimately linked – what you know about some deep aspect of reality does not come simply from clues arising from your particular experience of it but is ontologically part of your very being. It resides in your bones, so to


19 For Howard Root this means that theologians need to immerse themselves in the works of the poet or novelist or dramatist or film producer – of “those who are in touch with the springs of creative imagination.” He claims that “theologians cannot direct people’s minds to God until they are themselves steeped in God’s world and in the imaginative productions of his most sensitive and articulate creatures,” Beginning all Over Again”, 18.


Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
speak. To the question “Does God exist?” an African response might well be “What a question, everybody
knows he exists!” And in much of Africa any questioning of the reality of the spirit-world would no doubt
elicit at least as firm a response. It is worth noting that Ellis’s list of natures of existence would certainly
accommodate the spirits in level (ii), but the case for assigning them the ontological status of level (iv) is
not so clear cut. This is surely a key topic for many of the churches in Africa in their varied approaches to
African Traditional Spirituality.21

From these epistemic considerations we turn to ways in which our creation narrative can link TEA to
other major issues in the church, the academy and society. First, the narrative can no doubt act as the basis
of a theology of religious pluralism, for use in Christian communities as preparation for interfaith
engagement. Second, lecturers can promote the constructive use of the narrative of evolutionary creation
in theology courses and be open to the broad area of interdisciplinary engagement. Third, the narrative can be
the basis on which these communities make their multi-faceted contribution to nation-building. In all three
spheres a well constructed grand narrative would help to widen horizons and build bridges. And in all
three, the vital gift the new-style natural theology can offer is a coherent world-view that invites people to
see what a remarkable ‘cradle of human existence’ we are part of. We consider briefly how this gift may
take effect in each of the spheres mentioned.

The church: We are at a stage in world affairs that calls for profound re-thinking about the relationships
between Christianity and the other major religions – re-thinking in terms of our creation narrative. This
would no doubt mean a fresh consideration of the place of the religions in a Spirit-energized world of great
diversity and plurality. A key theological resource for this task is the magisterial work of Jacques Dupuis
SJ,22 but here we simply mention the ideas of two writers at the heart of the ecumenical movement in the
1980s.

As a staff member of the British Council of Churches, Kenneth Cracknell had extensive encounters with
church leaders and theologians from most countries in the world and found that “everywhere we are
wrestling with the question of how we are to be faithful to Christ in a religiously plural world.”23 Another
high-profile ecumenical writer, Wesley Ariarajah (formerly of the World Council of Churches), urged that
the church is being called “to deal theologically with religious pluralism and come to a new understanding
of the way to relate to, and live and work with people of other faiths.” He encouraged the church to see this
as a new historical moment in its life, which could give it a new impetus and mark a new beginning. He
added that a re-emphasis on the Spirit would open up many possibilities for relationship with people of
other faiths.24

The academy: Here there exists a noticeable climate of anti-theology opinion, at least in the West. This
constitutes a challenge to theologians and their students to be confident in the metaphysical and
epistemological underpinning of their discipline and thence willing to open themselves to critical questions
about their presuppositions and foundational ideas. Furthermore, there often exists a degree of anxiety on
the part of churches and parents about the effect of the liberal, empirical, naturalistic approach of much
tertiary-level thinking on the religious belief of inexperienced students – they become confused by the
clash of world-views and often do not find the intellectual support they require.25 There is clearly a need for
the training of clergy that will enable them to prepare students for this aspect of university life.

Dupuis, J, Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions (New Delhi: Intercultural Publications, 1989).
25 Cameron, A, Cultural and religious barriers to learning in basic astronomy: A South African study (PhD
**Society:** Perhaps the church’s key role in nation-building lies in helping to develop a vision that unites society, beginning with the uniting of its own members. Furthermore, in an emerging, developing nation the challenge to the churches may well be that of developing a ‘theology of reconstruction’. This is a task that various theologians in Africa have addressed in recent years as they consider the need for socio-political reconstruction. And whereas these recent African theologies have tended to take their lead from Scripture, especially by drawing on the example of the post-exilic restoration of Jerusalem during the sixth century BCE, outlined in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, one may opt for a creation-narrative approach that encourages the quest for a uniting vision — such as the Mandela/Tutu dream of a caring, sharing, compassionate ‘rainbow nation’. Furthermore, a natural extension of that vision would be to include the well-being of our planet — a response to the aesthetic imperative that arises from a sense of the holiness of beauty.

Underlying these involvements with church, academy and society is the central idea that TEA should seek to develop: that we are all part of a creation that is stunningly imaginative and unimaginably costly. Costly to its creatures and, above all, costly to its creator. Costly in dealing with human self-centredness and its outcomes, and costly in the sharing of every moment of suffering. And from theology and science together, through the exercise of informed imagination, we may try to understand something of the mystery and immensity of the gracious *creatio continua* underlying and sustaining this amazing, beloved, costly and deeply interconnected universe.

*Addendum*

**Cosmic evolution:** After the early formation of hydrogen and helium atoms from their sub-atomic constituents — that is, a few hundred thousand years after the ‘big bang’ starting point of the rapid expansion of space itself, when the unimaginably hot universe had cooled sufficiently for such atoms to hold together — there followed a much longer period in which the force of gravity steadily condensed the hydrogen and helium into clusters of stars with their life cycles of burning and radiating. In this nuclear burning process four hydrogen nuclei (protons) fuse together to form a helium nucleus plus energy. In the larger stars helium then burns to form successively beryllium, carbon, oxygen, and eventually, through other nuclear reactions, the entire range of chemical elements. After several billion years some of the larger first generation stars exploded as supernovae, making their chemically rich contents available for second generation stars and their planets, and thus for the emergence of life.

**Biological evolution:** Given the slight spread in anatomical detail within any local population of any particular species, the pressures exerted by environmental change, food shortages, and the attacks of predators gradually and inexorably weed out the less well adapted members, while allowing the better adapted to survive to the stage of procreation and pass on their favourable characteristics. Such natural selection acting on slight bodily variations over many generations was Charles Darwin’s key insight. The process makes for the adaptation of organisms to their environment, giving the appearance of superb design.

There are many excellent accounts of Darwin’s theory, together with its later development after the discovery of genes — describing how a species can be gradually transformed into a new one, not how the first life-forms originated. Two books by Catholic theologians well-informed in biology are Denis Edwards’ *The God of Evolution* and John Haught’s *God after Darwin*. Note, too, the title of an article by the eminent biologist Theodosius Dobzhansky: “Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution.” Indeed, ‘evolution’ is a standard theory in biology just as the classification of the elements in...
the Periodic Table is a standard theory in chemistry and the plate tectonic description of the earth’s crust is a standard theory in geology. In science a *theory* represents a far more advanced state of understanding than that of a mere *hypothesis*. And for biologists, the theory of evolution (whatever the ongoing internal arguments on some of its aspects) provides a unifying framework for a remarkably diverse set of topics in their discipline.

**Bibliography**


Resources for science and theology in theological education in Africa

COURSES AND DISCUSSIONS IN AFRICA

From Google search under ‘Religion and Science at Makerere University’:

Religion & Science, course code RSD 3212, Makerere University;

‘Resources/ Metanexus’, a list of Religion & Science dialogues in Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda.

Makerere University course RSD 3212 on Religion and Science

Aim: To form an African theology of life from the perspectives of science and technology.

Thematic Issues: Creation & Evolution; Genesis & Genes; Physics & Theology; Religion & Mathematics; Science & Technology; Faith, Science & Technology; Faith & Genetics; Ethics & Cloning; Biomedicine & Ethics; Mind & Body; Faith & Health/Healing & Medicine.

BOOKS

Comprehensive university-level texts


Some shorter books


Science & Religion organizations

American Scientific Affiliation; Center for Theology & the Natural Sciences (Berkeley); Christians in Science (UK); European Society for the Study of Science and Theology; Institute on Religion in an Age of Science (Chicago); Metanexus Institute (USA); Science & Religion Forum (UK); South African Science & Religion Forum. All except the last are among the best known on a 1992 list of sixty science-and-religion organizations.

A Google website

‘Counterbalance: new views on complex issues’. This includes a discussion of ‘Theistic Evolution’ and how it stands in contrast to Creationism, Intelligent Design and Atheism.
ETHNICITY IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Peter Nyende

Introduction

In this article I argue that by virtue of its subject matter, theological education ought to infuse life with morals and values, thus moulding a just, moral and peaceful society such as is envisaged in God’s telos for His world. And in line with its aims, theological education provides knowledge and skills to people to enable them serve the church, together with the wider society where the church lives. A theological curriculum appropriate to its context ensures success in both these aspects of theological education. To their credit Africa's theological institutions seem to have curricula which are relevant to Africa's context. Success in sustaining the relevance of these curricula lies in continually revising the curriculum so that it does not become dated. One such urgent revision is in the offering of ethnic studies which is necessitated by the ethnic crisis in Africa. For this reason ethnic studies in the curriculum of theological education in Africa is imperative. I propose four ways in which ethnic studies could be included in the curriculum of theological education Africa.

A few years ago, renowned theological educator, the late Professor Kwame Bediako, in a passing comment noted the following: 'During the past thirty to forty years, the mushrooming of churches in independent Africa has led also to the proliferation of Bible schools...' 1. We may not have actual statistics of the current number of theological institutions in Africa but it is a fairly safe conclusion that the hundreds of Theological Institutions in Africa 2 (including university Religious Studies Departments and Faculties of Theology) represent an appetite in Africa to have her clergy and church workers theologically educated or trained. This is a noble desire that ought to be fulfilled since the provision of theological education (unless noted otherwise, TE from here on) is vital in view of its subject matter and goals.

Importance of Theological Education

The Subject Matter of TE

Theology, and thus the subject matter of TE, is about God and God’s created order. For that reason TE is intrinsically characterized by the intersection of issues about God – God’s words and actions, agency, nature, character etc., and God’s world – human beings, nature and environment, societies/communities etc. In consequence, TE is distinguished by the fact that although it has professional, civic and intellectual purposes, it is, on the basis of its transcendent subject, essentially moral and value-laden. And so, in concrete terms, TE invariably offers inquiry, instruction, knowledge, and practice which, in relation to humans’ perceptions and experiences of the transcendent, draw from both the moral and value-orientated domains. As such it can influence most other human endeavours, whether scientific, artistic, social or political, for good or ill. What is more, seen in this perspective, the contribution of TE is distinct and

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2 See Bowers, P., ‘New Light on Theological Education in Africa’, Evangelical Review of Theology 14 (1990), 57-63. His paper which although written 18 years ago clearly points to this since there has been no visible drop in the increase of theological institutions in Africa, nor the closing down of African University's Religious Studies departments or Faculties of Theology. See also Gatwa (2002) for more about theological institutions in French speaking Africa.
necessary in any pursuit of a just, moral and peaceful society, which are vital elements in the viability of any society and, for Christians, germane to God’s *telos* for His world – a new heaven and earth.

Such an understanding of the subject matter of TE is not to say that other kinds of education and academic disciplines have no moral and value elements, nor any sense of the transcendent among those involved with them as tutors or students. But insofar as they are involved with morals and valuing, they have a theological element. This is the reason why it is argued that issues of theology exist in all abstract academic disciplines. So that, ‘Just as problems in the physical theory in relativity can be discussed philosophically ... so, too, problems in ecology and psychoanalysis can be discussed theologically.’3 Put simply, where moral and value issues in different fields and disciplines emerge, an avenue is provided for the deeper study of religious and ethical issues which are a subject area of theology even though in this case those issues fall within those other fields and disciplines. Moreover, theology relates to other cognate disciplines such as sociology, development, conflict resolution, psychology, counselling, history, etc. To the degree that theology relates to these disciplines, theological issues are dealt with within these disciplines but from the vantage point of matters specific to those disciplines’ subject areas. Seen this way, TE is significant because it contributes to our society vital elements we could variously describe as ‘moral’ or a ‘moral vision’, ‘values’ or a ‘value system’, ‘spirituality’ and the like, all of which are integral to a just, moral and peaceful society. For this reason theological institutions in Africa have a very special role of moulding African society into a just, moral and peaceful society in keeping with God’s *telos* for His world – a new heaven and earth.

### Aims of TE

The second importance of TE lies in its aims. 21st century formal higher education ideally strives to provide knowledge and a variety of skills which are necessary for public service and other vocations. For this reason, higher education is viewed as existing to benefit a nation's economy (of course with its corollary benefits of giving individuals access to income and professional status).4 So strong is this perception of the goal of higher education that in many places universities have been blamed for failing to offer the right, or quality, education (that is to relate theory to practice in the field) when the services for which its graduates are employed are inadequately delivered.

TE is not divorced from the dynamics and impulses of general higher education that we have just alluded to above. Such a thesis is clear where TE is offered through faculties of theology and departments of religious studies in African universities. Elsewhere, TE usually subscribes to the purposes of higher education in endeavouring to offer ‘certificate’, ‘diploma’, or ‘degree’ level education in the field of theology. In fact, in a number of instances, theological institutions are offering TE in partnership with universities, or are seeking accreditation through institutions which impose on them purposes and standards that would be expected of higher education in universities.5 TE, therefore, has been understood in a variety of ways and with different shades of emphases, to exist for the purposes of providing knowledge and skills for services in the church and in the wider society where the church lives. The following few examples of the observations and reflections by those involved in TE will suffice to underline this *raison d’être* of TE.

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3 See Toulmin, S., ‘Theology in the Context of the University’, *Theological Education* 26:2 (1990), 61.
4 See Grubb, W. N., and Lazerson, M., ‘Vocationalism in Higher Education: The Triumph of the Educational Gospel.’ *Journal of Higher Education* 76.1 (2005), 1-25. His article provides for more on this. Even though their article is written from an American context, the issues and facts they look at resonate with higher education across the continents (see Matos [200] and Vilakazi [2000]).
5 Such as the Commission of Higher Education in Kenya. The commission was established in 1985 through an Act of Parliament to regulate growth and ensure quality in higher education in Kenya. To date this commission has granted a number of theological institutions in Kenya the licence to offer degrees in TE having certified that the meet the standards expected of university education. For more on the commission, see their website http://che.or.ke.
Tinyinko Maluleke in the context of TE in South Africa writes, '(South) Africa should be producing theologians, priests and religious workers who are able to participate and/or facilitate in the addressing of Africa's peculiar problems'. Klaus Fiedler and Kenneth Ross are of the view that TE in Malawi should be equipping its beneficiaries 'to think out the meaning of the gospel in their particular social and ecclesial situation'. Kwame Bediako feels that TE should end up 'equipping God's people for mission and for the transformation of African society'. Plueddemann forthrightly puts it thus, 'The aim of TE is to develop leaders to build and strengthen the church'.

As a last example, I cite Anderson who argues that, 'Theological institutions are called upon with exponential force to produce ministers capable of addressing the complexities of modern life. Frequent questions emerge: “How shall we best teach our students to minister to the world?...”'.

It is important to be aware that in the context of Africa, the importance of the goals of TE, just mentioned, are magnified. This is on account of the fact that in Africa Christianity (together with Islam and other forms of indigenous religions) is a major presence or factor in life. Consequently, it is incumbent on theological educators to understand that the provision of TE which directs and channels Christianity in constructive ways for public and social good is an important agenda within TE's proscribed goal which relates to the church's habitat, the wider society. Maluleke puts it thus:

If official statistics are to be trusted, Africa is a very religious continent with Christianity – however nominal it might be – occupying a place of pride in this. This means that TE in Africa has public consequences beyond the narrow confines of seminaries and church congregations. In many countries therefore, African theological and religious education is public education – quite apart from whether governments recognize this or not.

To sum up, we are saying that the subject matter of theology and its goals brings out the importance of TE into sharp relief. This importance has to do on the one hand with the infusing of life with morals and values, thus moulding a just, moral and peaceful society such as is envisaged in God’s telos for His world, and on the other, providing knowledge and skills to people to enable them serve the church, together with the wider society where the church lives.

The State of TE in Africa

Inappropriate Curriculum?

For TE in Africa to engage adequately with the subject matter of theology and at the same time meet the goals of TE, it must have a curriculum which is appropriate to the African context. In this regard, TE in Africa has been cited as not appropriate for the African context. Undoubtedly TE cannot engage adequately with its subject matter if that subject matter is not related to the context of those engaging with

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12 For example, De Gruchy (1994), Maluleke (1998), Bediako (2001) and Gundani (2002). Of course, evaluations of TE as inappropriate to their context are not unique to TE in Africa (see Farley [1983], Cobb and Hoff [1985], and Ott [2001]) nor even, as alluded to above, unique to TE.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
it, nor derived from issues stemming out of their context. Secondly, TE cannot provide requisite knowledge and skills to its students for service in the church and world if the skills and knowledge offered are out of touch with their realities. The result of such a mismatch between the curriculum of TE and the context of its students is that the students end up ignorant of the issues they need to work with and engage with theologically in their churches and wider society. They also are not knowledgeable enough to handle adequately (and in the interest of God’s telos) the various issues that affect their churches and their society. Finally, they are not competent to contribute to the solving of issues that affect their churches and society. But it is not quite the case that TE in Africa is riddled with inappropriate curriculum.

A survey of the curriculum of twelve theological institutions in different regions of Africa seems to indicate, in varying degrees, that theological institutions in Africa have made efforts to have in their bachelor’s degree a curriculum that is informed by the African context. The curriculum of these institutions include the traditional academic disciplines – such as ‘systematic theology’, ‘biblical studies’, and ‘church history’ – that would be found in theological/religious studies anywhere. In this regard one would be tempted to conclude that such curricula is not geared to the African context. While we cannot rule this out, it is not necessarily the case since one can incorporate African concerns within the traditional disciplines. In the area of biblical studies, for example, one can conduct interpretations that are deliberately contextual. In systematic theology, as another example, African categories can be exploited in Christological studies. But the traditional disciplines are not all there is in the curricula of these African theological institutions. There are courses that are clearly designed to address the African context.

Concerning Africa’s religious context the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (in conjunction with the University of Jos), for example, has courses which aspire to address the religious context in Africa, such as ‘African Church History’, ‘Nigerian Church History’, ‘Theology of the Holy Spirit for an African Context’, ‘African Traditional Religion in Nigeria’, ‘Ethics in the West African Context’ etc. In Kenya, the University of Nairobi’s Department of Religious Studies has; ‘African religion’, ‘Belief Systems in Kenya’, ‘New Religious Movements’, ‘History of Christianity in East Africa’, etc. In Southern Africa, the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa has courses such as ‘The Church in Africa’, ‘African Initiated Churches’ and ‘Zulu Language and Culture’, which address the religious context of Africa. Indeed, any random look at the curriculum of theological institutions in Africa confirms that common to most of them are courses in various disciplines and fields which are informed by the religious context of Africa.

As another example of an appropriate curriculum in TE in Africa, my survey also shows that Africa’s theological institutions are grappling with Africa’s political context particularly with regard to conflict resolution and management. For example, African University of Zimbabwe has a course on ‘Biblical Foundations for Leadership’ and on ‘Conflict Transformation and Peace Building’; the University of KwaZulu Natal has a course on ‘Religion and Conflict’, as well as on ‘Christianity, Justice and Peace’; while both the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa and the Theological College of Western Nigeria have a course on ‘Conflict Resolution’. As a last example, I surmise that the various courses offered in the field of ethics by African theological institutions may have in their application component touch on the political issues facing Africa.

So there is every indication that, in principle, theological institutions in Africa are striving in the TE they offer to address Africa’s context. Theological institutions which offer degrees and higher studies that do not address themselves in their curriculum to the African context would be the exception. But such a

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13 These are: Bangui Evangelical School of Theology of Central Africa Republic, The Theological College of Northern Nigeria, West African Advanced School of Theology in Togo, Shalom University of Bunia in DRC, Uganda Christian University, Nairobi University of Kenya, NETS in Namibia, Sovereign Grace Theological Seminary of the University of Africa in Malawi, Africa University in Zimbabwe, University of Stellenbosch in South Africa, University of KwaZulu Natal Peiermaritzburg in South Africa, and Evangelical College of Southern Africa in South Africa. My survey is not meant to be comprehensive but, rather, to serve as a window to look into the curriculum of TE in Africa.
conclusion does not mean that there is no room for revising and improving the curriculum of TE in Africa. In the interest of continued appropriateness, curriculum revision is a necessity in view of the constant movement and ever evolving contexts. Indeed we have a critical issue in the African context which theological institutions in Africa must address in their curriculum and to this we turn now.

**Ethnic Studies: A Critical Need in the Curricula of TE in Africa**

The select number of theological institutions in Africa which I looked at lack, without exception, in addressing one critical context in Africa, viz., ethnicity. An aspect of Africa’s context is that it is characterized by ethnic identities and with them ethnic psyches, conflicts, loyalties, jealousy and hatred. Ethnicity in Africa has some vital and positive elements such as ‘ethnic morality’ – that ‘…complex web of social obligations that define people’s rights and responsibilities, and that protect people when they are most vulnerable and alone…’, ‘which subordinates …one’s behaviour to certain moral imperatives when dealing with other group members’. But what makes ethnicity in Africa stand out, as I shall soon make clear, is that it is largely an ubiquitous, potent negative force shaping most aspects of life in Africa. Africans feel closer to members of their own ethnic community regardless of whether they are family or friends than to others. Many persons in Africa cannot define themselves without reference to their ethnic group. Their ethnic group is what gives them an identity, a sense of belonging, and even in some sense, 'life'. So, it is unthinkable to an African to exist without one's ethnic group. 'I am because we are' is an African sentiment.

In consequence, most Africans have an overriding commitment, loyalty and emotional attachment to their ethnic community. This commitment manifests itself in various guises such as in solidarity with one’s ethnic community, in jealousy and hatred of other ethnic groups and so on and predominates negatively in the religious, economic, political and social context of Africa that we mentioned above. For example, in the religious arena of Africa, ethnicity continually makes nonsense of the proclamation of the gospel of the brotherhood of all believers which transcends ethnic boundaries when Christians find it difficult to accept each other as one in Christ just because they are from different ethnic groups. In the economic context of Africa, corruption and the plunder of national resources and the poverty which springs from these vices in Africa can be traced to ethnicity. In politics, virtually all wars and conflict in Africa can be traced to the forces of ethnicity. Ironically it is in times of scarcity and competition for resources, and in wars and conflicts that ethnic forces seem to be at the height of their strength. Invariably ethnicity has bred instability and violence in Africa and is altogether a threat to the survival of African

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15 It is precisely ethnicity in this negative sense which concerns my paper. I am concerned with ethnicity’s negative influence in Africa to which, I am contending, TE must address itself. If the influence of ethnicity in Africa was largely positive, then its subject would be more of an academic exercise in TE. Unfortunately for Africa, as Lemarchand (1986, 184) once put it, ‘Ethnicity is evidently more than an intellectual construction. Its devastating effects on the fabric of newly independent states, and of older polities, are all too obvious’.


17 Uchendu, V. C., *The Dilemma of Ethnicity and Polity Primacy in Black Africa* 1995, 129 calls this ‘ethnic patriotism’ – an important value which conflicts with a wider national loyalty.’

18 It is an open secret that Churches themselves are caught up in these negative ethnic forces. For more, see, Cyril (2007), Maigadi (2006), and Onyalla (2005).

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
statehood as envisaged in the various national constitutions of African countries – a fact that may not be well appreciated.

What is more, studies on the current state of ethnic problems in Africa show that the problems are worse now than ever before. ‘Everywhere [in Africa] the politics of identity and ethnicity appear resurgent’. Forrest, from the standpoint of politics, summarises the reasons thus:

In the early years following postcolonial independence, government co-option, the predominance of an international system that supported existing states, and the pursuit of a dual autonomy-plus-state-access strategy all contributed to keeping sub-nationalist [ethnic] mobilization at non-threatening levels. Later, autonomy-seeking movements gained momentum for a number of reasons. These include state leaders’ loss of external backers due to the end of the Cold War, the failure of most African states to generate a strong sense of nationhood, the dramatic weakening of the state infrastructures, and the improvements in rebels’ organizational capacity and their ability to synchronize their behaviour with the norms of local societies. In some cases, this local synchronization may involve a re-traditionalization of political power, which is occurring in various rural locales. The subtext of a coalition-orientated political culture is an underlying influence in a growing number of movements.

In view of the above, it is a fair conclusion that ethnicity is a crucial dimension around which Africa’s religious, socio-economic and political problems revolve and is currently a crisis in Africa which threatens the very survival of Africa. It is a life and death issue that is totally against God’s telos for His world which TE cannot ignore. For this reason, I view the ethnic crisis as more deadly than HIV&AIDS, yet TE in Africa has responded to HIV&AIDS and is silent on ethnicity. A response to ethnicity by theological institutions in Africa, therefore, is both imperative and urgent. TE in Africa would betray utterly its subject matter and goals, discussed earlier, if it does not respond with urgency to the crisis of ethnicity in Africa, and to the incapacity of the church in Africa to manage ethnicity positively. But how could ethnicity be part of the curricula offered in TE in Africa? I suggest four ways in which this could be done in what follows.

**Ethnic Studies in the Curriculum of TE in Africa**

**Ethnic Studies Offered as a Discipline in TE in Africa**

One way in which ethnic studies could be part of the curriculum of TE is by way of having it offered as a distinct discipline alongside the other traditional ones. Having ethnic studies as a discipline will have the advantage of both isolating and concentrating on particular issues on ethnicity, and intensively studying

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19 As Ayittey (1999, 343) puts it, ‘In country after country, the state has been captured or monopolized by one tiny group – an ethnic group… and the instruments of state power and government machinery have been used to advance the economic interests of the ruling group. … This politics of exclusion does not endure. It eventually leads to destructive competition, instability, civil strife, institutional breakdown and ultimately to the implosion of the state’. Braathen, E., Boås, M and Sæther, G. (eds), *Ethnicity Kills? The Politics of War, Peace and Ethnicity* (2000).

20 The sentiments of Okuro, S. A. ‘Review of *Ethnicity in Africa: Towards a Positive Approach* by Hameso Y. Seyoum’, in *Africa Studies Quarterly* 7:1 (2003), 88-89 that ‘despite its resilient reality, ethnicity and “tribalism” have not received adequate scholarly commentary in academic discourses on Africa’, point to this (p.87). It is no wonder that there is relatively scant material on ethnicity in journals on discourse on Africa such as *African Studies Review, African Studies Quarterly, African Affairs*, and *African Cultural Studies*.


22 See Berman, Eyoh and Kymlica 2004, 2.

specified variables or problems. Indeed there are a number of issues that need to be looked at to appreciate ethnicity in Africa. These issues would touch on the meaning and understandings of ethnicity, the history of ethnic groups and ethnic relations in Africa, their underlying assumptions and philosophies, reasons for their enduring strength, the roles played by ethnic communities in the formation and identity of individuals and societies etc. The acquisition of knowledge on, and the understanding of, ethnicity in Africa will surely be transformative at some level, changing the student’s perspectives and even prejudicial attitude.

However, I submit that knowledge and understanding of the subject will not be all there is to such a discipline. Ethnic studies will have to be an applied and engaged discipline since ethnic studies are not neutral but take a stand against the life threatening forces of ethnicity. For this reason reflection and instruction on managing ethnicity would be integral to such a discipline, as would the inculcating of the virtues of tolerance and love. In addition, other issues that will have to be isolated and looked at have to do with advocacy, the application of knowledge and understanding in contending with the negative forces of ethnicity in Africa in the student’s nearest appropriate constituency. In this regard the Bible in TE would assume a place of pre-eminence as a source of guidance in managing ethnicity, in acting to combat it, and in inculcating the virtues without which ethnic forces cannot be neutralized. This pre-eminence of the Bible is vital because for Christian communities the Bible is in some sense ‘the word of God’ which, therefore, has an absolute and universal character and, as, of permanent value in helping to deal with the concrete realities of life, including ethnicity. The biblical vision of God’s telos, for example, must be brought to bear on, and to be linked with, ethnic realities in order to produce recommendations which are helpful, possible and fall within the churches’ competence. Case studies too may be particularly helpful in bringing out real ethnic issues which could form a basis for reflection and desired actions.²⁴

However, in order for ethnic studies to be offered in TE in Africa as a discipline, theological institutions which intend to offer it as such must, at the very least, meet the following disciplinary requirements: ²⁵

1. Define the goals (of course within the over-arching goals and purposes of TE) of ethnic studies.
2. Articulate the commitments that are implied by the defined goals.
3. Enumerate the methodology and procedure which should organize and direct ethnic studies.
4. Spell out the parameters of the body of knowledge (the field of the discipline) to be looked at in ethnic studies.
5. Specify skills applicable to ethnic studies
6. Have (or develop) specialists and practitioners in ethnic studies who essentially are scholars who have invested themselves in ethnic studies.

Meeting the above requirement is not an easy task particularly in the case of the third, fourth and sixth requirement. It is perhaps for this reason that virtually all traditional academic disciplines were not the result of carefully planned efforts with the ultimate aim of having them as disciplines but rather evolved through time into disciplines. Even relatively recent disciplines wherever they are found, such ‘missiology’ or mission studies, ²⁶ cultural studies, ²⁷ or African studies, ²⁸ evolved into disciplines. Therefore, although offering ethnic studies as a discipline in TE in Africa is, for the reasons mentioned, desirable, we may have to wait for the studies to evolve into a discipline. But in view of the ethnic crisis in Africa, TE in Africa

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²⁴ See Wendland’s work on the merits of the ‘case-study’ approach in TE in Africa. Wendland, E. R., ‘The Case for a “Case-Study” Approach to Theological Education in Africa’, Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology 17:1 (1998), 41-57. Some case studies are already available (see for example Hameso [2001], Klug [2001] and Lemarchand [1986]) but there are many more waiting to be researched.

²⁵ These specific requirements are a synthesis of my general knowledge on the dynamics of disciplines in higher education, and of what I have read on some discussions on other forms of emerging studies such as ‘environmental studies’ (see Caldwell [1984]), and curriculum studies (see Oliva [1988, 14-17]).


²⁷ For more see Exum and Moore (1998).


*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
does not have the luxury of time. We have to look then to other ways in which ethnic studies can be offered as part of the curriculum of TE in Africa. Indeed, these other ways have been the starting point from which recent disciplines have evolved into disciplines.

Ethnic Studies Offered as an Interdisciplinary Subject in TE in Africa

The second way in which ethnic studies can be offered in the curriculum of TE in Africa is through positioning it as an interdisciplinary field of study. In this way ethnic studies could, against the background of its concerns, subject and goals, draw from relevant content of various fields of study. Such fields of study could include, for example, biblical and theological/philosophical studies (because biblical, theological and philosophical perspectives on ethnicity are necessary to understanding ethnicity, in guiding advocacy against its negative forces, and in managing it), religious studies (since ethnic dynamics are often inseparable from religion), historical studies (for matters ethnic have a history which is important in analyzing and understanding ethnicity), peace and reconciliation (since such studies are particularly useful in advocacy towards a peaceful and integrated society), conflict resolution (because of the ethnic factor in these issues), sociological and anthropological studies (on account of ethnicity being a sociological phenomenon), politics and governance, etc.

Consequently, much as ethnic studies does have, and, if taken up, will generate over time its own unique content and applicable skills, it will share common subject matter with other fields of study relevant to it. This sharing could be done in at least two ways. Firstly, ethnic studies could have its separate and distinct courses, which we may call block courses. To these block courses would be added courses taken from other fields but which are relevant to ethnic studies. Such an approach is at times referred to as a ‘multidisciplinary’ approach to studies. The disadvantage of a multidisciplinary approach to offering ethnic studies in the curriculum of TE is the intrinsic potential of having an eclectic curriculum. This could happen when the discipline-based courses that are added to the block ethnic studies courses are not well integrated together and with ethnic studies.

Secondly, ethnic studies could aim to transcend the aforementioned potential danger in offering ethnic studies as an interdisciplinary field of study by offering ethnic studies in such a way that it invariably links and interweaves with the courses which it draws from other disciplines. The direct way of doing this is simply by placing ethnic studies alongside those courses so that indeed, ethnic issues feed into and out of that subject. So, for example, a theological institution could offer the courses such as, ‘The Gospels and Ethnicity’, or ‘Ephesians and Ethnic Reconciliation’ and in so doing link biblical studies with ethnicity. As another example, a theological institution could offer courses such as, ‘Religion and Ethnicity’, or ‘The Idolatry of Ethnicity’ and in so doing link ethnic studies with religious studies. Other courses that theological institution could offer are, ‘Nationhood and the Emergence of Ethnicity in Africa’, or ‘The History of Ethnic Conflict in Africa’ and in so doing link ethnic studies with historical studies, or even offer, ‘Ethnicity and Conflict in Africa’, and in so doing link ethnic studies with peace and reconciliation studies etc. This approach in contradistinction from the multidisciplinary approach above is at times referred to a an ‘interdisciplinary’ approach to studies and seems to be the one preferred in introducing HIV&AIDS studies in the curriculum of TE in Africa.  

Ethnic Studies offered Across the Curriculum in TE in Africa

Another way in which ethnic studies can be offered in TE in Africa is through integrating or infusing ethnic studies across the already existing theological curriculum in a way that does not require new,
separate courses in ethnic studies. The subject of ethnicity would then be interwoven into all courses which are taught in a theological institution. So, for example, a lecturer of New Testament, might address the meaning and application of the oneness of God’s people advocated in Ephesians for African societies particularly the church which is riddled with ethnic tensions and barriers. In a theological studies course, the oneness of the human race could be pondered and its meaning for ethnic relations considered in a course such as ‘A New Humanity in Christ’. In a pastoral studies course on the local church one may wish to consider how ethnicity affects church congregations and to reflect on ways that such situations could be managed or overcome. In an ethics class the immorality of ethnicity could be considered and a rigorous ethical response mounted, alongside inculcating the virtue of tolerance and love, etc.

Infusion of ethnic studies in the curriculum of TE in Africa may necessitate investing in faculty in order for them to have the requisite knowledge in ethnic issues which would enable them to link ethnic issues with the courses they teach. Although investing in faculty for ethnic studies may be a hindrance, the advantage of such a way of offering ethnic studies in TE in Africa is that no new courses are added to the curriculum which is often tight and space in it competed for. This way of offering ethnic studies also brings about a critical dialogue between ethnic issues and various subject in the curriculum which is potentially helpful in bringing about actions and stands against ethnicity in Africa informed with knowledge, understanding and skills from different fields.

Ethnic Studies offered as General or Core Courses in TE in Africa

Last but not least, given the significance but largely negative nature of ethnicity in shaping Africa and the educational imperative thereby, courses in ethnic studies could be offered as part of the core or general courses which must be taken before graduation. This will mean that all students undertaking a theological education will have the benefit of acquisition of knowledge and understanding of ethnic issues, together with the advocacy that such knowledge and understanding call for. It is possible for such courses to be offered in a way that is specific to traditional or established theological disciplines. Here, for example, a theological institution could offer a core course in ethnic studies specific to those undertaking a biblical studies degree, or offer an ethnic course specific to those studying for a missions degree etc. Such a way of offering an emerging discipline was done some years back by Concordia Theological Seminary in the USA. In this instance the emerging field of study was ‘missions’ and it was offered in all the traditional theological disciplines by ‘mission professors’ who were ‘embedded in each of the traditional theological disciplines’.31

Conclusion

As I pointed out earlier, ethnicity is largely a negative force shaping most aspects of life in Africa, and a threat to the survival of African statehood as envisaged in the various national constitutions of African countries – a fact that may not be well appreciated. The point cannot be overstated that ethnicity is a crisis in Africa for it threatens the very survival of Africa. It is a life and death issue which is totally against God’s telos for his world. TE in Africa, therefore, would be failing Africa if it does not help students acquire, from the perspective of theology, knowledge and understanding of the forces of ethnicity, and skills through which they can counter these forces and contribute to a moral, peaceful and just society in the course of their work in the church and the world. Indeed, ethnic studies is an urgent need in TE in Africa.

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Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
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Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa


Introduction

From the days of Muhammad in Medina through the centuries to date, both the church and the umma have been concerned with the need to promote peaceful and fruitful relations between the two communities, as is evident from uncountable pronouncements made by their respective leaders at the least opportunity whether in the public and in private. The prophet married Maria, a Coptic Christian woman. He went ahead to marry a Jewess to emphasize the need for peaceful and permanent relations. These diplomatic marriages were meant to heal broken relations between the other community and the umma.

Post Muhammad periods saw different shades of relations between Christians and Muslims, ranging from mutual mistrust to violent clashes between them, depending on the caliph at the time and the context. The situation remains the same today in many parts of the world including African countries. The first caliph, Abu Bakar was concerned with the internal organization and consolidation of the young but shocked religion following the sudden death of the prophet, the second Umar ibn al-Khattab was an expansionist, taking the religion beyond the borders of Arabia to Egypt and Jerusalem. Christians and Jews living in Jerusalem in this period were treated with greater respect and kindness than they were treated under the Byzantine rule. In fact Christians who had previously been under Byzantine rule quite probably found they now fared better than before. 1 Uthman ibn Affan and Ali ibn Abu Talib had enough of internal crisis culminating in the first civil war among Muslims at Siffin in 656AD. This paper intends to discuss the varied nature and courses of relations between Christians and Muslims in history, from Medina through Europe to West Africa. All these historical happenings have direct bearing in the churches of Africa today. I will discuss the topic under separate sub titles – Christians and nascent Islam (from Muhammad to Ali ibn Abu Talib); Christian-Muslim encounters under the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties (661AD to 1258AD); the crusades – the roots of conflicts between Christians and Muslims; the colonial enterprise – another twist to the conflicts; response to colonial rule in West Africa; the Post-Modern world order and its effects on Christian-Muslim relations in Africa. I will finally draw out some lessons for theological education for the Church in West Africa today, conclusions which call for a paradigm shift in theological education in Africa to be more inclusive than it is at the moment.

Christians and Nascent Islam (from Muhammad to Ali ibn Abu Talib)

A cursory look at the history of the Muslim-Christian debates begins with the Prophet himself. The Qur’an contains a substantial amount of material about Christianity, some of which portrays the Christian faith favourably while much of it warns against the mistakenness of Christianity. The greatest part of these teachings concerns the nature of Christ, who – it repeatedly asserts – was no more than a human warmer. The Qur’an refers to Christ as just a prophet, who was granted many miraculous signs by God, but he was no greater than prophets before and after him, a human being and servant of the transcendent divinity. 2

Naturally, Muslims at the time and throughout the generations have been influenced very deeply by this

2 See G. Parrinder, Jesus in the Qur’an (London: 1965) for his discussion of them.
teaching of Qur’an and rarely demonstrated any independent estimation of Christianity. They have never indeed thought it necessary to do any independent estimation of Christianity. As a result of this teaching when Muslims met (and still meet) with Christians to explore and compare beliefs they already had with them information and attitudes that were largely formulated from the Qur’an.

From the time of Muhammad in Medina to the end of the reign of Ali ibn Abu Talib, the fourth caliph, records of clear meetings and inter-changes between Muslims and Christians are rare. Records of clear meetings and inter-changes survive however from the period of the Umayyad onwards.

Christian-Muslim Encounters under the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties (661AD to 1258AD)

The Umayyad era saw further expansion of the Muslim frontiers but their strong spirit of Arabism coupled with their unpopular religious standing made them to appear corrupt and religiously unacceptable to the generality of the umma. In the period of the Umayyad dynasty we begin to find records of clear meetings and inter-changes between Muslims and Christians. The earliest and best known example include the works of John of Damascus and Theodor Abu Qurra, and later the long defense of Christianity which Timothy I gave before the Caliph al-Mahdi in about 781AD. However, the first works of Muslims which survive in quantity date from the beginning of the ninth century when the Mu’tazilite theologians of Basra and Baghdad were laying the foundations of Islamic systematic theology. Almost all the Muslim masters of this period are known to have written refutations of Christianity. One of the major themes of Muslim polemics was the nature of Christ. This theme rose repeatedly from the Qur’an.

Muslim polemicists attacked this teaching from many angles. Firstly, with respect to the nature of God, stating that the one divine God could not have been a son or an equal partner and still be fully divine. For them to have a son would reduce the divine being to the level of humankind, and to have partners equal to himself would amount to a diminution of his godliness.

Secondly, with respect to Jesus himself they argued that he was unquestionably human and nothing more. They based their argument on the fact that he grew up as a child to man and suffered death, that he was limited in knowledge and that he regarded himself inferior to God. Most polemicists compared the miracle Jesus performed with those performed by the Old Testament prophets as well as those of Muhammad himself and discovered parallels for his miracles of feeding the thousands of people, walking on the sea, reviving the dead and his virgin birth.

In addition Muslim polemicists of the ninth century stressed the incoherence of Christian teaching. They referred constantly to the problems attendant to the incarnation, raising queries on how one being could be both human and divine, how God can die and how he could control the universe if he was on earth. Other themes attacked were the Trinity, a teaching they considered was riddled with inconsistencies, on a purely numerical level, three cannot be one, on theological level they said three identical beings could not be determinants of the actual being of God himself and so they must be accidental and not identical with absolute reality of the divine being.

Yet under the Abbasids dynasty Christians enjoyed their greatest period of favour and good relations with the umma. Christians could move through these centuries (700 to 1000 AD) with some ease. They were nonetheless required to pay the jizya, protectorate tax in return as ahludhimmah, protected people as laid down for subject people of Muslims, they were forbidden to bear arms. However, one hears of Christian secretaries who were in influential positions and were able to turn imperial policy to their own favour, of Christian physicians whom the caliphs preferred to Muslims and Christian accountants serving the caliphs. Still under the Abbasids Christians rendered an important service to Islam and future

4 W. M. Watt in his Islamic Philosophy and Theology (Edinburgh: 1985) traces early Islamic intellectual developments.
generations by transmitting the thought of the ancient world. The House of Wisdom set up in Baghdad under the early Abbasid caliphs was entirely staffed by Christians engaged upon tasks of translating philosophical, scientific and other texts from Greek and Syriac into Arabic. The best know among these translators was Hunayn ibn Ishaq who is acknowledged as an accomplished translator who made a totally reliable Arabic versions of the originals. He and his colleagues’ efforts were perhaps appreciated by the Muslim intellectuals for whom they worked.

In spite of the seemingly good relations with their Muslim superiors, life under Muslim rule was not always easy for Christians. Technically, they were to conduct themselves according to the principles laid down in the so-called Convention of ‘Umar, the second Caliph. This was enforced from time to time as political expediency required. Under this Convention Christians were expected to wear distinctive dress, forbidden to conduct their services publicly, or make their call to service, and most serious of all they were not allowed to build any new churches or would have them destroyed. Finally, they were not allowed to erect or carry the cross in public. There is evidence to suggest that tightest restrictions coincided with periods of political instability, which suggests that Christians may have been used as scapegoats by nervous governments. Fortunately they were not often enforced methodically or for long periods, though the caliph al-Muttawakil does seem to have applied them with unusual severity in the years around 850 AD following. Under his rule all new churches were destroyed while Christians were ordered to wear yellow markings on their clothes. He ordered Christian graves to be destroyed, Christian officials were dismissed from state services, Christian children were removed from Muslim schools, and images of devils were placed on the doors of Christian homes. Al-Muttawakil was a cruel fanatic, but the fact that his steps were hardly ever repeated in early Islamic times testified to the normally lenient treatment Christians received.

To some measure Christians may have even deserved the harsh treatment of al-Muttawakil. A letter written a few years by the polymath Abu Uthman al-Jahiz, complains in its opening paragraphs of Christian abuses of the tolerance shown them within the Muslim empire: they take advantage of their respected positions as theologians, doctors, astronomers, secretaries, perfumers and money changers, they ignore official edicts, avoid taxes, poke fun at Islamic traditions, corrupt the minds of young and weak Muslims and show scant regard for those among whom they live. In this letter it can be inferred that Christians saw themselves as socially and intellectually elite and their neighbours as inferior.

Even though the details of the letter suggest some exaggeration, yet it is not surprising that Muslim resentment at what would be seen as haughtiness should occasionally boil over into anger.

Thomas suggests that in the midst of this somewhat

…unstable though tolerant social background relations of a distinctly religious nature were characterized by the contrasting qualities of respect and vehement disagreement. In social terms, the Christian denominations were allowed to order their own affairs, and the religious hierarchy was permitted to go about its business… Muslims commonly attended feast-day services in churches to witness the drama of the liturgy being enacted.

The socio-religious basket of this period appeared blended with tolerance for Christians and fun for their religious activities both by themselves and for the admiration of their Muslim neighbor as the above quotations testifies.

Yet the Abbasids sought the control of the churches by bringing all denominations under the overall responsibility of the Nestorian patriarch of Baghdad whose election the Abbasids supervised. Even then

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5 W. M. Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*.  
8 David Thomas, ‘Early Muslim relations with Christianity’, 25.

*Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa*
there is enough evidence to suggest that sufficient freedom was allowed the patriarch to use his discretion in the day-to-day running of the affairs of his religious community. Sometimes a patriarch may have the singular honour to hold dialogue with the caliph with reference to the Christian doctrines. For example, the caliph al-Mahdi spent two days in dialogue with the patriarch Timothy I, mentioned above. 

During the reign of caliph al-Ma’ mun Christian patriarchs, together with leaders of Jews, Zoroastrians and others debated questions of religion under the leadership and guidance of the caliph himself.

All the above imply that Muslims under the Abbasid caliphate generally held Christians with considerable respect even though there were instances of Christian show of arrogance thus incurring the anger of their Muslim neighbours.

**The Crusades: The Roots of Conflicts between Christians and Muslims**

The crusades were a series of religiously sanctioned military campaigns, called by the pope and waged by European kings and nobles who volunteered to take up the cross with the sole objective of restoring Christian control of the Holy Land. The crusaders came from all over Western Europe and fought a series of disconnected campaigns between 1095 AD and 1291. Historians have numbered these campaigns. Similar campaigns in Spain and Eastern Europe continued into the 15th century. The crusades were fought mainly by the Western European Church against Muslims and Greek Orthodox Christians in Byzantium. Orthodox Christians also took part in fighting against Islamic forces in some crusades.

The crusades originally had the aim of recapturing Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Muslim rule and their campaigns were launched in response to a call from the leaders of the Byzantine Empire for help to fight the expansion of the Muslim Seljuk Turks into Anatolia. The immediate cause of the first crusade was the Byzantine emperor Alexius I’s appeal to Pope Urban II for mercenaries to help him resist Muslim advances into territory of the Byzantine Empire. In 1071, in the battle of Manzikert, the Byzantine Empire was defeated, leading to the loss of all of Asia Minor (modern Turkey) except the coastlands. Up to this point there had been a long history of losing territories (Jerusalem, Spain, Antioch and many western European cities) to the religious enemy. This created a powerful motive to respond to Byzantine emperor Alexius I’s call for holy war to defend Christendom, and to recapture the lost lands beginning with Jerusalem. Following this appeal Pope Urban defined and launched the crusades at the Council of Clermont in 1095AD. The Pope was moved by the urgent appeal for help from the emperor Alexius I. Urban’s solution was announced on the last day of the Council when the Pope suddenly proclaimed the crusade against ‘the infidel Muslims’, contrasting the sanctity of Jerusalem and the holy places with the plunder and desecration by the infidel Turks. The crusades though using religion could be seen as being more political, adventurous and economic than religious. We say this for three reasons.

Firstly, by 1000AD the East/ West schism in the church had created a deep religio-political friction between Western and Eastern Europe and the Muslim easy victories in the East and West could partly be attributed to the schism. In the mind of Pope Urban a crusade could therefore serve to reunite Christendom, bolster the papacy, and could perhaps bring the east under his control. For this reason the first crusade even though called with a religious tone had political undercurrents.

Secondly, the crusades had some temporary successes, but the crusaders were eventually forced out of the Holy Land. Nevertheless the crusades had major far-reaching political, economic and social impacts on Europe. Because of internal conflicts among Christian kingdoms and political powers, some of the crusade

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9 David Thomas, ‘Early Muslim relations with Christianity’, referring to A. Mingana, ‘The apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph Mahdi’.

10 A traditional numbering scheme for the crusades totals nine during the 11th to the 13th centuries. This division is arbitrary and excludes many expeditions of 1101, 1107-1110, 1147-1149, 1209, 1212.
expeditions were diverted from their original aim, such as the fourth crusade, which resulted in the sacking of Constantinople and the partition of the Byzantine empire between Venice and the crusaders.

Thirdly, when an enemy refused to surrender the crusaders massacred the Muslim inhabitants, destroyed mosques, and pillaged the city in line with military standard practice. The Jews and Muslims fought together to defend Jerusalem against the invading Franks. They were not successful though and in 1099 the crusaders entered the city. They proceeded to massacre the remaining Jewish and Muslim civilians and pillaged or destroyed mosques and the city itself. This act negated the original aim of the crusade, to recapture the holy Land from the infidel Muslims.

**Colonialism: A New Twist to the Conflicts**

The Renaissance and the industrial revolution of Europe were resurrection events that shot Europe into the limelight. The Arab world went down completely and never to be heard of again until the oil boom of the late 20th century (1970s) brought them back among world power brokers.

With the industrial revolution the European quest to rule the whole world came with it, combined with the interest to pillage the wealth of the world natural resources in the name of feeding the industries with raw material. Europe used colonization to annex the material wealth of Asia, America, the Middle East, the Gulf, and Africa to build their empires from the ashes of the ancient ones.11 Britain, France Portugal and Belgium became the lead colonizers, especially of Africa. Germany joined in later but did not go far because of its rivalry with Britain in the World Wars. Several countries of the world came under British and French imperial rule. Readers may recall how Europeans sat in Berlin (1884-1885) to share the lands of Africa among themselves and immediately moved in to occupy and plunder the wealth of the continent. Similar plunder of Asia and the Middle East had started earlier by the same people. Colonialism took the Christian-Muslim problems to another level.

By the middle 1800s Muslims in India and other parts of Asia and the Middle East were revolting against the continued occupation of their land by European kafirun, pagans. The Indian mutiny of 1857 was a particular case in point. Muslims did so using religion as a rallying point for inspiration, power and unity. They constantly referred to the historical depth, power and strength of Muslims when they were united and lived under one rule and drew inspiration from it. In Islam Muslims felt they had a self-image to defend.

We shall be treating the effects of the colonial rule and counter actions and how they affected Christians and Muslims in West Africa but before I want to discuss how the self-image concept is applied by Muslims to the non-Muslim, including the West. In the words of Montgomery Watt ‘the traditional self-image of Islam divides the world into two clear distinctions, dar al-Islam and dar al-harb. At least this is the kind of extrapolation of the expansion of the Islamic state in the century after Muhammad’s death’.12 The dar al-Islam where the shari’a is fully observed, is seen as continuing to expand – perhaps until it includes the whole world. On the other hand the non-Islamic part of the world is seen as potentially hostile and as an abode of war.

Muslim traditionalists today hold that the expansion of the Islamic state was not colonialism, but was the bringing of the fuller spiritual life to people hitherto deprived of it. Western scholars of Islam who try to suggest that the Islamic expansion was colonalist are charged with making false accusations.13 The perception of the world as hostile to Islam goes back to the days before the hijra. Many of the earlier passages of the Qur’an are critical of the attitudes and practices of the Meccan merchants and the latter

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11 Colonialism is the policy and practice of so called powerful nation in extending control over the so called weaker peoples or areas. It is also known as imperialism.
naturally adopted a hostile position towards Muhammad and his followers. After the hijra and the attacks by the Muslims on the Meccan caravans, the hostility received a military expression. Thus the last ten years of Muhammad’s life can be characterized as a military struggle against his own opponents. This military struggle has always been explained by traditionalist Muslims as a struggle against opponents, not in order to bring about the spread of Islam, but to ensure the survival of the Muslims.

This perception of hostility has received a new dimension in modern and post-modern times as a result of Muslims’ study of the history of the West. As a result many Muslims now see colonialism as a continuation of the aggression of Christians against the Islamic world which was begun by the Crusades. According to Watt this is not a ‘folk-memory’ but is a new perception which is based on what Muslims have learnt in the West.14

If this perception were based on folk-memory there could be a hope of ending it with a certain generation but since it is based on knowledge, which is passed on from generation to generation, the struggle and hostility between the two religions would last a very long time. No doubt there is some justification for Muslims seeing the Crusades as an early stage of the struggle between the Islamic world and Christian Europe.

A Muslim is given two options to go by when his right to practice his faith is denied by any power: firstly, he must fight back in self defence, and become a mujāhid or, secondly, if he cannot fight or fails to fight, he should emigrate and become a muhājir.15 Islamist Muslims of this post-modern era still believe in this principle, and for some the best option is to fight back. This is of course a somewhat crude attempt to apply the ideas of Muhammad’s time to modern conditions. The central point for Muslims here is that while a religion is primarily something spiritual, yet its physical embodiment is also important and indeed is a part of it. This gives those Christians more food for thought who think that religion is only just something spiritual without any physical embodiment.

The place of jihad or holy war in Islamic thought must also be considered. The word properly means ‘striving’ or ‘effort’, but there are several instances in the Qur’an when the phrase ‘those who have striven in the way of God with wealth and person’, and this is clearly meant for those who take part in military campaigns. In the same way there are verses permitting or commanding fighting. The earliest of such verses is Surah 22.39; 8.39. These are early surat and may have been abrogated by later ones forbidding fighting for the sake of it. Maududi however, believed that jihad is the overall defence of Islam and a Muslim must make sacrifices to protect the interests of Muslims and of Islam. He goes on to say:

Jihad is a part of this overall defence of Islam. Jihad means struggle in the utmost of one’s capacity. A man who exerts himself physically or mentally or spends his wealth in the way of Allah is indeed engaged in jihad. But in the language of shari’ah this word is used particularly for the war that is waged solely in name of Allah and against those who perpetrate oppression as enemies of Islam. This extreme sacrifice of lives devolves on all Muslims...16

We now continue with our discussion of European interruption in West Africa, which started in earnest in the late 1880s when France, Britain and Portugal had strong footholds in the sub region. France possessed a relatively large colony in Senegal with other settlements along the West African coast. The British were strong in Freetown and surrounding peninsula, in the island and colony of Lagos, in the southern parts of the Gold Coast, now Ghana and in Banjul, which they called Bathurst. The Portuguese

14 W. M. Watt, Islamic Fundamentalism and Modernity. If this perception were based on folk-memory there could be a hope of ending it with a certain generation but since it is based on acquired knowledge, which is passed on from generation to generation, the struggle and hostility between the two would last a very long time.


16 Maududi, Towards Understanding Islam (Lahore, 1960), 150.
were in Cachu and Bissau, which now are parts of modern day Guinea Bissau and in the islands of Sao Tome and Cape Verde.

These European colonialists frequently interfered in the internal affairs of their West African colonies, a case in point is the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the incessant wars with Asante of the Gold Coast. As mentioned earlier Germany, a late comer into the colonization exercise after the Berlin Conference of 1884-5 laid claim to Togo and the Cameroons.

France acquired the largest amount of territory and began with the intention of administering it as a single unit and as an extension of France. Also known as the policy of assimilation West Africa under French rule was an extension of France. On paper the policy of Assimilation was good and ideal but in practice things turned out totally differently. Just a very small minority of West Africans obtained French citizenship and therefore equal rights as white Frenchmen and women. Above all the policy of ‘assimilation’ was abandoned for a policy of ‘association’. This was a system by which France sought to administer her West African colonies through re-organised West African institutions rather than relying solely on French institutions.

Although France occupied almost three times as much of West African territory as the British, the British colonies had a combined population twice the size of that found in the French West Africa. The administrative policy applied by Britain throughout most of her former West African colonies was that of ‘indirect rule’; a policy which in different areas took on different forms and meant different things to both the colonist and the colonized. In theory, and sometimes in practice this policy ‘gave local traditional authorities a say, and sometimes too big a say of the indigenous political constitutions and political systems’. This gave opportunity for some rulers to be overly powerful and in some cases lower chiefs were elevated to high, beyond measure levels. Prior to colonial interruption in West Africa the kings and chiefs were ultimately responsible in some form or other to those over whom they ruled, but with colonialism responsibility to the people was replaced by responsibility to the colonial administration.

How did Islam and Christianity fare in West Africa under the colonial powers of France and Britain? Did the imperial governments have any specific policy for religion, including Islam and Christianity? According to Gouilly, “French ‘policy’ towards Islam was ‘often hostile, sometimes favourable…made up of contradictions…’ of sharp twists and turns”. Gouilly has aptly summarized the French attitude to Islam within its colonies. There is disagreement among scholars whether the colonialists had a policy on Islam or not. There may not have been a written down policy but the attitude the powers took implied their policy, whether printed or otherwise. The British system of indirect rule was first experimented in Northern Nigeria in 1909 by Lord Lugard, and later extended to other British colonies. The policy gave greater freedom to Islam and Muslim emirs across the sub-continent. On the contrary the same British colonialists put cubs in the movements of Christian missionaries to localities perceived to be Islamic. For instance, the emir of Northern Nigeria were made overlords over many ethnic majors because the British simply took that the Muslims were better organized with the established administrative and legal systems and

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17 West Africa according to this policy known was simply an extension of France and was referred to in Paris as part of ‘Overseas France’, la France d’Outre-mer. Some of the many versions of assimilation, France’s African colonial subjects were to be given the same rights and treatment as Frenchmen. There was to be no difference between the two sets of citizen, that education could eliminate all differences. In addition there was to be political, administrative and economic identity between France and her West African colonies. See M. Crowder, Senegal: a study of French Assimilation Policy (Oxford, 1962) and Peter B. Clarke, West Africa and Islam; A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century (London: Edward Arnold, 1982), 185.
18 Clarke, West Africa and Islam, 187.
heads. Boer quotes an anonymous writer in a local Nigeria Newspaper, published during the frequent clashes between Muslims and Christians in the 1990s. He says:

Central to it all ‘is the issue of the political and administrative control of the area. Since colonial time political power has been with a tiny minority of Hausa in Zangon Kataf because the British imposed Zaria emirate rule on the people of the area… a transit settlement of Hausa traders.’

In this book, volume three of a series of publications on the continued strained relations between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria Boer concentrated on the Christian view on the causes for the Christian-Muslims conflicts in Nigeria, mainly Northern Nigeria. Similar such impositions and preference for Islam were made in Northern Ghana, a practice that delayed western educational development in those parts of northern Ghana.

Luggard’s successors continued the practice of indirect rule without giving any consideration to the system’s limitations and impracticability in many areas of Nigeria or elsewhere. What seemed to have worked well in Borno, the north-east of Nigeria or in parts of the Gambia with long traditions of strong central administrations could not necessarily be made to operate effectively in the eastern or western parts of Nigeria and elsewhere where the traditional system of government was different. In the end West African states as we have them today are more artificial than natural. They were colonial fabrications bringing hitherto unrelated and independent people’s groups together under imposed leaders.

Three factors made the full scale colonization of the West African states in the 19th century easy for the imperial powers. These are: the traditional African’s boundless hospitality; the supply of the most advanced military equipment available; benefits from the industrialization. Apart from the boundless hospitality of the African which appears to have reduced to some extent the latter two factors have since developed to different levels in the West with their distribution to the rest of the world assuming unethical and complex dimensions even today.

The Post-Modern World Order and Its Effects on Christian-Muslim Relations

The debate of the era of modern and post-modern is an interesting and perhaps unending one. When does one end and when did the post-modern era begin? That debate is beyond the scope of this paper. We consider post-modern, for the purposes of this paper to begin in the latter parts of the 20th century, coinciding with Samuel P. Huntington’s publication of The clash of civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, and worldwide consciousness of “globalization” with their rippling effects on the world order. The ‘Clash of Civilizations’ is a theory, proposed by political scientist Huntington, that people's cultural and religious identities will be the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War world. This theory was originally formulated in a 1992 lecture at the American Enterprise Institute, which was then developed in a 1993 Foreign Affairs article titled "The Clash of Civilizations", in response to Francis Fukuyama's 1992 book, The End of History and the Last Man. Huntington later expanded his thesis in a 1996 book The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.

The author began his thinking by surveying the diverse theories about the nature of global politics in the post-Cold War period. Some theorists and writers had argued that human rights, liberal democracy and capitalist free market economy had become the only remaining ideological alternative for nations in the

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22 The first western type of school to be opened in Northern Ghana was by the Catholic Missionaries in Navrongo in 1909, with colonial authorities opening their first in Tamale in 1912, by which time the church had opened such schools nearly eighty years ago in the south of the Gold Coast. See Samwini, The Muslim resurgence in Ghana, 50-1.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
post-Cold War world. Specifically, Francis Fukuyama had argued earlier that the world had reached the 'end of history' in a Hegelian sense.

Huntington on his part believed that "while the age of ideology had ended, the world had only reverted to a normal state of affairs characterized by cultural conflict". He argues that the primary axis of conflict in the future will be along "cultural and religious lines...". As an extension, he posits that the concept of different civilizations, as the highest rank of cultural identity, will become increasingly useful in analyzing the potential for conflict.

Ethiopia and Haiti instead of belonging to one of the "major" civilizations, are "Lone" countries, while Israel is considered a unique state with its own civilization, but is extremely similar to the West. Huntington also believes that the Anglophone Caribbean, former British colonies in the Caribbean, constitutes a distinct entity.

Huntington divided the world into the "major civilizations" in his thesis as such:

- Western civilization, centered on Australia, Northern America, and Europe (excluding Orthodox Eastern and South-Eastern Europe but including Catholic Central and East-Central Europe); Latin America. Includes Central America (excluding Belize), South America (excluding the Guianas), Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico may be considered a part of Western civilization, though it has slightly distinct social and political structures from Europe and Northern America;
- The Orthodox world of the former Soviet Union (excluding the Baltic states, most of Central Asia and Azerbaijan), the former Yugoslavia (excluding Slovenia and Croatia), Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, and Romania;
- The Eastern world is the mix of the Buddhist, Sinic, Hindu, and Japonic civilizations;
- The Muslim world of the Greater Middle East (excluding Armenia, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Georgia, Greece, Israel, Kazakhstan, Malta and South Sudan), northern West Africa, Albania, Bangladesh, Brunei, Comoros, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Maldives;
- The civilization of Sub-Saharan Africa located in Southern Africa, Middle Africa (excluding Chad), East Africa (excluding the Horn of Africa, Comoros, Kenya, Mauritius, and Tanzania), Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Considered as a possible 8th civilization by Huntington;

Instead of belonging to one of the "major" civilizations, Ethiopia and Haiti are labeled as "Lone" countries. Israel could be considered a unique state with its own civilization, but one which is extremely similar to the West. Huntington also believes that the Anglophone Caribbean, former British colonies in the Caribbean, constitutes a distinct entity;

As a first observation our attention must be drawn to the groupings of the civilizations in the book. The West and its technology is put together as representing one civilization, Japan, the Asian Tigers, Russia, then Ethiopia and Haiti, Israel and the Anglophone Caribbean for different civilizations. The West generally knows only of Ethiopia to be the cradle of civilization in Africa. Take a curious look at the grouping of the rest of Africa. West Africa is among the Muslim world. Huntington used an important phrase above, “civilizations as the highest rank of cultural identity”. If indeed civilizations are to clash in the future can Africa clash with its own unique civilization? Or is Africa going to use the borrowed religions of Islam and Christianity as her cultural identity. The author refers to some African states, including Nigeria as cleft states whose civilization could swing to Islam. Another very important question worth asking is the place of African Christians in this new clash and arena of a new world order.

24 Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations. For the details of the nature of the conflict and various levels and communities to be involved please see the entire document.
The second major factor that will have long term effect on Christian-Muslim relations in West Africa is the depth of globalization in the sub region and how followers of the two religions identify with the global religious events that unfold between the western civilization and the Muslim world of the Greater Middle East.

Globalization refers to the increasing unification of the world's economic order through reduction of such barriers to international trade as tariffs, export fees, and import quotas. The goal is to increase material wealth, goods, and services through an international division of labor by efficiencies catalyzed by international relations, specialization and competition. It is the process by which regional economies, societies, and cultures have become integrated through communication, transportation, and trade. The term is most closely associated with the term economic globalization: the integration of national economies into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flows, migration, the spread of technology, and military presence.\(^{26}\)

However, globalization is usually recognized as being driven by a combination of economic, technological, sociocultural, political, and biological factors. The term can also refer to the transnational circulation of ideas, languages, or popular culture through acculturation. An aspect of the world which has gone through the process can be said to be globalized.

Against this view, an alternative approach is how globalization has actually decreased inter-cultural contacts while increasing the possibility of international and intra-national conflict. For the purposes of this paper may we be permitted to extend the definition of globalization to include globalization of religious events.

If it is permitted then the globalization of religion began to be manifest since September 11, 2001, popularly referred to as 9/11. The bombing of strategic and important places of America by al-Qaeda activists, the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the long standing complex problem of Israel and Palestine, the caricaturing of the image of Muhammad in a Danish Newspaper and other related issues. For example why should Muslims in Nigeria jubilate that American Embassy in Nairobi is bombed? Why should Nigerian Muslims demonstrate against the US when the latter invaded Iraq? Meanwhile in Ghana there were different reactions among the Muslim leadership. While the National Chief Imam of the sunni fraternity condemned the 9/11 event and called on Muslims in Ghana to see it as a terrorist act and unIslamic,\(^{27}\) his Ahmadiyya counterpart justified it and wondered why similar acts by individual Christians was not used against Christianity. How have West African Christians generally reacted to global religious occurrences, especially, between Christians and Muslims?

What Lessons for Theological Education for the Church in Africa

From the historical overview above we can draw at least seven lessons for theological education for the church in Africa today to serve as blueprints for meaningful education on Christian-Muslim relations and encounters with its Muslim neighbours. We shall list them without much elaboration.

Firstly, the church of pre-Islamic Middle East took the sentiments and spiritual needs of the Arabs for granted and did not bother to cater properly for those needs. It woke up too late to be faced with the reality of Islam, a movement started by the kin and kith of the Arab. The sentiments and spiritual needs of any

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\(^{27}\) Following the 9/11 destruction of the World Trade Centre the National chief Imam of Ghana called a Press conference on November 10, 2001 to condemn the act as unIslamic and referred to the perpetrators as not true Muslims. See *The Ghanaian Times*, November 11, 2001. Cf the Address of the Ameer and Missionary in Charge of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission Maulvi A. Wahab Adam to the Jama’at on the occasion of their National *jalsa salana* at the *bustan e Adam*, at Ashongman near Accra held from February 23-28, 2002.
minority group within the mission field of the church in Africa must be taken seriously and be made a case for theological study if the church in Africa is to avoid such historical pitfall.

Secondly, the harsh rule of the Byzantine empire and its use of state religion against the so-called heresies served as recipe for defection of vassals to join a new religious and political power in Islam. Theological education in Africa today should not be skewed to favour any exclusivist religious tendency by the state.

Thirdly, when the new Muslim lords recognized their need for knowledge, which they were aware could be provided by their Christian subjects they did not hesitate to use them. If theological educators find knowledge of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in people other than their own the church should not hesitate to use such people as resource persons.

Fourthly, it is imperative for the church in Africa to place the historical event of the crusades into proper educational context. It seems obvious from the adventures that Europe used religion in the 11th-13th century to perpetrate a socio-religious and political agenda against Muslims and Jews and Palestinian Christians of the time. Social, economic and political matters must be separated from Christianity, especially when they are seen as problems;

Fifthly, in this post-modern world theological curricula must be designed in a way that will equip will-be-clergy with adequate knowledge of Islam and the Muslims. It is a key task of African theological education to enable Christians to engage Muslims to work towards removal of all real or imaginary boundaries between them before global issues could lead to a more violent clash between the two religious traditions in Africa; I am aware that throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s Christian-Muslim Relations was taught as a course in the Nigeria Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomoso when Dr. Fola Lateju was there as a lecturer. That decade produced a good number of Pastors for the Baptist Church across Nigeria and West Africa. Some of these graduates have gone ahead to do higher degrees in the discipline while others are practicing interfaith Pastors on the field. Currently Islam and the History of Christian-Muslim Relations are being taught to undergraduates in the Department of Religious Studies at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. At the moment Religious Pluralism and Cooperation in Ghana is taught as core course for the Masters students of the Department. All these subjects are taught by Christian Islamicists.

Sixthly, the church in Africa must note that attitudes towards the use of force in religion are an important point of divergence between Muslims and Christians. Traditionalist Muslims, Islamists and many others hold that the right of a Muslim to observe the practices of his religion should be defended by force of arms if necessary. This point requires deeper understanding by church leaders and this leadership begins from theological institutions;

Seventhly and finally; the church in West Africa should know that violence is not the best alternative to any problem in Christian-Muslim relations. Instead communal violence of any sort in West Africa can be solved by religious leaders if they cooperate and collaborate in good times. Examples of this situation can be given of Ghana and the Gambia whose Muslim and Christian leaders cooperate and collaborate in many ways including joint electoral observations since 1996, as the case is with Ghana. Again it took the joint efforts of the leadership of Muslims and Christians in Liberia to bring the warring factions to a round table under ECOWAS watch in 1989. Yet religious cooperation and collaboration goes beyond interest. It requires knowledge and a bit of expertise. The Arabs tried the way of violence and it did not end any problem. The Europeans used violence and even colonialism included violence and also failed completely. How can Africa succeed if it would return to violence in this 21st century?
Conclusion

My thesis for this paper is short and clear. The relational challenges between Christians and Muslims are not a recent matter. The challenges between Christianity and Islam emerged right from the first day of the emergence of Islam. They existed through the days of the prophet, the caliphs and the dynasties. They were compounded by the crusaders and the European colonial enterprise. The case of the clash of civilizations should not be whisked away as having no religious relevance. It is indeed crucial as religion is being used each day to justify several happenings especially by Muslims. What is making these issues even more realistic and brings them closer to our door step is the globalization of everything, including any religious event or propaganda. What happens in one part of the world becomes real and visible in all other parts, including Africa, in a matter of seconds. The problem of one part of the world also becomes the immediate problem of Africa. As a solution to this we propose two steps: We need an intense and conscientious knowledge of “the other” through a deliberate theological curricula reform that will be inclusive of “the other”. And we need to strive for articulating a specific and distinct African theological identity. Islam and Christian-Muslim relations must be taught in-depth. Comparative Study of Religions is good and important. Yet with regard to the African context specific in-depth study of Islam and African indigenous religions is preferable. In my three years of theological and pastoral formation I remember the lecturer in Comparative Study of religions taking us only through Sufism in depth. No other aspect of Islam was treated however. Had I terminated my study of Islam at that time, I would have been totally unprepared to handle Muslims and Christian-Muslim relations. Theological Institutions and Departments of Religion of the secular Universities can lead this educational drive across the Africa continent. Perhaps a lasting solution could be found. The avoidance of conflict in advance is better than any resolution tried after a conflict has happened and spread already. Conflict can only be avoided if in good times people live as good neighbours. When things go bad, bad neighbours are never capable of solving some of the conflicts piled up. Good neighbourliness can be achieved through deep understanding of one another which in turn comes through proper education. In conclusion we propose a shift in the paradigm of theological education in Africa to make more it inclusive with regard to Christian-Muslim dialogue than it is at the moment.

Bibliography


Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
THE INCLUSION OF THE STUDY OF ISLAM AND CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS AS AN IMPERATIVE FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Johnson Mbilla

Introduction

The importance of the inclusion of the study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in theological institutions is better understood when one looks back at the rationale behind the founding of the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) over 50 years (1959) ago and the reality as it was then, as it is now, and perhaps as it will be in the future. The background to the founding of the organisation goes back to the political and religious climate of Africa in the 1950s. In that period, the political climate was marked by agitation of African nationalists’ movements to obtain independence from the colonial masters. There was a growing sense of togetherness then, as leaders of the nationalists’ movements preached the need for constructive relationships and co-operation of Africans across the diverse linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural frontiers.

On the religious front, Churches were very much aware that Christianity was portrayed by many as the religion of the colonialists, and the missionary presence seen as a symbol of the continuous presence of colonialism. In a situation as described, the churches were considering how they would adopt the ‘three-self’ phrase (self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating) once independence was obtained. It was in the area of self-propagation of the gospel that the seed of PROCMURA was sown. The missions that were quickly transformed into church denominations at the period were aware that in post-colonial Africa, nation states would evolve and nationals of a particular country would be made up of Christians and Muslims among others, and that the need for Christian-Muslim constructive engagement with Muslims in witness as co-citizens would be imperative.

This vision of the churches of the coming reality and what they needed to do about it was stifled by the lack of expertise to attend to such reality when it emerged. The situation was not helped by the fact that theological colleges at the time (as it seems to be the case at present) had little to say about Islam, and where anything was said; it was either clouded in ignorance, or otherwise contained a lot of the medieval polemical presentations and responses to the religion. The blanket crusading image of Islam as a religion of violence, and Muslims as enemies of Christianity, for example, had pervaded the minds of many Christian scholars as it still does in some circles today.

Apart from this perception or rather because of it, principles of Christian mission in relation to Muslims were not part of the theological training of priests and pastors either. Christian mission was very much focused on the propagation of the gospel to adherents of African Traditional Religion(s). It was in the context of all these that the need to evolve a programme specifically focusing on the Christian-Muslim encounter in independent Africa was to receive attention.

The Foundational Framework for the Founding of PROCMURA

Against the backdrop of the political and religious climate in the continent and the role the churches were to play in this, African Churches represented at the last meeting of the International Missionary Council

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1 We have put religion(s) because of the ongoing debate on whether or not the primordial religious heritage of Africans should be described as African Traditional religion or religions.
(IMC) Assembly held in Achimota in Accra, Ghana from December 28, 1957 to January 8, 1958 expressed the need to evolve a road map towards a more intensive study, and action plan in respect to the Protestant churches approach to Muslims in independent Africa. This resolve received added credence some few days later when the first All Africa Church Conference was held in Ibadan, Nigeria from January 10 to 20 1958, under the theme “The Church in a Changing Africa.”

At the conference, special attention was given to the issue of Islam which was raised at the Accra IMC conference. A paper delivered by Bishop S. O. Odutola, Anglican Bishop of Ondo in Nigeria, on the topic “Islam as it affects life in Nigeria” re-emphasised the concerns raised in Accra. Discussions stimulated by the paper centred on how Christians in Africa needed to interpret the Gospel in a more meaningful way to Muslims without violating the spirit of good neighbourliness. It was the considered view of the conference that the church in Africa in its bid to bear witness to Christ, should avoid medieval responses to Islam that led to polemics and eventually gave cause to the crusades. Avoidance of confrontation the conference concluded, required adequate and objective study of Islam and informed knowledge of the history of Muslims in the continent.

The importance of the conference and its proceedings rests on a number of equally important landmarks which are of immense relevance to PROCMURA as they are also to the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). In the first place the conference was of great historical significance since it was the first continental conference where over ninety African Church leaders, most of whom were meeting for the first time, teamed up with over sixty delegates from Asia, Europe and America to discuss pertinent issues that affected the life and ministry of the Churches in Africa as it faced up to the new political challenges of the period. In the second place it was the proceedings of this conference that added value to the proceedings of the Accra conference and thereby laid the foundation for the founding of the Islam in Africa Project (IAP) now PROCMURA in 1959, as it also laid the foundation for the founding of the AACC in 1963.

On PROCMURA, and in the context of this paper, the All Africa Church Conference gave hints of the nature of the African Protestant Churches’ engagement with Islam and Muslims when it discussed the importance of interpreting the Gospel in a more meaningful way, and to ensure that in Christian propagation of the Gospel, medieval responses to Islam which eventually contributed to the crusades would be avoided. Of greater importance to the focus of this paper is the statement that if the churches in Africa had to avoid confrontation, it was imperative for them to have adequate and objective study of Islam and knowledge of the history of Muslims in the continent.

This statement, it has to be said, was valid then, as it is now. For if the churches in Africa have to constructively relate with Muslims for peace and peaceful co-existence, for example, it is imperative that they have informed knowledge of Islam and of Muslims. Arguably, such knowledge can only appropriately be obtained if theological institutions in the continent introduce the study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations into their curricula and ensure that there are competent people to handle the subject objectively.

After the Accra and Ibadan conferences, the journey towards the establishment of PROCMURA moved from Africa to Europe and North America. For at about the same time or immediately after the African churches discussed the most appropriate approach to Islam in the African context, the Missionary Society of the Netherlands Reformed Church offered to send to Africa, one or more specially trained personnel in Islam to assist the African churches in their quest to have a meaningful encounter with Muslims. The International Missionary Council, perhaps aware of the Dutch intentions and certainly having in mind the issues raised by the African Churches in Accra and Ibadan, facilitated a consultation of about twenty

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missionary leaders drawn from different countries in Europe at Oegstgeest in the Netherlands in September 1958.

The consultation, which was held under the theme “Islam in Africa Project” was to discuss how Europe could be of help to the African churches in their stated objective of constructively relating with Muslims in witness and co-existence. The Oegstgeest meeting was followed by a similar meeting in Hartford, Connecticut, in the United States of America in October 1958 with the same objective of how the United States on its part could be of assistance to the African Churches. Documents of the Oegstgeest meeting which is readily available shows clearly that it toed the All Africa Church Conference statement of a none confrontational approach to Islam and Muslims when it states: “There should be a new approach, not of opposition, but of friendship, patience and love which seeks to transcend the inherited stereotypes of both Christianity and Islam in their institutionalised forms.”

A resolution was tabled at the consultation to send a messenger to West Africa and some parts of East Africa to embark on a fact-finding mission. Rev. Pierre Benignus of the Paris Missionary Society who was also the secretary to the consultation was chosen to make the trip. He was mandated to consult with leaders of Protestant and Anglican churches and missions in Africa on what practical steps could be taken to assist them in their stated task of a Christian approach to Islam. Rev. Benignus’ trip took him to Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Kenya and Tanzania among others. His findings and recommendations led to the founding of the IAP now PROCMURA which was inaugurated in 1959 upon the arrival of Wim Bijlefeld in Numan in Northern Nigeria in November, 1959. Wim Bijlefeld who was the first Area Adviser of PROCMURA and later its first General Adviser, was from the Missionary Society of the Netherlands Reformed Church.

When Wim Bijlefeld arrived and briefly stayed in Numan before moving to Jos the current capital city of the Plateau State of the northern part of Nigeria which became his permanent base. On his arrival in Jos, it did not take long for him to recognise from his interaction with Christian leaders that “the greatest problem with regard to Christian relations with Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa was lack of knowledge and understanding of Islam.”

The arrival of Bijlefeld marked the beginning of the Islam in Africa Project (IAP) whose name changed in 1987 to Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA), and in 2003, to Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA). It is interesting and important to note that the change of name from ‘project’ to ‘programme’ stemmed from PROCMURA’s General Council’s understanding that Christian-Muslim relations will continue to get complicated to being complex until (humanly speaking) Christ returns. This statement does not depict resignation to fate. It depicts reality and an appeal to the churches in the continent to take the issue seriously instead of being complacent and thinking that such complexity is a passing phase in the history of Christian-Muslim relations in Africa and indeed, the world.

With this historical brief on how PROCMURA came into existence and its development and change of name twice, it can be summarised that the seed of PROCMURA, was sown in Accra in 1957, groomed in Ibadan in 1958, nurtured in Oegstgeest in September 1958, and transplanted as an African continental

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5 In PROCMURA, ‘Area Adviser’ denotes a country adviser to the churches in any given country on Islam and Christian-Muslim relations while the term ‘General Adviser’ denotes a person who is the General overseer of PROCMURA’s programmes in the entire continent. The word Adviser is used to stress that in the Christian-Muslim encounter PROCMURA only advises the churches and does not impose its will on them.
7 See PROCMURA General Council meeting minutes of 2003, which is at the PROCMURA Central office in Nairobi.
organisation in 1959. The continuous existence of PROCMURA in good times and not so good times in the encounter between Christianity and Islam in some parts of the continent, shows that the forefathers and foremothers of the churches in Africa were visionary and more conscious of the importance of Christian-Muslim relations within the ministry of the Churches in Africa than (perhaps) the churches of today, who are more reactive than proactive in the Christian-Muslim encounter in the continent.

In the next section, we shall be looking at the importance of study and research in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations as essential prerequisites for any meaningful encounter between Christians and Muslims and indeed within the life and ministry of any church that seek to have informed relations with Muslims in witness and for peace and peaceful co-existence. We shall discuss this in the light of PROCMURA’s stated objectives of faithful Christian witness in an interfaith environment of Christians and Muslims that respects the spirit of good neighbourliness, and Christian constructive engagement with Muslims for peace and peaceful co-existence towards the holistic development of the human family and the environment.8 We shall do this by refocusing our attention on how PROCMURA from its inception then as now, continue to stress the relevance and in fact the imperative of including the study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in theological institutions.

Making a Case for the Inclusion of the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in Theological Institutions in Africa

As stated earlier, from its inception PROCMURA has always argued that formal Christian-Muslim relations cannot be entered into and be found to be fruitful, except with some knowledge of Islam as a religion and the history of Muslims within the context in which the church finds itself in ministry. The opening statement of PROCMURA’s first constitution which was formulated in the 1960s attests to this when it outlines the focus and goal of PROCMURA thus: “To keep before the churches in Africa, their responsibility for understanding Islam and the Muslims in their region in view of the church’s task of interpreting the Gospel of Jesus Christ faithfully in the Muslim World, and to effect the research and education necessary for this.”9

A few comments on this constitutional statement which also outlines PROCMURA’s role would be helpful:

1. That the responsibility for understanding their neighbour, the Muslim, whose religion is Islam, rests with the churches. PROCMURA only acts as a catalyst or a service-programme that assists the churches to take their responsibility in relation to Islam and Muslims seriously.

2. That such understanding the constitutional statement elaborates, requires research and education which, as we have earlier argued, is only attainable in an appropriate manner if and when theological formation of priests and pastors are carried out in theological institutions that incorporate the teaching of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in their curricula and have competent scholars to handle the subject.

3. That the objective of such research and study is to equip the Churches in their task of interpreting the Gospel faithfully in the ‘Muslim World.’10 The statement as may be recognised, does not see

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8 For details of What PROCMURA is and what it does, visit the PROCMURA website: procmura-prica.org/en.
9 This constitutional statement of PROCMURA from its inception was maintained when the constitution went through a major review in 2003, thus indicating that the issues in the 1960s have in essence not changed in 21st century.
10 The ‘Muslim World’ in the minds of the originators of the maiden constitutional statement as we in PROCMURA are made to understand, is not just the world of Islam but more importantly the mind-set of Muslims concerning the Gospel and the Christian faith.
the interpretation of the Gospel to the ‘Muslim World’ as an option for the churches – it assumes, in fact takes for granted, that the churches are aware that it is their task and therefore not an option.\(^ {11} \)

On PROCMURA’s second principle of Christian constructive engagement with Muslims for peace in society and peaceful co-existence between adherents of the two communities the above need for research and education are important as they are relevant. The justification of cooperation and collaboration find credence in the preamble of the PROCMURA 2003 constitutional statement which reads:

> Whereas Christian Witness is an integral part of Christian identity, and whereas working towards peace on earth is to follow the example of Jesus Christ who is Himself the “Prince of Peace”, churches in Africa in consort with the church universal established the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa, to work through Area Committees of the Churches in Africa, to promote contextual Witness amidst the Muslim presence, and constructive inter-religious engagement between Christians and Muslims for peaceful co-existence in Africa in obedience to the triune God in whom we live and move and have our being.\(^ {12} \)

The combination of the principle of contextual Christian witness as explained and elaborated on in the 2003 PROCMURA constitution and which has been the bedrock of PROCMURA’s work since its inception finds value in Christian biblical thinking and justification. For, it is Jesus the Christ who is quoted as having said to his disciples you are my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the world (Acts 1:8) whose birth was announced with the angels’ song ‘Peace on earth and goodwill among humankind with whom he is well pleased.’ (Luke 2:14). In fact in Christian biblical exegesis, Jesus is referred to as the ‘Prince of Peace’ (Isaiah 9:6). The constitutional statement of PROCMURA therefore seeks to reemphasise the obvious which is that Christian commitment to be witnesses to Christ and work to promote peace is following the directive and example of Christ; that witness and peacemaking in Christian-Muslim relations have to be held together in tension as they are paradoxical but not contradictory.

Having put forward the main features of PROCMURA’s foundational thinking on Christian-Muslim relations we would want to turn our attention to pertinent issues in our contemporary situation that informs the dire need for theological institutions to take seriously, the study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations if theology has to be relevant and not far removed from the existential reality of the human being – indeed the African.

**Main Features of Theology**

Theology or God-talk is generally understood to be the attempt of adherents of a faith such as Christianity to present their statements of belief consistently, and to assign to such statements their specific place within the context of all other worldly relations such as nature, history etc.

The main themes of theology have always been God, humankind, the world, salvation, and eschatology (or the study of last times). These themes are indispensable components of any theological education anywhere. However, in terms of the period, the context, as well as the environment in which these themes have to be studied, there ought to be areas of emphasis so as to make theology relevant to any given society. In our time and in the foreseeable future, Islam and Christian-Muslim relations is most certainly the subject that can no longer be ignored except if we were to suggest that theology (as mentioned above) should be far removed from the reality of human existence and daily living. In the light of this, it is worth reminding ourselves of the two indispensable themes of theology which are God and humankind and the

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\(^ {11} \) For an elaborate understanding of what PROCMURA means by faithful witness refer to the PROCMURA website which is www.procmura-prica.org/en.

\(^ {12} \) Quoted from the Revised constitution of PROCMURA 2003, Copies can be obtained at the PROCMURA Central Office in Nairobi.
relevance of the study of Islam and Christian-Muslims relations if Christian theology in Africa has to pragmatic and contextually meaningful.

**God**

The question of God in theological discourse as far as African theological institutions are concerned was (and perhaps still is in some theological institutions) largely inherited from the West. For example, most if not all African theological institutions still spend a lot of time discussing the arguments for the existence of God. It is fair to say that such a study since the last century also include the doctrine of God as found in African Traditional Religion(s). Relevant, as these studies are, the theological specialists and their students are unlikely to encounter persons in Africa who will be discussing with them, the question of whether or not God exists, or whether the African traditional religious understanding of God is any different from the Christian understanding. What one is likely to encounter though, are questions about the unity of God as Triune (Christianity’s view) and the absolute unity of God as *Tawhīd* (Islam’s view). This discussion, far from being a mere theological and theoretical exercise reserved for the theological specialists, sometimes arises when ‘ordinary’ Christians and Muslims meet anywhere. I have encountered this several times when travelling by air and sitting by a Muslim cleric who happens to know that I am a Christian pastor – not as a person involved in the vocation of Christian-Muslim relations. My vocation becomes a great discovery when the Muslim cleric is stunned by the cordiality and the explanations given using aspects of Islam to illustrate what I mean.

The importance of the study of at least the basics of Islamic theology is an asset to priests and pastors who may be called upon to reason with their Muslim neighbour or Christian parishioner who genuinely seek to understand the Christian teaching that ‘God is one and only, alone but not lonely’ – that He is Triune, and the Muslim teaching that ‘God is one and only, alone and lonely’ – that He connotes *Tawhīd*. Experience has shown that discussions on the unity of God between a Christian theological specialist and a Muslim theological specialist usually do not make much sense to the other (at least to the Muslim) unless the Christian theologian who is our concern in this study understands the theological discussions within Islam on the subject.

Apart from discussions on the unity of God, there are Christian theologians and parishioners who have several questions on whether or not the God of Christianity and the God of Islam are one and the same. Closely connected with this is the question of Jesus as ‘Son of God’ (Christianity) and Jesus as ‘Son of Mary’ (Islam). What we are saying in this aspect of our discussion is that the imperative for the inclusion of the study of Islam in all Christian theological institutions is because of the theological discourse on the essence of God which is the bedrock of both Christian and Muslim theologies. This is especially important when one recognises (as we should) that Christianity and Islam currently wield the largest following in Africa and that adherents of the two faiths interact all the time.

**Salvation (Soteriology)**

On the question of salvation and the hereafter, Christianity and Islam are without doubt the two great missionary religions in the world that have universal messages for humankind on the here and now, as in

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13 We are referring here to the Design (or Teleological Argument), the Causal Argument, and the Ontological Argument etc.
14 This is taken from my lecture notes at St Paul’s University in Limuru, Kenya.
15 Many Census in Africa avoid asking the religious question because of the tendency of it being divisive to near animosity and protest of one religion or the other arguing that their numbers are more than the figures depict. Muslims in Ghana and Kenya, for example, have in the past contested census figures.

*Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa*
the hereafter. These two religions which alongside with Judaism are regarded as monotheistic religions are competing for membership and for space to practice their respective faiths. Sub-Saharan Africa appears to be one of few regions in the world where the two religions are growing faster. What this means from the missiological point of view is that Christian witness, evangelism, propagation of the Gospel, Christian outreach programmes and all its prototypes cannot be carried out appropriately without an understanding of the message of Islam. In general terms Christian theologians committed to their faith should always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks them to give the reason for the hope that they have even as they do so in humility and respect (1Peter 3:15).

Having said the above it’s worth emphasizing that inherited traditional methods that were designed to propagate or recommend the Gospel within the African traditional religious environment and which theological colleges spent time and energy studying within a missiological framework, are virtually becoming obsolete in some environments as people hear contradictory messages that require a lot of reflection and making choices. When we talk about choice, we do not in any way suggest that conversion from a Christian perspective is the work of the human agent. We are aware that it is the Holy Spirit that convicts and converts. What we are saying though is that the human agent, indeed the messenger, needs to be conversant with the essence of the message and the context in which it has to be delivered. In other words the essence of the message is the same but the way it has to be presented has to take context seriously.16

An example of what we are seeking to elucidate comes in the fundamentals of the Christian traditional Gospel message of Christ and Him crucified, dead and buried and on the third day He rose again from the dead ascended into heaven; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.17 Apart from these fundamentals, in Christian traditional theological treaties there is the talk about the “Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith.”18 Mainstream Islam talks of Jesus and sees him not crucified, not dead, therefore not buried and therefore not risen on the third day. Islam emphasizes that Jesus ascended (is taken) to heaven and shall return and will show his allegiance to Islam and condemn Christians for referring to him as son of God etc.

The Qadiani branch of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Movement whose adherents can be spotted all over Africa on the other hand talks of Jesus and him as crucified, but not as dead but swooned; on the third day he did not rise from the dead but resuscitated from his swoon and proceeded to go and look for the lost sheep of Israel. He later died and was buried and has since returned in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad the founder of the movement who is said to have been born on 13th February 1835 in Qadian, India.19

These different renderings of the person of Jesus means that the terrain within which the Christian theologian in Africa teaches and ministers is more challenging and complex since the Christian message about Jesus the Christ is contested by Islam and there is the need to clearly understand the issues at stake. Parish priests and congregational pastors in Africa at one time or the other are bound to come face to face with some of these questions in the ministry and they should at least be able to understand the origins of those teachings and what they seek to convey.

After advancing the theological and missiological arguments for including the study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in all theological institutions in Africa, it is worth reiterating that since Islam is

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16 The issue of context in Christian-Muslim relations is one of the key principles that guides PROCMURA’s work.
17 What we are saying here is better understood when we make time to carefully read or recite the ‘The Apostles Creed.’
18 “The Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith,” as we understand it was coined over a hundred years ago, in 1892, by Martin Kähler to distinguish between the historical Jesus, and the Christ whom the church proclaimed in its Gospels, See C.E. Braaten (Translated from the 1896 German edition) The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964).
19 For details of Ahmadis views on the subject see Maulana Muhammad Ali, Amadiyya Anjuman Isha’at-i-Islam, (Lahore, Ripon Printing Press, undated).

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
not only a religion in the conventional sense of the word there are pastoral, relational, dialogical, political, and governance issues which border on Church and society which a study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations will assist the church to have a deeper conversation with Muslim neighbours on matters that members of the two communities may not agree with.

**Bibliography**


GENDER AND HIV AND AIDS

(59) HIV RESEARCH, GENDER AND RELIGION STUDIES

Sarojini Nadar and Isabel Apawo Phiri

Introduction

Our central aim in this article is to chart the ways in which particular epistemological frameworks within the study of gender and religion serve to interrogate and challenge the systems of knowledge that exist in the HIV pandemic in the African and global contexts. We argue that the epistemological frameworks that gender and religion studies generate have caused significant paradigm shifts within HIV knowledge production both on the popular and academic level. These shifts have been so profound that HIV studies that do not take these areas of study seriously can and should have their credibility questioned.

We wish to demonstrate our central argument by reflecting on a decade of experience in researching and teaching in the area of HIV, gender, and religion in Africa. These experiences are found in a selected number of programmes, research projects, and initiatives that relate to or emanate from the work of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (the Circle). These are, inter alia, Yale’s Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS (CIRA); the Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA), and a bilateral project between the Universities of Oslo and KwaZulu-Natal called “Broken Women, Healing Traditions: Indigenous Resources for Gender Critique and Social Transformation in the Context of HIV & AIDS” (the Broken Women project).

While the studies have been done in Africa, the impact is global.

Forging Partnerships in HIV Research

The Circle

Although the Circle was established in 1989 with the aim of promoting research, writing, and publishing from the experiences of African women in religion and culture, it was not until thirteen years later in 2002 at its third Pan-African Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, that the Circle started to seriously grapple with the issue of HIV and AIDS. This commitment to engage in research on HIV and AIDS was born out of the realization that African women as a group are disproportionately affected by the virus and therefore had to contribute to the knowledge production in this area not only to achieve the long-term effect of prevention but also to inject the critical gendered perspective of religion and culture into the knowledge that was being generated. Therefore, through the theme “Sex, Stigma, and HIV and AIDS: African Women Challenging Religion, Culture and Social Practices” African women theologians began to reflect on the role played by sacred texts, faith communities, and African culture in both the spread and prevention of HIV as it affects African women.1

1 Some of the publications that came out of the third Pan-African Conference of the Circle are Isabel A. Phiri, Beverley Haddad, and Madipoane Masenya (eds), African Women, HIV and AIDS, and Faith Communities (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2003); Musa W. Dube, and Musimbi Kanyoro (eds), Grant Me Justice: HIV and AIDS and Gender Readings of the Bible (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2004); Elizabeth Amoah, Dorothy Akoto, and Dorcas Akintunde (eds), Culture Practice and HIV and AIDS: African Women’s Voice (Accra-North: Sam-Woode, 2005); Helene Yinda and Bernadette
CIRA and the Faith Fellows Project

The Circle did not work on its own but formed partnerships with strategic collaborators. One example of such a partnership in generating knowledge about the gendered nature of HIV and its links with faith communities was the partnership between the Circle and Yale University Divinity School through a project entitled Gender, Faith, and Responses to HIV and AIDS in Africa, under the leadership of the late Letty Russell and Margaret Farley. This project was a collaboration with Yale School of Public Health and CIRA under the leadership of Kari Hartwig. A postdoctoral program was established to afford African women theologians an opportunity for empirical research on improving awareness and effectiveness of faith-based organizations related to HIV prevention. The project was a success in that twelve Circle members spent from four to nine months at Yale University as “faith fellows” to prepare for empirical research that deals with Gender, Faith, and HIV and AIDS.

EHAIA

A second partnership of note in the Circle’s history of researching HIV, gender and religion also goes back to 2003 when the Circle formed a partnership with the World Council of Churches’ EHAIA. The most significant research output from the partnership of the Circle and EHAIA is Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV, as it indicates where the gaps are in the Circle research and writing in the area of gender, faith, and HIV and AIDS in Africa. In this way, future Circle researchers were challenged to broaden their research. One of these areas of challenge was to shift focus from women to also include men. This paradigm shift will be discussed later.

The Broken Women Project

Emanating from, though not directly linked to the Circle is a third project that began in 2007 called “Broken Women–Healing Traditions? Indigenous Resources for Gender Critique and Social Transformation in the Context of HIV and AIDS.” This joint three-year research project between the Universities of KwaZulu-Natal and Oslo based in rural Inanda and Mphopomeni, KwaZulu-Natal, had three subprojects. We were the key researchers in one of the subprojects entitled “Indigenous Resources for Critiquing Patriarchy in the Context of HIV and AIDS.” The rationale behind our search for indigenous resources to critique patriarchy was the fact that African women gender activists and academics have been accused of using Western resources to critique patriarchy within African culture and religion. Hence the main question of our research was: Are there African indigenous resources that can be used to critique patriarchy as experienced by African women within culture and religion, in the context of HIV and AIDS?

2 The overall objective of EHAIA continues to be that of working for and promoting an HIV and AIDS-competent church, by addressing the critical problem of stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS; the care for PLWHAs and their involvement as resource persons in church programs; the development of new curricula and training material for training institutions; the provision of accurate and factual correct information; promoting effective programs for prevention and care; and giving support to local congregations in caring for vulnerable groups in society. See EHAIA Newsletter of the Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Initiative in Africa, 6 (November 2004).
4 Mercy Odugoye has noted that: “Before and during the Nairobi [2nd Pan-African Circle] meeting African men insisted that liberation as applied to the African woman was a foreign impartation. Some even called it an imperialist trap that would do Africa no good” (Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995], 2–3).
Charting the Shifts

Our participation in each of the above partnerships or projects generated a number of important insights that we assert have caused paradigm shifts in the ways in which knowledge on HIV is produced and taken up as a means of prevention and care.

*Shift 1: Focus on Religion and Culture in the Discourse*

While a great deal of research in the area of HIV and AIDS is studied as a health issue, there is also a recognition that women’s health in the context of HIV is not only limited to disease. In the work of the Circle, health is approached holistically as demonstrated in the publication of *African Women Religion and Health: Essays in Honour of Mercy Amba Oduyoye.* Hence the variable of religion cannot be ignored in the knowledge being generated on HIV as faith plays an important role in individual and community life and has the capacity to control social and health conduct. John Mbiti has articulated very well that in African debates on the issue of God, the question is not whether God exists or not. His research notes that it is taken for granted that God exists and is experienced in community of the living and the living dead.

Religion is not practiced individually but in community. Hence emphasis is placed on working in community to finding solutions to African problems. It is not surprising then that when studying the phenomenon of HIV and AIDS, African women theologians have chosen to study faith-based initiatives in partnership with other initiatives from within the continent and globally to expand scholarly research that examines the impact of faith-based HIV prevention initiatives on the African continent. While much of this research was based in an analysis of the Christian faith rooted within specific denominations in order to analyze the impact of denominational teachings on gender and HIV, Circle studies on HIV and AIDS are also located within the African indigenous religion and Islam.

Furthermore, the interconnectedness between religion and culture cannot be overestimated and the development of distinct theoretical tools such as African feminist cultural hermeneutics have come in handy when attempting to understand the links between HIV, gender, and religion. As we have noted elsewhere, “one of the primary defining features of African women’s theologies is its focus on culture as a source of theology. Such focus is of course in continuity with African male theologians who also focus on culture as a way of redeeming African identity and culture which has often been demonised by an aggressive Christian missionary agenda to evangelise Africa.” However, while there was continuity with the inculturation project of African male theologians, African women theologians also challenged the inculturation project. As a result, African feminist cultural hermeneutics was developed as a tool of analysis to identify those forms of culture that were life-giving for women and jettison those that were oppressive. Given the researched links that are established between harmful cultural practices and HIV, not only was culture a focus in African women’s theologies but the theoretical framework of African feminist cultural hermeneutics also provided a platform from which to engage HIV discourses more meaningfully.

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8 See Dube, “‘Adinkra!’ Four Hearts Joined Together,” 131-51.


*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Circle research brought to the fore the importance of the particularity of context in knowledge generation of HIV. Demonstrating this most clearly were the research topics chosen by the African women faith fellows in the CIRA program:

- Fulata Lusungu Moyo (Malawi), “Women, Faith, AIDS, and Sex Education in Southern Malawi”
- Vuadi Vibila (Democratic Republic of Congo), “Celebration of Life in the Midst of Brokenness: Course-Project in the Fight against HIV and AIDS”
- Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike (Kenya), “The Influence of Traditional Beliefs about Sexuality on the Spread of HIV and AIDS in Africa: A Case Study among the Bantu of Western Kenya”
- Dorothy Ucheaga (Nigeria), “Religious Responses to the HIV and AIDS Pandemic: A Comparative Case Study of Seven Religious Institutions in Prevention/Care in Cross River State, Nigeria”
- Teresa Tinkasimiire (Uganda), “The Catholic Church’s Responses to HIV and AIDS Prevention and Care in Hoima Diocese”
- Isabel Apawo Phiri (Malawi), “Gender, Violence, and HIV and AIDS Prevention: Behaviour Change Interventions for Church Couples In Pietermaritzburg, South Africa”
- Lilian Siwila (Zambia), “Culture, Gender, and HIV and AIDS: The United Church of Zambia’s Response to Traditional Marriage Practices”

In all the research projects cited above the most important shift from mainstream HIV research is the context-specific nature of the research. This body of research produced by the Circle highlighted the dangers of speaking about HIV and AIDS in general terms as each context presents specific challenges which may not be generalized.

The so-called third wave of feminism has called feminists (primarily in the West) to account for excluding the experiences of women from the Two-Thirds World. African women have been similarly careful that in their discourses on HIV, the experiences of third-world women are specified and not universalized. They seek to not replicate what Chandra Mohanty has termed the “third world difference—that stable, a-historical something that apparently oppresses most if not all the women in these [third-world] countries.” For this reason, individual experience was highlighted in Circle work. However, this specificity did not translate into parochialism. African women theologians began to forge partnerships with African American feminist theologians as well, together reflecting and researching on HIV. This partnership extended not only beyond the borders of Africa but also beyond the borders of gender, and for the first time in its history, in 2007, the Circle invited male theologians to join them in their fourth Pan-African meeting in Yaounde, Cameroon.

10 Our choice to use the term Two-Thirds World as opposed to third world is deliberate in that we seek to acknowledge that third world is a contested term, particularly to those who originate from the Global South. We therefore take issue with the way in which the term is used to denigrate the African continent and thereby make the First World the norm and standard by which the rest of the world is judged.


Shift 3: A Focus on Masculinities

The Circle’s perception of health in broader terms is reflected in the focus of the fourth Pan-African Conference of the Circle, under the theme: “The Girl Child, Women, Religion, and HIV and AIDS in Africa: A Gendered Perspective.” The highlight of this conference was the realization that women alone cannot stop the spread of HIV in Africa. The importance of a community approach to HIV prevention became more pronounced as it focused on identifying liberating masculinities. With the male theologians present, the conference was marked by the identification of areas of contestation where it became clear that male theologians felt “bashed” by the Circle work on male violence against women, which was identified in Circle writings as one of the biggest contributors to the spread of HIV. The Circle’s research was in sync with how research on HIV was being done globally. Even social-science studies that were pointing to HIV being a gendered pandemic focused all their prevention campaigns on women. Ezra Chitando and Sophie Chirongoma have rightly argued that “while it is clear that men are seriously implicated in the HIV epidemic, it has also become obvious that leaving them out of prevention, care and support programmes is counterproductive. There is therefore need to ensure that men remain very much in the picture as nations, communities and institutions seek to provide effective responses to the epidemic.”13

This shift in the focus of HIV research from women to men is best represented in the work of EHAIA and the Circle.14 This shift was accompanied by the conviction that a gap existed in the research in terms of understanding the role of religion in maintaining hegemonic masculinities. In this respect, the male theologians began to look at the ways in which the construction and imbibing of male hegemonic masculinities contributed to the spread of HIV. Here, notions of male power within African culture were challenged. However, not only were these notions challenged but African male theologians also began replacing them with more gender equitable alternatives and creative models such as GEM (Gender Equitable Men) were rolled out. What was clear from the ways in which this research unfolded was that the long-held conviction of feminists that research is always in service of change and transformation, was becoming a reality. Action research was not new to the work of the Circle but took on greater significance in the context of HIV and AIDS, as the Broken Women project taught us.

Shift 4: Action Research for Change

We have documented elsewhere how the Broken Women project deepened and intensified our understanding of ourselves as action-researchers. “As such, we needed a methodology that spoke to both our intellectual and activist commitments. Our aim in doing research is not just to access knowledge but to impart knowledge as well. In theological terms we may describe our research framework as a missiological endeavour.”15 In theological terms we argued for a feminist missiological framework for doing empirical research. We were inspired by Letty Russell, drawing on Heinemann, who asserted that: “A description of the work of women in mission is not the same as feminist missiology. A feminist perspective would advocate for the full humanity of all women, together with all men and for the integrity of creation. In Heinemann’s view feminist missiology will only be possible through the development of postcolonial perspectives on mission by women who see themselves working together for justice as postcolonial subjects.”16 Of course, understanding research as a missiological endeavor can be deeply problematic, but

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we were pushing the boundaries of understanding regarding mission. Our understanding of the missionary
stance within our research was not in terms of religious conversion but in terms of social justice and
transformation. We wanted to achieve transformation not just through the product of the research but also
through and during the process of research. Hence we argued that the process of research is as important as
the product.

The process of doing research in these communities proved to be transformational for both the
participants and for us as researchers; in fact, they were upfront about what they wanted from us as
researchers. Hence the feminist values of relationality and mutuality were made manifest during the
process of our research. This challenges the kinds of research that scholars engage with when researching
in the area of HIV. The paradigm shift that can be identified for HIV research lies in the fact that this kind
of research invites other researchers to reconsider the ways in which empirical research is conducted. In
other words, it invites researchers to consider that research participants are much more than “raw data.”
While we have always maintained this conviction within our empirical research in the Circle, the
conviction gained intensity and more significance in the context of HIV and AIDS—especially when one
considers that HIV is not just a matter of theory but of life and death.

We conclude by offering a few questions for reflection and discussion:

4. How can the lessons in the paradigm shifts of knowledge production outlined above challenge and
   enable a more global discourse on HIV, gender, and religion?
5. What are some of the theoretical and methodological implications of the research conducted in this
   area for feminist and gender discourses?
6. What may be the possibilities for future collaborations globally in the discourse on HIV, gender,
   and religion? In other words, how can a paradigm shift in terms of the location of the discourse on
   HIV, gender, and religion shift from being a predominantly African one to a global one?

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Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
Priscille Djomhoue

Introduction

For decades, African higher education institutions have had an active interest in integrating gender perspectives in their basic educational functions of teaching, research and administration. This decision is justified by the aim of university education and research, which is to empower and to accompany leaders in a changing society. But theological faculties in francophone Africa have sidelined the inclusion of gender in the curriculum because gender is still viewed with a great deal of prejudice. The first purpose of this article is to engage with the situation of the marginalisation of gender in theological education, using the case of Cameroon. The second purpose is to suggest how taking gender into account can help francophone theological institutions to achieve their common aim; which is the transformation and the development of the Church and society.

The Situation of Gender in Cameroon Theological Institutions: Students, Staff and Curriculum Reconsidered

The Faculty of Protestant Theology was founded by eleven churches in Cameroon and Francophone Africa. Apart from being members of the Protestant University of Central Africa (former Faculty of Protestant University), each of these churches have their own theological institutions. Information given during the meeting of ASTHEOL held in Brazzaville, 22-24 August 2011, shows that only two of these churches have female lecturers in their theological institutions. And, between these two theological institutions, the female lecturers amount to two: one at the Protestant University of Central Africa and another at the Theological Faculty of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon.

In the Faculty of Theology of Yaoundé this academic year, there are 209 students, ranging from first year to the doctoral level. Of these, only thirty-five are female. The situation is no different in other francophone institutions. These statistics regarding female students and female staff raise questions in a country where, in all other universities, the number of female students is higher than the number of male students. We will return to analyse this situation in sections below.

The Faculty of Protestant Theology of Yaoundé was the first University in Cameroon. It was inaugurated by the first president of the republic in 1962. At that time, students were granted scholarships from the Cameroon government, but the government did not influence the content of the curriculum. From 2006 it became known as the Protestant University of Central Africa and has been accredited by the National Commission on private Higher Education. The most common quality assurance standards which interest this commission in private Universities are mission and vision, academic programs, library resources, physical and technological resources, number and qualifications of staff, number of students and

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2 2011-2012.
their entry qualifications, and financial resources (relative to number of students). There is no evidence of output standards such as through-put ratio (percent of a cohort that graduates within a specified time) or volume and quality of research. There is also no evidence of any link between quality assurance results and funding allocations to institutions or units.3

As far as curriculum is concerned at the Protestant University of Central Africa, the National Commission on Private Higher Education in Cameroon has inspected the faculties of Social Sciences, Medicine, and Technology. This was not the case with the faculty of Theology because of its direct relation to churches and religious partners who define the curriculum. In other words, the faculty of Theology itself – and especially the staff meeting – decides on the curriculum. It includes Biblical Sciences as well as Greek and Hebrew, Practical Theology, Dogmatics, Church History, Religious Sciences, Ethics, Missiology, Sociology, Philosophy, Anthropology, Linguistics, Semantics, Psychology, Music, Communication and Management. Gender Studies is not included. Eighty percent of this curriculum is shared with francophone theological institutions which are members of the Protestant University of Central Africa, and members of the Association of Francophone Theological Institutions in Africa (ASTHEOL).

As Peter Materu says, the self-assessment process (at institutional or unit level) has positive effects on the culture of quality within an institution or unit. Because it is conducted within a collegial atmosphere without any pressure from an external body, the self-assessment fosters social cohesion and teamwork among staff and also enhances staff accountability in terms of the results of the process. More concretely, self-assessment also helps institutions to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, while generating awareness of key performance indicators. The process of self-assessment is widely seen as the most valuable aspect of quality assurance reviews because it helps institutions to build capacity from within. This capacity-building function of self-assessment is valuable in any context, but it is particularly important in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa where capacity remains very weak.4 Indeed, Materu is right in stressing the positive aspect of self-assessment. But in the situation of Cameroonian theological faculties where the inclusion of gender studies is still a taboo, in contrast to state universities, indicates that we have a serious problem. How can we be sure that theologians and future pastors who are trained will be able to deal with gender challenges in their parishes if they do not study such issues in their theological studies? This raises the question of whether the training provided by theological institutions is consistent with new thinking or life vision, and with the new and emerging demands of the global agenda. An increased focus on quality and relevance of theological education would contribute to strengthening the link between the institution and the church in society. To understand this problem well, it is important to examine the situation within the theological institution.

Analysis of the Situation of Women in Francophone Africa’s Theological Institutions

This section seeks particularly to illustrate the challenges that women pursuing theological studies in general, and women theological educators in particular, encounter with regard to patriarchal attitudes which are legitimized by socio-cultural and theological discourses. The students who are recruited to study in the theological faculty come with a mindset that has been constructed by their culture and their denominational traditions on gender issues. Similarly, support staff and lecturers are also a product of their environment. The problem here is that, in such conditions, what type of products are expected from such an institution if there is no openness to knowledge on gender equality?

4 “Quality Assurance Practices in Higher Education in Africa.”
Socio-cultural and Political Position of African Women in Cameroon

Cameroonian culture, like many other African societies, is patriarchal. This is also true of the Francophone countries where many students in the Faculty of Protestant Theology and Religious Sciences come from. The traditional socialisation processes perpetuate beliefs, attitudes, and values which permit the subordination of women. The girl-child is taught to be submissive and polite, and is subjected to motherhood roles from an early age while boys are taught the manly tasks of providing and protecting. The result is that women are systematically subordinated and discriminated against because they lack equal opportunities in spheres such as education, the legal system, the workplace, the medical system and worse still in marriage.

The International Women Rights Action Watch (IWRAW), referred to by CEDAW, summarises well the plight of women in Cameroon:

The Preamble of the Constitution of Cameroon ensures equality of all citizens before the law. Yet according to women's rights activists whom IWRAW consulted, the unequal status of women and girls in Cameroon manifests itself in all spheres of life and there is no evidence that the government has taken measures to improve women's status. To the contrary, discriminatory administrative policies, practices, laws, cultural beliefs and attitudes hamper the enjoyment of human rights of women.

Women's rights activists report that the creation of the Government Ministry of Women's Affairs has not made much difference, as it has not taken steps to fight widespread practices of forced marriage, domestic abuse, female excision and other traditional discriminatory practices arising out of customary laws and traditions.

According to NGO sources in Cameroon the government-created National Human Rights Commission does not address issues of inequality between women and men or discriminatory practices relating to women.

Women are grossly underrepresented in politics...Out of 180 members of the National Assembly only 10 are women and there are only three women ministers in the 50-member Cabinet...only 5.3 percent of sub-ministerial level positions are held by women.

Discrimination against girls and women in education is common...illiteracy for women under 25 is 29% (for men 15%). Women constitute more than 20% of the workers but only 5.2% of women are found in skilled jobs....

The Situation in Theological Institutions

The situation of women in theological institutions is a reflection of what is described in the above quotation. The discrimination is even more apparent, because the aim of theological training is to become an ordained pastor in a context where, for many churches, there is still no way for women to be part of the ministry. They have their place in the church as members or deaconesses, but not as pastors. In Cameroon, of the eleven mainline churches who are members of the Council of Protestant Churches in Cameroon

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5 The aim of this paragraph is to show that the situation in theological institutions is related to the cultural context. We have then used studies which have already been carried out by some Cameroonians. In the theological institutions, statistics, and the number of females students, are a strong illustration of the situation.

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2872/is_1_27/ai_71563386/ (accessed 17.6.2011).

7 Deaconess is conceived in our society as a ministry of women because the work consists of assuring the cleanness of the church, to cook when there are events like church assemblies, to look after children (Sunday school) or young. There is also the ministry of elders in the churches, but when one observes closely, women here are mostly given tasks related to diaconia.

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
(CEPCA), only four have ordained women. In reality, only three have women as pastors within Cameroon. This situation explains, to a certain degree, why female students at the Faculty of Protestant Theology are few. Furthermore, registration in the theological institutions in Cameroon is still based on a recommendation of the church. Many women who would like to study theology are limited by this condition, which is also required by partners or church organisations, in case they need to apply for a scholarship. Apart from this structural requirement, there is one church where women really fear to engage with gender issues because of the sad experiences of the few first female pastors who are no longer in the church.

In addition, the few female students who are registered face many challenges. The first challenge is of being accepted by male students who mock them in lectures. They are constantly told that female students are at the theological institution because of pressure from some western countries and donors. Second, female students also face the problem of content where some courses are still andocentric, as well as sermons which emphasise patriarchy as a model. In this situation, the female students who try to oppose patriarchal readings of the Bible are stigmatised as feminist, because in this milieu, feminism is taboo. Unfortunately, in this context, gender and feminism are regarded as the same thing. The philosophy is that good women, and especially good African women who are looked up to as examples, are those who do not complain, and who accept their situation stoically.

Just as in many other institutions in the country, female students face sexual harassment. In the conclusion of Jean Emmanuel Pondi’s book in which he tells the story of nine female students at the University of Yaoundé, he concluded that:

> These deplorable stories adequately prove that the phenomenon of sexual harassment in our universities is not a fiction at all. It describes the case of girls who, having registered in our “temple of knowledge” to pursue their higher education studies, see themselves mostly introduced and trapped in a trauma of psychosis, because of the activities of a minority of teachers, attitudes which in the long run end up tarnishing the aura of a very great majority of teachers who exercise this noble, worthy and prestigious profession: that of University lecturer... harassment can take the direction of the lecturer on the student, or administrative and support staff on the student, or administrative staff on administrative staff.

In the whole country of about thirteen theological institutions and seminaries, we have only two women recruited as full time lecturers. In such conditions, how can we be sure that men and women who are trained in our institutions are, first, changed people, and second, well equipped to face the challenges of a changing Africa which is actually at the crossroads? Is it possible to affirm that students who are trained in these conditions will lead Christians in this world which has become a small village? In our states, universities, in many associations and institutions, gender questions are not only integrated into the curriculum, but are treated as a serious matter at the level of structures and functioning. How can we guarantee that future theologians and pastors will be the real promoters of the Kingdom of God that we are waiting for? How are we going build from the theological institutions, a Church which will fulfil its aim of being agent of peace, unity and development? How can the Theological Faculty fulfil the role of a university, which is to develop critical intellectual thought?

**Mainstreaming Gender in the Curriculum of Theological Institutions**

Curriculum is something to do with the actual content of education. It deals with the methodologies and processes by which learning takes place. This deals not only with the facts and figures, but also with the culture and values of the society. Teaching and learning take place within a context of a conceptualisation

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8 Jean Emmanuel Pondi, *Sexual Harassment and Deontology in the University Milieu* (Yaoundé: CLE, 2011), 24.
of the society, its values, its direction and its role in the world as a whole. The curriculum can re-enforce
the status quo or it can question the status quo. It involves the “hidden curriculum”, which incorporates the
often unspoken but nevertheless important messages which are transmitted within the higher education
establishment.9

Disciplines dealing with education are related to human rights, culture and equity. Education plays an
important role in defining the society, its characteristics and its future. This is done through its research,
development, education and training programmes. A society may conceive of itself as inefficient and
incompetent. One hears people say, “well, this is Africa”, where there is corruption, where things don’t
work, where people don’t come on time. Oppression of women and support for polygamy and even
promiscuity may be defined on the grounds that “this is our culture”10

The “hidden curriculum” deals with the unspoken curriculum. On many campuses, getting drunk may
be seen as an expansion of power and freedom, and may be commonly practised by otherwise powerless
youth. The baiting and sexual harassment of women students11 may be seen as an expression of manhood.
Its worst expression is in raping women and girls, where the hidden curriculum says that woman who says
“no” really means “yes”. There is a common misunderstanding between young men and young women
regarding what is meant to be a “boy friend” or a “girl friend”. When a young woman agrees to be a “girl
friend”, this can be interpreted by the boyfriend that she has agreed to sex, whereas for the girl, this means
a special basically non-sexual friendship. The hidden curriculum may also say that a woman who has
chosen a career, such as a lecturer, is operating outside societal mores, and deserves to be harassed.12

This situation which is observed on campuses is among the serious issues that need to be addressed in
the 21st century. In solving the above gendered problem, it also means solving one of the main objectives
of education, which is to bring people, belonging to a wide range of walks of life, to communicate with
each other and to be able to devise effective strategies and ways to help make their environment and
society a better place to live. The theological institution is a better place to implement change because
theologians and future pastors engage each other with tools that will enable them to promote values of the
Kingdom of God. But how can this change occur through the introduction of gender perspectives in the
curriculum?

Curriculum as a Transformational Tool in Terms of Both Human Rights and Development

Theological institutions are one of the best places for re-thinking and redefining reality in the light of the
gospel. Research and development are primary sources of knowledge, and higher education is responsible
for creating new knowledge as well as new values and attitudes. Gender mainstreaming is the public policy
concept of assessing the different implications for men and women of any planned action, including
legislation and programmes, in all areas and at all levels. Mainstreaming essentially offers a pluralistic
approach that values the diversity among both men and women. It is a strategy for making women’s as well
as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and
evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and
men benefit equally.13

10 “Mainstreaming Gender.”
11 It is important to add here that sexual harassment on campus is perpetrated against both female students and
lecturers. See Pondi, Sexual Harassment and Deontology. In fact, the situation which is described in this book is
common to all the universities, including church universities.
12 Pondi, Sexual Harassment and Deontology.

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
The Lutheran World Federation uses the concept Engendering Theological Education. In fact, engendering theological education means transforming the entire theological enterprise. It is not a matter of adding to, or being corrective. To engage in theological dialogue with gender issues is to see how the understanding of gender in society has affected our understanding of God, the Scriptures, the teaching and practices of the church and our relationships with one another, as men and women. Engendering means giving birth to something new – to hatch, cause, induce, provoke, develop, excite, stimulate, rouse or stir. The purpose is not to incorporate feminist perspectives into the existing curricula, but to provoke a reformation and reformulation of theological education, which is both relevant, and life affirming for both men and women. Engendering theology does not mean supplanting men’s ways of knowing with women’s ways of knowing and thereby merely inverting the hierarchy.14

We are not the first people to think about engendering theological education in general; many scholars and associations have expressed this concern through reflections and consultations. For example, from 6-7 November 2001 in Montreux Switzerland, the Department for Mission and Development of the Lutheran World Federation organised a Global Consultation on the Theme Engendering Theological Education for Transformation. It followed up a previous consultation which was organised in Rome, 23-27 August 1999, under the theme Re-visioning Theological Education. The message which came out of the first consultation to the heads of churches was as follows:

Going into the next century, curriculum development should be especially attentive to issues of contextualization, spirituality, the insight provided by feminist and other liberation perspectives, transformation and ecumenics.15

The consultation also determined the importance and ways of carrying out this project in Theological Education. It said, “in fact, Engendering theology frees men as well as women, leading men to recognise their own engendered experience; it retrieves lost stories and traditions and breaks open cultural stereotypes and hierarchies. It offers new ways of reading the Biblical text and seeks to free it from its moorings in patriarchy”.16

Engendered theology challenges the traditional assumption that the male is normative; that male theology and male experience can speak equally for women. Engendering theological education means transforming the entire theological enterprise. It is not a matter of adding to, or being corrective. To engage in theological dialogue with gender issues is to see how the understanding of gender in society has affected our understanding of God, the Scriptures, the teachings and practices of the church and our relationships as men and women with one another. The purpose of engendering theology is to provoke a reformation and reformulation of theological education, which is both relevant and life affirming for women and for men.

Engendered theology is not a matter of discussion but one of collaborative action that takes contextuality seriously. It should be introduced in the popular, pastoral and academic levels of the church. It needs to include students, faculty, and administrative heads as well as people from the grassroots in discussions on content, and method of doing theology. Engendering theology is possible through networking, sharing of resources, equipping individuals with analytical tools, and training of faculty. Doing engendered theology retrieves lost and hidden stories and traditions and breaks open cultural stereotypes and hierarchies. It offers new ways of reading the Biblical texts and seeks to free them from their

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15 Singh, Lutheran World Federation Global Consultation, 7.
16 Singh, Lutheran World Federation Global Consultation, 10.
patriarchal moorings. Engendering theology requires collaborative reflection with people on the margins of society.

It is not easy to formulate a single integrated curriculum. During the second consultation of the Lutheran World Federation’s Department for Mission and Development, many theological scholars were invited to develop a model, each of them according to their discipline. In this way, the result was the presentation of a multiplicity of models for the purpose of preparing an integrated curriculum: Integrating Gender Perspectives in the Curriculum – Biblical, Systematic and Practical Theology.17

In Francophone Africa, as far as theological institutions are concerned, we are not aware of writings and discussions or consultations in this sense. Unfortunately, this context was also not represented during this very important gathering. The fact that those from the francophone theological context have not yet gathered to discuss this issue is perhaps the reason why talking about gender perspectives is still taboo. The result of this great work which was done by scholars will be of help if the context is prepared to accept it. But concretely, to begin to mainstream gender in theological disciplines will be difficult since lecturers, as well as students, in their study context are not prepared technically, and scientifically to do so. This is the reason why, we suggest, the francophone theological association called ASTHEOL should reflect on how to encourage its members to take this quest seriously. It may also be advisable to introduce a gender studies course in the first year of Theological studies at least, and to train staff and lecturers during workshops.

Bibliography


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Fulata Moyo

Introduction

After three years of my theological education at the previous seminary, I was given a parish to pastor. As a pastor, I had to accompany a couple that was experiencing some dysfunctional relationship especially in their sexual life. Apart from reading the bible about marriage being permanent and faithful (Mat 19:3-6) and praying with them, I did not have any resources from my theological education that I could consult so as to guide my pastoral ministry efficiently. My inadequacy led me to start doubting my calling and I even lost confidence in ever being an effective pastor to addressing the needs of my congregation.

Theological Education in Malawi and most of the African Universities and Theological Seminaries is to a large extent a continuation of missionary Christian education. How does a seminarian or graduate pastor translate what s/he has learnt in such institutions into resources that can equip her/him as a transformer and healer of the community so that justice, peace and fullness of life for all becomes the expression and experience of God’s reign on earth? How can theological education retain its ecumenical identity and even help such students to accept and access existing indigenous resources to enrich them so that they are able to effectively accompany their communities? Are there ways in which theological education can be mutually enriching to existing indigenous systems of education that still influence how people live and relate with each other in their family life and community?

This article argues for the need for contextualising/inculturating theological education with existing indigenous religious knowledge systems, education and practices. Of particular interest to this paper is chinamwali, a rite of passage among the aMang’anja, which is an indigenous education system that still shapes and guides the ways of relating among communitarian Christians in southern Malawi. Using this as a case study, it further argues for the vitality and centrality of indigenous sexual education as an important and necessary ally to any education initiatives that form and inform African people’s spirituality and communitarian identity. The need to locate its focus on the practicing matrilineal community of aMang’anja ethnic group, where women still play a significant role in offering sexual education, is rooted in the subjectivity of my own research experience as a Ngoni-Tumbuka Malawian, who chose to be initiated into the aMang’anja sexual education system so as to remedy the deficiencies of my own patriarchal and patrilineal system. The choice of the aMang’anja religious and sexual knowledge system

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1 A story shared by a third year theology student in my Systematic Theology class at the University of Malawi in 2004.
2 Chinamwali is a religio-cultural rite of passage for girls, women and boys among the aMang’anja of Traditional Authority (T/A) Mwambo in rural Zomba District of southern Malawi, with an explicit sexual education component.
3 The aMang’anja people originally belonged to the matrilineal Malabvi (also referred to as Maravi) kingdom together with aChewa people.
4 Part of this paper is based on my PhD ethnographic research that took place from 1999 to 2005. To have access to the aMang’anja indigenous sexual education called chinamwali, I had to be initiated into the first three stages of it by special arrangement as a mature adult. Throughout this interactive research using in-depth individual interviews, focus group discussions, participatory observation and other spontaneous interactions, my being a member of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians gave me the background and confidence in gender, feminist and eco-feminist...
with its transformative potential for gender equality is necessitated by the ethical hypothesis that unless gender justice becomes a necessary aim of ecumenical theological education in Africa, its possibility for positive contribution to the building of communities of justice, peace and fullness of life will remain in the unfulfilled eschaton. Moreover, the aMang’ anja Indigenous Religion, that to some extent still influences their Christian spirituality in how they interpret their beliefs and practices, has shown great potential for gender justice. To this community, sexual education is the basis of all other education because it shapes and defines the communitarian life and relationships. As a major socialisation tool, this education affirms their being interconnected and interdependent as a community of humanity and creation. By using an ecofeminist ethical framework, this paper analyses this community’s indigenous religion and its sexual education so as to offer suggestions as to how theological education can enrich as well as be enriched by this existing spirituality and indigenous knowledge, so as to become an effective transforming and transformative tool for a culture of gender justice. It accomplishes the above, first, by providing an analysis of the aMang’ anja’s rites of passage for sexual empowerment as an important indigenous education and knowledge system that theological education needs to engage with for mutual enrichment. Second, it makes four suggestions that can enable theological education to become a process of equipping theologians to gain what the writer of Proverbs calls, “instructions in wise dealings, righteousness, justice and equity” for a culture of peace.

**AMang’ anja’s Sexual Education as Enriching Bedfellows of ETE?**

The vital part of the process of making a woman or man amongst the aMang’ anja is still in the hands of the **chinamwali** (aMang’ anja’s rite of passage) socialisation. Through song and dance, **chinamwali**, among other things, instructs the girls and women regarding the religio-culturally acceptable gender relations with men, sexual expressions and ‘power’. This socialisation determines most of these women’s sexual moral choices and behaviour. **Chinamwali**’s communitarian orientation does not seem to have room for the kind of socialisation that gives power to individual women to have control over their individual bodies and sexuality. Yet, its explicit celebration of embodied womanhood or just an implicit emphasis to what Audre Lorde would refer to as “the erotic as power” gives the potential for women’s empowerment as an ethical analysis that helped me interpret the findings of my study as I searched for meaning in and answers to my own gender and sexual questions that my previous theological education had not helped me answer. For more information about my research and findings, read: Fulata L. Mbanø-Moyo, “In Search of Sexual Empowerment through Education in an HIV and AIDS Context: The Case of Kukhonzekera Chinkhoswe cha Chikristu (KCC) among Christian aMang’ anja and aYao of T/A Mwambo in Rural Zomba, Southern Malawi” (PhD thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2009).

5 According to Ivone Gebara, Ecofeminism as a theological concept emphasizes the idea that we are interdependent and interconnected as one sacred body of humans (male and female) and with mother earth. Going beyond notions of the conflict between genders that have been promoted by the patriarchal as well as hierarchical systems, ecofeminism emerges from women’s struggle for freedom, equality and justice for women as well as the rest of creation. As praxis, it aims at the preservation of the life of present and future generations. There are two linked aspects in the feminist perspective: women’s struggle for freedom, self-determination and equality contextually expressed in each culture and the feminine as the oppressed reality of every human life and all biological systems. Transcending this acknowledgement, ecofeminism seeks to transform society according to these ecological and feminist principles. In this paper, ecofeminist ethical theory is used as a hermeneutical tool to interpret how both the aMang’ anja Indigenous Religion and sexual education can advance the agenda for gender justice in theological education. For further discussion on ecofeminism, read Ivone Gebara, *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 76-77, and Elenora Rae, *Women, the Earth, the Divine* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994), 24.

6 Proverbs 1:3.

acknowledgement of their intrinsic dignity that is core to their sense of complete and full personhood. This would be even more empowering in their sexual relationships if there was also assured mutuality in sexual decision making between women and men, and if there were no cases of violence against women. But often the opposite is these women’s lived reality.

For ecumenical theology to meaningfully equip theologians for their transformative service to their community like that of the aMang’anja, targeting chinamwali socialisation, therefore, is an imperative. This would ensure that ecumenical theological education, through the praxis of these theologians, contributes to the communitarian quest for a more gender and sexually just environment. Since Malawi is part of sub-Saharan Africa where HIV and AIDS still claims the lives of both sexually active women and men of all ages and influence, such a theological education would also contribute to directly responding to this contextual threat to fullness of life. For in sub-Saharan Africa, this pandemic is more a heterosexual than homosexual one and therefore such an education would also help address the need for mutuality in women’s and men’s sexual relationships. Not only does chinamwali unlock underlying religio-cultural assumptions and meanings attached to sexuality, but it also provides the sacred safe space for women and men to be in touch with their embodied selves as a first step to the process of empowerment.

Since sexuality is core to people’s being, their relationships with each other, as well as their relationship with God, it therefore should be part of the ecumenical theological education curriculum. As part of ecumenical theological education, it would help equip the trained theologians to deal with their sexuality in healthy ways that also guide the way they accompany the communities they serve. Inevitably, both women and men are relational and sexual beings; they both have needs for mutual love and sexual fulfilment. The existing challenge is that the aMang’anja, like most communities around the world, live in cultural contexts that define them, and which enclose them in boundaries of the possible that are often male-oriented, that is, that favour the needs of men at the expense of those of the women. In addition, pressured by the patriarchal cultural contexts, women have been socialized to suspect, vilify, abuse, distrust and even devalue this power, which rises from the non-rational knowledge within them.

The erotic is a resource within each of us that lies in a deeply female and spiritual plane, firmly rooted in the power of our unexpected or unrecognized feelings... The erotic is a measure between the beginnings of our sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings. It is an internal sense of satisfaction to which, once we have experienced the fullness of this depth of feeling and recognizing its power, in honour and self-respect we require no less of ourselves. Carter Heyward makes a clear connection between the erotic as power and our connection to the divine, making our sexuality an embodied spirituality.

8 Being embodied also means that one is a sexual being (male or female). While being male or female in this human life has implications for having sexual needs, which demand fulfilment, the Christian concept of the resurrection seems to unsex the body. While our resurrected bodies might be shaped in a way that we can still be identified by some of our human features, according to Jesus’ words, “when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven” (Mark 12:25). However in this human body, sexual needs are inherent in every healthy human being; the fulfilment thereof is dependent on many factors including human choices. For example, those who choose a life of celibacy in their service to God and creation, in principle, would have chosen not to seek sexual fulfilment through civil union or marital commitment. To them, sexual fulfilment would be replaced by experiences of ecstasy or what mystics would refer to as spiritual lovemaking. See writings of Hadewijch of Antwerp cited in G.M. Jantzen, Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 203-207.


10 Lorde, Sister Outsider, 53-54.
...probing the Sacred—exploring divine terrain—through sexual experience. ... (W)ith Audre Lorde... “to write fire,” to be erotic—touching, pressing, making connections, contributing what I can to the forging of that mutuality which characterizes right relation, or justice.11

James Nelson, a western theologian of sexuality, while acknowledging the distinction and interdependence of sexuality and sex, brings in a spiritual aspect that is actually missing in the socio-psychological understanding of sexuality. Nelson affirms the fact that sexuality involves much more than what we do with our genitals. For him, it actually distinguishes who we are as body-selves, how we experience the physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual. As social beings, it is the mystery of sexuality through which we express and experience our need for intimate communion with the human and the Divine.12

While chinamwali still remains very influential in the process of the making of a woman, it seems to face several challenges, amongst them bio-sexual information inadequacy and Christian social ethical questions of what sexuality signifies. The instructor-oriented methodology fails to acknowledge the socio-political realities based on human rights and freedoms. This and other inadequacies also call for a paradigm shift from an instructor-oriented to a more learner-oriented approach for effective learning and transformation. Moreover, among aMang’ana affected by HIV and AIDS, the lack of emphasis on mutuality challenges the exclusive targeting of women for sexual empowerment. It is necessary to search for a sexual education that will, together with women, involve men to ensure mutuality and just loving. Mutual collaboration between ecumenical theological education and indigenous sexual education would help address chinamwali’s and current theological education’s deficiencies. These include, for example, the implications of shared sexual knowledge for human dignity, gender justice, the problems of instruction methodology and the lack of emphasis in mutuality in sexual relationships and the need to jointly involve both women and men as instructors as well as those being instructed at chinamwali, just to mention a few.

**Sexual Empowerment as a Core Aim of Theological Education**

Marie J. Giblin defines empowerment as a “process by which individuals, families, groups, and communities increase their personal and interpersonal, socioeconomic, and political strength and influence in order to improve their well-being”.13 Responding to the misconceptions regarding empowerment as something that is handed down from an external power or influence, Giblin argues that empowerment actually “emerges from within as persons and communities acknowledge and appreciate their gifts and their responsibilities”.14 Power, therefore, is not conceived as a commodity which is used so as to establish control over others but rather as a “creative and transformative efficacy and agency achieved through collaboration rather than domination”.15 Sexual empowerment, as part of the aims of theological education, would entail a dialogical and critical process between the theological researcher and the indigenous instructors and the process of sexual education, moving from given sexual knowledge and then reconstructing it with updated, scientifically proven and theologically liberating knowledge. The purpose would be to give both the theologians and communities the confidence and ability for positive moral discernment that leads to making informed sexual decisions that promote justice and fullness of life.

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13 Marie J. Giblin in Russell and Clarkson, *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, 83.
Ecumenical Theological Education for Gender Justice in Malawi

How can theological education in Malawi, Africa and globally retain its ecumenical nature and be committed to contributing to the pursuit of justice, peace and fullness of life for all in this inhabited world? This paper suggests the following four approaches as a possibility to ensure the above characteristics:

First, theological education that would meaningfully contribute to the transformation of communities that tend to work towards common moral discourse in their pursuit for communitarian good, including the insurance of justice, peace and fullness of life, should have an ecumenical perspective as a necessary feature. Otherwise, maintaining the historical denominational divisions would be contradictory to the principles and practices of being interconnected, and the interdependence that is the basis of such communitarian life. To keep this ecumenical nature therefore, organisations such as the World Council of Churches, whose mission is to build unity that embraces diversity as a holistically enriching resource, should at least ensure the following three inter-related commitments:

- Not only to sustain theological education and formation programmes, but also to make sure that they have ample resources to reach out in advocating for such, and convening such processes for the maintenance of ecumenism in global theological institutions.
- Since often such programmes carry out their mandate as if ecumenical theological education is androgynous, there should be a clear WCC gender just policy that becomes mandatory so as to hold such initiatives accountable.
- Related to the above, there should also be deliberate efforts made for collaboration and integration between ecumenical theological education and formation, and those programmes that prophetically address questions of justice and peace as being core to the pursuit of unity. Such collaboration will also help ecumenical theological education at the international level to become user-friendly in equipping theologians for effective engagement with different global communities, whatever challenges and opportunities each is encountering.

Second, for the ecumenical theological education to be an active fountain of transformation in each community it functions, it has to be contextual so as to meaningfully contribute to setting in motion paradigm shifts where necessary. It is necessary therefore, that theological researchers involved in theological education be conversant with the context where they are researching and teaching. This then will help them to be vehicles of contextualisation or inculturation of the core gospel with the empowering aspects of the existing indigenous religio-culture and systems of knowledge and education.

Third, whether it is questions of gender justice or fullness of life, in Africa, both pursuits entail that human sexuality is at the core. The above case study on the aMang’anja religion and education implies that sexual education determines the way this community lives and relates. Theological education therefore has to establish research projects that mutually collaborate with instructors, as well as their systems, of indigenous education and knowledge. Such collaborations should be genuinely mutual by making sure that the processes of planning, implementation, evaluation as well as dissemination of findings are done together with these indigenous educators. Theological researchers and students involved in such projects should always remember that they are mutual partners and collaborators, not exclusive holders of academic knowledge as if it were a ‘superior’ kind of knowledge.

Finally, ecumenical theological education in Africa should embrace the experience of a God who makes the option for the marginalised\(^{16}\) as foundational to any theological journey towards transformation.

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\(^{16}\) God making an option for the poor and marginalised should be conceived as God making a commitment against poverty and marginalisation through the pursuit of justice not otherwise. It is not that poverty and marginalisation are acceptable ways of life for some and therefore those who are privileged should make sure that they contribute to the sustenance of such, or that the poor and marginalised should be indoctrinated to accept their condition without doing something to change it. Nor does making the option for the poor and marginalised imply working towards pastoral care.
Ecumenical theological education rooted in the Western Christian theologies seems to have emphasized a dualistic theological discourse that privileges the rational over the experience of a relational God who in Jesus became human so as to reach out and touch humanity at the core of the human experience. If theological education is to be truly transforming and transformative, it has to holistically embrace all the human faculties, body, mind/soul and spirit. It has to embrace both masculine and feminine ways of knowing and relating.

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and exclusive provision of charity. While it might mean engaging in charity for immediate survival if necessary, it also means investing in prophetic reflection and praxis that would advocate for structural change and systemic transformation of structures of injustice that nurture poverty and marginalisation. For further discussion on this, see Gustavo Gutiérrez in a lecture responding to then Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), where he affirmed that speaking about poverty and marginalization actually invites believers to speak of justice and to consider the rights of Christians while not losing sight of the fact of what makes this fundamental option for the poor so central is its rootedness in the gratuitousness of God’s love. See: *Una teología de la liberación en el contexto del tercer milenio, in VARIOS, El futuro de la reflexión teológica en A.L.* (Bogotá: CELAM, 1996), 111. I am not talking about an isolated text, but in my modest opinion, this reflects a softened and common perspective in the theology of the option for the poor of Gutiérrez which has gone on now for more than a decade; see Gustavo Gutiérrez, “Pobres y opción fundamental,” in Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino (eds), *Mysterium Liberationis* (San Salvador: UCA Editores, 1991), 303ff, 310.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
As I went about business as usual, teaching the synoptic gospels from a feminist, narrative, historical or redactional criticism and the like, there came a point that this academic approach began to become artificial and strange even on my tongue. I began to ask myself: Why am I talking about the historical context of Jesus, redactional criticism, narrative and all this stuff and skirting the main issue in this context and the gospels, namely, sickness and healing?¹

Teaching the synoptic gospels in an HIV&AIDS context forces me to rethink the purpose of the academy. I am forced to ask myself what good does my teaching do if it cannot address the most pressing needs of my students and society... I am forced to ask the “how” question – how can I make my teaching of the synoptic gospels, which are full of the healing miracles of Jesus, a social space for preparing students to live in their own context of HIV&AIDS.²

As African scholars and teachers of biblical studies in a time and context of HIV&AIDS, we are faced with a number of questions. How can we become partners in the struggle against HIV&AIDS? How can we help to provide quality care to the infected and affected, eliminate the stigma and discrimination around HIV&AIDS, minimize the impact of HIV&AIDS on our societies, assist to make treatment affordable and accessible as well as assist to build HIV&AIDS competent faith-communities? What methods can be used to mainstream HIV&AIDS in biblical studies? The latter question entails examining the usability of available methods as well as suggesting other new and creative ways of teaching biblical studies. This is indispensable, given that most of us who are currently teaching biblical studies have not learned about re/reading the Bible in the light of HIV&AIDS at graduate school. Our efforts to mainstream HIV&AIDS in biblical studies must actively include the experience and the views of people living with HIV&AIDS (henceforth PLWHA). In what follows, I shall present what I have shared with many theological educators in Africa during the various training-of-trainers (TOT) workshops I have held on integrating HIV&AIDS in theological programs between 2000&2003. These include:

- sharing my pedagogical response
- outlining five possible methods of mainstreaming HIV&AIDS in biblical studies

Sharing My Story: One Pedagogical Response to HIV & AIDS

Like many others, I did not immediately see a direct link between my work as a New Testament lecturer and the fight against HIV&AIDS. I was rudely shocked into bringing HIV&AIDS into my teaching by the realization that my work was futile if it could not address the havoc caused by the epidemic. I was then teaching a second-year course on the synoptic gospels to a large class of two hundred students. The majority of the class members were between 18 and 40 years of age. With an HIV&AIDS infection rate in the range of 38 percent among sexually active people in Botswana, I was suddenly struck by the fact that almost half of my class members might not be alive in ten years’ time (the ARVs were not available then).

This devastating realization made me realize how futile my teaching was. I began to ask myself what was the point of teaching the synoptic gospels to this group of young people if it could not help them stay alive or live and operate in an HIV&AIDS context – if they could not even live long enough to utilize this knowledge. So how could I teach the New Testament in such a way that it would help my students to have an understanding of HIV&AIDS and its impact, and how we can all take part in the struggle against it? I began to ask these questions.

There was a second reason that pushed me towards mainstreaming HIV&AIDS in New Testament studies. This had to do with the content of the synoptic gospels, namely, the miracles of healing performed by Jesus. As I narrate this story elsewhere,

...The miracles of healing seem to be [present] throughout these texts. As we read, we become consciously aware that we are reading two texts: the ancient biblical text and the text of our lives. The merging of these two texts is sharply ironic, for Jesus goes about healing all diseases and illness, while we believers in Christ know too well that there is no healing where we stand. Despite this overt contradiction, Jesus, who heals all diseases instantly and without demanding payment, represents our deepest prayers and wishes.3

Confronted with this crisis in my teaching vocation in the late 1990s, I began to devise ways of mainstreaming HIV&AIDS in my university work. First, I encouraged students to write their thesis on the subject by making it clear that I would be happy to supervise any work in this area.4 Second, I assigned students various passages on the miracles of healing and asked them to design a questionnaire. Then they were to find four or five people from the outside community to read the passage with them through the questionnaire. In this way, students would read the miracles of healing with people in the community, compile their findings and present some of these findings in the classroom. This enabled us to discern the theology that arises from our HIV&AIDS context. More importantly, it broke the silence surrounding HIV&AIDS and brought all of us to talk. Breaking the silence revealed that,

In this process of talking, we participate in our own healing as we come to define ourselves as “all affected” by HIV&AIDS in our country, region and continent. The classroom becomes a social space for “tough encounters” as we take the moment to talk about what is really happening and how best we can bring ourselves to live with each other and our situation.5

In addition, my examination papers always included a question on some aspect of HIV&AIDS and how it can be seen from the perspective of the New Testament.

The third method I used was to mobilize my department to mainstream HIV&AIDS in our research, writing and publications. I happened to be the seminar coordinator for the department at the time, responsible for organizing speakers, from the department and elsewhere. So I proposed an academic year-long series of papers that focused on HIV&AIDS from our various areas of specialties as scholars of religion. Some rejected this idea, others supported it. To make it more appealing, I successfully approached a well-known journal and proposed to edit a special issue on HIV&AIDS and theological education, using the papers from the seminar. With a promise that their papers would be published in a refereed academic journal, I won the support of more colleagues. I also found speakers from outside the university community. I e-mailed an academic year-long programme of fortnightly presentations to the whole university community and things began to roll.

4 Some of them include Tom Lekanang, “Church Men Can Make a Difference in the Struggle against HIV/AIDS”; Boboshe Hdwewa, “The Role of the Church in the Fight against HIV/AIDS”; Portia Liphoko, “Married Women, the Church and AIDS”. All these are University of Botswana dissertation projects for undergraduates.
5 Dube, “Healing,” 125.
Every two weeks, except during exam time, we had a presentation. The seminars brought together students, staff, the university community in general, and all interested outsiders. Soon our department was noted for its exemplary leadership in mainstreaming HIV&AIDS in our work. Again, the seminars served as a space for breaking the silence and hearing each other out. The end result of these seminars was published in *Missionalia*.  

This story, I believe, gives us various methods of integrating HIV&AIDS in biblical studies and in religious studies in general. First, it demands intellectuals that are interconnected with both their religious communities and society in general. Clearly, it calls for an activist biblical scholar. Second, the method of reading the Bible with and from the community was used to generate and discover a contextually relevant theology of our time. Third, research and the seminar approach also helped to mainstream HIV&AIDS not just at individual level but also at departmental and campus-wide level through bringing people together to discuss the issue, but also through students’ thesis and projects. These, I believe, are some practical methods, but there are countless other ways, as I will outline below.

**Some Methods of Mainstreaming HIV & AIDS in Biblical Studies**

There are many ways of mainstreaming HIV&AIDS into biblical studies and theological programs in general. Whatever methods we adopt, they should seek to address some of the above-mentioned problems that are precipitated by HIV&AIDS, and to contribute towards prevention, provision of quality care, elimination of the stigma of HIV&AIDS and discrimination, advocacy for accessible and affordable treatment as well as minimizing its impact. Given the complexity of HIV&AIDS and the fact that it is closely linked to various social epidemics, it is critically important that whatever methods and frameworks we choose to use should equip students with the capacity to analyze poverty, gender, racism, human-rights abuse, homophobia, violence, national and international relationships, in biblical texts and today’s communities. Since HIV&AIDS affects various, if not all aspects of our lives, it is also important that a professors’ approach should creatively utilize the available methods as well as seek new ways. Similarly, we should create separate core courses but also mainstream HIV&AIDS in available ones; and there should be courses targeting both registered students and community workers. Given the vast impact of HIV&AIDS in almost all aspects of life, it should now be possible to design diploma, degree and post-graduate programs that allow students to specialize in any area of religion and HIV&AIDS. All these factors also point to the importance of co-teaching and bringing different specialists to the classroom to address particular issues, since no one individual can be specialized in all areas affected by HIV&AIDS. Teaching or re-reading the Bible in the light of HIV&AIDS means that such methods will have to be contextually oriented and theological. That is, the approach will be to read the Bible not only as an historical and ancient book, but also with an eye to current concerns. Luckily, both in African and worldwide biblical studies such an approach is now possible and recognized. In African biblical studies, as in most Two-Thirds World contexts, inculturation and liberation hermeneutics of the Bible have always been contextual. As Justin Ukpong points out, “This involves a variety of ways that link the biblical text to the African context such that the main focus of interpretation is on the communities that receive it rather than on those that produced it or on the text itself as in the Western methods”. Yet even in Western scholarship, methods and theories such as reader-response, feminist and social location mean that biblical readers cannot avoid reading with their own concerns, identity and experience in mind. Basically, a contextual biblical study is inevitable.

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Depending on various factors, such as one’s situation, training, specialty in methods, interest, type of students and academic environment, one can choose to use one of the following categories of methods in teaching biblical studies in an HIV&AIDS context: available methods, available African biblical methods, a thematic approach, a book approach and a comparative approach. Whatever the method used, it should be creative, imaginative and research-oriented.

**Available Methods of Biblical Studies**

There is a wide range of methods in biblical studies, which are sometimes classified under three groups: historical, literary and social-scientific. Some methods of biblical reading function in combinations. For example, feminist biblical reading can use historical, literary or cultural perspectives. At the same time, some literary (rhetorical and genre) and cultural (cultural anthropology) methods can be historical, that is, reading the biblical text as an ancient artifact that must be understood in its own terms. In short, there is some overlap in the three categories of methods. However, I believe every category can be helpful in re/reading the Bible in this time of HIV&AIDS.

To start with the historical approach, those who use historical criticism can particularly help us to have a better understanding of illness and healing in ancient times and biblical thinking. Given that the initial response to HIV&AIDS focused on those biblical passages that associated illness with disobedience and punishment by God (Gen. 30; Num. 12, 14 and 21:4-9; 2 Sam. 24), a historical approach can help us to understand the context in which these passages were written and used. Such an approach can also highlight various other biblical perspectives of understanding illness, particularly that illness is not always a consequence of disobedience and divine punishment. Similarly, historical perspectives can also highlight biblical perspectives on social epidemics such as poverty, gender inequalities, national corruption, international exploitation, exploitation of widows and orphans. Historical feminist methods of reading can particularly help to highlight both oppressive gender relations in the Bible and those that empower both sexes. The latter could give us an entry-point to advocate gender empowerment, given that gender inequalities have been identified as a major driving force behind the spread of HIV&AIDS.

Literary methods are various. They include narrative, rhetorical, genre, semiotics, structuralism and deconstruction, reader-response, literary theory and criticism. Some of the methods are concerned with analysis of the text more from a historical perspective (Greek rhetorical and genre) than from a contemporary one. Some are more interested on focusing on the text itself than on history or the present (narrative and structuralism). However, all ways of reading will of necessity include the reader, the text and the context. For example, reader-response theories can work in combination with most literary/historical and cultural methods. The presupposition is that different readers will highlight different aspects of the text depending on their experiences, identity and context. In short, the social location of readers informs the type of biblical interpretation they will make. If we are reading in a world and a context of HIV&AIDS, it follows that narrative, ideological, psycho-analytical, feminist and post-colonial methods will highlight those themes that have been vividly brought to the fore for us by HIV&AIDS. Literary methods of analysis are therefore particularly useful for the integration of HIV&AIDS in the reading of various passages.

To cite one example, I have read Mark 5:24b-43, the story of the bleeding woman and the dead young girl, from a feminist and HIV&AIDS perspective with different groups. I begin by inviting the group to

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8 Fernando Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (eds), *Reading from This Place*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 1-32.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
do a narrative analysis, asking the participants to identify characters, setting, narrators, and the rhetoric of the passage. We then move to a gender analysis of our narrative findings and of the passage. Here we note the difference between men and women in terms of role and power. Lastly, I suggest reading the passage from an HIV&AIDS context. Here we are struck by doctors who cannot heal, patients who lose all their savings in the search for healing, the stigma that is attached to some illnesses, Jesus as a religious leader who is so sensitive to the touch of a desperate woman and who stops to listen, fathers who are actively involved in care, mothers who are imprisoned by having to give 24-hour care, mourning communities who have lost their children, and the chilling reality of the death of young people. Basically, in reading the text in the light of HIV&AIDS we find many similarities and helpful models. This text, for example, becomes important for calling for religious leaders who care (Jesus and Jairus); for an absolute insistence on hope and life even in the face of death and hopelessness (the bleeding woman and Jesus’ words at the news that the daughter is dead and to the mourners); for the need for young people to hear the call to arise into life against death by HIV&AIDS (symbolized by the rise of the little girl); for understanding the gender reality of illness, suffering, poverty and care (the bleeding woman, the little girl and the mother). The biblical text thus becomes mirror-like, enabling us to see and understand our HIV&AIDS context as well as giving us ideas for transformation. While this is one example, I believe one can apply a narrative feminist and HIV&AIDS reading to any passage which seems suitable. Similarly, those who do ideological and psycho-analytical criticism can also give us useful insights into re/reading the Bible in a context of HIV&AIDS.

Turning to the social-scientific paradigm, some of the methods listed under this category are social description, sociological analysis, Marxist readings, cultural anthropology and archeology. The presuppositions and questions of some of these methods closely resemble historical methods which emphasize letting the ancient text speak in its own terms. Social description is an explanation and elucidation of the institutions and customs of the biblical community. According to Priest, it seeks to describe the changes that take place in the long history of Israel, without explaining the reason, while a sociological approach uses macro-theory in an attempt also to explain the changes.

Cultural anthropology, on the other hand, focuses on the total life of a society and sometimes uses cross-cultural models where data are missing. It deals with the symbolic universe, societal institutions such as family, politics, economic and cultural values of a society. The ancient biblical text is seen as an artifact that represents, therefore, its place and time of origin, and it should be read on its own terms. Marxism, on the other hand, lays great emphasis on class analysis and material production. The usability of social-scientific methods is the same as the one described above for historical criticism. But its use-ability may even be more important for understanding our current social systems and how they help or hinder the struggle against HIV&AIDS, and in particular how societies and a people’s social institutions, structures and symbolic worlds inform their response. Marxist tools of analysis remain essential for understanding poverty and seeking economic transformation and justice.

African Methods of Reading

African biblical studies tend to be categorized under inculturation and liberation hermeneutics. The latter includes black biblical hermeneutics of South Africa and African feminist biblical readings, while the former tends towards a comparative approach to the Bible and African religions. Both methods are contextual, given that they read the Bible with current concerns in mind. How can inculturation

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11 Jerome H. Neyrey, Paul in Other Words: A Cultural Reading of His Letters (Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 13.
14 Neyrey, Paul in Other Words, 12-30.
hermeneutics help us to re/read the Bible in the light of HIV&AIDS? There should be countless ways of doing this, depending on the most important theme or subject in a given place. For HIV&AIDS prevention, one can design a course on prevention of disease in African religions, and the Bible and the HIV&AIDS epidemic. Such a course could also focus on care and stigma from both religious perspectives, and explore what is useful and what needs to be re-imagined. It would be interesting to have a course on an inculturation approach to the social epidemic of HIV&AIDS. Here one would explore what both approaches say about social injustice and how that can inform our struggle against HIV&AIDS.

Turning to liberation hermeneutics, its use of class, race, gender and ideological analysis to interrogate all forms of oppression is quite central to re/reading the Bible in the light of HIV&AIDS. Current HIV&AIDS research and documentation underline that poverty, gender and social inequalities are lead causes in the spread of the disease. Any method that seeks to read the Bible in the context of HIV&AIDS cannot afford to be silent about or ignore doing class and gender analysis. Both black and African feminist methods of reading the Bible equip us with such skills. Most faith leaders’ response to HIV&AIDS stops, pitifully, at a personal level (insisting on A/abstain and B/be faithful as the answer), which fails to acknowledge that individuals are socially located and the decisions they make are dependent upon that. Thus any pedagogical approach that assists students and church ministers to understand poverty and gender analysis will be extremely helpful in creating faith communities that are HIV&AIDS-competent and sensitive. Under the umbrella of liberation hermeneutics, one can do a thematic or comparative study of a particular book in the light of HIV&AIDS. Some examples could be Genesis 1-4: a liberation and HIV&AIDS approach; Exodus 1-12: a liberation and HIV&AIDS reading; the gospel of Luke: Liberation and HIV&AIDS approach; or Galatians: a liberation and HIV&AIDS re/reading. A liberation approach also assists the reader to analyze not only the text but also the society and to insist on transformative justice. The value of this method cannot be overemphasized.

Although the work of African women is categorized under African liberation hermeneutics, their innovative methods deserve separate attention. Most of these are elaborated in Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible. For example, Teresa Okure has, in a number of her works, insisted on a hermeneutic of life. She holds “that the Bible is about life and for promoting life... if it is consequently accepted that the primary hermeneutical key for writing and comprehending the Bible is life, then the question should be: How can the life experiences of the contemporary reader serve as key for reinterpreting the Bible?” [emphasis added]. Okure underlines that a biblical interpreter is anybody who “reads the biblical text in order to discover life...” and that “any interpretation that fails to do this... becomes suspect and should be regarded as inauthentic”, for it has failed to “be in tune with this universal intention of God to liberate, save and sustain life”. I believe the usefulness of this hermeneutical point of view in the struggle against HIV&AIDS speaks for itself in so far as re/reading the Bible to save life is concerned – be it for prevention, care, elimination of stigma or minimizing the impact of the epidemic. Much can be said and done through this hermeneutic of life.

Story-telling and divination methods that are elaborated in Other Ways of Reading would, I believe, be very useful. Story-telling of the text and of the life of the listeners or readers can serve to break the silence

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17 In Segovia and Tolbert, Reading from This Place, vol. 2, 55.

18 In Segovia and Tolbert, Reading from This Place, vol. 2, 57.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
and to hear each other out. This story-telling includes retelling biblical stories in the light of contemporary concerns\(^{19}\) and also bringing together African cultural stories and the Bible to be read together.\(^{20}\)

Musimbi R. Kanyoro has proposed gendered communal and cultural hermeneutics, which takes both the Bible and African cultures seriously and which also seeks to do theology with and within the community for transformative reasons.\(^{21}\) Reading African cultures and the Bible together with the community to highlight gender and other social injustices would serve well in our search for a healing theology at a time of HIV&AIDS. As she underlines, “For us in Africa, it does not matter how much we write about our theology in books, the big test before us is whether we can bring change in our societies”.\(^{22}\) Similarly, divination which insists that health should be regarded as good relationships and that we are responsible for each other’s health is central to understanding HIV&AIDS and addressing the social evils that encourage it in our search for healing.\(^{23}\)

**A Thematic Approach**

One approach that may be usable is to study a particular theme that is central to HIV&AIDS. Some of these include life, sickness, compassion, healing, fear, hope, sin and forgiveness, widows, orphans, advocacy/prophets and human sexuality. Alternatively, themes may focus on the category of social epidemics that fuel HIV&AIDS: we have already named poverty, gender inequalities, violence, exploitation of children, human-rights abuse, racism, national corruption, international justice, stigma and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and ethnicity.

One can choose any one of these, or a combination, and follow it in various biblical books in order to identify, acknowledge and isolate various useful and unhelpful perspectives on a particular theme in relation to HIV&AIDS. For example, one could teach a course on healing in the synoptic gospels, or the creation of life in Genesis, or gender relations in the New Testament, the biblical concept of sin, stigma and discrimination in the Bible, or poverty and health: biblical perspectives in the light of HIV&AIDS. Whatever theme is chosen may be determined by what is the most burning issue in a particular context or for a given audience. For example, those who are in the Northern hemisphere may choose topics such as international injustice and HIV&AIDS, or advocacy, prophecy and HIV&AIDS.

**A Book Approach**

Another useable framework is what I call a book approach. One can pick a particular biblical book and study it in the light of HIV&AIDS or one of the pertinent themes. There should be countless number of things one can explore, given the sixty-six books of the Bible and the various issues that arise from HIV&AIDS. To mention just a few, a course on the Song of Songs, human sexuality and HIV&AIDS could explore a biblical language of openly discussing human sexuality, of both genders enjoying open expression in sexual relations, and how this can assist us to break the silence and affirm gender equality among partners. A course on Job and HIV&AIDS can explore the suffering of the righteous, the role of friends in giving social support to the sick, an understanding of the concept of illness that brings loss of material possessions, and human relations. The story of Job, in particular, highlights the fact that we cannot

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\(^{22}\) Kanyoro, “Engendered Communal Theology,” 160.

\(^{23}\) Dube, *Other Ways of Reading*, 179-98.

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**Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa**
always assume that those who are sick are being punished for their immorality. In the New Testament a
course on the gospel of Mark and HIV&AIDS can explore perspectives for healing the sick, stigma and
discrimination, advocacy on behalf of the marginalized and empowerment of children. Similarly, one can
study Leviticus and HIV&AIDS prevention, or the gospel of John and HIV&AIDS. What is important in
all these possibilities is to ensure that students have tools of analysis that assist them to deal with the
complexity of HIV&AIDS and especially how it links with poverty, gender inequalities, violence, stigma
or other social evils.

A Comparative Approach
In a comparative approach, we can compare themes, books or even religions on HIV&AIDS or a particular
aspect of the epidemic. For example, we can do a course on healing in Leviticus and Job; or healing in the
Hebrew Bible and in African religions; sin in the Hebrew Bible and African religions and the HIV&AIDS
context; or sin in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament and the HIV&AIDS context. Similarly, we can
compare stigma in both Testaments with perspectives from indigenous religions and how it helps or does
not help to eliminate HIV&AIDS stigma and discrimination. We can also explore such topics as gendered
perspectives of illness and care in the biblical worlds and in the HIV&AIDS curriculum.

Conclusion
All the above approaches can employ any analytical tools that are already available in biblical literature or
social sciences. A thematic, book or comparative approach can thus use historical, narrative, ideological,
class or feminist methods of analysis as and when the teacher finds it necessary. In fact, one may/would
have to employ a combination of methods, given the complexity of the HIV&AIDS epidemic. One would
do well to co-teach with colleagues of other specialties, and also to invite guests from outside to address
particular areas of the epidemic. The involvement of PLWHA is a must, given that their experiences must
inform any articulation of a biblical hermeneutics that seeks to combat HIV&AIDS. In whatever way they
can, teachers will have to be creative in their methods of teaching and in finding the resources, given that a
direct link between the Bible and HIV&AIDS is a subject that is yet to be examined and hence is scarcely
featured in most library collections. In one way or another, they will need to use a participatory and
research-oriented approach of teaching to facilitate a space for breaking the silence, for healing and care as
well as for taking an active part in the elimination of the HIV&AIDS epidemic.

Our role as biblical educators in the fight against HIV&AIDS may seem very small, but it is nonetheless
indispensable. When we employ some of the above frameworks and methods, or any other that we find
useful, we will be doing our part in seeking to reduce the spread of HIV&AIDS, ensuring that there is
provision of quality care, promoting access to affordable treatment, contributing towards the elimination of
the stigma, minimizing the impact of HIV&AIDS, helping our students and communities to stay alive and
assisting churches to be HIV&AIDS competent faith-communities. For this commitment, it is “A luta
continua!” – the struggle continues.

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Introduction

The study of religion in Africa is a product of external influences. To a large extent, the study of religion in Africa has been shaped by European traditions. The implication has been that the methods and approaches adopted in the study of religion in Africa have been derived from “outside”. For a continent that has waged liberation struggles, this comes as a major point for debate. How can African scholars be subservient to the theories and methods of their erstwhile former colonizers? Can African scholars of religion have the confidence to take the discipline in a different direction as they respond to African realities? Such questions lie at the heart of debates on developing African traditions in the study of religion in Africa.

This article utilises the emerging field of religion and masculinities to explore the opportunities for Africanization. It argues that the discourse on religion and masculinities in Africa provides a valuable opportunity for African scholars to be creative and illustrate the possibility of doing religious studies with an African flavour. The dominant argument is that African material will necessarily colour and influence the study of religion in Africa. Having come to Africa, the study of religion in Africa dare not, and in fact cannot, remain the same. In the first section, the paper outlines male dominance in the study of religion in Africa. In the second section, it describes the discourse on gender in the study of religion in Africa, paying particular attention to women’s issues and the subsequent marginalisation of men. The third section briefly explains the factors that have given rise to attention on masculinities in Africa, laying emphasis on the impact of the HIV epidemic. The fourth section examines how the theme of religion and masculinities offers a valuable opportunity to African scholars to chart a new path in the discipline. It analyses the opportunities for Africanization. In conclusion, the article argues that the Africanization of religious studies must be undertaken urgently.

Male Dominance and the Study of Religion in Africa

The study of religion in Africa has generally been gender blind until very recently. This is due to the reality that the pioneering scholars in the study of religion were European and later, African males, who did not pay attention to the dynamics of gender. In his useful application of the ideas of Edward Said to the study of African Traditional Religions, Henk J. van Rinsum suggests that Geoffrey Parrinder could be regarded as the patriarchal authority, with John S. Mbiti and E. Bolaji Idowu as “followers and elaborators”. In this

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1 “Africa” is a multivalent term. It is used in a general sense to cover Anglophone sub-Saharan Africa. While there are notable differences in the growth of the discipline in the area under analysis, there are sufficient similarities to justify the generalisations.


3 There is greater gravitation towards the term, “African Indigenous Religions”. However, I retain the term “African Traditional Religions” due to its recurrence in the literature consulted.

scheme, Jacob Olupona, Friday Mbon and Umar H. D. Danfulani would be the “new authorities”. As is apparent, the succession line is exclusively male.

The study of religion in Africa has therefore been (and continues to be) a male-dominated discipline. In line with the development of the discipline in Europe, male scholars, interests and methodologies have been dominant. While it might appear controversial to describe methodologies as “male”, it must be appreciated that approaches such as the phenomenological approach are not gender neutral. Although they purport to be “scientific and scholarly”, they are very much an outcome of male interests and preoccupations. By carrying over the dominance of men in religious studies from Europe to Africa, the discipline missed an opportunity to have a different outlook in Africa.

Male scholars have been shaping the direction of religious studies in Africa since the 1960s when it sought to establish itself more firmly on the continent. Across the various regions, it was male scholars who were replacing departing European scholars. In this regard the coalescence of indigenous and European patriarchies has played a major role in excluding women from religious studies. Patriarchy privileges male interests, needs and even frivolities. As a result, a visit to most departments of religious studies in Africa will familiarise one with male “gate keepers and patriarchal authorities”.

It is important to highlight the fact that the dominance of men in religious studies is in keeping with the general absence of women in higher education in Africa. There is a need to appreciate the “politics of exclusion in higher education” and the historical factors that have led to male dominance. An awareness of the historical and ideological factors that have kept women away from higher education will enable one to put the absence of women from the study of religion into proper prospective. Thus:

Women in Africa (as is the case the world over) generally entered academia later than their male counterparts. A systematic and deliberate colonial policy ensured that African women were excluded from the various ‘ivory towers’ that dotted the continent. Not only did missionary education disproportionately extend educational opportunities to males, but men’s education was also accorded higher priority than that of women…A variety of factors, including the emphasis on domestic chores, generalized conditions of poverty and the overarching influence of patriarchy, combined to make access and entrance to academic institutions for women a mirage for much of the colonial period. Women were a rare commodity in the annals of academia, and were Africa’s true ‘drawers of water and hewers of wood’.

In line with the observation in the citation above, men have dominated the academic study of religion in Africa. The situation in religious studies remained unchanged until the late 1970s and the 1980s when some departments of religious studies in West and Southern Africa began to employ women lecturers here and there. It was only in the 1990s, through the forceful work of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (hereafter, the Circle) led by the Ghanaian theologian Mercy Amba Oduyoye, that more departments of religious studies began to recruit women scholars. However, the situation is far from being satisfactory as the percentage of women within the discipline remains very low. As with their counterparts

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5 The approach to power in African academia (as indeed elsewhere) is characterised by the dominance of the “power over” paradigm, in contrast to the “power with” paradigm. While former induces suffocation, the later promotes solidarity and a shared vision.
in theology. African women undertaking religious studies face numerous challenges. However, when they forced themselves on to the scene, they began to pay attention to the issue of gender.

**Gender and the Study of Religion in Africa**

Since the 1990s, the Circle has played a major role in ensuring that gender is put on the agenda of the study of religion in Africa. Although most of the Circle activists are theologians, others are also involved in religious studies. Yet others straddle both worlds. Circle authors have challenged the church in Africa and departments of religious studies to take women’s issues seriously. Whereas previously the departments of religious studies had given the impression that religion meant the same to men and women, women scholars have sought to highlight the significance of religion to women (as opposed to what it means to men). African women scholars of religion have sought to challenge the dominant approaches to the discipline by paying attention to the status of women in the various religions of Africa. In particular, they have dwelt on the status of women in African Traditional Religions, Christianity and Islam. Whereas male scholars have tended to describe these religions in general terms, women scholars have been more interested in retrieving women’s voices. In her book, *Women in the Yoruba Religious Sphere*, Oyeronke Olajubu clarifies this stance using the following words:

> Where people extol complementary gender relations, but accounts of people’s culture and religious traditions present the male as the active participant and the female as docile and passive, there is a valid reason for the hermeneutic of suspicion...There is need to retrieve, reinterpret, and reevaluate previous assumptions about women in religious traditions to arrive at the center point where all voices are heard and respected.\(^\text{10}\)

The focus on gender has been accentuated by the Circle’s focus on HIV and its impact on women and girls in Africa. The Circle has emerged as the most consistent group writing on HIV, religion and gender in Africa.\(^\text{11}\) The Circle has demonstrated how inequitable gender relations buttressed by religion and culture have left African women and girls more vulnerable to HIV. Women scholars in religious studies and theology have shown how religion and culture have been abused to condemn women and children to premature deaths in the era of HIV in Africa (see Dube in this volume). Whereas approaches such as phenomenology call upon scholars to be neutral, African women scholars have spoken out in favour of restructuring religions in order to achieve gender justice.

By placing emphasis on women’s religious experiences, African women scholars of religion such as Isabel A. Phiri have forced the discipline to become conscious of gender dynamics. Although many male scholars of religion have resisted applying the tools of gender analysis to their work, it is fair to say that the face of the discipline has been affected decisively by the arrival of African women scholars. It must be acknowledged that women scholars have been productive and effective.

Emphasising women’s religious experiences, however, has had the effect of effacing men from the discourse on gender. This has had the negative effect of suggesting that men do not have a gender. Whereas gender means the socially prescribed roles for men and women, the trend has been to focus exclusively on women. Around 2000, it became clear to gender activists that there was need to bring men

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9 A separate study is required to explore the relationship between theology and religious studies in Africa. However, a number of practitioners have moved between the two areas with relative ease.


*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
back into the discourse on gender and HIV. As a result, there has been a notable increase in interest in masculinities and religion in Africa. For example, the *Journal of Gender and Religion in Africa*, previously known as the *Journal of Constructive Theology*, published in the School of Religion and Theology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, has devoted two full issues to the theme of masculinity, HIV and Religion in Africa.

Recognising the importance of men in the response to HIV, there have been calls to pay more attention to the social construction of masculinities. It has become generally accepted that society plays an important role in shaping men. It is society that prescribes what men may or may not do. Of significance has been society’s double standards regarding the sexual behaviour of men and women. Whereas women are expected to be chaste and restrained, men are excused when they have multiple sexual partners. Furthermore, men are by far the primary perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence. Such observations have led to calls to pay more attention to masculinities in the time of HIV. The plural, masculinities, is used as there is no single way of being a man across religions and cultures.

Religion is a major force in the construction of masculinities across Africa (and in other parts of the world). As a guide to belief and action, religion equips its adherents with ethical standards. African Traditional Religions, Christianity and Islam all have certain expectations regarding men. To a large extent, they construct men to be the leaders and to control women and children. Through their sacred writings/oral traditions, myths, inherited beliefs and practices, they project men as having priority over women. As with other religions of the world, they are patriarchal. Faced with the challenges of HIV and gender-based violence, activists in Africa have been calling for the transformation of masculinities. They contend that religion has a role to play as it has promoted aggressive masculinities. For example, many men cite the scriptures of various religions to defend their authority to “discipline” women. Others maintain that as “heads”, they have the license to make decisions without consulting women. In most instances this leads to gender-based violence as women resist such abuses of power.

Realising the strategic importance of working with boys and men in the face of HIV and gender-based violence, there have been growing calls for the transformation of masculinities in Africa and globally. An abuse of sacred texts and traditions by men has allowed men to project having multiple sexual partners and using violence as “divinely sanctioned”. Furthermore, the processes of urbanization, Arabization and Christianization have had a telling effect on how men in Africa express their masculinities. Thus:

The fact that Arabization and Europeanization demonized African ethnic masculinities as primitive, heathen and barbaric, did not bar the latter from cross-pollinating with the former’s influences and across ethnic divides. As a result, the current African elite masculinities are predominantly crossbreeds and hybrids of indigenous masculinity and western modernity. To prove that they are men, many African leaders sacrificed their own lives and those of innocent women, men and children at the altar of their own masculine ambiguity.

There is a growing appreciation that religions can play a constructive role in challenging men to be agents of change in the face of HIV and gender-based violence in Africa. Men must be challenged to have new approaches towards power. This will require rigorous analyses of the religious and cultural factors that inform aggressive masculinities. Researchers in different African contexts will need to interrogate the

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15 *Men for the Equality of Men and Women* (Karen, Nairobi: Men for the Equality of Men and Women, 2008), 21
African appropriation of sacred texts in Christianity and Islam, as well as the use of oral traditions to support patriarchal dominance. Deconstructing and reinterpreting these texts to transform masculinities must be undertaken in order to discover and deliver “the justice men owe to women” and acknowledging the “positive resources from world religions”.17 From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that there is a growing interest in the area of masculinities, HIV and religion. As this is a new area of research and publication, there is room for Africanizing. However, before illustrating how the area of masculinities and religion can have “African traditions”, there is need to grapple, briefly, with the very concept of Africanization. I undertake this task in the following section.

**Africanizing Religious Studies: A Characterization and an Overview of the Challenges**

The discourse on religion and masculinities in Africa avails a number of opportunities for Africanizing the discipline. However, there is no unanimity on both the meaning and desirability of Africanization. In general, Africanizing refers to the process of ensuring that African concerns, issues, methods and personnel are reflected in a given discipline. With special reference to religious studies, Africanizing the discipline implies that a student studying religion in Africa should be able to interact with African concerns, issues, methods and personnel in an African university. Walter Kamba, the University of Zimbabwe’s first black Vice Chancellor, offers some useful insights on Africanization following his appointment in 1981.18 He argues that Africanization implies that institutions of higher learning “have their feet on African soil”. 19 They strive to grapple with African issues and endeavour to find African solutions. However, they do this knowing full well that universities necessarily have the international dimension. They must ensure that African students are not alienated in their studies. In the case of religious studies, it is vital that students experience the discipline as reflecting an African ethos. The bulk of the material encountered should at least speak to the real life situation of the student. The textbooks accessed and examples used must reflect African realities. A student studying religion in Harare must be exposed to a setting that is different from a student studying religion in London (religious studies as “having its roots in African soil”). Of course, both students will have a lot in common, as both would be drawing from a common discipline called religious studies (religious studies as having “the international dimension”). However, a longer narrative would be required to provide a more detailed analysis of the assertions made herein.

The Africanization of religious studies faces a number of challenges. First, the discipline itself did not originate on African shores. Rather, the discipline has its origins outside the continent.20 This poses a major challenge to the discipline in an African context. It implies that African practitioners of the discipline are heavily influenced by the formulations of the pioneers. The vision, procedures and goals have already been framed, forcing most practitioners to utilise pre-existing categories and concepts. Second, alongside the challenge of the discipline having an external origin, the Africanization of religious studies in Africa has been compromised by the absence of vibrant methodological schools. Apart from the pioneering work done in countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Botswana and Zimbabwe, most departments of religious studies in Africa continue to rely on publications from outside the continent. This

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18 Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980.
sad situation remains in place, years after the process of decolonization set in. Third, apart from the theoretical conundrum is the book famine that characterizes the study of religion in Africa. Most religious studies courses are totally dependent on textbooks that were published in Europe and North America. There have been notable publishing initiatives in Kenya and South Africa, but these remain inadequate. In Nigeria, considerable progress has been made, but mainly within the area of biblical studies through the Nigerian Association of Biblical Studies. There is therefore a crying need for African scholars in religious studies to follow this lead and reflect on the process of Africanization. Finally, there are some African scholars of religion who are uncomfortable with the very concept of Africanization. Given the intractable problems that Africa faces, it is understandable that some scholars would be wary of accepting a concept that seems to imply accepting the “ugly face” of the continent. Others contend that Africanization implies the lowering of “standards”. They are convinced that the concept is laden with ideological assumptions and results in accepting mediocrity in the name of Africanization.

Despite the challenges and misgivings surrounding Africanization, I am convinced that the study of religion in Africa must prioritise the process of Africanization. Failure to undertake Africanization implies that the discipline will struggle to have a meaningful impact on the continent. I am also persuaded that the area of religion and masculinities offers useful insights into the process of Africanization. The following section therefore appropriates the theme of religion and masculinities to probe opportunities for Africanization.

**Religion and Masculinities: Opportunities for Africanization**

The foregoing section has outlined some of the major challenges facing the quest to Africanize religious studies. In this section, I seek to highlight how scholars working on religion and masculinities in Africa have ample scope for Africanizing in their academic endeavours. I argue that although concepts and material developed by scholars outside the continent is helpful, African scholars should not feel bound to work only within the parameters that have been set by their counterparts from outside the continent.

**Placing Masculinities within Research Efforts in African Religious Studies**

One of the key aspects of Africanization is to ensure that African concerns are at the centre of research efforts in religious studies. The theme of masculinities must find a place in the study of religion in Africa in the face of the HIV epidemic. If the discipline is to be contextually sensitive and to be relevant to the lived realities of Africans, it must grapple with the theme of masculinities. The Circle has done well to bring gender to the fore. However, women scholars have tended to focus exclusively on women’s issues. To complement this process, there is need to undertake research into religion and the formation of masculinities in Africa.

Research efforts in religious studies in Africa must be directed towards the transformation of masculinities in the face of HIV and gender-based violence. This must become an urgent undertaking. Scholars in the various areas of religious studies must utilise the opportunity to reflect on how the current masculinities have not been beneficial to African communities. Writing on Islam in general, Trad Godsey has suggested the need for new conceptualizations of masculinity. According to him:

> The redefining and reformulation of masculinity in the Muslim world to allow manliness to be expressed as weakness and vulnerability has both a Qur’anic and Prophetic precedent. While the AIDS pandemic creates an

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*Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa*
urgency for change, the Qur’an and the Sunnah have always contained tools to reconstruct manhood in a way that achieves greater gender equity for women and men alike.21

The approach that Godsey adopts in Islam needs to be followed in the reflections on masculinities in African Traditional Religions, African Christianity, African Islam, African Buddhism, and other religions found on the African religious market. How does a particular African religion shape the values that men hold dear? To what extent do these ideas of manhood pose a danger to women, children and other men? What are the redemptive values found in these religions and how do they challenge hegemonic masculinities that define manhood in contemporary African societies? Interacting with such questions will enable African scholars to indigenize scholarship on religion and masculinities and make it relevant to the struggles against HIV and gender-based violence.

By paying attention to the interface between religion and masculinities, African scholars would have chosen to focus on a theme that is of existential significance to African communities. They would have been guided by African issues and concerns in their selection of the theme and its implications to the struggles against HIV and gender-based violence. While Randi R. Warne22 notes that (Western) scholarship that reflected on maleness and masculinity developed a high profile in the 1980s and 1990s, it has not had an impact on the study of religion in Africa. By taking up the theme of religion and masculinities in the time of HIV, African scholars would be addressing a timely and relevant issue.

Utilising African Material to Understand African Masculinities

Alongside giving priority to African issues and concerns, Africanization also implies utilising African material to clarify (religious) concepts and phenomena. For example, if the term “religion” has been notoriously difficult to define in European and American religious studies, the question arises as to how or whether “religion” in Africa clarifies (or even, complicates) the concept. Similarly, studying religion and masculinities in Africa provides ample opportunity to expand the meaning of masculinities. How do religion and culture in Africa socialise men to understand themselves as men? Are there specific African notions of manhood that are at play? How do indigenous rites of passage such as circumcision contribute to the formation of masculinities in Africa? By responding to such questions, the study on religion and masculinities in Africa can provide valuable insights into the discourses on masculinity.

There is also a need to utilise African material to understand religion and masculinity. This also implies that African scholars must be willing to take the oral nature of African communities seriously. For example, there is a need to pay attention to proverbs and their role in forming masculinities. African scholars need to interrogate proverbs that promote dangerous masculinities and draw attention to those that call upon men to be peaceful and tolerant. Furthermore, African scholars must make use of myths, folktales, music and other forms of communication in their analyses of the factors that inform masculinities in Africa.

Applying Research Results on Religion and Masculinities for Social Transformation

One of the biggest challenges facing the academic study of religion in Africa is whether it is relevant to the process of social transformation. The question can be posed more directly: can the study of religion in Africa afford to be “only scholarly” and not contribute practically to the resolution of challenges facing

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African societies? It would appear that Africa cannot afford to pursue “knowledge for the sake of knowledge”.23  

Research results on religion and masculinities in Africa must be harnessed in the struggle for health and well-being. It would be futile to come up with research results that are relevant to the struggle for gender justice and fail to disseminate these results in a way that promotes active engagement in society. What is the value of discovering, for example, that certain religious beliefs and practices promote dangerous masculinities in the time of HIV, and then fail to embark on practical strategies to construct alternative masculinities? I am convinced that the study of religion and masculinities holds a great deal of promise in terms of enabling scholars in the field to become socially engaged. In fact, embarking on transformative masculinities in the time of HIV and gender-based violence would enable departments of religious studies in Africa to engage in what Paulo Freire called “the pedagogy of the oppressed”.24 In applying this methodology, lecturers would ensure that education leads to freedom by engaging students in exercises that tackle real life situations. In the context of religion and masculinities, students would grapple with how religion often sponsors destructive masculinities. They would then work towards transforming these harmful masculinities.

Conclusion

The academic study of religion in Africa needs to set its own agenda and to give priority to issues that vex African communities. In this article, I have drawn attention to the theme of religion and masculinities in the face of HIV and gender-based violence. I have argued that researching on this theme provides sufficient scope for Africanization. As the theme has not yet received much scholarly attention, there is potential for African scholars to shape this particular area of research without feeling that some European or American “expert/s” will not approve of their approaches. In closing, I must reiterate that the area of religion and masculinities has existential significance.

Bibliography


23 Chitando. “Sub-Saharan Africa,” 121.


*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Introduction

“If this text is in the Bible, we will not be quiet,” a group of women said to me after the Ujamaa Centre had facilitated the Tamar Campaign in their church. They then became even more vociferous, asking, “Why had the church hidden this story from the Bible from us?” They were right, the church has ‘hidden’ the story of the rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13) from us. Even in those churches that use a lectionary this text is not one of the set readings for a Sunday. When the Tamar Campaign was launched in Kenya in 2005 the church leader who was invited to deliver the opening sermon preached on the wrong Tamar! Instead of preaching on 2 Samuel 13, he preached on Genesis 38.

But things are changing thanks to the Tamar Campaign. Tamar’s story is becoming more familiar to the church. Her name is finding its place alongside the more well-known names of our faith tradition, like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Saul, David, and many others. Tamar is emerging alongside the many women of our faith tradition whose names are less familiar to the faithful, like Sarah, Hagar, Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, Zilpah, Dinah, Shiphrah, Puah, Miriam, Deborah, Jael, Ruth, Naomi, Hannah, Rizpah, and many others. Fortunately, Tamar has a name, unlike so many women in the Bible. And like many of her biblical sisters, Tamar has a story to tell.

This article recounts briefly the history of the Tamar Campaign, goes on to explain in more depth the way in which 2 Samuel 13:1-22 has been used in work of the Tamar Campaign, examines how this text is being used to address a range of gender-related issues, and offers some reflection on the pedagogical dimensions of the Tamar Campaign.

The Tamar Campaign

The Ujamaa Centre (formerly the Institute for the Study of the Bible and Worker Ministry Project), which is located in the School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, first used the Tamar story in a workshop we were invited to facilitate in 1996.1 The theme of that workshop was “Women and the Bible in Southern Africa,” and the participants came from South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, Kenya, and Brazil. The vast majority of the participants were women, numbering more than ninety, and a few men. The workshop was facilitated in the majority languages, Zulu, Sotho, and English.

The workshop was divided into three sub-themes: “Women and Culture,” “Women and Violence,” and “Women and the Church.” It was for the second of these sub-themes that we chose to use 2 Samuel 13:1-22. Phyllis Trible’s important book, *Texts of Terror* (1984), provided us with many insights into this powerful text, but we were apprehensive, as we had never before used this story in a workshop context. In constructing the Bible study on this text we were guided by our Contextual Bible Study methodology, which begins with the participants’ initial receptions and appropriations of the text, then moves into the literary dimensions of the text, from which we then move into the socio-historical dimensions of the text, and then finally back in-front-of-the-text to the participants’ ‘new’ appropriation of the text. These methodological considerations led to the following Contextual Bible Study questions:

1. What is the text about?
2. Who are the male characters and what is the role of each of them in the rape of Tamar?
3. What is Tamar’s response throughout the story?
4. Where is God in this story?
5. In your own words retell the story of Tamar.
6. What effect or impact does the story of Tamar have on you as a Southern African woman?
7. How do society and the church react to a raped victim?
8. The media, NGOs, women’s groups, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are advocating that women should break the culture of silence about violence against them. Do you find the legal system, the police, courts, hospitals, etc., helpful when reporting a rape?
9. What message does the story of Tamar have for us?
10. In what ways does the story of Tamar empower us?

Though somewhat cumbersome in its initial form, there was plenty of time for participants to engage in small groups with this Contextual Bible Study and each of its questions. And because this Contextual Bible Study took place on the third day of the workshop, the participants had already begun to constitute their small groups as sacred and safe sites in which some level of trust and accountability could be presumed. The few men present formed their own small group. Each small group had the opportunity to report back in plenary at various stages in the process, but were encouraged to share selectively, respecting the confidences of the group. Professional counselors were available after the Bible study and for the next two days.

The impact was massive. From the very moment the biblical text was read aloud in three languages there were murmurings among the participants. Most did not know that this text was in the Bible, and no-one present had ever heard the text read aloud. So there was considerable excitement and energy as we worked our way through the questions. The Bible study took most of the day, and the counselors were busy for three days.

Such was the impact of the Tamar story that we continued to use the Tamar Contextual Bible Study as part of the work of our Women and Gender Programme within the Ujamaa Centre, under the pioneering leadership of Phumzile Zondi. More and more local communities invited us to facilitate this Bible study, which enabled us to continually rework it as part of the praxis cycle. During one such workshop with a local community we were challenged by the young women who had invited us. What more, they wanted to know, would we do to provide resources for them to break the chains of silence? Then and there those of us from the Ujamaa Centre sat down together and began to reflect and plan. The result was the birth of the “Tamar Campaign,” which was launched in 2000. Alongside the Tamar Contextual Bible Study a range of

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5 West and Zondi-Mabizela, “The Bible Story That Became a Campaign: The Tamar Campaign in South Africa (and Beyond),” 9-11.
resources have grown as part of the Campaign, including dedicated personnel, gender ‘literacy’ training, gender violence information, the Tamar Contextual Bible Study in leaflet form (in various African languages), a range of posters, workshops throughout the year, website resources, and most recently the training of community identified resource people in basic counseling and referral skills, co-ordinated by the Ujamaa Centre’s Maria Makgamathe.

The Tamar Campaign continues to be a resource across South Africa and further afield in the African continent, and beyond. A number of our funding partners have allocated specific funding to work in Africa beyond the borders of South Africa. In recent years we have launched the Tamar Campaign in Kenya, Zambia, Cameroun, Nigeria, and Angola, and a whole array of resources have been developed by us and others for this work. The Tamar Contextual Bible Study and elements of the Tamar Campaign are also being used in other parts of Africa and the world, with activists and organisations in Ghana, Mozambique, India, Australia, Latin America, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe using and adapting our material for their own contexts.

As the account so far indicates, the Tamar Campaign is the product of a long praxis. Central to the work of the Ujamaa Centre is the notion of praxis, an ongoing cycle of action and reflection. In biblical liberation hermeneutics, biblical interpretation is a second act. The first act is the praxis of action and reflection. The ‘action’ envisaged here is actual action in a particular social struggle; integrally related to this action is reflection on the action; and integrally related to this action-induced reflection is further action, refined or reconstituted by the reflection on and reconsideration of theory (and so the cyclical process continues). Out of this first act of praxis second order liberatory biblical interpretation is constructed.

Like liberation hermeneutics, Contextual Bible Study is fundamentally a process, and this process can be described as having three movements: See-Judge-Act. Shaped extensively by the “worker priest” movement championed by Fr. Joseph Cardijn in the 1930s in Belgium and embodied in Latin America and South Africa by the Young Christian Workers movement, the threefold See-Judge-Act process provides a structure to Contextual Bible Study. The process begins with social analysis of a context of struggle (See), moves into a similar systemic analysis of the Bible, bringing text and context into dialogue (Judge), and then moves into community controlled action (Act). Community-based action provides a new site of contestation and struggle, and so further social analysis is required (See), and so the process continues.

The Tamar Contextual Bible Study

The actual community action from which the Tamar Campaign has emerged is the struggle for justice in the midst of the pervasive system of patriarchy. More specifically, the Ujamaa Centre is involved in the ongoing struggle against gender violence, particularly violence against women (including lesbians) and children, using the Tamar Contextual Bible Study as one of its “weapons of struggle.” The long process of praxis has generated a ‘shape’ to the Contextual Bible Study on the Tamar story that is fairly stable.

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6 See http://ujamaa.ukzn.ac.za.
8 Frostin, Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa, 10.
10 Itumeleng J. Mosala, “Ethics of the Economic Principles: Church and Secular Investments,” in B. Thlagale and

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
A Contextual Bible Study consists of two related kinds of questions, community consciousness questions which draw on a particular local community’s resources, both experiential and interpretive, and critical consciousness questions which draw on the structured and systematic resources of biblical scholarship. The Contextual Bible Study that we use currently has the following shape:

2 Samuel 13:1-22 is read aloud to the group as a whole. After the text has been read a series of questions follow.

1. Read 2 Samuel 13:1-22 together again in small groups. Share with each other what you think the text is about.
2. Who are the main characters in this story and what do we know about them?
3. What is the role of each of the male characters in the rape of Tamar?
4. What does Tamar say and what does Tamar do?
5. Are there women like Tamar in your church and/or community? Tell their story.
6. What is the theology of women who have been raped?
7. What resources are there in your area for survivors of rape?
8. What will you now do in response to this Bible study?

When the small groups have finished their discussion, each group is invited to present a summary of their discussion. After this report-back the smaller groups re-convene and discuss the following questions.

The Contextual Bible Study is framed by community consciousness questions (Questions 1, 5-8), with critical consciousness questions in-between (Questions 2-4). Question 6 is a difficult question to pose and to answer, and is only used in situations which are especially safe. Though disturbing and difficult, this question does allow the group to ‘do theology,’ which can be empowering, drawing as it does on the incipient and inchoate embodied ‘theology’ of the participants. If the site is sacred and safe, questions 5 and 6 provide space for in-depth sharing of experiences of abuse and some of the contours of how particular women ‘theologise’ their embodied experience.

Besides question 6, the other questions are standard in the Tamar Contextual Bible Study. Question 1 allows for participants to respond from their reception history of the text (if any) and from their immediate engagement with the text. Each and every response is received by the facilitator and written up publically on newsprint, affirming each person’s contribution and confirming the participatory nature of the Contextual Bible Study process. The rest of the Contextual Bible Study is done in small groups, usually divided along gender, age, and language lines, so as to create as safe a place as possible. There is regular


report-back to the full plenary of participants, so the distinctive groups are able to hear the contributions of the others.

Questions 2-4 move the Bible study from a focus on ‘the reader/hearer’ to a focus on the biblical text. Literary critical consciousness questions provide the entry point for a deeper and more detailed reading of the text than is common in most local communities. But because the biblical text is considered sacred, in some sense, by most African communities, participants eagerly return to re-read the biblical text. Character analysis is an accessible form of literary analysis, and participants readily list and examine each and every character, and in so doing discern something of the plot, particularly in narratives such as this in which the plot and its pace is driven by the characters and their dialogue. Question 2 is a general question, and provides participants with a sense of confidence in their own capacity to do this kind of analysis. Question 3 begins to shift the Bible study in the direction of the Tamar Campaign, requiring further character analysis, but adding a relational component. Question 4 has gone through various formulations before we settled on its current form. Tamar is remarkably articulate and so we searched for a question which would encourage participants to probe both what she does and what she says. When we introduce and read out Question 4 we usually supplement it with a provocative comment like, “Tamar says at least ten things!” When the groups report-back on Question 4 they have usually managed, among them, to pay attention to each element of what Tamar says (in verses 12-13 and 16).

Though this Contextual Bible Study has no overt socio-historical question, going behind-the-text often does take place during report-back. Some groups will have wondered, for example, whether brothers and sisters had separate living quarters in this culture and whether sisters were allowed to visit their brothers in their living quarters without a female chaperone, or whether in this society Amnon would have been allowed to marry his half-sister (or was Tamar simply stalling?), or whether the word often translated as “love” (verse 4) is an appropriate translation of the Hebrew word. Such questions and the information available and guesses made within a group allow the facilitator an opportunity to provide some socio-historical information (difficult as it may be to be definitive on aspects of the text’s socio-historical setting).

Having re-read the text, more carefully and closely and with some socio-historical input, the participants then move back into their own experience and their own appropriations of the story through Questions 5-8. Question 5 is the pivotal question, providing an opportunity for the participants to share with each other from their experience. There can be no doubt that Tamar’s story enables such sharing, though the depth of sharing depends entirely on the level of safety within the group. But while the breaking the silence around rape and other forms of violence against women and children is an important initial response to the text, the larger purpose of the Tamar Contextual Bible Study is to mobilize the sharing around Questions 5-7 into some form of planned action, whether personal or communal. The dual purposes of Contextual Bible Study are empowerment and social transformation.

While the focus of the Tamar Campaign has been on women, there has been a repeated request over the sixteen years we have been working with this text to involve men more directly. So the Ujamaa Centre has been searching for a biblical text with the power of the Tamar story with which to address men. We have tried a range of biblical texts, mainly from the New Testament,13 with some success, but have returned recently to the Tamar story itself as a resource.

13 http://ujamaa.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/manuals/Redemptive_masculinities_series_1.sflb.ashx
In Search of Redemptive Masculinities

The Tamar Contextual Bible Study has an amazing capacity to draw men into the story without them becoming too defensive. Perhaps because the story offers men a range of male characters with which to identify, besides the rapist, they are able to accept some sense of culpability (for each of the male characters in the story participates in the rape of Tamar in some way) without being condemned as the rapist. Building on this capacity of the story to include men without alienating them, we have begun to develop a new Contextual Bible Study based on 2 Samuel 13:1-22 as part of a series of Bible studies on "Redemptive Masculinities." We hope in time to have a "Redemptive Masculinities Campaign."

The emerging Contextual Bible Study has a similar shape to the Tamar study, but has a quite different focus:

1. Have you heard this text (2 Samuel 13:1-22) read publically ... on a Sunday? Share with each other if and when and where you have heard this text read.

2. Who are the main characters in this story and what do we know about them?

3. What is the role of each of the male characters in the rape of Tamar?

4. How would you characterize Amnon’s masculinity in this text? Consider:
   - What prevents Amnon initially from acting on his desire/lust for Tamar (v2)?
   - What is it then that enables him to act on his desire/lust (v4-6)?
   - How does he react to Tamar’s arguments (v14)?
   - How does he behave after he has raped Tamar (v15-17)?

5. What does Tamar’s response to Amnon’s assault tell us about her understanding of masculinity? Consider:
   - What does she say (v12-13,16), and what do each of the things she says tell us about her understanding of what it means to be ‘a man’?
   - What does she do (v19), and what do each of things she does tell us about her understanding of what it means to be ‘a man’?

6. What are the dominant forms of masculinity in our contexts (in various age groups), and what alternative forms of masculinity can we draw on from our cultural and religious traditions?

7. How can we raise the issue of masculinity in our various gender and age-groups?

Question 1 performs a similar function to that of the first question in the Tamar Contextual Bible Study, but draws attention to the absence of the text in the male-dominated world of religious life, whether Jewish, Christian, or Muslim (and this Bible study has been done by participants from each of these faith traditions, in each case at their own initiative). Questions 2 and 3, as in the Tamar study, draw attention to the text itself and provide an overall orientation to the story. Questions 4 and 5 slow the ‘reading’ process down considerably, posing two related and quite difficult questions. In working with this Redemptive Masculinities Contextual Bible Study we have kept reformulating these two questions in order to devise a form of question which combines a careful reading of the text with the participants’ own understandings of notions of ‘masculinity’. So far we have settled on a general question and then some prompting sub-questions. Because the notion of ‘masculinity’ is somewhat elusive, as any introductory textbook in the emerging field of masculinity studies readily admits, we have tried to come at it from a number of angles, using the biblical text as a resource. A complicating problem is the socio-historical questions which hover in the background of the biblical text, and the paucity of studies on masculinity in the Ancient Near East. As the helpful classified bibliography by Janice Capel Anderson, assisted by Stephen Moore and Seong Hee Kim shows, there are a rich array of materials on masculinity studies in general and on the Greco-

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Roman period, as well as an emerging body of material on the New Testament, including the excellent *Semeia Studies* volume on *New Testament masculinities* edited by Stephen Moore and Janice Capel Anderson in which this bibliography appears.\(^{17}\) Unfortunately, the material available on the Ancient Near East is rather sparse,\(^{18}\) and so it is difficult to provide a ‘thick’ sociological setting for Hebrew Bible representations of masculinity. However, this socio-historical problem is an additional incentive to do community-based work, for our Redemptive Masculinities Contextual Bible Study has the capacity to suggest questions about masculinity with which we might interrogate the available Ancient Near Eastern material.

Notwithstanding the socio-historical difficulties, the text itself offers plenty to work with, and the Bible study has already proved to be a powerful resource for communities to talk about masculinity, not something they usually do. As a part of patriarchy,\(^{20}\) masculinity is an almost invisible thread woven through our African cultures, and so addressing it and thereby rendering it visible is itself a significant feature of this Redemptive Masculinities Contextual Bible Study. But while participants do not find it easy to grasp the notion of ‘masculinity’, they seem to have little difficulty in accepting the implication of our questions that there is more than one masculinity. This too is a significant recognition. By grappling with the notion of ‘masculinity’ and interrogating what local realities constitute the term, the local communities we work with are also making a contribution to the emerging field of African masculinities,\(^ {21}\) furnishing questions from their understanding to be taken up by socially engaged biblical scholars and other social scientists.

The biblical story provides a powerful dialogue partner in this regard, offering a number of potential lines of connection with their socio-cultural contexts. The first sub-question under Question 4, for example, is especially significant, pointing as it does to a feature of the text seldom noticed by the reader. By focusing on the moment of Amnon’s restraint, before he acts on his desire – however this desire is characterized – Amnon is normalized. Amnon is not initially the demonized ‘other’, the rapist; Amnon is the ordinary male who has desires but does not act on them. The second sub-question under Question 4 then creates space for participants to discuss what aspects of masculinity enable men to disregard socio-cultural norms of restraint. The third and fourth sub-questions are especially productive among participants as they draw attention to the irrational responses of Amnon to Tamar’s rational arguments and the role of physical and socio-cultural force. What emerges from Question 4 is some interrogation of how masculine power operates.

Question 5 shifts the focus from the male Amnon is to the kind of male he should be, as envisaged by Tamar. Each of the elements of what she says, for example, in verses 12-13 summons forth a different kind of male, and participants eagerly construct the characteristics of this imagined male. Tamar summons forth, anticipates, hopes for, a man who understands "No," who understands what it means to be in relationship as a “brother,” who is able to resist using force, who respects the socio-cultural traditions of his community, who is able to discern and desist from doing what is disgraceful, who considers the situation of the other, who considers the consequences of his actions for himself, who is willing to pause and examine other options, who is willing to listen to rational argument. These characteristics in turn provide a potential reservoir from which to draw in their responses to Question 6.

In our work with this Contextual Bible Study thus far, male groups have been remarkably frank and even vulnerable within their own gender and age groups in responding to Question 6, and imaginative and practical in their responses to Question 7. For example, in responding to Question 6 a number of groups of

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*Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa*
young men, across different socio-cultural communities, have admitted that among themselves as young men they often play the part of Jonadab with each other, urging each other ‘to take’ a woman who seems unattainable. They confess that though they do not usually intend their compatriots to act on their advice, they nevertheless talk in this way among themselves. Younger men have also indicated in our workshops that they are able to envisage a range of masculinities, while many of their elders found it difficult to grasp what was meant by “alternative masculinities.” But across all age groups among male participants there has been a genuine willingness to talk about these issues, surprising themselves even, for most acknowledged that they would never have imagined themselves talking about “such things in church.” This has been our experience of Contextual Bible Study in general, whether we are dealing with issues like gender violence, unemployment, land, or HIV and AIDS; participants find themselves talking about things they would not normally discuss in religious settings.

**The Pedagogy of the Tamar Campaign: From Embodiment to Speech**

While Pierre Bourdieu is right to remind us of the socially habituated body and its limited capacity to recognize and resist its socialization, particularly in the case of masculine domination, the social space produced by the Tamar Contextual Bible Study is significant for enabling what is embodied to come to some kind of articulation, and for this articulation to lead, potentially, to some kind of social transformation. As Terry Lovell notes, while contemporary feminisms of difference share with Bourdieu’s sociology of practice a common focus upon ‘the body’, Bourdieu’s embodied social actor lacks the agency which feminists posit for their subjects. Poststructuralist and postmodernist discourses, says Lovell, “celebrate flexible selves, permeable or semi-permeable boundaries, the journey traversed rather than origins or lasting determinations.”

Society does write the dominant (and dominating) masculine order into our bodies, and it does compel a set of practices. But, social reality does not always (or ever, if we are to follow the alternative sociological analysis of James Scott) produce a unified habitus, as Bourdieu himself acknowledges. So important as it is to hear Bourdieu’s call for a project which rigorously interrogates the socio-political institutions that construct masculine domination, we must not fail to recognise nor minimise the contributions of the disruptions and the contradictions that characterise the Redemptive Masculinities Contextual Bible Study on 2 Samuel 13:1-22. For within such sites we find many examples of a body/habitus divided against itself. These sites are opportunities to bring to speech what is embodied, and while they may be localized and on the periphery of the kinds of social movements Bourdieu envisages, such sites, James Scott reminds us, are integral to larger-scale political change. The negation of any dominant ideology, including dominant forms of masculinity, requires “an offstage subculture” in which negation can be formed and articulated, argues Scott. Once this now-articulated disruption to the dominant performances of masculinity becomes the

22 Lovell, “Thinking Feminism with and against Bourdieu,” 30. For Bourdieu’s reply to postmodernism see Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, 103.
property of a small group, “it will be further disciplined by the shared experiences and power relations within that small group,” and in so doing may “carry effective meaning” for a whole category of subordinates, enabling a movement “from the individual resisting subject ... to the socialization of resistant practices and discourses.”

At the very least, Tamar’s story read from the perspective of a search for redemptive masculinities, in the very face of dominant forms of masculinity, provides resources with which “the inertia of habitus” might be overcome.

Conclusion

In her conclusion to her discussion of Tamar’s story, Phyllis Trible invokes Proverbs 7:4-5, in which “wisdom” is designated as “a sister” who preserves the young man “from the loose woman, from the adventurer with her smooth words.” “If,” asks Trible, “sister wisdom can protect a young man from the loose woman, who will protect sister wisdom from the loose man, symbolized not by a foreigner but by her very own brother? Who will preserve sister wisdom from the adventurer, the rapist with his smooth words, lecherous eyes, and grasping hands?” “In answering the question,” Trible insists, “Israel is found wanting – and so are we.”

Trible captures rather nicely here the way in which Tamar’s evocation of another kind of masculinity, albeit one that only partially deconstructs patriarchy, is an alternative form of wisdom. That such wisdom might be recovered from our socio-cultural and religious traditions is the hope we cling to in facilitating and encouraging the Tamar Campaign. We have been found wanting, and so we strive to hear and provide a site within which and resources with which such alternative forms of wisdom might be articulated, owned, and become the social property of a movement of change.

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27 Bourdieu, Masculine Domination, 89.


1. Women’s Rights between Religion and Politics – Raising the Question

Feminist theologies for four decades have been discussing women’s roles and women’s images in Bible and Theology. They have developed feminist hermeneutics and have questioned traditional female roles in church and society. Feminist theologians have been contested by their churches, have experienced changes or rejection. They have brought their insights and the results of their work into the education of younger theologians, both female and male. Sometimes, they achieved changes within the churches, but sometimes churches also reject to change or even withdraw from changes that had already been made in favour of the women. This paper asks the question as to whether and to which extent feminist theology is in touch with the feminist discourses in their respective societies? How does the religion politics of the respective governments influence upon the opportunities women in Christian Churches have? And, finally, how does theological education bring about changes in the churches towards more rights for women?

2. Women’s Rights between Religion and Secularization

“That religions can threaten gender equality is hardly controversial.”¹ This statement of Anne Phillips, scholar of political sciences in the UK, opens the debate on the relationship between religion, religion politics and feminism in the latest research report of UNRISD and the Heinrich-Boell-Foundation. Under the title Religion: Alley, Threat or Just Religion? Anne Phillips discusses the question as to whether and to which extent religion politics bring about changes towards more rights for women in their respective religious communities and, on the other hand, how religious women can and actually do influence religion politics.

Her initial observation is that religions tend to support patriarchal structures. Early feminist movements were supported by women of minority churches like the Unitarian or the Quaker communities. She states that during the 20th century, the lose connection between religions and feminism was nearly lost. Feminist discourse, Phillips claims, became merely secular. At the same time, secularism in Europe developed towards an ideology of progress which nurtured hopes for overcoming religion at all and, thus, achieving real liberation of women. Looking back, today we realize that these hopes materialized only very partially. What happened?

3. Secularism and Religious Pluralism

Secularism in Europe for decades has been perceived as the ideology of progress. Even theologians have praised secularism as the most adequate form of modern society, being the legal inheritance of Protestant thought. Theology, in their opinion, should therefore embrace secularism as it gives way to a perspective on the whole creation that is not filtered through religious precepts. Humankind, finally, would accept its responsibility for the creation and start working for liberation.

Verena Grueter

This perception of secularism has been contested by theologians and scholars of other sciences. American Sociologist Peter Berger questions the theory of secularism at all. He claims that in reality we are witnessing a process of constant pluralisation of religions and other worldviews. This causes a high degree of uncertainty for people who are not becoming less religious but differently religious. In the end, this doesn’t mean modern societies are overcoming religion and developing towards more liberation for everyone. On the contrary: What can easily be observed is that many societies rejoice in religious revivals. This has led to the critical opinion that the theory of secularism in reality was very much centred on Western Europe. At the same time, the theory of secularism is questioned for being a theory of Western dominance promising progress of development to societies which have never embraced it. In reality, the public significance of religion in many societies has been and continues to be very high. Moreover, the discourse of secularism reflects an erroneous neutrality pretending to be not at all religious while in reality it is based on the Jewish-Christian worldview.

Looking at the positive effects of religion even from the perspective of human development, we should say that religions in many parts of the world have contested political power and given important impulses for social change. Internal reforms of religious communities often have contributed to more rights for women. And, finally, we as Westerners should be more self-critical concerning our images of women and women’s rights in the so called developing countries. Our interpretations must undergo post-colonial criticism.

4. Religion Politics and Gender

Of course, religions in general and Christian churches especially may not always be in favour of women’s liberation. They even can present severe obstacles to it. On the other hand, state institutions may not always be advocating for women’s liberation either. So a discussion on the relationship between religion and politics cannot start from the assumption that discussing questions of women’s rights would put religious communities or especially Christian churches in opposition to a secular state. Between state authorities on the one hand and religious communities on the other there can exist different forms of interaction and more or less hidden cooperations that are not at all bound towards women’s liberation.

In the centre of our reflections on women’s rights we should put the right to make up free and individual choices. Women should be given the right to choose between different possibilities – may they be based on religious or whatever precepts. Anne Phillips in her above mentioned paper makes this the focus of her argumentation. We should be aware, however, that the right to make up free individual choices may put a woman into a tension between her religious belonging and the culture of her society. At the same time, women who make use of their right of an individual and free choice are exercising pressure on other women of the same religious community putting the question in front of them how they make up their decision. Anyhow, women’s rights can be based on religious or non-religious precepts.

The fundamental question, then, is as to how far a government must respect the authority of religious rules and, to the opposite, up to which extent public laws that protect women’s rights are allowed to interfere with the internal rules of religious communities.

Anne Phillips points out how the interactions of religion and politics can influence on the decision making of women. Subtle forms of social punishment or only the public opinion can exercise a high pressure on women. Especially in states with a religious constitution as Pakistan or Iran women are submitted to a high pressure when they want to go for more rights. This problem cannot be resolved by individual freedom of choice.

On the other hand, internal reforms of religious communities often give more freedom to women. This has been the case in the past for example in churches which introduced the ordination of women or in the case of Muslim communities which allowed for a female Imam. The best effects for improvement of rights
for women are achieved where religious communities embrace transformations and at the same time public laws open up for women’s rights. This leads to the question which alliances religious feminists should look for in order to achieve progresses for women’s rights. In order to attain sustainable transformation in a society, it is important that arguments in favour of gender justice cannot be used e.g. by politicians to argue against certain religious communities. If this happens, women are driven into the conflict between their religious belonging and their rights.

5. Public Theology in Transforming Societies

As early as 1959 the World Council of Churches initiated a worldwide study process on “The responsibility of the churches in societies of rapid social change”. Behind that was the conflict between East and West and the starting process of decolonization. The WCC conference on “Church and Society” in Geneva 1966 discussed the support churches could give to transforming societies. At the same time, the Catholic Church during Vaticanum II agreed upon the process of aggiornamento which meant catching up with society.

Recently, theologians started speaking of “public theology”. This concept starts from the observation, that the whole earth belongs to God as states Psalm 24: “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.” So the whole oikumene, the whole inhabited world is addressed by theology. Jeremiah invites the Israelites in the Babylonian exile to pray for the city they live in: “Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it will prosper you too will prosper.” (Jer 29) The search for the common good unites Christians with people of other cultural and religious backgrounds. Intercession, social and diaconical work and prophetic ministry together form the public performance of the church.

Of course, in many contexts this has been done for quite a time already. Especially in the case of the work with and for women, in many parts diaconical work as e.g. women shelters have been an integral part of the church’s work and it often is been carried out together with non church based NGO’s. What is special about this concept of public theology is that it looks for the place and the role of church in society and for its social form. Swiss theologian Christine Lienemann underlines that in contexts of rapid social change it is of high importance that also the social form of the church is being theologically reflected. She, therefore, speaks about public theology as an umbrella concept of different contextual theologies. The concept of public theology in my opinion can help especially feminist theology to overcome a certain church centeredness and to reach out to connect with the public feminist discourse. The question then is how theological education can bring these discourses together and so bring about necessary changes within the churches.

I want to discuss two examples here: The example of Bolivia, which is a multiethnic state and the example of theological work on the issue of HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa.

6. Feminist Theology and Religion Politics in Bolivia

Latin American liberational theologies have become the most famous contextual theologies. In the last two decades, liberation theologies have diversified to the extent that the existence of a real liberation theology has been questioned at all. The diversified spectrum of Latin American contextual theologies includes a lot of feminist approaches and different indigenous theologies. This is especially the case in Bolivia with its Andine population.

Until the beginning of the 21st century, the Roman Catholic Church was the dominant denomination. Although already the constitution of 1905 guaranteed religious freedom, until 1959 only 35 religions were registered. The amount increased until 1995 up to 160 different religious communities. While in the
beginning of the 20th century the population was almost 100% catholic, this percentage diminished until 2001 to 77.8%. The winners of the game are the Pentecostal churches.

Bolivia’s new constitution that was installed in January 2009 now denies special privileges to the Roman Catholic Church and gives equal rights to all religious communities. The text of the new constitution includes concepts as religion (instead of Christianity), cosmovision, spirituality, God and Pachamama. The now re-elected president Evo Morales in his formal installation to his ministry in 2005 rejected to celebrate this public act in the cathedral and instead went to the ancient sanctuary Tiwanako, wearing Andine clothes. This of course is a demonstration of a new indigenous self-consciousness and a shift towards an openly anti-colonial paradigm of politics. This of course causes conflicts with the white population which in certain areas still own the land and resources like gas and oil.

Christian churches react hesitantly towards this change of paradigm. Fundamentalist groups campaign against the president as the symbol for idolatry. The positive role of churches in these new political trends towards the Andine ideal of the good life has yet to be defined.

What does this mean for women in Bolivia? The government of president Evo Morales has a very strict gender policy: 50% of all political ministries are occupied by women. In his first governing period there were even homosexual persons holding political ministries. The right to individual choice of one’s sexual preference is guaranteed in the constitution. This on the other hand has caused resistance towards the struggle for gender balance because the issues of women and of homosexual people were deliberately combined and used by conservative groups in order to defeat both. At the same time, social and indigenous NGO’s prevent women from presenting their own interests, because they prioritize the indigenous cause. The women’s cause, therefore, has to be submitted to the struggle of the indigenous people for their rights. This example shows how difficult it is to discuss several issues of justice at the same time. The feminist groups here easily get into the conflicts of interest between indigenous and sexual rights. The above mentioned question of which alliances are helpful applies to this situation.

In some churches – even in the ethnic churches – women enjoy more participation than in public life. Some of the churches have a positive discourse towards the rights of women but the practice often is poor. While some “alibi women” can easily be found, a broader participation of women especially in the church hierarchies is still not realized. The Lutheran Church of Bolivia e.g. still does not ordain women. An open discussion of the issue of violence against women is hardly possible. The case of the project Suma Jakana, a women shelter that was initiated by women of the Lutheran Church, shows clearly that it was not possible to go on with the project within the church.

What are the consequences for theological education? Talking with Dr. Irene Tokarski, feminist theologian in the Instituto Superior Ecumenico Andino de Teología (ISEAT) she shares with me the following experience: Indigenous discourse is very much a discourse of victims. Indigenous feminists often claim that the machismo in Bolivian society is a result of the colonization. To the contrary, the indigenous ideal of chacha – warmi (man – women) represents the perfect harmony. Their recommendation, therefore, is to re-establish the indigenous relationship between man and woman.

The indigenous feminist organization mujeres creando comunidad (women creating community) heavily criticizes this concept. Parting from the concept of an communitarian feminism, they criticize the indigenous model of chacha – warmi as a patriarchal one because it does not really open the chance for women to make a choice and to appear in the public life. Instead, they pursue the aim of constructing a new community of women and men for the better life of the whole community. Criticizing the hierarchical model of the complementarien principle of chacha – warmi they suggest a horizontal model. Their endeavour is to construct a network of communities as an alternative to the individualistic society.

We could say that the indigenization of politics together with the strict gender politics of the Bolivian government at least has led to a high level of awareness on this issue. The feminist theological debate in ISEAT, formerly dominated by the western criticism on patriarchal structures in church and society now is
being challenged by this discourse of a communitarian indigenous feminism. To which extent this will influence the churches – especially the ethnic churches – is still to be expected.

7. Theology in Africa in times of HIV and AIDS

The decades of Apartheid in South Africa have brought along the birth of contextual political theologies as for instance the “black theology”. Similar to the liberation theologies in Latin America, the poor were the central category and the Exodus and the Prophets were among the most interpreted biblical texts.

South Africa’s new constitution after overcoming Apartheid in 1994 separated the state from religion and proclaimed a general religious freedom. All religious traditions are expected to contribute to the so-called “moral fibre of the nation”. Religious plurality is a characteristic feature of Post-Apartheid. While certain churches were actively combating Apartheid (especially the South African Council of Churches, SACC), in the new shape of society churches not easily find their role. Some of them have been too close to the Apartheid-regime so that the public image of Christian religion is not of mere integrity. At the same time, in Post-Apartheid South Africa Neopentecostal churches are growing.

Nevertheless, the public life as a framework for theology and church work remains to be a challenge. In 1999 a huge event in Cape Town under the title “Religion in Public Life. Transforming Public Life: Religion in the Making of Public Policy and Cultural Values” opened a platform for the discussion and the imagination of forms of public engagement of theology. From 2001 onwards, the ecumenical churches have been searching for a new form of critical engagement in the society. Theologies of reconstruction, of reconciliation and nation building are discussed and offer new critical approaches towards South African reality as e.g. the continuing poverty.

Among the really challenging questions is the one how within a religiously plural context churches can engage in public discourse. A plural public sphere requires a basic tolerance towards others. Public Theology must refrain itself from making normative claims and must be able to change their own position in the course of the dialogue. The concept of truth must be open and cannot be used as a security for the own position.

These are great challenges even for a feminist theology in South Africa! Feminist theologians in Africa since 1989 gather under the umbrella of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians which was founded by Mercy Amba Oduyoye. Initially, they worked on critical analysis of patriarchal structures in Bible and theology and also in different African cultures. Most of them started in positions of marginalization. Today, some of them are in leading academic or church positions. To mention only some names: Mercy Oduyoye, Isabel Phiri, Fulata Moyo, Musa Dube, Madipoane Masenya, Sarojini Nadar, Nyambura Njoroge are recognized beyond their respective theological seminaries or church positions. They started criticizing African contextual theologies that did not cope with the HIV pandemic.

In 2002 during the Circle’s meeting in Addis-Abeba Circle members decided to make the issue of HIV and AIDS their priority. Moreover, they decided not only to do theological research work on the issue but also engage in activism in cooperation with NGO’s. South African theologian Madipoane Masenya e.g. stresses that African theology must leave the academic circles and direct itself towards the suffering.

Among South African feminist theologians the criticism on patriarchal structures within African cultures is heavily debated. Research work is being done to investigate upon patriarchal cultural practices that help to transmit the HI-Virus. African feminists criticise that churches often “baptized” cultural practices without really transforming them. The rituals in itself continue with their patriarchal character. Examples for cultural practices which deny women their rights are e.g. the forced marriage of teenage women in order to atone a murder in Simbabwe. In Ghana seven year old girls are given into a sanctuary for the atonement of a family.
On the other hand, theologians like Musa Dube request to take into consideration the healing powers of African cultures. Musimbi Kanyoro underlines: “It was necessary to come to terms with identifying in our cultures those things that were beautiful and wholesome and life-affirming and to denounce those which were denying us life and wholeness.” (Chitando 2009, 57)

One of the most successful approaches for a theological education in times of HIV and AIDS in my opinion is the Tamar Campaign: Starting from the violation of David’s daughter Tamar as related in 2nd Samuel 13, the campaign addresses the issue of gender based violence as one of the most influential factors of the HIV pandemic. The Tamar campaign was developed in South Africa in 2002 as a contextual Bible study, focussing on the issue of sexual abuse. Thus, it helped to overcome this until then in the churches silenced issue. Starting with discussions in women’s groups, it soon got transferred to the work with children. It was adapted to different African contexts and languages and today is even available as a module within Theological Education by Extension programmes. Recently, male theologians are joining the discussion making their priority the development of a new masculinity that overcomes the image of the violent man as a strong person. Among the main factors that will help to bring forward sustainable change in theology and churches is the participation of male theologians. The WCC programme Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative for Africa (EHAIA) works hard on mainstreaming theological work on the pandemic into the curricula of theological institutions.

Ezra Chitando, one of the male theologians who is very committed to the issue of theology on HIV and AIDS, challenges the theological work of the Circle with the following priorities:
1. Production of theological literature for non-theologians;
2. Cooperation with male theologians;
3. Political analysis on local, national and international level;
4. Catch up with African philosophy;
5. Cooperation with other religions;
6. Theological reconstruction of African cultures and communities.

8. Conclusion: Issues for Theological Education

The recent results of UNRISD research as presented in the paper by Anne Phillips challenges ecumenical theological education. Theological education is the key for bringing about sustainable change towards full participation of women both in church and society. The discussion on making theology in the times of HIV and AIDS in Africa shows that mere development work falls short in overcoming the violence against women in Christian churches. For sustainable changes, women must be able to make their own choices on religious or non-religious precepts. The highly necessary changes can only be achieved by crosscutting theological reflection that takes into account the respective political frameworks concerning gender relations as well as concerning ethnicity and religions. Women in churches must be enabled to make alliances with women from other religious and non-religious backgrounds in order to work out political strategies for more gender justice.

Ecumenical theological education, therefore, should consider to propose gender as a crosscutting dimension especially in religious science. Moreover, interdisciplinary theological research on sociological, philosophical, cultural and economical issues concerning gender justice should be encouraged. In a post-colonial perspective, cultural questions concerning women’s rights should be critically discussed in order to deconstruct and reconstruct women’s chances to make up their own decisions in all dimensions of their lives. As shown by the example of Bolivia, critical research on women’s rights in pre-colonial cultures may lead to different feminist options. Finally, in a long term perspective women’s lives in church and society will only change when men decide to change, too. In this perspective, the insertion of the Tamar Campaign in theological education in many African countries and the upcoming discussion on new masculinities as a
consequence of theological reflection on HIV and AIDS may develop towards a success story in terms of gender politics and religion.

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PUBLIC THEOLOGY – JUSTICE, PEACE AND ECOLOGY

(66) POLITICAL THEOLOGY IN THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLE COLLEGES CURRICULUM

Godfrey Ngumi

Introduction

The term ‘Political Theology’ is defined as a stress on the political dimensions of theology, which are found throughout its range and which are capable of transformation. In most cases this political theology is based on civil religion. ‘Civil Religion’ is the religious or quasi-religious regard for certain civic values and traditions found recurrent in the history of the state. Leroy Rouner states that “according to ancient state doctrines, honouring the gods of one’s own land is the highest purpose of the state because these gods secure the welfare and peace of the state. The public practice of religion is therefore the primary of civic duty”. Civil religion also refers to the set of assumptions which (often subconsciously) guide a society’s political life and which can be very wrong as in apartheid that existed in South Africa until the 1980s or Zionism in socio-politics of Israel and propagated by some churches in United States of America. Further, political theology is a brand of theology which encompasses not only the political dimension but also the spiritual. Participation in civil religion becomes automatic for the polity. And this gives religious leaders a central role in the maintenance of the state. It is therefore very difficult to separate religion and politics in all societies ancient or modern. Thus, a political theology is derived from this wholistic responsibility of every person. Often, such a theology is said to sanction the religious influences on the state and vice versa. The outcome is ‘a theology of the state’ that, especially in ancient times, elevated the rulers to superhuman level or demi-gods. The state makes one particular religion ‘the religion of the state’ and the god or gods of that religion become the mainstay of the society. Most cultural religions were maintained through this civil religion. The aim of this paper is to argue for a Theological Education that includes political theology in its curriculum. This will be done in five steps as follows:

Theological Education to Include Social Theology

The possibility of the church improving the current social order lies with self-critiques especially its theology, traditions and structure. Perhaps it is time that the churches in modern Africa become more concerned with social theology than church theology. Social justice is a balance of rights and responsibility in a social order which results in quality human relationships “If human dignity, freedom and self-sufficiency in the necessities of life are accompanied by a reasonable degree of social and Economic equality and a sense of community, then social justice will be achieved. Social justice has both an individual and social component”. As early as 1950s Bishop Stephen Neill made his apprehension known, after a survey of theological education across the continent. He commented that “the African clergy at that time were far from being adequate to the demands that must be upon them if the church is to fulfil the role

which God seems to be laying upon it in the present time”.\textsuperscript{5} It is striking that almost fifty years later there is a similar apprehension that the clergy are still not adequately prepared for their role at the present time. J. N.K Mugambi also comments that:

Sociology and psychology of religion would also be useful basic courses to prepare theology students for the ministry before their completion of their studies. Such basic courses provide foundations of knowledge upon which a solid pastoral ministry can be built. Without a foundation most Protestants priests find themselves inadequately prepared to cope with the challenges arising from religious plurality and other pressures of modernization and social transitions.\textsuperscript{6}

We have to consider how the situation can be redressed. One major point of concern is that church leaders lack political articulation because it is not part of their training in the seminaries and theological colleges. This inhibits them in their service to their communities. In general, the communities they serve lack information and courage to participate in socio-politics because their leaders are not equipped to guide them. The argument here is that if the church is to be involved in the process of social transformation, politically and economically, theological colleges and seminaries have to take civic education or development studies seriously.

Theological educators should place their focus beyond the horizons of traditional structures, beyond the comforts of ready-made methodology of theologizing; they should be with the church where it is rubbing shoulders with the human condition. Much theological education going on in the seminaries and colleges in Africa is limited to doctrines and church traditions. Even the teaching of doctrinal theology is not contextualized. Doctrines on the Eucharist or the Cross are taught in such a way as to emphasize individual salvation. Their social dimension and their relation to community solidarity are not expounded. Likewise, the concept of sin, central in doctrinal studies, emphasizes the individual fullness. Thus, the clergy pursue in their pastoral ministry what they have learnt in a limiting curriculum. Consequently, this limits the church to self-seeking without relating to social dimensions.

The Challenges of Church Leadership Today

Baum comments that Christian political theology, also referred to as “critical theology’, is based on the concept that “the preaching of Jesus Christ had to do with repentance and the coming of the kingdom of God and that it had personal and social meaning. Christ’s message was addressed to people personally and collectively. Therefore, critical theology counters privatizing of the Gospel with an effort to regain its double dimension of personal and social”.\textsuperscript{7} While personal conversion may make us discover the wayward direction of our collective life, the collective dimension of sin has to be explained within the context of the theological curriculum. In this process, theologians who also happen to become church leaders will be enlighten and encouraged to see the importance of social dimension of Christian theology. Modern theological education cannot avoid dialogue with other seemingly secular disciplines such as sociology, economics and political science. For example, “sociology will inform theological education by posing questions distinctly social rather than merely spiritual concerning life issues. In many ways, sociology will pinpoint to theology the context of social sin, comprising injustice and dehumanizing trends built into the various institutions social, political, economic, religious and others which embody people’s collective life”\textsuperscript{8}.

\textsuperscript{7} G. Boum, \textit{Religion and Alienation} (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 197.
\textsuperscript{8} Boum, \textit{Religion and Alienation}, 201.
Theology is more than an academic exercise. It is the interpretation of the interaction of the word of God and the human condition. The doctrine of the incarnation implies the sacredness of the whole material world. The world is the place where salvation is worked out. It is the world that God so loved “that he gave his only-begotten son”… It becomes applied theology when it is called upon to respond to human or social issues. According to the Gospel narratives, God and creation are reconciled in the acts of Christ in this world involving political procedures. Applied theology operates in the social context, using sociological techniques. This means on one hand, that theological syllabi have to include social sciences which will help in enlarging the scope of spiritual vision. For instance, if the pastor or theologian is content to communicate to the faithful alone, not to society at large, he may pay scant attention to the social context within which he/she operates. In this instance, sociological technique may not be really needed. On the other hand, if the theologian is concerned with communication structures apparent within the society, then he or she is obliged to take the sociological data more seriously. The Church history curriculum includes some form of explanation of socio-political development of Christian west. African Church history is often limited as if it is subordinate to the Western history. Furthermore, although it is a history of political colonialism, what is emphasized are Missions and church planting. There is a deliberate teaching of a skewed history that disarms the people on relevant issues and their interactions. Aristotle the Greek philosopher (384-322 BC) is quoted as saying:

But of all the safeguards that we hear spoken of as helping to maintain constitutional continuity, the most important, but the most neglected today, is education, that is educating citizens for the way of living that belong to the constitution in each case. It is useless to have the most beneficial of rules of society fully agreed on by all whom are members of the polity, if individuals are not going to be trained and have their habits formed for that polity that is to live democratically if the laws of society are democratic, oligarchically if they are oligarchic.

Civic education must be included in the theological training curriculum because the problems of the people are ‘issue of concern for theology.’ The clergy trained and formed for ministry have to be prepared for this role in society. This means that being responsible for pastoral work, means, being responsible of people’s concerns, fears and hopes. Everyone working with people needs to be aware of the structures that inhibit or encourage full human expression. The challenges to the stewardship ministry of the church demands recognition of a theological curriculum in the seminaries and churches, in order that the clergy becomes relevant to the communities they are serving. Biblical hermeneutics has to be community based. As such it becomes a social theology. It can pursue challenges and questions posed by the social context, Christian spiritual cannot be experienced in a vacuum. It has to reflect the holistic endeavour in which God is with God’s people. A theological curriculum which includes civic education, among the syllabi in one way of contextualizing the Christian faith would bring this better.

This approach to theological-ministerial training recognizes three levels of personal consciousness and social participation: local, national and international. Due to global interrelatedness, the three levels are also interrelated. The whole aspect of human rights, justice and social responsibility has to be seen in this tri-level perspective. Social, cultural, environmental and economic issues are connected, imparting on the very living conditions of the people.

Our task here is to investigate the possibility of a theological basis for civic education by the church in Africa. We have identified a number of issues. Firstly, the church all over Africa has a heritage from Western and colonial history. On the one hand, this history includes political dynamics found in religions

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including Christianity. Our investigation of the Biblical narratives revealed that Christian theology has a political dynamic influenced greatly by the emergence of industrialization which was taking place at the same period as the missionaries set out to the new lands. The powers of the princes and landowners over the subservient population were waning and being replaced by a new social structure based on different value systems. In this context, the structure of the emerging church government was an important measure for secular administration.

It is important to mention here that, through the various denominations that trace their origins to teachings of the Reformers, churches inherited much of the theology and social political ethics of the Reformers. Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Reformed and others are linked to the ideas and theologies of the Reformers through the missionary enterprise of nineteenth and twentieth century. It is therefore right to say that the African churches cannot avoid a critical self-analysis regarding the way they relate to the state. They have to inquire into their structures to identify whether they merely support the status quo or they are involved in the reforming processes.

**Political Theology: Modern Trends**

The public views on religion and politics have not changed drastically. The strong views expressed by John Calvin in the sixteenth century against state intrusion into the affairs of the church\(^{12}\) are similar to those of Karl Barth in the twentieth century.\(^{13}\) Although separated by four centuries their views are similar in that they both call for the prevention of the state from dominating the church. They opposed traditions which allowed the state to control the affairs of the church and the beliefs on which the individuals base their conscience. As indicated above, the Reformers were against apolitical theology that entrenched theocratic traditions such as the divine role in the choice and installation of rulers.

The critique of civil religion by modern theology occurs within the general background of modernity. Modernity comprises many and complex factors. Industrialization and state formation are some of these. The advance of science and technology had its influences such as advancing industrialism and capitalism. New ideologies like Marxism and socialism have also impacted on religion and society. It is said that the shift from an agrarian to an industrial culture through technology set the oppressed serfs free from their masters. Coupled with religious freedom that had already been shared by the Reformation, a new understanding of the state was emerging.

A critique of civil religion as put by Herbert Richardson in Moltmann states that:\(^{14}\)

> a civil religion is inconsistent with a truly political society. It involves internalization of the principle of unity and reduces the social plurality. What holds a political society together is the actual process of politics. Politics allows persons and groups that have differing aspirations to live together in relative peace and to cooperate in limited ways for the sake of specific benefits. Whenever politics seeks to be more than this, it inevitably becomes far less. This process is what makes a political society. Political societies is where there is distribution of power or sovereignty to a plural number of centres of initiative and are forced, thereafter, to create a social unity through that process of conflict, negotiation, and compromise which we call “politics”. Non-political societies do not seek to distribute power to a plural number of centres of initiative, but tend to rely on a single center of initiative (e.g., a strong president, a dominant party or a technological elite) to wield power and to establish social order.

This means that the demise of civil religion went hand in hand with the demise of monarchical controls of society. It happened when new ideas on the state were taking root. In this critique of civil religion is also entry-point for theology. M.M. Thomas suggests an entry-point. He suggests that we have to consider three factors

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
or forces which have shaped the character of states in the modern period. He suggests that; first is modern technology which includes both material technology and social technology. Second is the revolt of the peoples who have been awakened to new conceptions of justice. Third is the secularization of traditional societies and pluralism of both religion and ideologies.\textsuperscript{15} Thomas further states that technology produced a new consciousness of the world. Its first expression was imperialistic because the states of Europe which had a monopoly of technological discoveries and advance had the power to exploit the universe and exploit people of other continents. In this sense, technology produced an imperialist universality. Part of this imperial universality was also the exploitation of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Nationally, it buttressed the extreme exploitation of the working class by the class that owned the technology. It was in the attempt to reshape the universality of technology in less exploitative and more just terms that Asian and African peoples and the working class of Europe rose in revolt and sought to capture the powers of the state. For Thomas:

The crucial question then is the reality of the participation by the people in the modern state. ‘Mass’ is an unfortunate word, but it is true to reality. The mass is made up of the manipulated people who have formal but no real participation in decision-making. The problem is how to transform the “mass” to “people” who are conscious of their personal responsibility and who really have the means to participate in decision-making processes of the society and state. To my mind, it is the witness of the church to see how this transformation can be brought about.\textsuperscript{16}

The relevance of the views expressed by Thomas for our subject matter is that modernity is essential for some aspects of democracy. But it is important to note that in the past, modernity has been used to exploit less advanced societies. The church as Christendom joined herself to the various aspects of modernity. Thus, historically, the church cannot evade the blame or glory that may be laid on modernity. However, even though the Gospel is not a political programme, the practice of the love of God leads to the interaction and invasion of the social life of the peoples encountered by the church. In entering with God into the life issue the church has to risk identifying with secular concepts and the values set on them by the secular world. This means the church has to develop a cautious but sure approach to the world’s concerns. Having played a relevant part in the formation of the modern state, the church cannot escape involvement in the dynamics that continually influence the state and the society. A confessing church has to resist evil even when disguised as the politics of development. And in the course of resistance, inevitably, a political theology emerges.

\textbf{The Church and Democratization}

As indicated above, the church has always been part of the power structure. In this situation, it has often legitimated the status quo. However, as more and more African countries move towards democracy the church will find its stance challenged. When the status quo misrepresents human rights and justice, the church will always encounter difficulties if it remains indifferent to the wishes of the people. Justice and the right to human life are intrinsically related.” Life is the most basic human right; if justice means anything at all it must protect life. That should be a constant underlying purpose of all social, economic and political activities of governments at all levels. This basic right must never be forgotten by activist including religious leaders in a community”.\textsuperscript{17} Consequently, the church cannot maintain a theology that is otherworldly, devoid of social context.

\textsuperscript{16} Thomas, \textit{Church and Development}, 23.
\textsuperscript{17} J.K. Nyerere, \textit{Education for Self-reliance} (Dare Salam: Oxford Press, 1967), 17.
We recommend that the theology curriculum in the seminaries has to be reformed to include political concerns such as human rights, constitutionalism, citizenship, economic development, policy development etc. the same curriculum change needs to take place at the lower level of catechism classes for baptism and confirmation. As bishop Okulu indicated, the fight against the “devil and his works” which Christians undertake at baptism should be clarified as relevant to this worldly life.\textsuperscript{18} Christian education in churches should be oriented to making the communities of faith more responsive to what is happening around them. Politics need people of good moral standing as Christians seek to be. As long as this area is left to those who consider politics as divorced from religion, the people will always suffer from bad politics and therefore bad government. This provides a reason to reforming the theological curriculum that trains the clergy and catechists who are in charge of churches.

The issue of social order and social justice are of momentous importance. Human wisdom alone is not adequate. We need the insight of divine revelation. This is why life issues have to be reflected upon from a theological perspective. The cosmos should not only be seen as evil and the playground of Satan. Rather, it should also be seen to be redeemed world because God reconciled it to himself through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The politics of the cross should interpret Christian concern for social development.

**Church Theology**

In July 1986 a group of South African Evangelicals published ‘the evangelical witness in South Africa’ in which they critiqued their own theology and practice in regard to the recent racial crisis in South Africa. The full text of this highly important document was printed in the *Transformation*.\textsuperscript{19} This statement by “Concern evangelicals” is similar in spirit to my socio-political theology as articulated in this thesis. So I have summarized the highlights of their confession. If widely read and widely obeyed, this profoundly Biblical analysis of the human condition in terms of life on this earth could have a great impact, especially conservative Christians.

As South African evangelicals faced the racial crisis, they realized that though they were born-again believers, their “theology nevertheless was inadequate to address the crisis.” their past theology dealt with personal sin but not with their social oppression. In the document the words oppressed, oppression and oppressors occur 39 times along with many other similar words such as exploitation, injustice and structural sin. By contrast, the positive words such as justice or just occur 16 times, kingdom of God 7 times and radical (in a positive Biblical sense) 25 times. The self-critique is outlined below:

- We wish to confess that to a large extent the evangelical community has chosen to avoid that burden of socio-political crisis in the country. We wish to confess that our evangelical family has a track record of supporting and legitimating oppressive regimes here and elsewhere. That this family has tended to assume conservative positions which tend to maintain the status quo. Without a careful thought through theology dealing with socio-political aspects of life, most evangelicals have retreated to a tolerance of or an endorsement of the existing secular socio-economic and socio-political structures often endorsing oppression in the process.
- Because conformity to the secular socio structures is often the norm among evangelicals, they have to rationalize their rejection of the radical kingdom of God that Jesus taught. “In fact, evangelicals go to great lengths claiming Jesus did not teach what he clearly did. We have to, because to admit he taught what he did, would require us to change (repent) or to criticize him. And neither of these is acceptable”
- “The problem is that Jesus was radical and we are moderates.” He did not turn the world upside down from the top for the benefit of the affluent and powerful in the Jewish society. This would

\textsuperscript{18} H. Okulu, *Church and Society* (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1987), IV.

\textsuperscript{19} *Transformation* (January/ March, 1987), 17-30.
be supervision. But he turned the world upside down from below for the benefit of the poor and powerless (subversion)"

- There is one type of oppression that evangelicals recognize – the danger of future communist oppression (though this no longer exists after glasnost). This is an oppression which would oppress them. The present white racist apartheid system of oppression oppresses others. There is selectivity in tolerance of or opposition to oppression. Instead of a biblical condemnation of all types of oppression, there is a biblical justification of apartheid oppression by an appeal to Romans13. “those we thought were “born again” and reconciled to God turned out to be the worst racists, oppressors and exploiters”

- Why selective and limited recognition of sin? What are the sins which have been omitted? “The sin of racism. The sin of undermining other people and suppressing them to stop them from utilizing their potential and living their lives to the full. The sin of dispossessing people of their land. The sin of accumulating riches by making profits at the expense of other vulnerable humans, by so doing impoverishing them. The sin of classism and sexism. The sin of monopoly of power where people want “reforms” that will leave them still in power.

- Because of the pervasive nature of social evil, there must be a radical repentance of sin. Selective repentance for a list of personal sins alone is not fully biblical. We who are rich and powerful must recognize and repent of our oppression. We must not narrow the preaching of the gospel to identify only personal sin and ignoring the sin of those who hold political and economic power. “This position to us actually means preaching the gospel at the expense of the gospel. It means leaving sin to prevail in society to be able to preach against (personal) sin.” Limited preaching means limited repentance.

- Why this blindness to the full message of the bible by those who profess to believe in the Bible? Cultural conformity. “We must therefore be conscious of how society around us influences us and even distorts our thinking… a good example is how radically different the perceptions of whites and blacks are of the South African reality. It is for this reason that we could read the same text and hear different messages from it because our eyes, ears and our brains are geared to seeing, hearing and understanding things in terms of our socialization”.

- Is there any hope? A time of crisis forces us to rethink as this document itself indicates. A time of crisis is potentially an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to reveal new truth to us. Evangelicals in South Africa may yet develop a new radical commitment to incarnate the kingdom of God on earth.

Church theology as shown by the Evangelical paradigms has for a long time led to similar blindness to social sin by emphasizing a list of personal sins as is the case in most charismatic fundamentalist churches. Socio-economic and political sins cripple the society as Christians enjoy and praise the state for “the freedom of worship” responsible for mushrooming of thousands of denominations.

Conclusions

There are implications for a civic education curriculum in Theological and Bible. One of such implications is leadership in Church and society. H. Giroux, states that curriculum developers make definite choices regarding the impact of the curriculum on the socio-political context. He says that the school cannot be removed from the social context and the dynamics of power:

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
Rather than being objective institutions removed from the dynamics of politics and power, schools actually are contested spheres that embody and express a struggle over what forms of authority, types of knowledge, forms of moral regulation and versions of the past and future should be.  

The system has to be reorganized to include a learning process that leads the school drop-outs to alternative employment. It must shift from educating for employment and subservience to self-improvement and self-employment. In this context, individuals would become oriented to the communities they live in. They would start to see education not as an avenue to get them out of their communities but as one that deepens their roots in a profitable way.

Teachers have to help pupils translate their education in terms of local potentials and needs. In my opinion, this would stem from rural-urban migration through reorientation of education towards life. Therefore a way has to be found, through a democratization and politicization of schooling, to re-orientate the learners. It is through such an education that a responsible citizenship can develop.

A great deal of attention has been paid to the way political cultures are transferred from generation to generation. These include the family, the school, church, youth movements, political parties and the interpretation political history. All these are said to be formative influences on the young, which enable a political culture to be transmitted by socialization. However, a conscious or planned and formative political culture requires the role of the teacher in school. Further, the clergy are teachers at best and must be properly trained to educate the believers who sit on the pews of their churches every Sunday.

Bibliography


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THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR DIGNITY IN AFRICA
– A PUBLIC THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Nico Koopman

1. Introduction
This article investigates the potential of Public Theology to aid theological education in its calling to contribute to the task of acknowledging, affirming and actualising dignity in Africa. The three central questions of Public Theology illuminate the discussion on human dignity. The first question regarding the inherent public nature and thrust of Christian faith enables us to discover the Trinitarian basis of human dignity and to view dignity as Trinitarian dignity. The second question of Public Theology regarding the public rationality and reasonability of Christian convictions enables us to derive ethical parameters for public challenges from the notion of Trinitarian dignity. Other academic disciplines aid us in this task. The third question of Public Theology regarding the public implications and public impact of Christian convictions open the possibility to focus on concrete human dignity issues from the vantage point of so-called thicker theological convictions which offer an understanding of dignity as Trinitarian dignity.

The paper is structured as follows: In a first round the three central questions of Public Theology are briefly discussed. Thereafter the manner in which each one of these questions, respectively, illuminates our understanding of the theological foundations of dignity, the ethical parameters for public life derived from dignity discourses, and the impact of the notion of Trinitarian dignity on concrete human dignity challenges in Africa, is demonstrated. Finally a brief portrayal is offered of the theological education for dignity approach at the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University.

2. The Three Central Questions of Public Theology
The notion of Public Theology is used in a variety of ways. Some distinctions might be helpful to describe the variety of understandings of Public Theology.

Public Theology is currently described as a paradigm in both the two main senses in which Thomas Kuhn uses the notion of paradigm. For some it is a new paradigm in theology in the sense that there is only one Public Theology that serves as a comprehensive organising and determining framework for the practice of theology in all contexts. For others it is a paradigm in the sense of being a model, an example, of how theology is done in a specific context. Last-mentioned group would therefore prefer to talk about Public Theologies instead of Public Theology.

For some Public Theology is a new theological discipline or sub-discipline. Some theological institutions even use Public Theology as the organising principle for the redefinition of the task of all their theological disciplines. For others Public Theology is a crucial emphasis, facet, aspect of all theological disciplines.

Another distinction has to do with the three main questions that Public Theology addresses. Public Theology namely investigates the inherent public contents and thrust of Christian faith convictions, the inherent public rationality and reasonability thereof, and the public implications, impact and significance of Christian faith. Some theologians choose to focus on just one of these questions, although they would

1 The notion of human dignity is used within the context of the integrity of creation. The notion of integrity refers to the interdependence between humans and the rest of creation. It also refers to the inherent authenticity, value, worth and dignity of the so-called nonhuman part of creation.
attend to all three questions. Others would strive to emphasise all three these questions and approaches. In this paper I will try to demonstrate how a focus on each one of these questions might illuminate, enrich and guide public discourses about one of the most central themes in public life, namely human dignity in the context of the integrity of creation.

The development of the notion of Public Theology should be welcomed for various reasons. The first approach, which focuses upon the inherent public nature of Christian convictions, helps us to guard against self-secularisation, and to re-discover the wealth that the Christian tradition has to offer with regard to the challenges of all walks of life. Christian faith is very personal but not private. It is both individual and communal. It transforms both human beings and humanly created structures and systems. Public Theology helps us to re-discover the inherent public contents, thrust and focus of our faith. God’s Trinitarian love which is expressed as the creative and caring love of our heavenly Creator and Parent, as the saving and reconciling love of Jesus Christ our Saviour, as the renewing and perfecting love of the Spirit our Guide and Comforter, is a love for the cosmos, for humans in all walks of life – marriage, family, circles of friends, culture, work, church, society (which includes political life, economic life, ecological life, civil society, public discourse), and for all of creation.

The second main question or approach of Public Theology enables us to guard against anti-intellectualism. The recognition of the rationality and reasonability of Christian faith inspires us to make Christian convictions as far as possible rationally accessible to those inside and outside the faith tradition. This commitment to love God also with all our mind, to adhere to Anselm’s famous notion that Christian faith seeks understanding – *fides quarens intellectum*, to believe in order to understand, to strive to understand what we believe, to give rational account of the hope that lives within us, enables us to live faithfully in a globalising world of diversity and plurality, of ambiguity and paradoxality, of tragedy and complexity. And faithful living in this complex world entails that we guard against over-simplification. The two major forms of over-simplification are absolutism and relativism. Absolutism does not tolerate difference. Those who differ from my doctrinal or ethical position are stereotyped, stigmatised, demonised and eventually annihilated. Relativism entails that we develop a laissez-faire and tentative approach to these doctrinal and ethical matters of crucial importance as if they do not matter. Relativism easily becomes nihilism which entails that nothing is right and nothing is wrong, nothing is worth dying for and nothing is worth living for. Public Theology can equip us to live constructively with situations in contemporary societies where consensus is not achieved but where only dis-sensus and even incommensurability – irreconcilable positions – exist.

The third main question of Public Theology helps us to bring Christian faith concretely into conversation with the questions and plights of human beings in all walks of life, and with the plights of the rest of creation. Public Theology assists our efforts to discern the liberating and dignifying meaning of Christian faith for our plights, especially the plights and pain of the vulnerable, the destitute, the poor, the wronged and the marginalised.

In some sense we can argue that Public Theology is actually a tautology. The functions of Public Theology spelled out here in a cursory manner are actually the functions of all theology. We, however, need this disturbing and frustrating tautology called Public Theology to conscientise and inspire us regarding the threefold task of acknowledging and appreciating the inherent public nature and thrust of our faith, the rationality and reasonability of our faith and the significance of our faith for all facets of life.2

Theological education on our continent and in fact everywhere else will omit an essential and indispensable part of our calling if we neglect these insights.

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3. Public Theology and Trinitarian Dignity

The first central question or position of Public Theology entails that Christian convictions have an inherent public content, public focus and public thrust. This is clearly demonstrated if we mine the Christian tradition for its perspectives on a public matter like human dignity.

British theologian, John Webster, offers a very helpful analysis of the Trinitarian roots of human dignity.

3.1. Creaturely and inalienable dignity

Our dignity resides in the loving act of God the creator who summons us into being. Our dignity is a creaturely dignity. Our vulnerability, as expressed in our creaturely needs, is not in conflict with our creaturely dignity. Our needs reflect our dependence upon God who summoned us into being and who gave us life, and who fulfils and consummates a life of full glory for us. Human dignity as responsible selfhood, identity across time and creaturely continuity cannot be had remote Deo, i.e. in separation from the creator’s summons. Dignity does not reside in autonomy and independence, but in this dependence upon God the creator. The dignity, worth, honour and glory of creatures rest in our calling by God to live in fellowship and communion with Him. Webster states: “God crowns creatures with glory and honour, marking them out as the recipient of his approval, and setting them apart for fellowship with himself. Creation is exaltation; creatures have dignity as they are dignified by God.”

From this divine foundation of our dignity emanates the theological imperative to acknowledge and respect dignity. To quote Webster again:

Only God the creator can crown with glory and honour; creatures are not competent to ascribe dignity to themselves or to other creatures. Human judgements about dignity can only be repetitions of the divine judgement, acts in which honour is recognised as an indicative and imperative which rests on the divine decision.

Human dignity as created means that we receive our dignity from the creator. Our dignity is inalienable because it is given by the creator. It is alienable because it does not come from humans, but it comes from the creator. It is inalienable because it is not dependent upon the recognition of dignity by the frail and unreliable hearts, minds and actions of humans, but it is dependent upon the living God. Creaturely dignity as inalienable dignity implies that our dignity does not reside in our own merit, capabilities and performance. Inalienable, creaturely dignity is received dignity. It is dignity in the presence of, in communion with, and in dependence upon God the creator.

Our calling with regard to acknowledging and affirming, actualising and fulfilling dignity is to witness in word and deed to the dignifying decisions and actions of God the creator. But even our unfaithfulness to this calling does not mean that people can be alienated from their dignity. We may deny, disregard,
disrespect, betray, abuse and violate this dignity, but we cannot bereft and alienate people from their god-
given, creaturely dignity.

Webster refers to the fact that the creator calls us to enact our being in fellowship with Him. The
Christian tradition teaches that this human being is created in the image of God. And as his image we share
in God’s freedom, authority, creativity, rationality, responsibility and in his desire and capability to live life
in communion. Through the lens of Webster these features are defined and substantialised in terms of the
recognition of the vulnerability of humans who are called to live in dependence upon and in communion
with God. Therefore our freedom is in harmony with God’s freedom, which is always a freedom for the
other, specifically for the suffering other. Our authority is always authority received from the creator and
therefore redemptive, serving and liberative authority. Our creativity and work and labour are to create for
the sake of communion and joy. Our rationality reflects the rationality and logic of God, and therefore
transcends the modernistic criteria of rationality, namely that which makes logical sense and that which can
be empirically verified. Our desire for communion resonates with God’s desire for and realisation of a
communion of care and solidarity, mutuality and reciprocity.

God the creator, through his loving act of creation, also brought into being and also bestowed life upon
the non-human part of creation. This reality inspired the international ecumenical movement to re-capture
the understanding of the earth as oikos, as habitat or habitation for all forms of life. This realisation leads to
a revised understanding of concepts like ecumene, economy, ecology and oikodome. Ecumene refers to the
whole inhabited earth. Economy refers to the rules according to which the household is governed. It refers
to the knowledge of the material requirements of the household of life and how they are to be met. Ecology
refers to the logic of life that understands the inter-related dynamics of the household—something that is
crucial for its sustainability. This logic of life is in conflict with the logic of the market and the logic of
power. This logic respects the integrity, authenticity and inherent worth, value and glory of all of creation.
Oikodome refers to the constant effort to maintain and build up the oikos of life. This nurturing occurs in
the context of glocality, in the one oikos where the microcosm and macrocosm live within each other,
where the local is the basic unit of the global, where the local and the global constitute each other.

3.2 Christological and confirmed dignity
Webster argues that a theology of dignity should be developed within the context of Saint Augustine’s
appeal that dignity discourse should be part of hamartialogical and soteriological discourse. As human
beings we cannot destroy our dignity, but we can alienate ourselves from the relationship with God our
creator. Human dignity can only flourish in the context of a relationship with God where we thankfully
accept the gift of dignity and our calling to live a dignifying life. We trample our dignity in two sinful
ways, i.e. through our rush for carnal fulfilment and dishonourable passion, as well as through our
conviction that we ourselves, and not God, are responsible for the establishment and protection of our
dignity. This carnality and skewed form of responsibility are ways of refusing to accept the gift of dignity.
This refusal to accept the divine gift, according to Webster, causes alienation and misery:

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5 For helpful discussions of the meaning of the image of God for our reflection upon theological anthropology and
human dignity see D Migliore, Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology (Grand Rapids,
Michigan/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004); J Leith, Basic Christian Doctrine (Louisville, Kentucky: John
Knox/Westminster Press, 1993); S Guthrie, Christian Doctrine (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox/Westminster Press,
1994); W Huber, Violence: The Unrelenting Assault on Human Dignity (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996); W Huber,
Der Gemachte Mensch: Christlicher Glaube und Biotechnik (Berlin: Wichern-Verlag, 2002); J Moltmann, On Human
160-161.
The sinful state which eventuates may be characterised by alienation (the objective breach of relations between creator and creatures in which creatures come to discover that they have placed themselves at a mortal distance from the source of life and blessing) and by misery (the subjective degradation which comes from the futile attempt to have life on conditions other than those established by the creator’s love).

Where we isolate ourselves from God, and where we follow our own logic instead of God’s logic for our lives, we do not enjoy the blessing of dignified living that God has in store for us.

Through the Person and the extensive and comprehensive work of Jesus Christ God affirms our dignity. According to Webster Christ affirms and protects our dignity “by the full scope of this divine mission: its origin in the eternal procession of the Son; the assumption of flesh; the state of humiliation; the exaltation of Easter; the glorious rule of the Son as the ascended and enthroned reconciler who presents himself in the Spirit’s power”.

Through the work of Christ God provides a way for sinners to live in communion with Him again, to accept his gift of dignity and the vocation to live and witness to a god-given life of dignity. In this regard Webster cites Calvin’s comment on Psalm 8:

... the heavenly Father has again bestowed the fullness of all gifts upon his Son, that all of us should draw out of this well-spring: whatsoever God bestows upon us by him, the same right belongs in the first degree to him; yea, rather, he is the lively image of God, according to which we must be amended, upon which all other things depend.’ And so: ‘His excellence and heavenly dignity are extended unto us also, for whose sakes he is enriched with them.’

The gift of creaturely dignity that humans are invited to accept and enjoy is embodied by Jesus Christ. This dignity is confirmed by Christ. And in Christ this gift is offered afresh to us. The Christological dignity is therefore embodied dignity, confirmed dignity. The dignity and glory of Christ is pro nobis. It is for us, it is our dignity.

### 3.3 Pneumatological and actualised dignity

The Spirit is the Spirit of God through whom God perfects and actualises the dignity of human beings in correspondence to God’s plans and purposes, calling and summons. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ through whom the glorified Son directs creaturely realities to their completion. In this journey the Spirit generates, sustains and purifies obedience and active consent on the part of creatures. Webster states: “The Spirit moves creatures, and in moving gives them their proper spontaneity and integrity, that is, their dignity as the active children of God.”

Dignity is actualised in the Christian communion, in the Trinitarian communion, in the church. In communion with the triune God our dignity is created, confirmed and actualised. In communion with fellow creatures it becomes clear that this dignity is not only metaphysical, but that it is also orientational and moral. Dignity as gift from God also takes on social shape and form amongst God’s creatures. Our moral imperative is to acknowledge, protect and testify to this Trinitarian and ecclesial dignity. We are called upon to resist the denial and betrayal of dignity. This moral character of dignity helps to address the concern about the value of dignity discourse raised by Christoph Schwöbel: “Although human dignity is formally affirmed as a universal principle, it seems to have lost its capacity of providing orientation for human practice”.

Schwöbel argues that although the German Constitution affirms the inviolability of human dignity, there is uncertainty about the practical application of the principle in most spheres of public and personal life. He phrased this challenge very clearly:

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7 C Schwöbel, “Recovering human dignity”, 45.
8 C Schwöbel, “Recovering human dignity”, 44.
How much freedom is demanded by the principle, how much justice? What are the implications of the principle for the political and social order of society? In what sense is the principle of human dignity to be observed in the economic realm? What does appealing to human dignity mean in a society that increasingly tends to arrange all forms of social interaction according to the market-logic of supply and demand and thereby claims the factual primacy of economic values over all other values? Furthermore, how can human dignity function as an action-directing principle in the context of modern bio-technology, where modern techniques of genetic engineering offers prospects of medical progress which seem to imply that the boundaries between genetic diagnostics, gene therapy, and genetic enhancement become increasingly blurred?

This brief analysis indicates that human dignity is Trinitarian dignity. It is creaturely and inalienable dignity. It is Christological and confirmed dignity. It is pneumatological and fulfilled dignity. This metaphysical foundation of dignity provides orientation for life. The work of the triune God takes on moral form and shape in the church and the rest of the world. From the triune indicative of God’s Trinitarian dignifying work flows the imperative to give witness of the loving and dignifying work of the triune God who creates, affirms and actualises dignity. Schwöbel pleads for this witness to take on concrete form in all spheres of life, i.e. the personal, political, social, economic and biotechnological.

4. Public Theology and the Ethical Features of Trinitarian Dignity

In conversation with other disciplines Public Theology develops ethical parameters from the notion of human dignity.

Dutch social scientist Rob Buitenweg identifies three features of human beings, which correspond with three quests of human beings. Where these quests are met, dignity is acknowledged and respected, affirmed and celebrated, fulfilled and actualised.

The three features of human beings are vulnerability, sociality and openness (i.e. non-instinctive, non-determined). The three quests of human beings are the quest for well-being, the quest for participation and the quest for freedom. These features and quests enable us to derive ethical parameters from the notion of human dignity.

Humans are vulnerable, finite and limited beings. We are susceptible to suffering. We are confronted with situations that pose a threat to our lives. Amidst this vulnerability we have the resilience and strength to survive. Against the background of this vulnerability humans embark on the quest for wellbeing, i.e. the quest to protect ourselves from suffering and the threats to our physical existence. We therefore strive for the most basic goods for human life, like food, clothes, housing and medical care.

Humans are also social, relational beings. We are dependent upon each other. We care for each other. Our membership of communities establishes our identities. We therefore engage in the quest to participate in various social processes. We oppose isolation, alienation and exclusion. We strive to participate in communal processes, especially those that give form and content to our living together. Isolation and exclusion violate our self-respect.

Humans are thirdly open and not pre-determined and programmed beings. We are also not determined by our instincts. We can make choices, and we cannot avoid making choices. We are responsible beings. This inherent quality of openness prompts us to strive for freedom. We do not want to be imprisoned, trapped, enslaved, forced and oppressed. We hunger for spaces in which we can make choices and live authentically according to our own preferences.

Buitenweg states that besides these desires and quests, we also have general and specific goals. General goals refer to our existential ideals to be specific types of people with specific characteristics, attitudes and dispositions. We have specific goals like caring for a specific individual in need. All these quests, which correspond with our anthropological nature, as well as these goals, reflect our dignity as human beings.

An analysis of these anthropological features and corresponding quests helps to translate the broader principle of Trinitarian human dignity into more concrete moral visions and orientations, moral predispositions and intuitions, moral directives and actions in all spheres of life. Dignity is served where there is care for and justice to the vulnerable, where there is a communion of interdependency, reciprocity, mutuality and participation, and where there is freedom to live a life of decision-making, worth, self-actualisation, service and the space to pursue broader and specific goals.

5. Public Theology and the Implications of Trinitarian Dignity

The third emphasis in Public Theology is the quest to discern the meaning of Christian convictions for those many instances where Trinitarian dignity is not fulfilled. This violation of dignity is manifested in, amongst others, poverty and unemployment, the growing socio-economic exclusion and marginalisation of Africa, the negative impact of political, cultural and especially economic globalisation on the most vulnerable ones in society, the growing gap between rich and poor between and within countries, violence and crime, corruption and nepotism, human trafficking and child labour, racism and classism, sexism and homophobia, a spirit, structures and practices of empire in the context of globalisation.

Human dignity can be actualised through the fulfilment of human rights. Human rights discourse should, therefore, be a crucial dimension of theological education for human dignity. The aim should be that the so-called three generations of rights be implemented. These are the first generation political and civil rights, the second generation social and economic rights, and the third generation rights of development and ecological sustainability.

The implementation of rights is advanced through the process of envisioning. Churches are called to keep the vision alive of a new society of human dignity. According to US theologian James Gustafson, Christians are called to portray an alluring vision of the future. They see a new world in which the strife and suffering that we currently experience, are overcome. This vision may indict the contemporary broken reality, but its main function is to allure and attract people to act concretely and to attempt to approximate the vision. Utopian language, symbols, analogies, similes and metaphors that move us, are employed. Their speeches are not technical moral arguments or policy statements. Hearers are moved by aspects like the passion of the speaker’s voice, the cadences and figures of speech, many drawn from the Bible, that are employed, and also the moral authenticity of the speaker. Such visionary language moves us from indignation with the present to aspiration for the future.

Brazilian social scientist and theologian Rubem Alves offers a strong plea for envisioning. He calls for the task of envisioning, specifically in so-called postliberation societies. He talks about societies that have struggled against oppression, but who do not fulfil the vision of an alternative society years after the victory from oppression has been achieved. Alves speaks, in fact, about societies that became democracies, but had forgotten the vision of a liberated society, the vision that had inspired them during their struggle for liberation. His words are so relevant for young democracies in Africa.

The implementation of rights is also advanced through the process of the formation of people with civic virtue and civic character. Democracies with human rights cultures cannot become a reality without leaders

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and citizens of civic virtue and character. Societies need people of public and civic virtue: public wisdom in contexts of complexity, ambiguity, tragedy and aporia (dead-end streets); public justice in contexts of inequalities and injustices on local and global levels; public temperance in contexts of greed and consumerism amidst poverty and alienation; public fortitude amidst situations of powerlessness and inertia; public faith amidst feelings of disorientation and rootless-ness in contemporary societies; public hope amidst situations of despair and melancholy; public love in societies where public cohesion, solidarity and compassion are absent.

The implementation of rights is advanced through participation in public policy-making processes that seek to translate the broader human dignity vision and human rights principles into concrete policies and practices. Churches are called upon to work in partnership with other institutions of society for the fulfilment of rights. Collaboration with regard to appropriate participation in policy-making, policy-implementation, policy-monitoring and policy-amending processes is a crucial part of this collaboration. One very recent example of this role of churches is demonstrated in the crucial role that the South African Council of Churches (SACC) played in September 2012 in negotiations to solve the intense and violent conflict at the Lonmin Platinum Mine in Marikana, South Africa. Churches collaborated with other institutions to prevent further bloodshed. The role of the SACC was indispensable in solving this problem, and in ensuring that the dignity and rights of workers were respected. The mediating and facilitating role of the SACC leadership for the sake of dignity and human rights demonstrates what outcomes theological education can bring to the fore!

5. Conclusion

In the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University we attend to both Public Theology and human dignity as central foci of the Faculty. Our involvement in the Network for Congregational Studies in Africa, the work of the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology and the Human Dignity Programmes of the Faculty, amongst others, explicitly focus on these themes. Theological education on the continent of Africa might benefit from investigating the potential of Public Theology for nurturing a pedagogy that does not only inform but also transforms individuals and societies and continents – from a life of dehumanisation, injustice and oppression to a life of dignity, justice and freedom for all.

Bibliography


See www.sun.ac.za/theology.


Discourse on Sustainability in Africa

There is no need here to review the pressing environmental concerns in the African context. The time is now long gone when environmental issues were primarily related to nature conservation. This used to be predominantly a concern of the white middle class (not so much the very rich), at least in South Africa. Nevertheless, a number of other contributions tapped into indigenous African wisdom to express a concern over the degradation of ancestral lands and to call for the responsible stewardship of the land. While such a retrieval of indigenous wisdom is still urgently needed, especially in rural Africa, the environment has now become an urban issue as well.

This was prompted by the recognition that already marginalised communities across the African continent have become victims of environmental degradation. This applies to urban and rural communities alike. One may mention a long litany of concerns over deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, waste management, water-carried diseases (including malaria and cholera), toxic waste dumping, oil pollution, localised forms of over-population and congestion, the acidification of water supplies, air pollution, the impact of biotechnology on seed banks, flooding, etc. Indeed most of the problems experienced by the urban poor are environmental problems, although seldom recognised as such. All of these concerns are trumped by fears around changing weather and rainfall patterns resulting from climate change. This raises long-term concerns over food security in national economies, the sustainable livelihood of rural communities and the recognition that the current migration of peoples will be deeply influenced by environmental refugees in future. While some more immediate forms of environmental destruction are caused by marginalised communities themselves, those on the periphery of the economy typically become victims of forces far beyond their control.

It is within this context that discourse on sustainability in Africa is situated. The meaning of the word “sustainability” is by no means self-evident. It is not widely recognised that the concept has theological roots. It may well have been coined by the church around 1974 and since then became widely used in business and industry (together with other Christian vocabulary such as “mission”, “vision” and “justification”). It does not merely refer to God’s providence that sustains us in our daily lives. It begs theological questions on what endures through time amidst all other variables and evolutionary changes. The answer of Psalm 100 resounds: It is ultimately only God’s mercy and loyalty (hesed) that endures.

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2 For this distinction between the economic centre and the economic periphery, see the many contributions by Klaus Nürnberger, including *Prosperity, Poverty & Pollution: Managing the approaching crisis* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 1999), and more recently *Regaining Sanity for the Earth* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 2011).

3 See my discussion of the background of the term in *Christianity and Ecological Theology: Resources for further research* (Stellenbosch: SUN Press, 2006), Section 11.1.
forever and that sustains us. God’s loyalty to God’s own beloved creation was such that in God’s eyes the
dominant question is of a technological nature, namely how something can become more sustainable. This
is either a synonym for efficiency (as far as the use of non-renewal resources is concerned) or recognises
long-term economic interests in terms of the sustained use of renewable resources (such as water, soil,
forests, fish, etc).

On this basis, an answer to the second question, namely “What is sustainability?” is assumed, namely
that it refers to sustained economic growth, typically understood in the categories of neo-liberal capitalism.
However, since non-renewal resources are limited and the carrying capacity of any ecosystem is restricted,
this prompted the recognition that there can be no infinite economic growth on a finite planet, as long as
such growth assumes growth in bio-physical output. Economic growth on the basis of dematerialisation is
possible, but this would underplay the escalating needs for food, housing, transport networks and
infrastructure across the African continent. As a result, others have called for “sustainable development”,
understood as “development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future
generations to meet their own needs”.4 However this notion hides the conflicting paradigms in thinking
about what “development” entails and masks the failure of all too many development projects based on
outside funding in Africa. Moreover, such development often assumes growth in the use of natural
resources, as in the case of the Brundtland report of 1987 on Our Common Future – which assumed that
the global economy would need to grow sevenfold to meet the needs of the global population by 2050. The
question therefore remains whether such “development” is feasible and whether the standard of living of
the consumer class may be used as a benchmark for others to seek to attain. Clearly, if this is not feasible in
terms of the carrying capacity of the land, this has serious implications for the aspirations of the poor and
of industrialising countries. It raises issues of justice and a fair distribution of the wealth created through
the economic systems of global capitalism. Moreover, it will require a redefinition of what wealth entails.
This cannot be understood in material terms alone but has to focus on the quality of human relationships. In
a Message from African faith leaders to the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) following a meeting at
the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi, 7-8 June 2011, this is expressed in the
following words:

We debase human beings by seeing them only as economic instruments, and debase the sanctity of life by
commodifying it … We must realise that well-being cannot be equated with material wealth. The quality of life
is not dependent on the quantity of material things or growth measured by GDP. Instead, our standard of living
depends on our standard of loving and sharing. We cannot sustain a world dominated by profit-seeking, rampant
consumerism and gross inequalities, and an atmosphere of competition where the powerful take advantage of the
weak without caring for the well-being of every form of life. Development cannot be sustained if the affluent
project themselves as examples to be copied by everyone else, and if the poor model their lifestyles on such
examples.5

Critics therefore regard the notion of sustainable development as an attempt at the greening of global
capitalism, as a euphemism used by entrepreneurs for “business as usual”, namely an emphasis on
economic growth, qualified by a few environmental cautions. When faced with a choice between
development and a sustainable environment, the interests of developers and entrepreneurs (who can often
provide short-term economic gain in terms of employment) regularly seem to receive a priority. The

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4 This definition is derived from the Brundtland report of 1987 and has since been used in many documents.
5 This communique was compiled jointly by 130 faith leaders representing Muslim, Christian, Hindu, African
traditional, Bahá’í and Buddhist communities from 30 countries across Africa. It was circulated electronically by email.
underlying development paradigm, with its strong emphasis on economic growth and market expansion serves primarily the interests of powerful corporate-driven, market-oriented economic forces. In response to such criticisms, others have suggested the need for “sustainable communities” or “sustainable livelihoods”. The former term recognises the need for community structure while the latter term indicates concerns over nourishment, food sustenance and food security. This may be highly applicable to the needs of rural communities but it is less clear how this can guide macro-economic policies. Following these different views on sustainability, the third question is also answered, namely why something should be sustained? Sustainability may be in the interests of business and industry, national economies, community organisations or the basic needs of the marginalised.

On the basis of such ongoing debates a fourth question has emerged, namely “What is it that has to be sustained?” The question is born from the recognition of the limited ability of the biosphere to absorb the waste products of industrialised societies. Anything can be recycled, but it takes time. This applies to vegetable peels, to urban waste, toxic waste and nuclear waste alike. However, the real concern is over the recycling of carbon dioxide. Climate change is the result of the limited absorption capacity of the biosphere, i.e. to recycle carbon. It can be recycled through processes such as photosynthesis and absorption by the ocean but the tempo is determined by the earth’s natural cycles so the carbon once released into the atmosphere will remain there for a long period (500 years or more). This implies the need for a cap to the total amount of greenhouse emissions since the industrial revolution and on a per annum basis in order to prevent catastrophic anthropogenic climate change. The per annum cap can be maintained through using alternative sources of energy. However, given current escalating energy needs and the availability of fossil fuels (a highly efficient source of energy) the question is also how the right to emissions should be distributed, especially given historical imbalances. This is the bone of contention at international negotiations on climate change. Given the failure of such negotiations the default position is to simply allow everyone to use as much energy as they can pay for and thus to endorse a steady increase of global emissions with only a few cautions.7

Once such rights are allocated, the deeper question will become what the carbon should be used for. This may be more easily understood on a per capita basis. The current global emissions are above 4.5 tons of carbon dioxide per person per year. The biosphere can only absorb roughly 2 tons per person per year at the 1990 global human population. This of course hides wide ranging inequalities in carbon emissions between a country like Zambia (0.2 tons), South Africa (9.8 tons) and the USA (21.1 tons).8 Moreover, this hides differences between the poor and the consumer class within each country. If every person was to be allocated an enforced quota of 2 tons (which is admittedly a mere conjecture), one may use it, sell it to someone who wishes to use more or buy someone else’s quota in order to use more oneself. That this is not possible (yet) only serves to reveal the global injustices associated with climate change, namely that those who will suffer from it typically have contributed very little to the problem,9 while those who use fossil fuels do not need to pay for its impact and will have used most of what is available by 2050.

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6 For the use of this term, see especially Larry Rasmussen, Earth Community, Earth Ethics (Maryknoll: Orbis Books 1996), and David H. Wellman, Sustainable Communities (Geneva: World Council of Churches 2001).
7 The Global Carbon project, a study by 31 leading scientists headed by Prof Corinne Le Quéré, reported in December 2009 that annual carbon emissions have increased by 29% from 2000 to 2008 and by 41% from 1990 to 2008. Except for 2009 (due to the global recession), this represents an annual increase of 3%.
9 In the foreword to Andrew Simms & Hannah Reid (eds), Africa – Up I Smoke? (New Economics Foundation, 2005), Archbishop Desmond Tutu captures the implications for Africa: “The world’s wealthiest countries have emitted more than their fair share of greenhouse gases. Resultant floods, droughts and other climate change impacts continue to fall disproportionately on the world’s poorest people and countries, many of which are in Africa … [There is also a need to recognize] the strength and creativity of African people in times of stress. What is needed most now is that Africans are supported in their efforts to build on those strengths”.

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
If one wishes to use that quota oneself, what will it be used for? For domestic electricity, for individual or public motorised transport, for manufacturing products, for building houses, or for building infrastructure (including roads, communication channels, public facilities, education facilities, hosting public events, etc)? Here one has to recognise that such carbon emissions come in three forms, namely a) direct personal use (for electricity and transport), b) the embodied energy and implied carbon emission in any product purchased and c) the use of public facilities (roads, street lights, television networks, government buildings, etc.).

These observations suggest that the problem is not merely whether something can be sustained or how it can be sustained, but what it is that has to be sustained. To put it crudely: Is the question how long the lifestyles of the consumer class may be sustained? Or mega-sports events? Or institutions like universities? Or global tourism? Or industrialised civilisation? Or neo-liberal capitalism? As many have recognised, what is at stake is the very foundations of our notion(s) of civilisation. The South African Council of Churches in its document entitled *Climate Change: A Challenge to Churches in South Africa* (2009) puts its finger where it hurts:

These aspects can be sustained, but only at grave costs and only when sacrifices are made elsewhere in order to make that possible. Some may need to travel more, but that is only sustainable if others travel less (if using fossil fuels). Some may want to have a carbon footprint above 2 tons per year, but then the footprint of others have to be less than that. The real problem is that decisions over what should be sustained are not made by those who have to make the sacrifices.  

**Implications for Theological Education**

These observations on sustainability have several implications for theological education in Africa. The following four may be highlighted:

First, there is an obvious need to include courses dealing with issues relating to sustainability in the curriculum for theological education. This has been introduced at several theological institutions, although far more can still be done in this regard. The more pertinent question is where it should be dealt with in the curriculum. This would obviously depend on how the curriculum is structured, how long the curriculum extends and how particular institutions deviate from the well-known parameters of the fourfold paradigm, namely Biblical Studies, the History of Christianity, Systematic Theology and Practical Theology.

The most obvious possibility would be to introduce courses or course components in the field of environmental ethics. There are by now ample resources available for such courses. However, one may also explore issues around sustainability in courses on theology and development, in building sustainable communities through Christian education and formation and in the practical challenges of greening churches. At least in the South African context there is a widespread interest in the notion of eco-congregations – which may be addressed through courses in the field of Practical Theology. Moreover, ecological concerns have prompted widespread interest in liturgical renewal, for example through the celebration of environmental feast days and a Season of Creation. This should not only be recognised in liturgical training but also through worship services on the campus of theological institutions. There is also a wide range of environmental projects that can provide thought-provoking case studies for mission programmes (i.e. in the field of Missiology).

Another area where such issues can be discussed is of course creation theology as one theme addressed in Systematic Theology. One may also reflect on the ecological concerns raised around dualist...
anthropology, an escapist eschatology and truncated soteriology. Indeed, almost every other aspect of the Christian faith has been explored for its ecological significance and impact – the trinity, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology and the doctrine of the sacraments.

In the field of Biblical studies there is a growing interest in an ecological biblical hermeneutics and particular studies on literary corpuses in the Bible. Several (South) African scholars have contributed to such literature over the past decade.

On this basis one may argue that there is no need to introduce all that many courses on the bio-physical environment in an already over-crowded agenda of theological education. Instead, every course should have an ecological dimension, even where it is not explicitly and intentionally addressed. In the same way that everything is gendered (and political, financial, hermeneutical) but gender is not everything, one may say that everything has an ecological dimension but not everything can or need to be reduced to ecological concerns. On this basis one may observe a twofold danger in terms of developing an appropriate curriculum. The one danger is that such an ecological dimension will be neglected when it is not specifically addressed. The other danger is that the introduction of courses on the environment will lead to self-marginalisation in the sense that only those who are interested will focus on that so that others may safely ignore it. Thus ecotheology will remain the focus only of a particular interest group with some connections possible between interest groups.

Second, there is an equally obvious need for the greening of theological institutions. This is actually not a new concern. Many theological colleges and universities in Africa have developed from Christian missions which almost always recognised the need for continuing education. The practical challenges of building the required infrastructure for theological and other forms of education are well-known across the African continent. There are ongoing concerns over suitable buildings, access to water and electricity, food security, medical care and so forth. In the past self-sustainability (alongside self-governance, self-funding and self-perpetuation) was typically born from necessity, albeit that this seldom implied financial independence. As a result, many former missions required expertise in all these areas, including sustainable agriculture. The recognition of ecological concerns can therefore easily prompt a programme towards the greening of theological institutions except where the patterns of Western (and now Chinese) infrastructure are merely replicated in a very different climate and geographical environment.

Third, there is a need for theological institutions to position themselves through policy making with reference to ongoing debates on environmental destruction. This applies especially to self-governed institutions that do not form part of larger educational institutions like universities (which would be less easy to influence). The challenge here has to be addressed both within and outside the institution. The greening of institutions (see above) can best be done on the basis of policy decisions on the use of resources (like paper), electricity, transport, etc. Such policies would have an impact on contracts for service delivery, appointments, calendar planning and so forth. This would require firm decisions by the governing bodies of such institutions following programmes to raise environmental awareness. Once such policies are implemented this should shape the ethos of any particular theological institution in the long run. This should contribute to Christian formation amongst the staff and student body alike and would lead the institution towards becoming a “sustainable community”, or better, a sustainable, Eucharistic communion.

Such policy decisions will also position theological institutions in local, regional and continental debates. Advocacy in terms of decision making in the local municipality may well be required. The impact

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11 For this identification of an agenda for contributions to Christian ecotheology from the perspective of systematic theology, see my Christianity and Ecological Theology, 95-118.
12 See the especially the 5-volume Earth Bible series edited by Norman Habel (published by Sheffield Academic and Pilgrim Press) and the recent volume edited by David Horrell et al, Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Perspectives (London: T & T Clark 2010).

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
of such positioning need not be underestimated in the African context. Moreover, students may be encouraged to participate in activism around environmental issues by “thinking globally”. The obvious examples here would be on issues of water, oil, deforestation and climate change. The ecumenical agenda set at the World Council of Churches’ General Assembly in Nairobi (1975), namely to promote a “Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society” may continue to guide such activism – in the light of economic injustices, violent conflict over scarce resources and environmental destruction.

Finally, discourse on sustainability may also contribute to a rethinking of the very aims of theological education. These aims are usually described in terms of spiritual formation, academic excellence and practical training for ordained and lay ministries. However, the broader question remains: what is the purpose of any form of education? Clearly, education cannot be an aim itself. What, then, is that aim?

From the perspective of students, the opportunity for theological education certainly harbours hope for obtaining qualifications, finding employment, securing income in order to sustain an upward social mobility and the recognition and honour in society that would bring. However, that cannot be the only aim of theological education from the point of view of the institution itself. It has to entail a broader vision, to be God’s witnesses, to save “souls”, to strengthen the denomination’s numbers, to build expertise for the church and its programmes, to work for the coming of God’s reign on earth, to contribute to the reconstruction and development of African societies, to conquer the forces of evil, or something like that.

In secular educational institutions such aims are increasingly being defined in terms of the reigning ideologies of economic growth, development, and increasing prosperity, if not in terms of rampant consumerism. Educational institutions often buy into this ideology, leading to the corporatisation of universities as part of what is sometimes called the “knowledge industry”. Universities thus become businesses that are run on business principles derived from the corporate world. When knowledge is for sale, this has far reaching consequences for teaching (packaging knowledge) and learning (adopting what may be called a consumerist hermeneutics). Churches and their theological institutions are tempted to provide ideological support and theological legitimisation for such aims, especially through preaching the gospel of increasing prosperity for all.

In response to such observations it should be clear that discourse on sustainability raises profound questions about the very aims of theological education. The issue here is not only teaching about sustainability or making teaching sustainable, but teaching for sustainability. Of course, this would require more clarity on the term “sustainable society”. What kind of society is it that theological education would seek to promote? Since sustainability can hardly be an aim in itself either, the question returns: “What is it that has to be sustained?” What is it that we truly value, above all else?

This is a strangely difficult question to answer. It clearly has religious connotations, thus enabling religious traditions (and theological education) to offer a critique of purely secular answers. However, religious language may easily become vague (working for God’s reign on earth) and thus may obscure the kind of interests that are indeed at stake. It is not easy to be honest enough in order to answer the question through introspection. We often hide our deepest desires for money, fame, power or love from ourselves. What should at least be clear is that discourse on sustainability cannot leave the most fundamental aims of theological education untouched. It will necessarily disturb any complacent answers to this question.

Purely secular answers will not do either. Indeed, this begs fundamental theological question about the nature of the Christian message of salvation. What implications does that have for education in general and for theological education in particular? The underlying question is how this message affects God’s own

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13 For a discussion, see my Christianity and a Critique of Consumerism: A survey of six points of entry (Wellington: Bible Media, 2009), chapter 6.

14 See my essay “Globalisation, consumerism and the call for a status confessionis” in Allan A. Boesak & Len Hansen (eds), Globalisation Volume II: Global crisis, global challenge, global faith – An ongoing response to the Accra confession (Stellenbosch: SUN Press), 53-76.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
creation? To do justice to both creation and salvation is clearly required (for “saving the earth” and for discourse in sustainability alike) but is not easy to accomplish. This theme is currently being addressed in two volumes of essays that are underway as part of the Christian Faith and the Earth project.15

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15 I am currently editing two volumes of essays on this theme, namely Creation and Salvation: A mosaic of selected classic Christian theologies (Berlin: LIT Verlag, forthcoming, 2011) and Creation and Salvation: A medley on recent theological movements (also to be submitted for publication by LIT Verlag).


(69) ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Clemence Makamure

Introduction

As the advancement of science permits humanity to better understand its impact upon the earth, theologians are increasingly being forced to grapple with important questions of environmental ethics. What does theology teach about humanity's obligation to care for creation? Is human dominion responsible for the ecological crisis? How do the needs of the human person and the integrity of creation properly intersect? This paper will examine the reflection of African theologians to environmental issues. The paper will argue that the first sentence of the Bible (“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1)), together with the subsequent creation of human beings, provide a necessary foundation for environmental reflection. God made the earth, and gave to human beings a special place and a role of stewardship in relation to the rest of creation. This place and this role afford human beings a unique dignity and responsibility. The view of this paper is that environmental stewardship accurately addresses both human responsibility to the environment and the special place and dignity of human beings within God's creation. The thrust of the paper is that the training of theologians seldom includes any exposure to environmental issues, or any reflection on the relation of theology to the environment. On the other hand, the environmentalists have little familiarity with theology and are hesitant to discuss theological subjects in their curriculum. This being the case, it is important to expose students in the field of theology to environmental issues in order for them to appreciate the relationship of theology and the environment. This will help in promoting constructive dialogue, environmental preservation, and hence, viewing the two areas not as conflicting but as interdependent so that we speak of God, humanity and nature. The paper will begin by giving a brief description of the history of theological reflections on environmental issues. It will then proceed to discuss the relationship of human beings to the environment, and how some Christians are causing environmental annihilation. Finally, the paper will examine the theological response to global warming issues.

Theology of Nature

Many Judeo-Christian denominations, theologians and organizations have attempted to provide theological statements pertaining to creation and environmental stewardship. In 1967, the American cultural historian Lynn White wrote that Christianity is uniquely responsible for growing environmental problems. White claimed that Judeo-Christian religion was the world's most 'anthropocentric' religion, blaming it for Western technologies' exploitative relationship with nature.1 White's highly controversial article, now a classic, gave rise to a new dialogue on religious environmentalism which is still affecting discussions today in churches all over the world. So, the theology of nature, ecological theology, or eco-theology starts from a religious tradition based on religious experience and historical revelation. It focuses on the interrelationships of religion and nature, particularly in the light of environmental concerns, and explores

the interaction between ecological values such as sustainability and the human domination of nature.\(^2\) Theology of nature, therefore, deals with three interrelated aspects of theological reflections which include God, humankind and the world of nature.

Under theology of nature, science and religion are considered to be relatively independent sources of ideas, but with some areas of overlap in their concerns. In particular, the doctrine of creation, providence and human nature are affected by the findings of science so that our understanding of the general characteristics of nature affects our models of God’s relation to nature. Today, nature is understood to be a dynamic evolutionary process with a long history of emergent novelty, characterised throughout by chance and law. The natural order is ecological, interdependent, and multileveled. These characteristics of nature will modify our representation of the relation of both God and humanity to nonhuman nature. This will, in turn, affect our attitudes toward nature and will have practical implications for environmental ethics. Given the interdependence of creation, and the uniqueness of human beings, created in the image of God, we have the responsibility to preserve the natural environment.\(^3\) Generally speaking, theological reflections on environmental issues gained momentum over the last few years. The reflections whispered the view that the global environmental crisis is fundamentally a moral and religious problem. This being the case, theologians need to elucidate what it means to have a proper respect for the earth in our personal and social and economic choices. Theologians have to come up with a framework of an environmental ethic based on the intrinsic value of nature. Because it seems to be already saturated with, and acculturated to the dominant ideology of science, it can help provide a clearer vision of religious environmentalism.\(^4\)

**Human Beings and the Environment**

The relationship between humans and environment has varied from the early periods of human settlement on the earth to the present day. The environment has considerably affected human beings throughout this evolution. Humans have used the natural resources roughly and unconsciously. Human’s lifestyle and industrialisation are main factors causing the destruction of ecological balance. Rather, economic advancement has made people use the natural resources wastefully. For the purposes of meeting their needs and aims, human beings have exploited ecological resources. Humanity is totally dependent on its natural environment; without nature, humanity cannot exist. However, humans have understood that if they continue using and wasting natural resources, the future generations and their grandchildren will not find any habitable environment. They have recently begun to adopt the understanding of sustainability for the environment. Human beings have nowadays started to develop consciousness, responsible behaviour and action skills so as to protect the environment. This being the case therefore, African theological education’s roles in developing environmental consciousness are unavoidable. Environmental education has to be infused in theological education curricula. Rather, reforms should be made in theological education so that it is more environmentally-based. Curricula should be geared to create environmental awareness and organising environmental friendly activities for the local communities. This entails that environmental education should be life-long and available to all theological people. In this regard, Barbour asserted that theologians should support all those promoting and propagating nature conservation in various ways in their long-standing struggle against the pollution of air and water and in their demands for saving forests and replacing destroyed ones.\(^5\)

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\(^5\) Barbour, *Religion in an Age of Science.*
Many African indigenous communities have a holistic and integrative view of life; the universe is their friend, partner, and home. Africans believe that the natural resources must be developed, protected and preserved. They have a spiritual and a caring relationship with nature. For this reason, every aspect of the universe is continually blessed, sanctified and rejuvenated by proper use, prayers, offerings and sacrifices.\(^6\) Human life is seen as part of the universe, and there is a close link between the human predicament and the universe. To violate the earth would mean violating life and the giver of life, God.\(^7\) Having this interconnectedness between nature and humanity, theologians have to advocate for the preservation of nature.

The starting point of African theologians’ reflections on environmental issues should be based on Christians admitting their failure to be sensitive to the effect their actions may have on the physical environment. There are times when we allow ourselves to be motivated by selfishness and a desire for a greater share of the world’s resources than can equitably be justified. We seek to minimize personal effort and maximize personal comfort, with little consideration for long-term consequences. We do not always love our neighbours as we love ourselves, particularly those “neighbours” of generations yet to be born. If theologians admit their failure they will be in a position to stand up and correct their wrongs in so far as the preservation of the environment is concerned.

In the theological world, there seems to be no connection between religion and the environment. This is seen in the lack of environmental policy and environmental education in both formal and informal theological education systems. It is because of this that some have asked the question: Is there a distinctively Christian theological approach to the environment? The question itself sounds to be odd – odd for us to speak of theology and ecology in the same sentence. One theologian in an interview in Harare clearly postulated that:

Does not theology have to do with God and our personal relationship with him, with the soul, with heaven, with spiritual matters? What bearing can this have on ecology, which has to do with the study of the physical environment, its complex interactions, and the measures to be taken to enhance the prospects of its preservation? Does the Bible not make a clear distinction between this world and the world to come? Did Jesus not say that his kingdom is not of this world? Can ecology, then, be of any concern to theologians as theologians?\(^8\)

An analysis of the Pastor’s assertions shows that some African theologians do not see the relationship between theology and the environment. Rather, most African theologians believe that there is a gulf between the physical environment and the spiritual world. However, a closer look at the Scriptures indicates that the contrast intended by such language is not between the material world we experience with our eyes and ears, and a non-material world which will one day replace the material world and make it redundant.

Theologians should look at everything from the understanding that the world is God’s and that we are dependent on God for everything, including our processes of thought. For this reason, land degradation, for example, becomes just as much a theological issue as the atonement, for (as the author of Genesis observes) humanity has a close affinity with “the dust of the ground”. It is by cultivating the soil (on the dry land which God caused to be separated from the waters) that our life is sustained in the world in which God has placed us. It is this earth, no less than the heavens, which God has promised to renew on the basis of the work of Christ (2 Peter 3:13).

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\(^7\) Maimela and Konig, *Initiation into Theology,* 208.

\(^8\) Pastor Tapera, Interview, 15 August 2011, Harare.
It may be asked: If theology claims to be of value in dealing with environmental issues, why is it taking so long to address the problem of environmental degradation? It would be unreasonable to expect that Christian thinkers would have applied their minds to the implications of the biblical revelation for specific environmental issues such as global warming or the depletion of the ozone layer before there were any data to indicate these as problem areas. To require this is to misunderstand the nature of the theological task. It is only since the industrial revolution that we have begun to have the capacity for environmental degradation on a global scale. And it is only in the last few decades that many of the consequences of our industrial activities have become apparent. Although Christians have long considered environmental issues at a theological level and the tradition of writing commentaries on the biblical text has ensured this, and it is further reflected to some extent in the treatments of the locus of “creation” in the works of systematic theologians, no effort has been made to try to include the environmental issues in the curriculum of training African theologians. Christian voices have to be heard, on ecological issues from the early days of the modern discussion. Efforts have to be made to try to incorporate environmental issues in the curriculum of African theological training institutions. Theologians have to preach about the importance of preserving the environment in all human gatherings. Seminars and conferences should be held in order to enable theologians to become aware of the environmental problems we are causing. Field and nature trips should be organised so as to enable theologians to see, touch, feel and realise the need to protect the environment. This will help to cultivate in people a consciousness of their dominion over the environment.

Sacred stories of creation show the nature of the cosmic order and our place in it. The Bible views human beings as rooted in nature, sharing the finitude, creatureliness, and death of all living things since all creatures are part of a single system, an interdependent community of life, an inclusive order. At the end of the creation of the universe, God looked at everything God had made, and was very pleased (Genesis 1:31). On the sixth day, Adam is formed from the dust, “in the image of God” (Genesis 1:26). Humans alone, out of all the creation, are free moral agents who can respond to the demands of righteousness and justice. Theologians have understood the Imago Dei rationally to refer to the relation of human beings and God, or to their dominion over all other creatures. So, by drawing an absolute line between humanity and other creatures, theologians contributed to the attitudes that encouraged environmental destruction. The implication of this is that it is the doctrine of creation which should provide the focus of Christian considerations of the environment.

Lynn White was one of the first to charge Christianity with being bankrupt of the values which would tend to the conservation of the planet, and with being responsible for the greed and arrogance of our species. The real problem is that too little attention has been paid to the Bible’s view of humankind and the world. Vital to note is the idea that it is only on the foundation of a Christian view of our preeminent position in God’s world that concern for the environment has any basis. Just as the Christian worldview spawned modern physics and chemistry, so should the theological worldview provide a foundation for a proper and an enduring environmental science.

Theologians should see more evidence of global interdependence and the need for a global viewpoint. Natural resource use, international trade, communication networks and economic policies connect us around the world. This calls for developing institutions that will encourage planetary survival without suppressing cultural diversity; institutions which encourage environmental preservation. The goal of preserving the environment includes sustaining natural resources, reducing pollution and preserving species and ecosystems. The biblical theme of stewardship should offset the one-sided emphasis on human

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9 J. Limburg, “What does it Mean to 'Have Dominion over the Earth'?,” Dialog (1971), 221-223.
10 Barbour, Religion in an Age of Science.
11 Barbour, Religion in an Age of Science, 204-5.
12 White, “The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis.”
13 Barbour, Religion in an Age of Science.
dominion, which has contributed to uncontrolled exploitation of the environment. This requires us to rethink our understanding of the relationship of humanity to nonhuman nature and to develop a more adequate theology of nature for representing God’s relation to the created order. This is necessitated by the view that there is no mandate in the Bible for a greedy exploitation of the earth’s resources. While it is true that the words *kivesuha uredu* translated “subdue” and “rule” (Genesis 1:28) give a forceful impression, these are to be understood in the context of the preceding reference to the human being as being God’s “image”. It is as a replica, in a sense, of God that humankind’s authority over the creation is to be exercised. Our rule is to mirror God’s. If God is concerned with long-term consequences in the manner in which he exercises his rule, then we must likewise be concerned.

This long-term commitment by God to the preservation of this world can be seen in the fact that though having every right, he did not destroy what he had made and pronounced “good.” At every stage, God took measures to ensure the preservation of the creation. At the time of the judgment of the flood, provision was made for the preservation not only of the human race, but of all species. It is instructive to note that the human being was God’s agent in this process. Further pointers to God’s pattern for human care of the environment may be seen in the sabbatical year in which the land was to lie fallow and in the prohibition of taking both a mother bird and her eggs for food (Deuteronomy 22:6). That the eggs but not the mother may be taken is a simple paradigm of sustainability. Even in time of war, the physical environment is to be respected for the benefit it brings to people (Deuteronomy 20:19).

From a biblical view, each aspect of God’s creation has value not at the expense of the centrality of humankind, but precisely in relation to that special place which we occupy under God. Nor can this value of the creation for humankind be reduced to economic terms — as though we had to find a specific use for a species to justify its preservation. There are the less quantifiable benefits of the richness, the beauty and the diversity which God’s creation brings to our lives, leading us to a greater appreciation of the wisdom and grandeur of God (Psalm 104).

The creation cannot be understood apart from its purpose. True, individual elements of creation can be said to praise God, apart from any explicit reference to their relation to humanity. Trees, hills, and rivers can be called upon to praise God, or are said to be there for God’s glory and enjoyment, though even with such references, the contexts suggest that the knowledge by humankind of such activities or created purposes will affect our perceptions and responses.

**Theological Education and Ecological Issues**

According to White, Biblical creation theology can serve to undermine ecological concerns and support exploitation and abuse of the earth and its resources. The Biblical command from Genesis 1 that humans are to subdue the earth and have dominion over it has been used to justify a whole host of ways of depleting the earth’s resources, of polluting air and water, and of endangering the continued existence of various parts of creation by theologians. However, the Bible in actuality does not affirm such an exploitative approach to the earth. White suggests that the way out of our ecological crisis is to undergo a spiritual conversion and recommends a model of harmonious and respectful living with nature for this conversion.

To support this claim, it is important to examine the main theological points of the Biblical creation accounts. Most Biblical scholars agree that there are two separate creation narratives in Genesis 1 and 2, and there is increasing recognition that the Bible’s creation theology is expressed in passages other than those of Genesis 1 and 2. Anderson for example, has argued that in the Hebrew Scriptures there are four

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15 Barbour, *Religion in an Age of Science*.
16 White, “The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis.”
strata of creation theology: the pre-monarchic level where creation is seen in the Exodus event as the creation of the human community of the people of Israel; the monarchic level where creation is seen as the creation of social order, which is represented in the Davidic monarchy reflected in Genesis 2; the level of Wisdom literature where creation is seen as the expression of God’s majesty and wisdom, apart from historical events; and the priestly level where creation is seen as the inauguration of a series of covenants reflected in Genesis.17

Given the scheme of different levels of creation theology, the narrative in Genesis 2 represents a level that precedes that in Genesis 1. The story suggests a relationship with the environment that is less exploitative than the view in Genesis 1. Adam clearly is given power over the animals by being assigned the task of naming them, but the responsibility Adam and Eve have to tend the garden suggests a caring and nurturing relationship with the earth. They were to till the garden so that it would thrive and flourish; abusing the earth would endanger the well-being of the garden and contradict their God-given charge to keep the garden.

On the other hand, the creation account in Genesis 1 is the first in a series of covenants. This creation account contains those passages that have been interpreted in ways that have supported exploitation of the environment, but upon careful analysis it appears that this narrative does not support such an interpretation. Consider, first of all, the statement that humans are created in the “image of God”. This phrase has been interpreted in a variety of ways, but most frequently it has been taken by theologians to mean that humans share some characteristic of God that no other creatures have, such as rationality. Such a dichotomy between humans and other creatures has been used by theologians to legitimate the use or abuse of animals for human purposes with little regard for how the animals are affected. In ecological issues, however, the statement “image of God” does not imply that humans possess some divine characteristic, but rather that they have been assigned a special function by God; humans are to represent God in all parts of the earth. Thus the phrase “image of God” implies that humans have the responsibility to represent God on earth and to treat and care for the earth in ways that are consistent with the Creator’s will for the earth.18

Similarly, the Hebrew word that is customarily translated “have dominion over” does not mean that humans can exercise arbitrary power over the earth and do whatever they please with creation. “To have dominion over the earth”, does not imply that humans may abuse the environment but suggests that humans are to exercise responsible and caring stewardship of the earth and its resources.19

Ignoring the environment, and abusing it, has been a result of a theological education that has emphasised the entrance of Jesus Christ into human history to save or liberate all people at the expense of any focus on creation theology. A passage in Paul’s Letter to the Romans, chapter 8:19-23, suggests that it may be erroneous to separate God’s creative and liberating activities. Paul writes that all creation “waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God”. It seems clear that in this passage Paul envisions all of creation as participating in God’s final salvation. Paul seems to be countering two tendencies among Christians that were prevalent then and that remain today: a tendency that emphasises the spiritual at the expense of the physical and another that stresses hope for the end of time but the present earthly reality is ignored. Paul argues instead that God’s salvation includes the physical, not just the spiritual, and that we are bound up with all of creation in God’s liberating process right here and now. Paul’s argument envisions human reality as interconnected with the rest of creation, nature included, in matters of salvation.20

Biblical theological education supports the following assertions:

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19 Limburg, “What does it Mean to ‘Have dominion over the Earth’?”, 221-223.
20 Timm, “Ecological Theology and the Bible.”
First, God’s creation in its origin was essentially good. However, it has to be acknowledged that there are some aspects of the created order that are evil and shameful. Whether it is human sexuality or the arts, the tiniest plant or the largest animal, the creation is to be valued and affirmed for its own sake, not rejected.

Second, humans have been given the responsibility to carefully and respectfully tend the earth and see that it thrives and flourishes. It is vital to note that the creation accounts in the Bible do not permit the exploitation of the earth for any and all human purposes. Ecologically, humans are to treasure the earth’s resources that have been entrusted to them. So, by depleting natural resources or polluting the environment, humans are violating the divine trust of their duty to the environment.

Third, theologians support the belief that humans were created in continuity with the rest of the created order, and were endowed with responsibility for it. This implies that we are bound up in solidarity with all of creation; hence we are not separate and distinct from other creatures. The Bible supports the notion that animals as well as humans have the right to ethical treatment. Whether dealing with animal rights or other issues of environmental ethics, the Bible supports a position that makes ethical decisions not simply on the basis of the instrumental value of creatures for human purposes, but on the basis of the intrinsic value all the products of God’s creative activity possess.

Finally, the variety of Biblical creation accounts suggests that the message of the Bible’s creation theology may legitimately be applied in different ways in distinctive situations. The task of theological education is to determine specific actions that are implied for today by the general principles of biblical creation theology. Whatever the statement “having dominion and subduing the earth” may have meant in other eras, theological education has to foster the realisation that today the statement indisputably means protecting the earth from overpopulation, toxic wastes, and nuclear holocaust. While the need to limit our use of the earth’s resources may not have been obvious in previous ages, it surely is clear now that responsible caring for the earth requires some such limitation.21

Conclusion

In the light of the above discussion, it is important to note that the whole controversy between theological education and environmental issues reflects shortcomings of fragmented specialised higher education. The training of theologians seldom includes any exposure to environmental issues, or any reflection on the relation of theology to environment. On the other hand, the environmentalists have little familiarity with theology and are hesitant to discuss theological subjects. Therefore, it is important to expose students in the field of theology to environmental issues in order for them to appreciate the relationship between the two. This will help in promoting constructive dialogue and avoid viewing the two disciplines as conflicting but as interdependent so that we speak of God, humanity and nature. Biblical creation theology can be ecologically and environmentally-minded; it can be a valuable tool for supporting and encouraging appropriate care of the environment.

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Introduction

Addressing issues of poverty and justice in the context of theological education in Africa is already a delayed undertaking, particularly because poverty and injustice are so prevalent on the continent. Poverty has been a perennial problem in Africa, and wealth is created only to benefit the rich within the continent and those outside of it. We read repeatedly of people in the rural areas in Africa who lose their lands to mining companies without compensation (now termed "land grabbing") and the almost absent investment in production within the continent. At the same time we read of how subsidized agricultural products from Europe and the US are dumped on African markets through forced trade liberalization policies. We read of how multinational corporations pay low wages to miners and reap huge profits and of commodity prices that do not cover production costs of peasants – the list is long. It has been mentioned over and over again that Africa is poor but rich in resources. Books have been written and cutting edge research has indicated that natural resources in Africa have turned out to be a curse rather than a blessing to the continent.

Over a period of 30 years (i.e. 1981 to 2008), the region saw a modest 3 percentage drop in the poverty headcount to 48 percent. However, the absolute number of impoverished Africans increased from 205 million to 386 million in the same time. Moreover, Africa continues to be characterised by massive socio-economic inequalities. The median Gini coefficient (a common measure of inequality) stands at 0.42, with Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Comoros and Seychelles registering the highest rates of inequality of over 0.6.¹

In order to understand the current challenges on poverty eradication it is essential to relate it to how wealth is created. Poverty and wealth are two sides of the same coin. In the current era of globalization (as much as in the previous period of colonisation) wealth creation and accumulation have often taken place at the expense of vulnerable people and ecology, thereby generating economic, social and ecological injustice. In the context of Africa, unfavourable trade agreements and dependence on external debt destroyed farmers’ livelihoods and small-scale businesses, as well as strangled public resources for health and education. According to Leonce Ndikumana the following holds true: “On a net basis, African countries often have paid annually to the rest of the world more than they have received from external borrowing.”²

Overall, the picture that has emerged is that poverty in Africa is caused not by a lazy populace but by greed and injustice as expressed in Proverbs 13:23: “The fields of the poor may yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice.” To what extent has theological education embraced economic, social and ecological justice in its curriculum and offered a critical analysis of the root causes of poverty? This is the focal question of this essay. Theological education in Africa must attend to human avarice and greed at individual, structural and cultural levels as this is at the heart of exploitation of human beings and of the Earth – it is at the heart of injustice.

Theological education does have a role to play in creating alternative value systems and economic and ecological justice ought to be embraced in its curriculum. Therefore, this article will make a case for the

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¹ The Gini coefficient is a number between 0 and 1, where 0 corresponds with perfect equality (where everyone has the same income) and 1 corresponds with perfect inequality (where one person has all the income. Data on inequality in Africa are from http://www.wolframalpha.com/input/?i=Gini+index+of+African+countries.
urgency for theological students to be exposed in their studies to a critical analysis of the root causes of poverty in Africa and become aware of available alternatives.

The Issues to be Addressed

In order to understand the current challenges to poverty eradication it is essential to relate this to how wealth is created. Poverty and wealth are two sides of the same coin. To add to that is the concern for ecology. It is important to underline that poverty, wealth and ecology cannot be separated from one another when it comes to an accurate analysis of the realities in Africa. It is now obvious that creating wealth at the expense of people in poverty and of the Earth creates what we term as economic, social and ecological injustice. Theological education needs to define, and analyse these issues for Africa, in an integrated way.

Any curriculum on theological education has to begin with gaining clarity of the terms “economic justice” and “ecological justice”. This will lead to exploring the understanding of a “transformative theology” as this is the need of the hour. A relevant theological education agenda today has to address the challenges of the negative impact of neo-liberal economic globalization on everyone – including even those who have been pushing it on to the world, as we see its consequences on all people and on the Earth. A theological curriculum has to address human avarice and greed as these are the ethical questions lying at the heart of exploitation of some human beings by others, and of the Earth itself. This is the core of injustice and demands an alternative moral voice from the Church.3

Justice has too often been defined as “giving to each what is due” or of “treating equal cases equally”. However, in the Christian understanding, justice transcends such concepts which are based on the distributive paradigm of liberal philosophies on life and on justice. Justice has to embrace a set of basic human values. Justice is one of the four "cardinal virtues" of moral philosophy, along with courage and temperance (self-control).

St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians speaks of “faith, hope and charity” as the three greatest virtues. Virtues or "good habits" help individuals to develop their human potentials fully, thus enabling them to serve their own self-interests as well as to work in harmony with others for the common good. In many communities of the South, justice is defined by how humans relate to each other, taken together with their relationships with the Earth. Where relationships between human beings and between humans and the Earth are broken, there is no justice. It also underscores that the way to restore justice is to promote mutual dignity among members of a community. In a context of so much injustice between peoples, between nations and between humanity and the Earth the achievement of forgiveness and reconciliation become key theological principles, in the search for justice.

In the context of Africa, Insights could be drawn from the concept of Ubuntu, “I am because we are”. To what extent has theological education enhanced and deepened the theological understanding of Ubuntu as the African contribution to the discourse on justice and dignity? Ubuntu is about human relationships lived in community, and of harmony with the whole of creation. It finds its parallel in the Asian concept of Sangsaeng, which is about a “sharing community and economy that allows all to flourish together”. From the Biblical perspective, we understand that God created human beings as part of a larger web of life and affirmed the goodness of the whole creation (Genesis 1). “The whole community of living organisms that grows and flourishes is an expression of God’s will and works together to bring life from and give life to the land, to connect one generation to the next, and to sustain the abundance and diversity of God’s

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household (Oikos). *Economy in God’s household emerges from God’s gracious offering of abundant life*. Theological education in Africa needs to take up this comprehensive understanding of economy and ecology in order to address adequately the issue of poverty.

**Understanding Economic, Social and Ecological Justice**

The term “economic justice” is often used interchangeably with “social justice” – these terms stress different but complementary points. *Economic justice* is about how economic life is organized in terms of production, distribution and consumption of material goods and services. The manner in which these goods and services are produced, distributed and consumed could be done unjustly and hence lead to what is called “economic injustice”.

Economic justice is defined as that which touches the individual person as well as the social order and encompasses the moral principles which guide us in designing our economic institutions. These institutions determine how each person earns a living, enters into contracts, exchanges goods and services with others and otherwise produces an independent material foundation for his or her economic sustenance. The ultimate purpose of economic justice in such an understanding is to free each person to engage creatively in the unlimited work beyond economics, that of the mind and the spirit. What is missing in such an understanding is the processes for maintaining equity and equality in the sharing of resources with dignity among people and with a deep and sacramental relationship with the Earth. Both justice in communities and justice with the Earth are paramount because without establishing this, individual life and dignity cannot be guaranteed.

“Social justice” is about just relationships and encompasses economic justice. Social justice is the virtue which guides us in creating those organized human interactions we call institutions. In turn, social institutions, when justly organized, provide us with access to what is good for the person, both individually and in our associations with others. Social justice also imposes on each of us a personal responsibility to work with others to design and continually perfect our institutions as tools for personal and social development. It involves addressing issues such as inequalities and exclusion at various levels of institutional organization in our societies. Institutions are set up mainly to monitor that all human beings are treated with dignity and that all have the right to enjoy the fruits of their economic achievements. The language of rights is used to emphasize the need to implement “social justice” as “social rights” under the auspices of the United Nations declaration on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Social justice as a term is used more often by the churches than by secular institutions because to people of faith, justice goes beyond rights of each individual – it is based on God’s justice founded in agape love that embraces the whole community and the Earth.

The terms “ecological justice” and “environmental justice” surfaced at the end of the last century, when it was recognized, based largely on the wisdom of indigenous communities all over the world that the Earth and its distress needs to be heeded. Indigenous Peoples challenged Christian theologians, ethicists and economists to recognize that the Earth has its own integrity and therefore requires respect. The ecumenical movement has stressed that both the poor and the Earth cry out for justice. Nature can be seen as the new poor, “not the poor that crowds out the human poor, but the ‘also’ poor; and as such it demands our attention and care.”

Leonardo Boff speaks of social ecology as the ways that social and economic systems interact with the natural ecosystem, and “since the human race is part of the environment, social

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
injustice goes hand-in-hand with ecological injustice." Larry Rasmussen defines the Earth’s distress as socio-ecological. In other words the rights attributed to the Earth include the rights of all of humankind (not just some) to also live and survive.” He underlines that “it is not possible to see ‘humanity’ as some nebulous whole…..but of varied human beings who presently occupy different strata in domestic and world social orders.” Many environmental and feminist movements have placed the demand for ecological justice at the centre, reminding the world that economy and ecology represent two interrelated and inseparable perspectives on God’s household of life (oikos). Therefore, the term ecological justice is based on two principles: firstly, it is about addressing humanity’s mutilation of the Earth with impunity through production, distribution and consumption – the way humanity manages industries, agriculture, mining, transport etc. Injustice happens when the Earth and its atmosphere are destroyed in the name of generating economic growth. Secondly it addresses the process by which those who are richer and stronger destroy the Earth, further impoverishing the poor, making them even more vulnerable, resulting in social injustice. The WCC policy statement on climate change stresses that climate change is a matter of justice, particularly for those who are and will increasingly be affected – these are the impoverished and vulnerable communities particularly in the global south who are dependent on natural resources for their survival and who do not have the means to adapt to the ecological chaos that climate change provokes. Restoration of ecological justice is, therefore, an obligation for all human beings. The WCC statement on Climate Change underlines that: “All humanity is made in the image and likeness of God and all nature bears the marks of God. This requires of us to adopt the guiding principle of equity. God’s inheritance is for the communal body, a concept that includes all of nature.”

Theological education in Africa, therefore needs to encompass a reflection on how God acts to protect and promote justice in creation and in human society. Mission has to regard that where there is eco-injustice there is “sin that deeply violates God’s good will, God’s steadfast love for life, for human beings and for the whole creation.”

**Transformative Theological Education**

One way for the church to address poverty and injustice in Africa is to ensure that the fundamental issues raised above become an integral part of theological education. At the moment our theology is still traditional in approach and is uncritical of the neo-liberal paradigm that is increasingly creating poverty and ecological destruction on the one hand while on the other ensuring that a few people become extremely rich within each nation and across nations. What is growing on the African continent is a theology of prosperity that has perverted the word of God by portraying people in poverty as being so as a result of their sins. People in poverty are blamed for their poverty rather than exposing to the world the structural injustices that keep people poor. Transformative theological education will be able to raise the critical issues of greed, usury and corruption and restore to the churches and the people the meaning of God’s economy, at the heart of which lies economic, social and ecological justice for all. Transformative

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8 Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth (AGAPE), Background Document, WCC, JPC, Reprint, Geneva 2006, 40
10 WCC, The Earth’s Atmosphere: Responsible Caring and Equitable Sharing For A Global Commons: a Justice Statement regarding Climate Change from the World Council of Churches, for the 6th Session of the Conference of Parties (COP6) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; The Hague, The Netherlands, November 2000 (Unpublished) 2
11 AGAPE:41

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Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
theological education should elevate the feminist concept of an economy of care as a way to develop an alternative value system.

Developing an ecological perspective in theological education entails working for and practicing in our own everyday lives, eco-justice. This demands costly discipleship in addressing the ongoing plunder of the Earth, which we seem to engage in with impunity. In other words, the churches cannot remain comfortable while being entrenched in a system that continues to destroy the planet through unsustainable production and consumption as well as inequitable economic, social and political systems. Isaiah warns us: “The Earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant...Therefore a curse devours the Earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt” (Isaiah 24:5-6a). The intensity and pace at which we are using up the Earth’s “natural resources” reflects an utter lack of care for the Earth’s regeneration and for future generations of living things. Indeed, mission history has reinforced this lack of care – the early mission movements focused on generating life in abundance for all people without consideration of ecological consequences!

**Transformative theology** as delineated above has to have an impact on and influence for all disciplines of theology, be it biblical studies, theology, Christian ethics, pastoralia, homiletics or spirituality and worship, among others. It is not enough that the issues of poverty and justice are treated as “additional topics” or as optional courses – it should be woven into all a student’s theological education so that they will come out with a heightened awareness of the role the church can play in transforming the lives of the millions living under poverty and injustice; and with a sharp sense of commitment to the Earth. With this in mind four requirements for theological education are listed below.

Theological education’s first requirement in Africa calls for developing an eco-theology that will offer guidance to Christians starting by equipping them with analytical tools on how to change the current systems of greed. The WCC Convocation on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in Seoul in 1990 approved ten theological affirmations and specific covenants for action which provide a description of the inter-relatedness of economic inequality, militarism, ecological destruction, climate change and racial injustice and the theological, ethical and spiritual basis for affirming and sustaining life in its fullness.

“Where ever human beings are denied God-created dignity, the rest of creation is denied its dignity also.” 12 The challenge today is to systematize what is already proposed in many churches for a consistent eco-theology and as a corollary to that their eco-mission. Churches in Norway have developed what they term as a “Hustavle” – a set of household rules which are framed and hung on the walls of homes. 13 One of the rules states: “Rejoice in Beauty: Creation has a wealth of its own. Nothing is mere raw material. The gifts of the Earth must be handled with devotion and gratitude.”

**The second requirement of theological education in Africa will be to reclaim the true meaning of stewardship.** We have used this theological imperative too as a way to claim dominion – as if the Earth has been given to us to use as we wish. However, stewardship ought to point to how to restrain from consumption and production patterns that are unsustainable, by constructing limits to growth. These must become mission priorities. Building just, sustainable and participatory communities could be the way for responsible stewardship – which leads to the development of “a theology for transformation”. We can learn from the project of life-giving agricultural communities that have been promoted by churches in South Korea, who engage in promoting natural and organic agriculture in order to improve the life of the Earth and human beings14. Stewardship will also mean that the churches and Christians will join hands with

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12 “See Searching for the New Heavens and the New Earth: An Ecumenical Response to The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development”, Baixada Fluminense, Brazil, WCC 1992:9 This was a gathering of 176 people from 52 countries and 70 churches to speak about sustainable Earth following the UNCED Earth Summit.
13 See www.kui.no.
14 See Life Giving Agriculture Global Forum, WCC, WARC, LWF, WSCF, YMCA, YWCA and Frontier in Mission (ECAG) report, Wonju, S. Korea 8-13 April, 2005 Unpublished. There is also A report on the Asian Ecumenical
social movements in challenging agro-industries such as Cargill and Monsanto to abandon death-dealing agriculture based on monoculture and toxic chemical fertilizers and pesticides. 15 Another rule of Hustavle from Norway is: “Remember the context: Your life is woven into the pattern of all life of Earth. All that you have is given to you in trust. You must pass it all on to those who come after you.”

Theological education for transformation leads us to ask a fundamental theological question: Can having more and more especially for the already rich, without any limits, bring real happiness? For this we need to develop not just poverty lines as we tend to focus on this, but we also need greed lines and wealth lines as a guidance for the churches and for individual Christians. 16 Another Hustavle rule states: “Struggle for justice: Mother Earth has enough to meet the needs of all but not to satisfy their greed. The gap between the poor and rich is contempt for human dignity.”

The third requirement for theological education in Africa is to instil in the churches and among Christians the imperative to live an exemplary life. The example of Christ and the Scriptures can inspire us to transform the ways in which we live with each other and with the Earth. But we can also draw lessons from other spiritualities such as those practiced by other faiths and by Indigenous Peoples. For instance, the cosmo-vision of Indigenous Peoples’ has an all-embracing and holistic perspective that encompasses everything, with no hierarchy in Creation. Their vision of a good life (“buen vivir”) is not exclusively religious and spiritual as our churches and religious teachers sometimes make us believe; nor is it economy-centred as our governments, the markets and the high street make us believe. Living out their spiritual and religious lives encompasses social, economic and political relationships with sisters and brothers, with living and non-living things, and with the Earth as a whole (“Pacha Mama”). They believe that the core is not human beings but Creation with its own integrity – and that human beings form part of Creation, which is continually searching for harmony and balance 17. Some insights could also be drawn from Buddhism and other religions which emphasise a close relationship between humans and the rest of nature.

The fourth requirement for theological education in Africa is for Christians and Churches to advocate for the recognition of ecological debt that is owed to Africa and other countries of the global south; as well as to Indigenous peoples and the poor in the global north, as a step towards achieving eco-justice. 18 This calls on African churches and governments to challenge international institutions and the United Nations and its institutions to flesh out international and national regulatory and legal frameworks that oblige ecological debtors (whether a country, corporation or institution) to stop destroying sources of sustenance, to repair, and to pay for ecological damages. This also calls on the churches to confront corporations and institutions that are wreaking havoc on our increasingly fragile ecosystems. Churches in India, Tanzania and the Philippines in partnership with churches in the North have been in the forefront of campaigns to halt destructive mining activities that have poisoned rivers and lands, and destroyed the livelihoods of tens of thousands of fisher folk and farmers. (Indeed some Christians in these countries have lost their lives in

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the fight against transnational mining companies.) Many churches, too, are advocating for the recognition of climate debt at the UN Forum for Climate Change, with a view to reaching a binding international agreement that ensures significant cuts in greenhouse gas emissions by rich, industrialized countries and urgent assistance to poor countries that need to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The above four requirements for theological education are not exclusive of each other; they are interrelated concerns outlined as a way to lay bare the crucial components of what a redefined theological education curriculum would be like. That is what will lead to economic and social justice and an ecological mission that “greens” our faith, our churches and our congregations and offers Christians in Africa a model of authentic discipleship for today.

Need for an Alternative, Theological and Secular Education in Africa

In general the current dominant world view in education prepares young people to be objects of a system of over-consumption. The paradigm inculcates among people values of competition for resources instead of cooperation. They are taught that poverty will never be eradicated and that inequalities in society are a natural phenomenon and can never be overcome. They are educated to dominate nature instead of nurturing and living in harmony with it. Values of competition, selfishness, apathy and greed are promoted in colleges and schools. Ecology is taken for granted by corporations, which ‘externalise’ ecological damages to increase profits and employ ‘green-washing’ to enlarge their markets. Influenced by corporate lobbies, mainstream policymakers see the “green economy”, which continues to privilege economic growth, as the hope for the future. Corporate thinking is manifested and continuously reproduced in schools through business, economics and other curricula. The current knowledge that devalues creation has contributed to the intertwined economic, social and ecological crises confronting our planet today, which reflect an unjust and unsustainable mode of life on Earth. Africa has suffered a lot from this paradigm. We need bold steps not only for alternative theological education but also secular education that will produce new African intellectuals who think and act for autochthonous development in Africa directed to eradicate poverty, promote justice, peace and dignity as per the theme of the AACC Assembly 2013 in Kampala.

In summary, we need a theological education in Africa which will enable students and researchers to adequately address the root cause of poverty and injustice in Africa. In doing so, issues of economy and ecology need to be studied, with a view to understand the alternative God’s Oikos which guarantees abundant life for all. The book of James chapter 5 indicates that accumulation of wealth is considered an act of injustice over against those who have provided their labour so as to generate gains for a minority. In order to address this situation of injustice in social and economic transactions, the biblical tradition has provided different examples and ways to lead to redistribution – from the understanding of the Sabbath and the jubilee year to Paul’s collection for the community of Jerusalem. The announcement of the coming reign of God through Jesus as good news to the poor is linked with the expectation of the great reversal. 19

Theological education for transformation in Africa ought to cover the following topics:

1. ECO-THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY
   - Revisiting God’s Creation
   - Eco-reading of the Bible (green bible)
   - Eco-spiritualities
   - The Ubuntu view of creation
   - Other alternative views of creation
   - Eco-feminist theology and its view of creation


Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
• Eco-spiritual praxis

2. GOD’S ECONOMY
• Understanding ecological economics
• Economy of sufficiency vs. economy of greed
• From competition to cooperation
• Revisiting scarcity theory
• De-commoditization against monetizing the invaluable
• New eco-economic values
• Eco-economic measurements and indices (e.g. gross national happiness)
• Managing/caring for the “global ecological commons”
• Economy of care
• Fair trade and sustainable lifestyles
• Just finance – investing in just, participatory and sustainable communities
• Poverty eradication

3. SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, SOCIETY AND ECOLOGY (STSE)
• Is science and technology always neutral and objective? – A critique of the ‘scientific method’
• Science, technology and creation
• The Earth and people (i.e. the “inhabited ecosystem”) – Social divisions and ecological framings and impacts
• Science of the “ecological commons” – water, land, air and fire

4. CRITICAL POLITICAL ECOLOGY
• Eco-global governance
• Towards an environmental criminal court
• Ecological debt and holistic reparations
• Eco-activism: social movements and ecological protection

Theological education that will embrace these subjects will enable students to adequately address the issue of poverty and justice in Africa.

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Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
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(71) EDAN’S JOURNEY IN INTRODUCING DISABILITY STUDIES IN AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Samuel Kabue and Micheline Kamba

PART ONE (Samuel Kabue): EDAN’s Journey in Introducing Disabilities Studies in Africa

In a previous publication entitled Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity1, we narrated the Journey by the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) to introduce disability studies in theological institutions in different regions of the world. In the current publication, we propose to continue this journey with specific reference to Africa. Part one of this paper, which was written by EDAN Executive Secretary Dr. Samuel Kabue, focuses on the background to this journey and the specific processes that have been recently initiated in Africa. Part two, which was written by Rev. Micheline Kamba, addresses a specific initiative in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

As we indicated in the previous publication mentioned, EDAN is a Project of the World Council of Churches in the broad Programme on Unity, Mission, Evangelism and Spirituality. It is situated within the Just and Inclusive stream which brings together WCC work on marginalized groups, which include Persons with Disabilities, Dalits, Indigenous Peoples, people who suffer racism and those in forced migration. EDAN was established after the WCC 8th Assembly held in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1998 consequent to the realization that WCC needed to find ways to come up with a sustainable structure to ensure that disability concerns remain in the agenda of the work with churches. Its main purpose is to carry forward the WCC vision on work with persons with disabilities and to provide a model of being church through advocacy for participation, inclusion and active involvement of persons with disabilities in all aspects of spiritual, social and development life of the Church and society. The 2006 Porto Alegre, Brazil 9th Assembly affirmed the work of the Network as a priority in the WCC work for the following seven years.

In the WCC reorganization following that Assembly, the work was placed within Programme 2 on Unity, Mission, Evangelism and Spirituality. This has brought a new understanding on how relevant EDAN work and indeed its objectives are closely related to Mission in its broad meaning. According to the WCC operations and therefore the rationale for placing this work under this programme, ‘Mission’ carries a holistic understanding: the proclamation and sharing of the good news of the Gospel by word (kerygma), deed (diakonia), prayer and worship (leiturgia) and the everyday witness of the Christian life (martyria); teaching as building up and strengthening people in their relationship with God and each other; and healing as wholeness and reconciliation into ‘koinonia’ communion with God, communion with people, and communion with Creation as a whole. This quite well encompasses what EDAN is expected to be and do in its advocacy for inclusion and full participation in all aspects of church life. It captures well the work that EDAN and the Ecumenical Theological Education Department of WCC have been carrying out for quite some time now regarding disability and theological education.

EDAN operates as a decentralized international network with its coordination base in Nairobi under the auspices of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). This has enabled a close working relationship between EDAN and other AACC departments, among which the theology department. During the AACC General Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique in December 2008, the participation of EDAN at the Assembly was quite significant for the future work of EDAN. Responding to the recommendations of the Assembly

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1 Edited by Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang and Joshva Raja (Oxford: Regnum, 2010), see article on EDAN there on 230ff.
participants with disabilities who attended the gathering under the auspices of EDAN, the Assembly acknowledged that AACC and WCC that EDAN shall, among other things, be part of the AACC programmatic work in so far as disability issues in Africa were concerned.

The Assembly further accepted the recommendations that AACC would continue and intensify its efforts to work with WCC through EDAN in addressing disability advocacy within and outside Africa in theological reflections and the disability discourse in churches and theological institution, among other areas. This has helped to guide the disability and theological education work in Africa, which we are now carrying out in conjunction with AACC.

The EDAN process on work with theological institutions is much older than the present close working relations with AACC. It began in 2004 when the first meeting of deans of theological studies from six select institutions World over was jointly organized at Limuru Conference Center by EDAN, the Ecumenical Theological Education programme of WCC and St. Paul’s University Faculty of Theology. The aim of the meeting was to discuss how to initiate a disability discourse in theological institutions. The plans for that meeting had come out of the conclusion that a brainstorming session was necessary to identify the specific focus regarding awareness, advocacy and pastoral theology that would be relevant to persons with disabilities. An internationally representative group needed to be put together for that purpose. The first step was the four-day workshop organized in Nairobi Kenya in August 2004, which brought together representatives from five key institutions:

- St. Paul’s United Theological College, Limuru, Kenya.
- United Theological College of West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica.
- Stockholm School of Theology, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Asia theological seminary, Philippines.
- Lutheran Senior Seminary, Brazil.

As we look back on what has taken place from the decisions taken by that historic consultation, we can in no doubt say that work on introducing disability discourse in theological institutions has recorded the greatest success of all our programmes. This can be seen in, among other ways, the introduction of the generic disability studies curriculum developed by that meeting, which has been adapted for study in different institutions worldwide. It was the initial group that attended the Limuru Conference consultation that helped to popularize the curriculum, beginning with the institutions where they came from. Saint Paul’s United Theological College in Limuru Kenya, a premier institution in the region and the one that hosted that first international Consultation for the Deans of studies, took the lead in introducing the curriculum.

Although the idea was quickly taken up by institutions in Asia, Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific regions, we had contact persons who had been involved in the process since the beginning. It therefore dawned on us that the process could be given greater impetus and faster embraces if we worked with the established associations of theological institutions rather than individual institutions. The first step towards this was in 2006 when we were introduced to the Senate of Serampore College (University) in India, which coordinates theological education in many affiliate institutions. The work with Serampore

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2 The Workshop was also attended by five EDAN representatives from Sweden, United States, Jamaica, Ghana and Kenya, selected on the bases of their theological training background. The United States National Disability Committee was represented in addition to three independent theologians from the United States. Others included representatives of Kenyan local theological institutions affiliated to Saint Paul’s United Theological College (now Saint Paul University).

3 In Limuru a course on disability issues has been taught as a one semester examinable course for the past seven years now.
University culminated in two sets of disability studies course development. Similar projects also followed in other regions.

Work with theological associations in Africa has been slow to begin. Associations in Africa are divided into linguistic and regional sectors. There are three Anglophone associations covering South, East and West Africa. There are two francophone ones which cover West and Central Africa, respectively. Supported by the WCC programme on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) the All Africa conference of Churches has taken up the task to revitalize and strengthen these associations in Africa. It is through this endeavor that EDAN has taken the opportunity to accompany AACC in its mission and to introduce the idea of disability discourse in theological institutions through these associations.

We started with the West Africa Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI) in 2010 with a sensitization workshop in Ghana. WAATI is comprised of the anglophone countries Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and The Gambia. The first workshop was meant as a forum to begin disability discourse. This was followed in July 2011 by a workshop held under the leadership of Nigeria Baptist Theological Seminary which saw a record attendance of 87 participants against the 35 planned for. Most of the extra participants were from different theological schools in Nigeria who attended the workshop at their own expense. The consultation worked out a regionally tailored curriculum which was to undergo some pre-test in the region. The Nigeria Baptist Seminary workshop resolved that their upcoming issue of the Ogbomoso Journal of theology would be dedicated to disability and theology. They also decided that the West Africa Association of Theological Institutions would organize a resource material writing workshop in the near future.

In February 2012, the first workshop for the Association of Theological Education in East Africa (ATIEA) and EDAN was organized in Nairobi. It was attended by 27 participants drawn from faculty staff of both theological schools and Christian universities from East Africa and departments of religious education in two public universities in Kenya. Although St. Paul’s University in Limuru, Kenya, had taught the disability studies course for seven years in a row, its impact on other institutions in the region had not been felt. It is this observation which called for the need to reach out to the ATIEA. It also happened that the AACC Theology Department had also begun to work with ATIEA, which was to be one of their major activities in their process of revitalization. The objectives of the consultation were, among other things, to discuss how disability studies could be introduced in more schools and to look at the curriculum that St. Paul’s University had used over the years in order to decide whether it needed revision. The workshop addressed, among other concerns, the challenges faced by people with disabilities such as the continued exclusion in the church and made practical recommendations on how to achieve the goal of “A Church of All and for All”. After much deliberation, the workshop reworked the original curriculum, which would be introduced to different participating institutions.

The next workshop was that of the two Associations of Theological Institutions of Francophone West and Central Africa (ASTHEOL). Participants were from Cameroon, Benin, Togo, Central Africa Republic, and others.

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4 One of which assumed a stand-alone course and the other a course comprising topics that were to be infused within other disciplines in the institutions where it was to be introduced.
5 In 2007, we began the process with the Association of Theological Education Seminaries in South East Asia (ATESEA). This followed a similar exercise with The Latin America Theological Education Institutions Association and from 2008; we also began to do some work with the South Pacific Associations of Theological Seminaries.
6 Emphasis was given to improving the original curriculum in the following areas: Introduction to disability models, definition of emerging terms used and historical development in the disability sector; East African traditional and cultural perspectives on disabilities; Biblical Perspectives on disabilities in the Old Testament and New Testament; Pastoral/psychological/social perspectives; Legal, human rights and ethical perspectives and a project that was to have a practical dimension on a theme related to disability and theology. The reworked curriculum is appended. Follow up work on how to implement the new curriculum widely is ongoing.
Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Burundi. It took place in Nairobi in April 2012. One of the challenges identified by this workshop was how to empower persons with disabilities in African societies and enable them to experience the God of Life through a life of dignity in every aspect of their lives. ASTHEOL’s task was to face the challenge taking up disability issues and integrating them in theological training. The greatest task facing theological institutions in this respect was identified as that of initiating changes so that these institutions were physically accessible to persons with disabilities, ensuring that liturgy developed for church services did not stigmatize persons with disabilities, encouraging and facilitating persons with disabilities to join pastoral ministry while removing all barriers preventing them from doing so and incorporating issues of disability in the curriculum. The participants discussed the methodology to address these challenges and resolved that ASTHEOL encourage students to address the theme of disability in the final stages of their coursework; lecturers interested in the theme were to be invited to write articles on the subject and share them with EDAN.

Among the achievements of these workshops are the initiatives that are now evident in thinking about disability as a concern for theological education. In each of these cases, the workshop is only the beginning of a process which is to be followed by advocacy through the associations for the implementation of the curricula which are developed in these workshops. EDAN plans to initiate two similar processes with the Southern Africa Association of theological institutions (ATISCA) and the two Portuguese-speaking countries, Angola and Mozambique, by organizing workshops for them in 2013.

As has been the case with St. Paul’s University, EDAN continues in special cases to work with individual institutions who have called on us to focus more specifically on the process of introducing disability studies at different levels of their operations. A case in point is the Protestant University of Congo (UPC) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (see the subsequent case study by Micheline Kamba).

Along with the work at hand, we continue the process of developing teaching materials, training potential lecturers and sustaining faculties’ interests as we continue to interest new institutions. We do so, among other ways, by distributing the materials already produced in different parts of the world through the work that we do.

**Conclusion**

There is no doubt that the most suitable foundation through which the churches could engage in disability discourse is the introduction of disability studies in theological institutions. It is the only way to ensure that women and men, who are trained to work in churches, lay training centres, theological and ecumenical institutions are well prepared and equipped to address the pastoral, theological and ethical concerns that are voiced by people with disabilities. EDAN has also concluded that, though it is important to include courses in the curriculum that specifically address the needs of persons with disabilities and prepare students for ministry to and with persons with disabilities, the voices of people with disabilities should be a part of the process of curriculum development and resource material preparation. Their presence and active involvement is essential in advocacy and pastoral theology that is relevant to them.

We trust that this process will ensure that theological schools will not only open their doors to disability studies but also be sensitized to take practical steps to include persons with disabilities both as students and as faculty. The process should ensure that they not address the issues involved in welcoming students with disabilities simply because they are forced to do so by law, denominational mandate or as a result of pressure by advocates, but rather because it is consistent with their theological purpose. If the purpose of theological schools is to provide and equip their trainees for the Ministry to all God’s people, they should consider themselves as having failed if part of the population forming God’s people has been pushed to the margins, denied full access or left out altogether on account of real or apparent reason of disability.
PART TWO (Micheline Kamba): Towards a Theological Programme of Disability Studies in Africa in the Context of DRC – A Case Study on EDAN and the Université Protestante au Congo (UPC)

“My experience as a young lady with a disability influenced most of my spiritual life and my calling into the Ministry. It was so difficult to be accepted as God’s creation. During my teenage years, I was wondering about my physical state. I attempted many times to commit suicide. One day my sister knew that and came to me and said “My dear sister, what you want to do is not a solution to your problems. Pray and ask your God what life means to you as a young lady with disability. And ask God why He wants you to remain like this”. These words from my sister were very powerful and made me conscious of my situation. As Victor Frankl says, “to be conscious, take an action and be responsible”. I prayed, cried, implored God to teach me the meaning of my life. My sister and I devoted three days to fasting and praying to God to help me. That time was really a healing time. Since that time I have never prayed God to heal me physically, because, I know, as Paul recognized, that “God’s grace is sufficient for you, His strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12, 10). Then I took courage and I believed in what my sister told me; she was inspired by the Holy Spirit. From that time I accepted myself as a woman with a disability and I knew that God had a good plan for me. That was in 1984.

Today, I understand my vocation as that of encouraging people with disabilities to “rise up and walk” spiritually (IMAN’ ENDA) so that they can be independent in their quest for transformation of their situation, both in Church and Society.”

Introduction

The experiences of lack of acceptance as God’s creation and an attempt to commit suicide, mentioned above, could be replicated in the lives of many people with disabilities around the world. Despite the efforts of the rights movement for the defense of people with disabilities, as seen, for instance, in the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the lives of people with disabilities continue to be marked by experiences of discrimination, prejudice and inequality.

In this article I intend therefore to present my contribution to the construction of the society’s image stated above of people with disabilities through a theological programme. My use of the term “person with disability” and not “disabled” is to show that in a theological framework a person who has a disability needs to be recognized as God’s creation and as someone who has been created to connect to all life in perfect harmony.

The aim of this paper is to develop a disability studies programme in an African theological context which is interdisciplinary.

Disability Studies programme

Disability studies are currently developing as an academic discipline, focusing on people with disabilities from the perspectives of different disciplines. In recent years biblical and theological scholars in Europe and North America have drawn on critical tools developed by those in the field of disability studies. The approach to the issue of disability has changed significantly in western society and has also started to do so in African society.

Disability Studies Programmes worldwide have certain characteristics:

- They tend to be interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary. This is because disability sits in the center of many of the humanities, sciences and social sciences. Thus, a programme of disability studies should encourage a curriculum that allows students, activists, teachers, artists, practitioners and researchers to engage the subject matter from various disciplinary perspectives;

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8 See Act.3. 6; the name of my organization comes from this verse.
9 Micheline Kamba K.’s testimony.

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
They challenge the view of disability as an individual deficit or defect that can be remedied solely through medical intervention or rehabilitation by “experts” and other service providers. Rather, “a program in disability studies should explore models and theories that examine social, political, cultural, and economic factors that define disability and help determine personal and collective responses to difference”. This is to indicate that disability studies should change the minds of people to “de-stigmatize disease, illness, and impairment, including those that cannot be measured or explained by biological science”;

They should actively encourage participation by disabled students and faculty, and should ensure physical and intellectual access. This reaffirms the UN convention of “Education for All” (Education pour tous, in French). The statement mentions, “United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of human Rights, and renews the pledge made by the world community at the World Conference on Education for All to ensure rights for all regardless of individual difference”

They should make it a priority to have leadership positions held by disabled people.

In other words, a disability study is a discipline which is open to plurality and diversity because there is richness in diversity. Disability studies, as Elisabeth Martiny says, “is a discipline which invites both disabled and able-bodied people to work together in breaking down barriers...” This shows how Disability studies goes beyond the “disability concept”. It opens a space for exploring different capacities and experience.

This paper will explore a disability studies in African theological context which is beyond of what Sam Kabue describes as “a vital component in term of engaging the church with the issue”. I would argue that disability studies need to be opened to the world, in taking account of the socio-cultural aspects of people. This view is in line with what Steve de Gruchy stated:

“Given that God is at work in the world, and not just in the church; and that the calling of the church is to participate in this work in the world, then missionary practice demands an adequate understanding of the world. “A new emphasis for theology upon the world in which mission takes place, or the world in which the church ministers comes to the fore here. Understanding the world in which the church ministers and its need...becomes in this view of theology, a major task of theology”. This means that theological education needs to be intentionally interdisciplinary in nature, and that theological education needs to help students to understand the world just as much as they need to understand the bible, the tradition, the creeds and the liturgy.

Referring to this, my understanding of Disability Studies in an African theological framework is to more fully expose the issue of disability to the world. This means inviting people to discover a new understanding of disability in the context of African socio-cultural norms which embraces all fields of life, because disability is part of the human condition.

From this perspective, therefore, this paper will develop a Theological Programme of Disability Studies in an African context, with particular emphasis on DRC. Later, I will refer to the results and suggestions of the workshop that I held in Kinshasa, at Université Protestante au Congo, last July (2011) on “Theology and Disability Studies as an interdisciplinary course”. Before that, however, I will outline some facts which have motivated the development of a theological programme of Disability Studies in Africa, particularly in DRC.

The African Concept of Disability

In Africa disability is regarded as a tragedy requiring sympathy and charity, but also sometimes condemnation. Cultural beliefs portray disability as a curse, as bad luck brought by the devil as a
consequence of sin. In some countries, a woman who delivers a baby with cerebral palsy will be judged to have committed an offence against an ancestor, or against God, or to have been unfaithful to her husband.

Research by the World Health Organization indicates facts about the situation faced by people with disabilities in Africa which causes them to experience oppression.

- According to the WHO 2011 report, there are over one billion disabled persons worldwide and 80% live in developing countries. Only a small percentage of these people have access to basic healthcare and basic schooling.
- 90% of all children with disabilities do not attend school;
- People with disabilities are more likely to contract HIV and AIDS as they have no access to information and treatment.
- Women with disabilities are vulnerable to abuse (during the war/genocide in DRC, Burundi and Rwanda, women with disabilities were the target of rape).

Unfortunately, most churches are complicit in this oppression. According to the following statement, “the World Council of Churches (WCC), the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) …contend that most of their member churches have yet to fully integrate persons with disabilities into their church and community life. Many churches have socio-economic development programmes, such as schools and medical facilities; though very few churches have specific programmes for people with disabilities”. It was also noticed by most of the scholars that “…Churches have participated in discriminating against people with disabilities and have not fully integrated them into the mainstream of the church and society at large”.

The interlinked socio-cultural concept of disability in Africa thus means that people with disabilities are marginalized in different respects and deprived of their fundamental human rights.

Disability Studies in Africa – DRC’s case

This programme of theological on disability is needed in general in Africa and particularly in the DRC for two reasons: firstly, the misconception that shapes beliefs and attitudes about disability is “individually experienced but socially constituted”; people with disabilities are seen as unfortunate and disability is perceived as abnormal. Secondly, the fact that people with disabilities experience suffering from a sense of inferiority, which leads them to frustration, rejection and rebellion (against self, family, society and God). This may be reflected in their behaviour which may manifest as aggression and isolation. It is important to note that this situation is largely due to wrong beliefs in society which are often emotionally based, such as people with disabilities being seen as “lesser human beings”. “Handicap” (the disabled), as they are pejoratively and commonly called in Kinshasa, are viewed as subjects of a curse needing deliverance. For that reason a popular novelist in the DRC, Zamenga Batukezanga denounces the spread of such misconceptions by titling one of his novels: “Homme comme toi” (As human as you are).

These erroneous beliefs are maintained (among other reasons) by a lack of proper understanding of God’s view toward disability, despite the fact that the Bible is taken seriously by the majority of people in the DRC. Hence, the theological basis for this programme would be a great contribution for the positive construct of disability image.

Workshop on “Disability Studies”

The workshop was supported by the EDAN and ETE (Ecumenical Theological Education) both units of WCC, and jointly organized with Université Protestant au Congo. The aim of this gathering was to reflect on the possibility of establishing a Disability Studies Programme at UPC. This programme will become a pilot project, not only for the DRC, but also for the entire Francophone Africa Sub-region.
Suggestions made for the Disability Studies Programme

Reporting to the plenary session, participants from the three workshops agreed on and made the following proposals for a Disability Studies Programme to be established at UPC:

1. That a two-year post-graduate programme be known as “Masters in Social Transformation” – MST, (see the Bologna Protocol) or in French, a “Licence en Transformation Sociale” (based on DRC’s former Belgian educational system);

2. Admissions requirements for the programme: being at least the holder of Bachelor of Theology degree (i.e. in French, Graduat en Théologie (DRC’s former Belgian system) ou “Licence en Théologie” (in the Bologna Protocol);

3. That candidates holding at least a Bachelor degree other than theology be admitted into this programme through a “Bridging Programme in Theology” (workload and credit hours to be determined later);

4. That a graduate of this programme (MST) be referred to as a “Social Transformation Officer,” able to work in any fields of social development of the society;

5. That at least one course on disability be introduced at every degree level in programmes that are not leading to an MST;

6. That in practice, the MST programme in DRC takes into serious consideration the issue of gender, violence in general and sexual violence in particular; in addition to “Community-Based Rehabilitation.”

7. That greater efforts be made to provide this programme with adequate facilities, necessary equipment and good quality resources;

8. That the programme be publicized in the media for the purpose of marketing to the government, churches, donors, private institutions, development agencies and the society in general.

9. That there be developed at UPC, in conjunction with the MST programme, a centre for the promotion of disability studies in Francophone Africa.

Disability Studies Programme at UPC (Proposal)

The Disability Studies Programme at UPC is a paradigm shift in understanding how Theology and Disability Studies should be open to all aspects of life.

THE PURPOSE OF DISABILITY STUDIES

The purpose of this programme is first, to create awareness of the issue of disability and to engage in critical reflection and praxis on what it means to be in the image of God and living with limitations in an African context. Secondly, it aims to train leaders who can engage in disability discourses in the African context and become agents in changing the attitude of our societies towards people with disabilities. Thirdly, it aims to construct a new image of disability, which enables people to see beyond disability and to realize that people with different abilities are human like others; and to consider disability as part of God’s creation of diversity.

VISION

The vision is to see leaders (religious and politico-social) equipped and empowered regarding the issue of disability and to see people with disabilities being considered and fully included in society.

MISSION

The mission for this programme is designed to be as an independent department in School of Theology at UPC. This is in line with the mission of UPC, which is aimed at the formation of leaders in combating against anti-values; and promoting Christian ethics.
METHODOLOGY

The methodology proposed for use in this programme is Contextualization. I agree with Sarojini Nadar’s statement about the “understanding of intercontextuality in Theological Education”:

The process of contextualization must encourage ‘responsible specifying of experience; analyzing context with attention to social, historical, and other relational particularities of …existence; and shaping theological images and visions appropriate to the context’. This ‘specifying of experience’ is what then gets built not only into the content of contextual theological education, but also into the methods of teaching and the theorizing of such theologies.

From a disability perspective the Contextual Theology will engage in dialogue, an encounter between able-bodied people and people with disabilities for the social inclusion and equality of both groups. In other words, this methodology will engage students of this programme to take the issue of disability not as a “case” to study, but as a challenge for social transformation.

This is the starting point of our journey in establishing a Disability Studies Programme in a broader way to open a space for experiencing and exploring different capacities for building a just world. The second workshop of this programme was aimed to work on curriculum and the feasibility of the whole budget of this programme (see curriculum annexure).

The relevance of this programme in general and each individual course in particular have been carefully conceived, designed and planned in such a way that at the end of the training, students can serve as agents of social transformation and able to respond to the cultural and contextual needs of specific people and communities.

Appendix I

West Africa Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI)
Disability Study course In Theological Institutions (Revised version)

1. Course Title: INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY STUDIES

2. Course Description – the course explores disability issues and engages students in critical reflection on the subject and its implications to the ministry of the church. The course further explores the biblical and theological basis of disability, and addresses the historical, cultural, social and psychological perspectives on disability with a view to developing a better understanding of the needs of people with disabilities.

3. Objectives –

   By the end of this course the students should be able to:
   • develop awareness of issues relating to people with disabilities,
   • analyse the traditional views, perceptions and prejudices that people have about persons with disabilities,
   • engage in critical reflection on disability issues in the church and society,
   • explore possible ways through which people with disabilities could be empowered through
     (a) advocacy
     (b) social actions in the church and the society

4. Target Group

11 Sarojini Nadar, “Contextuality and Inter-contextuality in Theological Education”, in Handbook on Theological Education in World Christianity, 129ff.
• Diploma
• Bachelor
• Post graduate levels

5. **Duration** – One semester (Recommended: minimum of 13 weeks, and 2 credits a week at least).

6. **Methodology** – Field trips, lectures, stories, case studies, films, videos and internet resources, drama.

7. **Course contents**
   • **Introduction**
     o Definitions of concepts
     o Global/historical overview
     o Types of disabilities
     o Causes of disabilities
   • **West African traditional and cultural perspectives about disability issues**
     o Myths
     o Beliefs
     o Taboos
     o World views
     o Attitudes, language etc.
   • **Theoretical perspectives of disability issues**
     o Social
     o Medical
     o Legal
     o Psychological
     o Human rights
   • **Biblical basis on disability**
     o Old Testament
     o New Testament
   • **Theological Perspectives**
     o Imago Dei (image of God)
     o Sin and suffering, judgment, imprecation
     o Grace and love of God,
     The church as the body of Christ
     o The Body in Scripture
     o The Meaning of Healing here on earth and hereafter
   • **Psychological / Sociological perspectives**
     o Parents
     o Family
     o Society
     o Disabled individual
   • **Pastoral perspective**
     o Pastoral care and counseling
     o Persons with disability and the worship life of the church
     o Leadership for inclusiveness
     o Integrating the persons with disabilities in the Church setting
   • **Legal/Ethical perspective**
     o human rights,
     o legislation and policies,
     o affirmative actions,
   • **Practical dimension**

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Church’s response to disability issues (social concerns – education, rehabilitation, medical assistance, assistive devices, social protection etc.)
- State and NGO responses
- Accessibility: physical, communication, information and services

- Emerging issues in disability studies
  - Gender and disability
  - Disability movement and networking
  - Children and disability etc.
  - ICT and new technologies.

Appendix II
Association of Theological Institutions in East Africa (ATIEA)
Disability Study course in Theological Institutions

1. Course Title: INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY STUDIES
2. Description
   This course explores an inclusive understanding of disability issues in a contemporary pluralistic context. It engages students in critical reflection on the subject of disability for holistic living. The course will particularly focus on biblical, theological, socio-cultural, religious and practical issues involved in the ministry to, with and by persons with disability.
3. Objectives
   By the end of the course, the students should be able to:
   a. Develop awareness and sensitivity to issues relating to people with disabilities (PWDs).
   b. Analyze traditional views, perceptions and prejudices that people have about PWDs.
   c. Engage in critical reflection on disability issues in the church and society.
   d. Explore possible ways through which people with disabilities would be empowered through:
      i. Advocacy
      ii. Social actions in the church and society.
   e. Explore religious-cultural resources to build an inclusive community.
4. Target Group
   Undergraduates and people of all professions need to be made aware of and be sensitized about people with disabilities.
5. Duration
   One semester (recommended: minimum of thirteen weeks and three credit hours a week). It is further recommended that the Practicum be done outside the semester. This is optional and entirely dependent on the internal arrangements of each institution.
6. Methodology
   Lectures, field trips, audio-visual, case studies, stories, drama and internet resources.
7. Course content
   Introduction
   - Definition of concepts
   - Global/historical overview
   - Types of disabilities
   - Causes of disabilities
   East African traditional and cultural perspectives about disability issues
   - Myths
   - Beliefs

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
Taboos
World views
Attitudes
Languages

Biblical Perspectives on disabilities in Old Testament and New Testament

a. Theological Perspectives
i. Imago Dei (Image of God)
ii. Sin and suffering, judgment, implications,
iii. Grace and Love of God
iv. The Church as the Body of Christ
v. The body in scripture
vi. The meaning of healing here on earth and thereafter.

b. Pastoral/psychological/social perspectives
i. Parents
ii. Family
iii. Society
iv. Disabled individual
v. Pastoral care and counseling
vi. Persons with disabilities and worship in the church
vii. Leadership for inclusiveness
viii. Integrating PWDs in the church setting

c. Legal, ethical perspectives
i. Human rights
ii. Legislation and policies
iii. Affirmative actions

d. Project: Practical dimension
i. A project should be carried out on various aspects on the church’s and society’s role and responsibility.
ii. Practical applications on including people with disabilities in the life and work of the church and society.
iii. Establishment of disability and advocacy groups, etc

8. Course Evaluation
i. Examinations – 40%
ii. Continuous assessments – 10%
iii. Research Project – 50%

9. Resources
i. Textbooks
ii. Internet sources

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Kabue Samuel, “Person with Handicap in Church and Society” Address paper to Church Leaders at Limuru Conference and Training Centre (NCCK) in Nairobi, 1993.


Introduction

Pastoral theology has always been among human beings; especially among those who are broken, abused and violated in some way by people and world structures. Before dealing with problems of troubled souls, let me define pastoral care as a discipline that cares for human souls. The term “pastoral” has been used in a variety of ways. It has its usage in various diverse fields among which are agriculture, geography, development studies, education, as well as, theology. On the other hand, “care” has been seen as the use of power to be able to develop and distribute resources for persons who are in need of care in order for them to live safe and prosperous lives. At times, in theological terms, it is associated with as caring for health or soul. Clebsch & Jaekle define pastoral care in the following way:

Pastoral care (theology) consists of helping acts done by representative Christian persons, directed towards the healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons, whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meaning and concern.1

The author agrees that pastoral care is an action which is performed by people who are not necessarily Christians. The above quotation from Clebsch and Jaekle raises four important aspects that are worthy to share:

Firstly, pastoral care is defined through helping acts. It, therefore, has a pragmatic focus and a somewhat messianic tone and demonstrates the pragmatism and optimism that was happening around the world in 1960s, especially in the USA.

Secondly, some scholars believe that pastoral care is the preserve of a representative Christian person. In other words, it was identified as a specialist of ordained clergy persons. However, it is now broad; even lay persons are able to perform acts of mercy and care. The major problem with the above statement is that it does not accommodate other faiths, notably Judaism. It is as if other faiths are not capable of, pastorally, caring for troubled souls. In short, they fail to recognize that the imagery of the shepherd, most beloved of Christian pastoral care, although shepherding originally is derived from the Jewish scriptures. Other cultures have practiced this concept of caring and these included faiths such as Islam, African religion, Hinduism, Buddhism etc.

Thirdly, pastoral care has to do with troubled persons or souls. This problem-centered focus, which is geared towards the implied problem-solving approach, has affinities with the types of therapies, educational philosophies and management techniques that seem to have emerged in the USA during 1960s.

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The fourth concept of the troubles that was focused on pastoral care that offers ‘ultimate meaning and concerns.’ This is particularly connected with Paul Tillich’s existential theology which influenced scholars at that time and offers advice on how to pastorally care for people.2

The above approach now introduces us to Clinebell, who was introduced to African theologians during the 1950s as a guru of pastoral care. His concept offered guidance on some ways to care for troubled souls. He says:

Pastoral care and counseling involves the utilization by persons in ministry of one to one or small group relationships to enable healing empowerment and growth to take place within individuals and their relationships… Pastoral care is the broad, inclusive ministry of mutual healing and growth within a congregation and its community, through life cycle.2

The Guru introduced the concept of one-on-one or small group relationship counseling sessions when dealing with troubled souls in the community. The Western world has always given space to individuals when dealing with problems. They always respect the space of an individual and his or her rights. The reader will understand the difference that arises from the African world perspective when dealing with troubled souls. With the above in mind, let us now analyze how African people view or describe pastoral care or counseling. Our Guru, Mbiti, has this to say about the above concept. He uses a proverb that opens a new understanding of care. He says: ”It takes the whole village to raise up a child” 3

The thought and wisdom of an African village comes to light. In other words, it is the responsibility of the whole village, not only of biological parents but all those who live with the child, to take care of him or her. It is the responsibility of the family, of the clan, the tribe, and the villagers to take care of those who are in deep need. It is an act of compassion and commitment to vows that are made to each other to make sure that children are raised in a good manner with values that will alter and bless the villagers. This concept will be discussed later. This concept is also shared by Healey, when he expands on this process of caring.4 For Africans, pastoral theology begins from conception until death. This idea is captured by Armah, when he explains how a woman cares for the unborn child in an effort to protect him/her from evil. He says:

…. But first, what care, what gentleness was not lavished on the pregnancy that became the child? I have to avoid food that are poisonous … it might poison the precious man seed in the womb; that liquid was impure – it could contaminate the coming child’s blood; such and such a breeze was ill-mannered – the way it blew, it was likely to give the unborn child a cold, or at any rate to injure it in some unsuspected way. What unseen dangers did the aspiring mother not avoid in those nine months of her suspended hope? She carried her belly like an egg, the only egg, the egg containing all the tomorrow of the universe, an egg the loss of which would mean the loss of everything. I must care for it.5

The reader can understand how pastoral care among Africans begins in the womb; with the mother when she nurtures the unborn child. Note that pastoral care in this concept does not concern troubled souls, but the raising of a child to be a good person among other villagers. It is nurtured from conception so that the child is cared by those who are capable of being a good influence on the child. Good people take care of the weak. This process of caring, not only involves the mother or parents, but the whole village. Westerners

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may mistake it as creating dependent personality disorder in the child, by overcrowding him/her. In other words, this kind of caring does not allow for individualism to develop. Mbti shares a concept of caring as a responsibility of everyone who lives among other people in the village. He says, if children are pastorally cared for, there will be less tension and violence attitudes when these children are adults. Pastoral care that is offered within a village cares for life instead of problems. Over and above this, the author highlights that villagers demonstrate this spirit in everyday life. It is common to hear an African speaking about ‘we’ when referring to him/herself; this is because they think of others before themselves. In short, as I sit here typing away I can think of many others who have shown that a string of wool cannot accomplish this, but by weaving them together, one has a tapestry of unity and togetherness of a village that is working together in a spirit of harambee (working together).

This form of pastoral care is still prevalent in rural areas of South Africa and other parts of Africa. In those villagers, the main form of caring is based on the concept of ‘Ubuntu’ (humanity). One would ask how this process differs from the Western world of caring? In the Western world, it begins with individuals, including families. When the time comes the children leave the nest. In Africa, the whole care involves the villagers, community, relatives, tribes or clans. Individualism or privacy is not accepted as a way of life. For example, when a young adult gets married, advice is given by adult women, and an invitation is open to all villagers. It is their responsibility to come and affirm the couple, and finally bless them. Armah shares a story where a woman married a person she did not love. He says:

Araba Jesiwa had married a man from one of the royal houses, a man called Bedu Addo. She did not marry against her will. But there was no love in her choice. What she had thought at the time was what those she then respected had told her: that in marrying Bedu Addo she had done what was right (for villagers, not for herself) for a person in her place.  

Araba followed the process of the village which guided her to marry in the royal place, because it was good for her family and the rest of the village. Out of respect and Ubuntu, she followed suit. Getui reminds us vividly about respect and the responsibility one has to the village. She says:

It is the responsibility of the whole village to care for life, especially among the young (children) and old (senior citizens). It is also our responsibility to help them towards the restoration of the wholeness. 7

The Concept of Ubuntu

The above quotation introduces us to the concept of Ubuntu which is created among villagers; especially among African communities. Mbti was right when he said:

I am because you are….. You are because I am.  

The above way of thinking helps people in the village to affirm each other. The author is aware that certain villages are changing due to globalization; therefore some of these concepts are under severe pressure and attack. Some of the villagers are challenged in such a way that they are emulating a Western way of life. Mucherera adds to this point by saying:

6 Armah. The Healers, 88.
The African context still struggles today with some of the rapid changes that took place due to colonization. The villagers are caught between worlds and cultural systems which challenge old patterns of life.9

The global world has divided people into two groups, the urban (who follow Western concepts) and rural area (follow traditional way of life). In short, one would say that Africans are caught up between the traditional socioeconomic culture and the modern Western systems. These factors affect the concept of *Ubuntu* and influence ways in which problems are resolved. It is important for the reader to note that the traditional systems are alive and well in rural areas (village), while in urban areas many Africans operate in the Western system. The above concept of Ubuntu has been challenged by the global world and its economic problems. In spite of the above understanding, *Ubuntu* adds value to caring because it creates a way of honouring the elders within the African communities. In other words, elders are still held with respect in villages and some urban areas. Wimberly articulates this idea by saying:

Honor means acknowledging the significance of the lives lived by elders and treating them as persons of worth.10

Through this kind of treatment, the village is shaped in such a way that order, respect and values are created in the lives of villagers, especially among young people. An African idiom summarizes the above way of thinking by saying: “*E kojwa e sale metsi*” – meaning a stick is bent into shape while it is still wet. As a result, it will not break when pressure is applied onto it. One needs to be aware that the above is also challenged by globalization and its new values. The paper continues by analyzing the world of ancestors. Mbiti11 says a good ancestor becomes good by virtue of the way he/she lives. The honour continues when he or she dies and his/her memories of her/his goodness are kept for people to remember. They cannot be forgotten by villagers. In short, this memory is kept by villagers; he or she cannot be removed from the lips of those who are alive. The beauty of the African village lies in honoring those who had lived good lives; especially those they had mentored while alive. This is another way of pastorally-caring for others. In spite of good mentors, there are bad ones who do not care for others. As people review their lives, they realize that they are never quoted by others, because they would introduce bad elements in their lives. The good help us to correct the wrongs in our lives as they are quoted. The author wants to emphasize the pastoral element that is demonstrated by those who have departed from this life, as they are quoted. The quoted words become words of encouragement to the living. It finally shapes them into good villagers. The reader should notice the cycle that was created through mentorship while they were children. This is one of the reasons why children are taught to honour adults while they grow up. When we add the concept of the image of God to this, respect becomes a way of life within the village. Wimberly shares another insight on this issue. She says:

Honoring elders includes the activity of those who honor as well as the activity of the elders.12

This two way process of communicating and caring for each other, places both the child and adult into a relationship of working together to create a village that cares for other fellow human beings. Another African proverb helps to clarify this way of caring or living within the village by saying:

*Moriri o mo sweu ke le hlohono lo* (which means, a white hair on an adult, when respected becomes a blessing.)

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The direction in which this proverb is pointing is that adults (white hair) become teachers or mentors who nurture young ones. It is a dual participation. In other words, they reciprocate the honour and their respect towards adults and adults do the same. They then move to the next level of passing on what they had received to others. Thus, the next generation learns from the past which helps them to deal with the present, in preparation for their own bright future. The reader must also understand the role of oral tradition which plays a pivotal role when passing on stories of great value from one generation to another. This is another way in which pastoral care takes place when children listened to these stories. A good example is that of the circumcision school. As children grow older, they occupy the role of caring for others, and thus become responsible in mentoring others. Clutterburg & Megginson says:

Mentorship is a mutual learning partnership in which individuals assist each other with personal and career development through coaching, role modelling, counselling. Sharing knowledge and providing emotional support.14

Henley, on the other hand, sees this process as a way of:

Creating possibilities and providing guidance and support to others in a relationship of trust, includes facilitating, bringing vision to life and enabling people to achieve.15

Finally, Thompson says:

A mentor is a person who achieves a one to one developmental relationship with a learner and one whom the learner identifies as having enabled personal growth to take place.16

Given the African village and its concept of caring, I will say that caring is designed in such a way that it creates an effective caring method that leads to growth among villagers. In other words, it is a guiding process that seeks to change behaviour for the better. Even though some of the quotations mentioned before focus on individuals, they do serve a purpose of working and teaching other persons and this leads to growth that, finally, blesses the entire village. In short, this process creates a cycle of pastoral care that makes villagers emulate, learn and later share a way of caring for each other. This concept can also be traced among slaves in USA. Genovese expands on it and adds the element of respect that was demonstrated among slaves who were facing hardship. He says:

Honor and respect means that whatever possible, the extended family take on the responsibility of caring for the elders when they are ill and dying.17

The concept was used in spite of hardship. It was used to care for each other; especially for the elderly. In other words, within the slave quarters (village), slaves, including children, looked after the needs of their older people, and treated them with respect and kindness. This kind of Ubuntu was exported with them as they were sold to a foreign land. In spite of humiliation, children did all within their powers to allow the elderly to die with dignity. The reader needs to note that slaves supported each other during these painful times. A kind of a village emerged among them, with values of love, kindness, mercy and respect. The

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13 Circumcision is a ritual or related school that teaches young people as they enter into adulthood. It is viewed by Africans as a pastoral way of nurturing young folks into maturity, with responsibilities of caring for others.
15 Healey, Once Upon a Time, 67.
village became a place of safety and refuge. When people are going through persecution or types of trauma, they rally around each other and support those who are broken. This is how a proper village should function. The above could also be seen during apartheid in South Africa.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care in Africa addresses hurtful and painful issues that are affecting the community. It begins so to speak, from the cradle until beyond the grave (good ancestor, for example, denotes a person who lived a good life and taught others to be good). Westerners will see this as a personality disorder, because it does not allow individualism to develop as a way of growing. Africa views adults as children as long as their parents are alive or one still lives with them. This pattern of thinking is still operating today. It involves a concept of honoring elderly people. Hence, families are included in the activity of honoring elders as recipients of care until death. Most of them will be cared for within their own homes, with their children participating in their lives. This pattern of caring also emerged among the slaves. Mellon argues that:

Some older slaves when sick lived with their children until death.18

One would ask, why not place the elderly in homes for the elderly where they will be cared for. It is a great idea but Africans have always believed that living with the elderly brings blessings, not only to the family, but to the entire community or village. An excellent idea is shared by Wimberly who says:

To speak of honoring African American elders in the context of the soul community means to voice a commitment to embody the value of honor and community in everything we do.19

Africans, including African slaves, have always viewed their elderly as a walking university. They were viewed that way if they pass on their knowledge to others. In other words, they are seen as having wisdom and bearers of history, wisdom, African values and culture that need to be passed on to the next generation. Their role is to share or pass on the past stories to the leaders, both present and future. The next generation also has the responsibility to share this wisdom with future villagers. This is another type of pastoral care that was conducted among African people. The late Masamba Ma Mpolo concluded this idea by highlighting important elements that need to be shared here:

When we connect with people at the time of crisis, illness, bereavement, and even at death, we are connected with the living ancestors as well as the dead.20

In this kind of a village, pastoral care is not only a care for the living, but includes the honouring of the dead, because they were created in the image of God. He calls them saints who are with the Lord. (Note only those who had lived a good life on earth.) They are regarded to be with the Lord. The concept of speaking through the induna’s in order to communicate with the chief emerges here. One cannot speak directly to the king. Therefore, when we honour the elders, we are honouring life itself which was given to them by God. Now you will understand the proverb ‘Moriri o mo sweu ke lehlohonolo’ (white hair, when respected, is a form of blessing)

19 Wimberly, “Honoring African”, XIII.

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
The African Concept Of Caring

In order to understand the African concept of caring, the reader needs to be exposed to some Western concept of caring. The author will compare it so that one could see the differences in how these two worlds care for their own people. As mentioned before, the concept embraces all members of the village, community, family, relatives, tribes, clans and ancestors. In this village, life is lived with others in a group. Individualism is not encouraged and privacy or rights of a person do not count unless they are connected to villagers. Getui and Theuri borrow this concept of caring in a crowded village from Mbiti. He reminds us that it is the responsibility of the whole village to care for life; especially of the weak, young and elderly. He says:

It is also our duty to help them towards the restoration of the wholeness.\(^{21}\)

Pastoral care in this case considers the life of villagers to be sacred; therefore it must be preserved, defended, supported and enhanced as a matter of priority above everything else. Protection of life is extremely important in this day and age, where violence is the order of the day. Kobia highlights it in this way:

relationships by which human beings find themselves interconnected to one another as villagers and, with the rest of the world.\(^{22}\)

It is important to note that this concept of caring is based on the doctrine of imago dei. Waruta & Kinoti argue that:

Human beings are created in God’s image, and that, whenever human life is undermined or destroyed; God seeks ways of restoring it within the village and in other worlds.\(^{23}\)

Therefore, those who are engaged in the task of restoring (or pastorally care) the wholeness of human life are co-workers with God in the primary task of perfecting divine creation. By contrast, Kobia emphasizes that:

The fullness of life, shared by all created things is experienced in the harmony of the interdependence and in their common dependence of God – the ground of all being.\(^{24}\)

Sharing life together in the village reminds villagers of God, who created all of them. Therefore, when we care for each other, we are caring for God, who lives within us. This is key to the village way of life. In other words, we are caring for God. We are now back to basics, “it takes the whole village to raise a child”.\(^{25}\) In spite of this closeness of life, villagers still have their own weaknesses in their caring systems, because of emulating Western patterns of life. Others have thrown away this way of life and are pursuing individual wealth and status. We, therefore, need to support each other; yet such support is at times inadequate, owing to the changing situation in the global world. Some of the Africans have lost the concept of taking care of each other. For example, our own personality (which is now a combination of African and

\(^{21}\) Getui & Theuri, *Quests for Abundant*, 176.
Western values) has become a problem which has lead us to blame others for our own short comings in caring for each other. Waruta & Kinoti are clear on this:

Pastoral care is the art and skill of helping individuals and groups in order to understand themselves better, and are able to relate to fellow human beings (village) in a mature and healthy manner. 26

The above way of thinking places us in the area of ‘Ubuntu’ especially when it is linked with the imago Dei. African writers tell us that it continues even when a person dies. In short, this idea is connected to the caring ministry of all villagers. The belief among some Africans is that their ancestors are closer to God, than those who are alive – hence they communicate with them. Again, it is important to alert the reader that there are two kinds of ancestors i.e., the good and the bad ones, hence the good ones are referred to as saints because they have lived a good life with other villagers. Their influence still lives within the villager’s memory. With the above in mind, let us now analyze how the Western world operates.

**Western Concepts**

The author or other African people can ask a question as to how Westerners view life. I came across an interesting maxim by John Donne which summarizes the Western thinking about the concept of life.

No man (sic) is an Island, entire of itself. 27

This precept does not only affirm the African way of living, but also reminds us of other people living or sharing life with us in the world. The Western concept of life expresses the respect for the individual and allows a person to have his/her own personal space this is regarded as growth and independence. In other words, the person does not have pathology of dependency. The author is aware of the crowding and over shadowing that occurs in an African village. This process does not allow space to individuals, but the process allows people to help and work with each other. In the western world, it is easy for a person to be lonely while there are people living with him or her. People have the respect to privacy and space, but loneliness and depression becomes part of life. When you are to visit, at times, you need permission to do so. The author experienced this while he was in USA when his daughter went to next door to play; she was told it was not the right time. African scholars are of the view that the western world rotates around being self-centered, right to privacy and respect of personal space in their lives.

The author also realizes that this concept destroys the quality of human life which results in loneness, isolation and rejection. Descartes was right when describing the western world in terms of: “Cognito ergo sum I think therefore I am”. 28

In this kind of world where individualism creeps in and introduces a spirit of competition and self centeredness in other words, your problems are yours, and only you can solve them. Failing which, you consult a therapist. The above contradicts the African way of solving issues and problems in a village, let alone in urban areas. This idea places us in the area of Ubuntu.

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26 Waruta & Kinoti, *Pastoral Care*, 2.

*Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa*
The Concept of Ubuntu

The Zulu saying: “Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu” helps us to understand what the concept of Ubuntu means, namely: “A person is only a person through his or her interaction with other people.” This is done by being hospitable, compassionate, fair and acting kindly towards others. Elion & Strieman will add:

Having sound and moral values.29

In a village, when African people meet and greet each other, there is an element of caring in their exchange of greetings. One will say to the other: “Siya kubona Umfwe” (I see you my brother or sister)

The person greeted will then respond in the following way: “Ngiya ku bona Umfwe” (I see myself in you my brother or sister.)

They will continue sharing about family, even animals that are part of their lives. This process affirms the way people care for each other, as well as life in the other; including all the household, and animals. As the conversation continues, the person will stop using “I” and talk about “We”, which means that the person includes the family, tribe, clan and villagers. As they speak, they think inclusively of others. This living pastoral response of greeting flows and touches all of life and, one has to have time talking to the other. In short, a person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirmation of others, and does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs the village which nurtured him or her. They know that if they humiliate others, they diminish themselves in the process. The Archbishop explains this concept of Ubuntu in the following way. He says:

Each individual’s humanity is ideally expressed in relationship with others and in turn individuality is truly expressed.30

Lewis finally shares another insight that is worth noting. He says: A person depends on other persons to be a person.

As Africans, we say a person is a person through others. We don’t come fully formed into this world. We learn how to talk, eat, walk, and how to behave, within the village which shapes our humanity that is why we need other human beings in order to be fully human. The Arch complete this thought by saying:

We are made for togetherness; we are made for family, for fellowship to exist in a tender network of interdependence.31

When the above statement is taken seriously by urban Africans, it can correct the influence of other cultures that has crept among modern Africans through globalization. It has destroyed some of our Ubuntu and human dignity of holding each other with care and grace. Some of us are living like Westerners; individualism has captured our way of thinking and acting. What is encouraging is to see that our rural areas still hold on to this concept of Ubuntu. For an example, when anyone is experiencing difficulties or problems in life, whether the person has offended any person, villagers or ancestors, they will rally around him or her. African people associate sickness and problems with broken relationships. When you go through the storm, they will ask you to mend your relationship with yours ancestors or others. Kobia has presented useful information about the power of relationships:

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29 Elion, B and Strieman, M, Clued Up on Culture (Cape Town: Juta Gariep, 2001), 41.
31 Tutu D and Tutu M, Made for Goodness (Ebuy Press, 2010), 64.
This force resides in all human beings and keeps us alive. It is brought to fruition in birth, sustained and nurtured in the rich network of communal relationships and transferred back to the village in the spiritual realm through death.32

The deeper understanding of this concept is that this power is given to us in such a way that we must relate, care and work with each other. This process is developed and nurtured in the village, and is passed on to others as they grow up. The reader will now understand why bad ancestors are buried and forgotten, because they will derail this process of nurturing others. Problems are dealt with by villagers and not individuals. Waruta & Kinoti sum up the way problems are dealt with in the following way. They say:

Human crises have a spiritual dimension, and they cannot be fully overcome until the spiritual yearnings of human beings have been met in relationship, through the help of other villagers.33

As human beings, we cannot avoid broken relationships to continue because they affect not only those who are involved, but the entire village. That is why villagers have ‘Makgotla’, a group of people who solves problems when families have failed to do so.

Conclusion

The global village continues to challenge and threaten the concept of Ubuntu and village life. Its values of respect are under constant attack through new concepts of pursuing pleasure, power and economic status at the expense of other human beings. The challenge is placed on African leaders, writers, caregivers and the clergy and others to continue introducing the concepts that are of value to Africans and the rest of the world. This has been done through the truth and reconciliation commission. We need to develop other ways of holding on to the beauty of African values. The focus needs to be on the young ones so that we can teach them to hold on to this concept of respecting adults. Music, folk stories, proverbs and idioms of great value are other avenues that help continue this legacy. As we engage the monster of globalization, we can bring to it the gift of respecting life.

Bibliography


33 Waruta & Kinoti, “Pastoral Care”, 46.


**SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

Marilyn Naidoo

1. Introduction

Spiritual formation is a significant component of the educational work of a theological institution that prepares students for church leadership. Many theology institutions are again envisioning theological education as a formational activity; an activity based on the assumption that the student's personal appropriation of theology is most central to theological education.1 The most obvious reason for this is the preparation and shaping of future church leaders: theological students need to become aware that ministry in the form of ministerial leadership is a public and not a private role. Students must therefore be attuned to the issues of behaviour and accountability required of those who enjoy the community's trust. This requires some degree of psychological, anthropological and sociological understanding, as well as a theological grasp of the human condition before God.2 It requires insight and penetration and a multitude of other personal qualities which rest upon one's self-knowledge and on the character of one's spiritual life.

The term “formation” has a range of meanings in different contexts. The Roman Catholic tradition has a sacramental conception of ministry as priesthood which highlights the priest’s fundamental relationship to Jesus Christ and with the Church.3 The exhortation affirms that the mission of the seminary embraces four key dimensions of formation: human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral.4 Within Protestant theological education, the expression of the three major dimensions of formation may be summarized as a cognitive or intellectual apprenticeship, a practical apprenticeship of skill and an apprenticeship of character or spiritual formation.5 This last aspect of ministerial formation is the focus of this research. Spiritual formation encompasses a wide range of competencies and traits. It includes conversion of mind and heart, fostering integrative thinking, character formation, promoting authentic discipleship, personal appropriation of faith and knowledge, and cultivating a spirituality of the intellectual life.6

In Protestant theological institutions effective integration of the above three aspects of ministerial formation has seldom been achieved.7 Instead what one finds in theological institutions is that the educational programme favours academic instruction with some practical exposure and compartmentalizes the spiritual, with spiritual formation happening implicitly, informally and on a personal basis. The common academic pattern, drawn from the university model, continues to be departmentalized with further

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specialization within those departments. The reason for the fragmentation and isolation of disciplines has been a subject of concern in the literature for several years. 8

2. The Research Project

This research was based on the hypothesis that Christian spiritual formation is central to the educational work of the theological institution. It is important for Christian spiritual formation to be intentional; that is, it needs to be carefully thought out and understood, and deliberate strategies need to be developed to promote it. 9 It must be noted that people are constantly in a process of formation, in families, in congregations, in faith traditions and through society at large, but the focus here is limited to a theological formation, the “spiritual shaping” of students over a period of time spent at a theological institution.

While there is little disagreement about the significance of the elements involved in preparing church leaders, there is no corresponding unanimity regarding how spiritual formation formally fits into a theological institution’s culture – whether spiritual formation is primarily about personal spirituality and only secondarily related to academic study and pastoral training, or whether students perceive theological institutions to have a positive influence on their spirituality. This kind of discussion is hard to come by in South Africa 10 together with the fact that reports are obscure and limited to denominational church minutes and documents, hence the reason for this research.

This research project was conducted from 2008 to 2010. 11 The aim of this project was to conduct an exploratory investigation into spiritual formation programmes at selected Protestant theological institutions in South Africa (1) to find out whether spiritual formation is being intentionally pursued, (2) to examine the academic and non-academic methods in which spiritual formation is being fostered in theological institutions, and (3) to develop a valid and reliable instrument to measure the emphasis on spiritual formation at theological institutions. Due to space limitations an overview of the quantitative and qualitative findings are provided and the findings are combined in the interpretation to more fully answer the research question.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

A review of the literature shows that definitions of spiritual formation abound, but one that is helpful to this discussion comes from a World Council of Churches publication in which spiritual formation is defined as “the intentional processes by which the marks of an authentic Christian spirituality are formed and integrated.” 12 In this definition certain processes are discussed that allude to the processes of spiritual development, and that for Christian spirituality to be authentic, it must be integrated into the lives of the students and so be observable, whether in the classroom, church or society. Spiritual formation is not simply developing the “spiritual” aspect of a theological student, but has to do with the integration of the

11 This research was supported by grants from the National Research Foundation which is gratefully acknowledged.
intellectual, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of life in the educational process. Methods of spiritual formation are not methodological in the sense that they “produce” the type of spirituality one desires or effectively guarantee certain “results” which afterwards can be measured like intellectual abilities. Theological anthropology and developmental theory remind us that humans are not creatures who simply move towards some specific objective but rather that there is fluidness to life, with multiple identities in Christian ministry. Rather, taking into account that each person already has a certain kind of spirituality, different methods of spiritual formation are conceived as helping each person to discover and be transformed to manifest the marks of true Christian spirituality. If a variety of means are not found through which spiritual formation of students can deliberately be pursued, it may not take place at all.

Ballard and Pritchard offer four “models of practical theology” which include the applied theory, critical correlation, praxis and habitus model. While all four models are used in the Church, the model of critical correlation represents the focus of how academia tends to engage with theology, bringing methods of a wide range of disciplines of enquiry into dialogue with theology and ecclesial practice. For this research, the concept of ministerial and spiritual formation is embedded in the habitus model in which the theological institution, as a distinctive and historical community, fosters values through shared discipleship, forming a “disposition of the heart” of students. In this approach the teacher shares his or her struggles to attain appropriate wisdom with the student. The most meaningful experiences for students are focused on the teacher's relational skills and personal qualities, and in-class interactive teaching and learning methods. For students, developing community and relationships within an academic setting is not only important, but also necessary in facilitating learning. The goal is to help the student undergo a deep kind of formation – a personal appropriation of wisdom about God, the self and the world where learning is not just a personal matter but is done for the sake of public life, ecclesial life and church leadership.

Several concepts were selected from the literature that would make for an emphasis on spiritual formation at a theological institution. Firstly, it would involve intentionality towards spiritual development evidenced in the life of the community and within a curriculum that is holistic and integrative. An institution that makes a corporate decision to do so should apply resources to the goal. A critical influence in formation is the involvement of the staff as they model integrity to the students. Spiritual formation within the academic setting is most effective when the classroom is both affirmed and complemented. Hence both formal and informal learning of spirituality is embedded in the context of shared lives. Research also supports the value of relationship as a learning tool, and community life can multiply

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16 Ballard and Pritchard note their indebtedness for this to Farley (1983:35–36). Farley argued that seminary curricula lack the habitus of theology. Farley seems to mean that every person of faith is constantly searching out God’s will. Such a search of God's will is immediately related to personal faith and to the study of Scripture.
17 Foster et al., Educating clergy, 213.
learning opportunities. Other services like counselling, progressive assessments and mentorships which specifically focus on spiritual development, should be made available to students. Theological institutions should be a worshipping community evidenced by various devotional activities. These concepts are the essential requirements that go into a spiritual formation programme, although within denominational theological institutions there could be other theological distinctives and practices that influence spiritual formation.

2.2. Method
This was a descriptive study using a mixed-methods approach using semi-structured interviews and a student questionnaire. The mixed-method model used was concurrent triangulation where both methods are given equal emphasis and combined in the interpretation phase, which promotes the triangulation of data. The study used a cross-sectional research design where observations were made at one point in time on seven different Christian campuses. All fieldwork and data collection at each site were conducted by a single trained fieldworker who, in most cases, was a lecturer or spiritual caregiver involved in student formation. This added many perspectives, backgrounds and social characteristics and yielded a more complete picture of spiritual formation at theological institutions.

Data were collected quantitatively from students at theological institutions to test their perceptions of the emphasis on spiritual formation at their institution. To do this, a student questionnaire was designed which also contained a spiritual formation index (SFI) or scale. This attends to the first and third aim of the project. A two-stage stratified sample was used for data collection. The second data analysis produced the final form of the SFI. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the final reporting on students’ perceptions on the formational emphasis at theological institutions.

Data were also collected qualitatively through semi-structured interviews with the management or principals of theological institutions to gauge the institution’s responsibility to students’ spiritual formation and the intentionality of it within the curriculum and institution. In addition, fieldworkers collected data through observations of various spiritual formational activities on campuses, through an analysis of the curriculum to establish the priority of spiritual formation and through the collection of institutional documents. This attends to the second aim of the project. A descriptive matrix data analysis methodology was used to compare, conceptualize and categorize qualitatively data. A conceptual map was designed placing theological institutions on a spectrum based on the intentionality of spiritual formation at their institution. The results of this qualitative and quantitative study were then integrated in the interpretation of results. Triangulation was used to measure a spiritual formation emphasis in more than one way and enable the researcher to see all aspects of it. This integrative process enabled the answering of the research question depicting the overall intentionality of the institutions’ priority of spiritual formation.

2.3. Sample
The sample with which an instrument is tested needs to be narrow enough for participants to share a similar understanding of spiritual formation, yet broad enough so that the data collection will not be biased by a

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24 John Cresswell, Vicki Clark, Michelle Gutmann, and William Hanson, “An expanded typology for classifying mixed methods research into designs.” in *The Mixed Methods Reader*, 159-196.
single denomination’s particular emphasis in doctrine or lifestyle. For this reason, a representative sample was selected made up of different church traditions, cultures and language groups of Protestantism in South Africa. The sample included seven theological institutions: Baptist Convention College, Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary, College of Transfiguration (Anglican), University of OFS (Reformed), Cape Theological Seminary (Pentecostal), Hatfield Training Centre (Charismatic) and University of Pretoria (Presbyterian). The selection criteria were based on the education and training for church leadership, an accredited theological programme with the Department of Education, South Africa, contact teaching sessions and the availability of an on-site field worker. Inter-denominational theological institutions were considered unsuitable for the sample because of the dynamics of ecumenical formation. Likewise, distance education models were also found unsuitable because of a lack of real-time interaction, lack of relational modelling of faculty and the absence of community life.

These selected theological institutions have approximately 300 students as total registration per year. Since theological institutions have different student registration figures, stratified sampling of students was used so as to be able to legitimately generalize information from a few people. An average of 40 full-time students from different years of study were surveyed from each institution. Study participants consisted of a stratified sample of 280 students (n= 280) enrolled full-time for the graduate-level courses in a denominational theological institution with a response rate of 93%. The sample was made up of students from Methodist 39 (14%), Anglican 46 (17%), Baptist 25 (9%), Reformed 52 (19%), Pentecostal 40 (15%), Presbyterian 22(8%) and Charismatic 45 (17%). A total of 146 (52%) were black, 101 (36%) participants were white, 27 (9%) were coloured and 2 (1%) were Indian. 246 (88%) students were South African citizens and 33 (11%) were students from other countries. Included in the sample were 109 (40%) females and 166 (60%) males. Students were enrolled in different years of study: 89 (32%) were first-year students, 100 (36%) were second-year students and 88 (30%) were final-year students. The majority of 192 students (72%) were training for the ordained ministry, while 75 (28%) were training for the lay ministry. The highest educational qualification of students showed that 177 (64%) had completed secondary schooling, while 98 (35%) had a previous qualification before entering theological training. The majority of students (55%) were between 18 and 28 years old, with the average age of respondents being 29 years.

2.4. Student Questionnaire

A lengthy questionnaire was formulated from the literature and from ATS (Profiles of Ministry) inventories for use with seminary students and young ministers. The structure of the questionnaire involved 12 questions (quantitative control variables) covering biographical data which included questions on the profile of students: gender, age, race, denomination, registration information, etc. Seven questions (mostly layered scale questions) were on students’ personal spirituality and spirituality within the institution. One question involved the spiritual formation index (made up of 34 items on a five-point Likert scale-interval) that looked specifically at different aspects of the formation process within the institution. From the first data collection it was evident that there was a general apathy from students around completing the questionnaire. A reason for this could be the lengthy questionnaire and that many of the questions seemed similar and repetitive to students. To get a quality response for the second data collection, questions were generally rephrased, added or simplified and the questionnaire was reduced from 30 to 21 questions.

2.5. Design and development of the Spiritual Formation Index (SFI)

The spiritual formation index\(^{29}\) was designed to test students’ perceptions of emphasis on spiritual formation at their theological institution. It measures involvement in formational activities offered by the theological institution. It does not purport to assign a level of achievement or maturity to the student’s involvement. Measurement instruments are collections of items combined into a composite score. This is an unweighted factor-based scale\(^ {30}\) where respondents’ raw scores on each item are added to obtain an average (mean) which is the scale score. Total possible scores range from 1 to 5 (five-point Likert scale 1= SA to 5= SD) with lower scores reflecting a stronger sense of spiritual formation.

There are a number of different measures developed to access spirituality and religiosity\(^{31}\) however they are focused in the dominant framework in psychology of religion.\(^ {32}\) Many measures for spirituality exist but no established instrument appears to be suitable for measuring the perceived formational emphasis within a theological institution, hence a new instrument was developed. Items were generated from the review of the literature and existing scales and qualitative studies\(^ {33}\) on spiritual formation in South Africa.

Initially a complex student index was designed with seven theoretical concepts (formal and informal learning were two different concepts) and an initial pool of 28 items on a five-point Likert-scale interval. The first data collection was administered to 200 second- and third-year students who were exposed to formational activities. A pilot data analysis was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the index. The goal was also to reduce the number of items in the index and to test the data for consistency in terms of the theoretical dimensions. To assist in determining which items to place in each scale dimension, factor analysis using the principal components method with Varimax rotation was used. Six factors were found that were developed into six theoretical dimensions after initially having seven theoretical dimensions. The index was adjusted from 28 items to 34 items with six dimensions with an average of five questions in each dimension. The second data collection was conducted among 280 first-, second- and third-year students after a year of exposure to formational activities at the various institutions. The data were analysed using the SAS JMP statistical package using frequencies, cross-tabulations, factor analysis, and reliability and correlation routines. In its final form, the index was reduced to 31 questions eliminating three items (see Appendix for the list of items in each dimension).

2.6. Reliability and Validity of the SFI

To test for reliability item analyses were conducted to produce Cronbach alpha values\(^ {34}\) on each dimension of the index. The Cronbach alpha values found were generally high with the coefficient alpha for (1) institutional commitment being .8382, for (2) services offered being .8241, for (3) formal/informal learning being .8558, for (4) community life being .8026, for (5) staff/faculty involvement being .8911, and for (6) spiritual activities on campus being .7626 (see Appendix).

To test for validity, a factor analysis was performed to determine if the individual questions contributed to the dimensions as in the scale. The KMO Bartlett value\(^ {35}\) was 0.936 which is a significant value showing...
that this set of variables in a correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis. Exploratory factor analysis was done and six factors were found with Eigen values of more than 1, the cumulative percentage explained by the factors is more than 60% with a significant decline in scree plot. In factor analysis, restricting the number of factors to the number of dimensions and comparing the obtained factors with the proposed factors is a method used to test the scales empirically. When Varimax rotations of factor analysis were used, a six-factor solution was carried out with the items of the spiritual formation index’s final form, and all of the obtained groupings of variables corresponded to the proposed factors. The six factors that go together are (1) institutional commitment towards spiritual formation, (2) specialized services offered by the institution, (3) formal/informal learning of spirituality, (4) community life, (5) staff/faculty involvement in spiritual formation, and (6) spiritual activities on campus. These factors tie in with the theoretical concepts found in the literature that make for spiritual formation.

3. Quantitative Results

3.1. Overall profiling of theological institutions according to the SFI

Table 1 shows the difference between theological institutions in terms of how they subscribed to the different dimensions of the SFI. To calculate this, the average student response for each factor for each institution was calculated to show the following scores:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theological Institution</th>
<th>Institutional commitment: Factor 1</th>
<th>Services offered: Factor 2</th>
<th>F/Informal learning: Factor 3</th>
<th>Community life: Factor 4</th>
<th>Staff involve: Factor 5</th>
<th>Spiritual activities: Factor 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.56</td>
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<td>2.37</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Institutional profiling according to factors

To calculate the overall mean score for each institution, the average of all factors was calculated. The overall mean score for the spiritual formation index was 2.16, with n = 269. These mean scores measured the extent to which institutions subscribe to the overall spiritual formation index with a lower mean score indicating more agreement with spiritual formation (1=SA… 5=SD).

The overall SFI is not normally distributed, therefore the Krauskal-Wallis sign rank test is used to test for differences between the ranks among the seven institutions. This technique tells us whether the differences between the observed sample ranks are likely to exist in the population from which the sample was drawn. The analysis revealed a significant difference between the ranks among the seven institutions ($\chi^2_6 = 78.85; p<0.001$). The p-value is smaller than .01 which shows a significant difference between the ranks of the institutions at a 99% level of confidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Mean$^{36}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$sufficient, values below 0.5 mean that factor analysis would be inappropriate.$

$^{36}$ The means is for interpretation purposes, the non-parametric comparisons for each pair using the Wilcoxon method were used for analysis and groupings.

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>2.5304843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>2.5165584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformed</td>
<td>2.4792659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>2.0355159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>2.0333492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>1.8862897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td>1.6458642</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Levels not connected by same letter are significantly different.

Table 2 Non-parametric comparisons for each pair using the Wilcoxon method

In Table 2 significant differences can be seen in the means between the different institutions in how spiritual formation is perceived. For example, there are slight or not significant differences between the groups Methodist, Reformed and Presbyterian, but as a group they have significant differences from the group Anglican, Baptist and Pentecostal. The Pentecostal could also fall into the Charismatic group and this group is significantly different from the other two groups.

3.2. Priority of theological institutions towards Spiritual Development

Students were asked to rate their institutions in terms of its priorities as they experienced them (with 1= lowest priority, and 5= highest priority). These priorities include pastoral ministry skills development, knowledge of the denomination/tradition, theological knowledge and competencies, growth in spiritual depth and moral integrity, and understanding of the social/cultural context. Table 3 shows the means for each priority, which also shows that all students rated their institution higher in terms of the focus on spiritual development with the lowest mean from the Methodist (3.34) and Presbyterian (3.45) institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Tradition</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Spirituality</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformed</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Students rating on different priorities within institutions

To focus on the priority regarding spiritual development ("growth in spiritual depth and moral integrity"), chi-square tests were used to test if there was a significant association between spirituality and institutions. It was found that the proportion who chose the highest priority for spiritual development were the Baptist (20/25 = 80%), Charismatic (36/45 = 80%) and Pentecostal (30/40 = 75%). The other institutions showed spiritual development as a high priority with the following percentages: Methodist (18/38 = 47%), Anglican (23/44 = 52%), Reformed (26/52 = 50%) and Presbyterian (12/22 = 55%). The probability value (p-value) is 0.0091, which is smaller than 0.05, which seems to indicate that a significant association exists between perceptions of priority of spiritual growth and theological institutions made at a 99% level of confidence.

37 The means of the different scale questions was calculated for interpretation purposes and not for analysis.
38 Chi-square is a nonparametric inferential statistical procedure designed to determine whether collected data are significantly different from what was expected.
3.3 Students’ satisfaction with Spiritual Development

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with their institution in terms of opportunities for spiritual growth, with 1= Very satisfied and 4= Not satisfied at all. A chi-square test was used to test if there is a significant association between satisfaction with spiritual development and institutions. The proportion of Charismatic (42/45 =95%) who chose “Satisfied”, together with Baptist (21/25= 84%) and Methodist (26/10=72%) institutions is high, while the Reformed (28/24=53%) and Anglican (23/21=52%) proportion is low. In the Presbyterian institution the majority response was “Not satisfied” (14/22= 64%) with the institutions’ focus on spiritual development. The p-value is 0.0001 which is smaller than 0.05, which seems to indicate that a significant association exists between perceptions of priority of spiritual growth and theological institutions made at a 99% level of confidence.

3.4 Students’ personal spirituality

Activities in personal spirituality showed that 247 (89%) participants come from a Christian background, while 31 (11%) did not. When students were asked how often they engaged in different spiritual activities (1= daily to 5= not at all), the mean varied (µ =1.45 to µ = 2.06). 65% (182) of students felt that the workload at the theological institutions was adequate to sustain their personal spirituality, while 87 (34%) did not agree with the statement. The main sources of stress during students’ training were financial concerns (score of 3.42), issues with the institution (score of 3.27), integrating their learning with faith (score of 2.72), future job prospects (score of 2.66) and personal/family relationships (2.64).

4. Qualitative Findings

4.1 Methods of spiritual formation

The second aim of this study was to examine the academic and non-academic methods in which spiritual formation was being fostered in theological institutions. This goal was to determine whether there was intentionality towards spiritual formation via the academic and non-academic methods used. The findings revealed that all theological institutions included some form of spiritual formation in their training programmes. Methods of formation varied according to denominational distinctives and included similar spiritual/devotional activities of chapel services, prayer, retreats, courses on spirituality and progressive student interviews. Some institutions were highly structured with formal experiences and curriculum that shaped the student from the beginning of seminary life to the end. Other institutions created spaces for formative practices through formal and informal venues, without over structuring it into the curriculum. Space does not allow for a detailed description across the sample, of other processes that speak to the methods used like community life, integration of spirituality within the curriculum, spiritual activities on campus and the role of educators suffice to say that different denominations used different methods. Taking into consideration the different data collection strategies used overall qualitative results reveal that institutions show intention towards spiritual formation on a continuum from awareness to full engagement. These findings are supported by the qualitative data analysis in which a conceptual map (Table 4) was created showing “awareness,” “awakening” and “being” as the descriptive lens through which to view formational initiatives at theological institutions.

The findings showed that spiritual formation is at various stages of intention within institutions. “Awareness” was shown by a basic application of the spiritual formation and was most evident within the

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39 The interpretations and conclusions of the findings are based on participant responses and are influenced by data quality related to the choice of interviewees, the field worker skills and competence and interpersonal dynamics during the data collection process. Final conclusions should be based upon the complete comparison of all data collected.

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
university-based models (Presbyterian and Reformed) where fragmentation exists with spiritual formation which is departmentalized and promoted on an ad-hoc basis at best. The larger the academic institution, the more depersonalized the interface seems with limited intention. The major focus is on academic advancement with open access to all at universities. It was found that the faculties of Theology at OFS (Reformed) and UP (Presbyterian) have a structured academic programme with the spiritual formation aspect of the programmes being less formalized. The concept of “awakening” showed that institutions (Anglican, Baptist and Methodist) are moving towards a more deliberate intent to focus on real-life application. This is evidenced by increased intentional activity by the methods used with a strong relational and community focus. Spiritual nurturing is actively engaged in and spirituality is practiced through acts of meditation, prayer, silence and so on. The Baptist and the Anglicans show a growing awareness of spirituality and are moving toward this approach. The Methodists seem to be the most formalized and intentional with “spirituality” at the core of the curriculum but not fully implemented into the life of the institution. The third stage is conceptualized as the “being” stage where institutions (Pentecostal, Charismatic) are showing deliberate intent, with focused vocational programmes for each year of study, community involvement and leadership support. The Charismatic has a more integrated head, hand and heart approach and the Pentecostal that have a personalized development plan for each student. The smaller and more intimate setting has the greatest intent with a deliberate actualization of spiritual formation. Spiritual formation forms part of the core curriculum; it is defined as and starts with the ‘personhood’ of the individual, translating into active spiritual ‘being’ with a relational component of self, others and the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Awakening</th>
<th>Being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic application</td>
<td>Initial intent</td>
<td>Active intent and clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger – individualistic</td>
<td>Working towards spiritual</td>
<td>direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic focus</td>
<td>formation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad hoc</td>
<td>Starts with the ‘self’</td>
<td>Spirituality is defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited definition of spirituality</td>
<td>Strong relational and</td>
<td>Curriculum well proportioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFORMED</td>
<td>community intent</td>
<td>Supported by leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRESBYTERIAN</td>
<td>BAPTIST</td>
<td>PENTECOSTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANGLICAN</td>
<td>CHARISMATIC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Conceptual Map of Spiritual Formation

The intentionality of including spiritual formation in educational programmes differs, as is evident by the methods employed, the curriculum content and design, the quality of community life, spiritual activities available as well as leadership support. Denominations that were successful in sustaining a spiritual formation programme were those that had close collaboration between the church and the theological institution, while in others there seems to be a lack of integration and collaboration. It is important to note that the quality of the spiritual formation is dependent on whether educational programmes are full-time, part-time or fully “residential” (meaning that students reside on the “campus” for the full duration of the programme).

5. Discussion

The goal of this study was to determine whether there was intentionality towards spiritual formation in theological institutions. The quantitative results revealed that students perceived that institutions were intentional towards formational practices. Student perceptions in all six factors of the SFI (Table 1) showed that all institutions had low scores (showing higher agreement with spiritual formation). The most important dimension was “institutional commitment towards spiritual formation” which deals with
questions about the intentional and strategic alignment of spiritual formation. The other five factors of the index are agents or methods that allow for formation to happen within the institution.

Three pertinent questions for this study focused on students’ perceptions of the institutions’ priority regarding growth in spiritual depth and moral integrity, their satisfaction with their institution in terms of opportunities for spiritual growth, and whether what went on in class strengthened their spiritual life outside the classroom. With each of these questions significant differences between the proportions in student responses were evident. Charismatic, Baptist and Pentecostal institutions showed greater emphasis on spirituality as a priority and showed satisfaction with opportunities for spiritual growth and were spiritually strengthened by classroom activity. The institutions Methodist, Reformed, Anglican and Presbyterian found spirituality to be a high priority with a 50% agreement with the statement, and in rating their satisfaction with opportunities for spiritual growth, Reformed and Anglican institutions showed 50% agreement, while student perceptions in the Presbyterian institution showed that 64% were not satisfied with the opportunities for spiritual growth. When asked whether what went on in class strengthened their spiritual life outside the classroom, students’ perceptions in Reformed, Anglican and Presbyterian institutions showed a 40-50% agreement with the statement, a significant percentage reported negatively under the never/seldom category for the same question: Reformed (30%), Anglican (22%) and Presbyterian (27%) institutions. It may be worthwhile for institutions to assess their current curriculum to determine how they impact students in a holistic way. However the degree to which spiritual formation programmes are effective in terms of enhancing ministerial identity and impact on the practice of ministry is yet to be determined. Theological institutions will have to find ways of tracking students beyond graduation to discover how their theological training has helped them and what actually sustains the graduates in their ministry.

The results from the SFI also showed that all institutions had high scores for the second factor “services” which showed a general lack of services offered that focused on supporting students in their spiritual growth. Greater priority should be given to services that assist students in psychological or emotional pain or experiencing life crises (eg divorce, death or loss of a loved one). Counselling services may be an essential component that needs to be evaluated and improved.

The qualitative findings showed that spiritual formation is facilitated through various academic and non-academic methods from ad-hoc spiritual activities to well-guided processes of personal transformation. This points to a perceived intentionality towards spiritual formation at theological institutions, and this intentionality is represented on a continuum. A conceptual map was created showing “awareness,” “awakening” and “being” as the descriptive lens through which to view formational initiatives at theological institutions. “Awareness” was represented by the university-based models (Presbyterian and Reformed), “awakening” showed that institutions (Anglican, Baptist, Methodist) are moving towards a more deliberate intention while institutions (Pentecostal, Charismatic) are represented by “being” showing deliberate intention towards spiritual development of students.

Both overall quantitative (Table 2) and qualitative (Table 4) findings show institutions across a spectrum in terms of how students perceived the institution and evidence of formation found in the life of the institution. There is agreement in both spectrums except for the Methodist sample. This could be accounted to the fact that this institution was in transition when the data was collected. Institutional commitment was most evident in the Charismatic and Pentecostal traditions, and this finding could be explained by the denominational emphasis on spiritual training. This finding was also supported by low scores in other factors like community life, staff involvement and formal and informal learning which

highlights an overall integrated learning environment. On the other end of the spectrum, the institutions with the highest scores (showing lower agreement with the spiritual formation) for all five factors were the Presbyterian and Reformed. Both denominations train in a university faculty and this formational mandate may clash with the focus of critical scholarship offered at universities. This finding highlights that a university setting presents more challenges in implementing a spiritual formational mandate. It would be difficult to seek to instil a specific *habitus* among theology students in a university classroom where similar church backgrounds or at least shared vocational trajectories cannot be assumed. The intention of spiritual formation may also be obscured by university accreditation demands, the compartmentalization of theological disciplines and the marginalization of spirituality in the life of the university. Previous studies show similar results.42

A plausible explanation for the differences across a spectrum is related to differences in the ethos and educational models used in each denominational institution. Firstly, one can view the institution’s conceptual framework as a window to discerning a school’s ethos and which helps shape the institution’s curriculum and culture and has a lasting impact on students.43 Institutional structure can be seen as a factor that either hinders or promotes the integration of spirituality within the curricula and co-curricular on campuses. In infusing spirituality into campus life, it is important to note that nothing is value-free. When spiritual dimensions are excluded, the lack of incorporation of ethics, meaning and purpose into curricula and co-curricular efforts, then what is valued and not valued is communicated by default. Hence transformative efforts in the institutional culture begin within a holistic consideration of institutional values and purposes. Secondly, the way theological education is conducted represents different educational approaches to theology. Institutions involved in both academic and ministerial education may be operating with a variety of understandings about what theology is and how it is learnt.44 David Kelsey refers to these two models of education as ancient “Athens” and modern “Berlin”.45 Both of course take place within reflective traditions of inquiry: the former consciously and deliberately takes place from within an ecclesiastical theological tradition, which it questions, evaluates and challenges, and the latter from within its own philosophical and cultural tradition. Yet what distinguishes these practitioner and academic models of theology, at the opposite ends of a continuum of approaches to studying theology, are different ideas of how theology, learning and learner relate.46 In spite of developments towards a more holistic view of the individual learner, the dissonance between educational philosophy and theological understanding of the person and of formation would seem to suggest that higher education is not an ideal partner in learning for the ministry.47


45 Kelsey, *Between Athens and Berlin*.

46 Gary Wilton conducted an empirical research project on six theological institutions to examine the approach to theological learning in each type in relation to the kind of formation envisaged. He concluded that whereas cooperation may be possible between institutions, structural partnerships are difficult because of divergent institutional aims. Gary Wilton, “The Hind Report: Theological Education and Cross Sector Partnerships,” *Discourse: Teaching and Learning in Philosophical and Religious Studies* 7:1 (2007), 153-178.

47 Overend, “Education or Formation?”, 146.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
The third aim of the project was the development of a valid and reliable instrument to measure the emphasis on spiritual formation at theological institutions. The value of the SFI is that it provides a way of evaluating formational efforts in a theological institution. It can serve as an assessment tool to provide an early warning about how students perform within the six dimensions of spiritual formation. In addition theological institutions and students may find it helpful to reflect on the items/dimensions; thus individual items in addition to subscale scores may have a heuristic value for students and institutions in the institutional setting. Although the SFI was found to be valid and reliable it is seen as a rudimentary instrument and further research is needed to confirm the stability of results in other multiple samples which may provide critical information about validity, especially as it relates to the influence of social desirability on self-report responses.

6. Conclusion
The spiritual maturity of future Christian leaders is an important challenge and needs to be dealt with throughout the theological training. The most conducive setting for such education to take place is one which is intentional, collaborative and communitarian. As this study has showed identifying accurately the specific dimensions of spiritual formation and expectations of students’ spirituality carries vital insights towards the development of more integrated educational and nurturing environments for students’ spirituality in theological education. As theological education in South Africa continues to assess its vision and goals, this exploratory study offers evidence to support the assumption that theological institutions are fulfilling their stated goals of shaping student spirituality.

Bibliography


*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Apostolic Exhortations of His Holiness John Paul II on the

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Appendix

Spiritual Formation Index

In your theological institution spiritual formation is evident in the following ways: mark one for each item (1= Strongly Agree ... 5= Strongly Disagree)

1. Institutional commitment towards spiritual formation (Reliability: alpha= 83)
   a. You are aware of a formal spiritual formation programme that exists and that is part of your learning
   b. There are staff member(s) assigned to spiritual formation responsibilities
   c. Confidentiality is maintained by those involved in spiritual formation
   d. You are exposed to different ways of being spiritual
   e. You are encouraged to live a balanced life in all areas: study, ministry, community life, recreation and spirituality
   f. Your understanding of God is strengthened by classroom and campus experiences

2. Services offered by the institution (Reliability: alpha= 82)
   a. Counselling is available to you as you go through various transitions and crises in your student life
   b. The availability of mentors, spiritual directors and guides for students
   c. Student interviews to monitor progress of your spiritual development
   d. Annual goal setting and evaluation for each student
   e. Psychometric and psychological testing is available for students
3. **Formal/Informal learning (Reliability: alpha= 85)**
   a. There are courses on spirituality, devotional theology, spiritual disciplines
   b. Spirituality is integrated into the content of academic courses
   c. Teaching methods that use different formal and informal learning experiences
   d. Ongoing supervised in-service training/ministry in the local church
   e. Field work opportunities as a team into different ministry contexts
   f. Availability of self-awareness activities, eg workshops on personality, identity development
   g. Appropriate bibliographical resources in the library and bookstore on spirituality

4. **Community life (Reliability: alpha= 80)**
   a. A sense of community is nurtured at the institution and campus
   b. Chapel and worship services for students and staff
   c. Recreational/Fun activities available as a community, eg sports, picnics
   d. The ability of the whole community to pray and work together
   e. The community exists within supportive campus relationships

5. **Staff involvement in spiritual formation (Reliability: alpha= 89)**
   a. Caring, nurturing attitude of the staff towards students
   b. Teaching staff are available for discussion or feedback on your work
   c. Teaching staff practise and model principles of spiritual integrity
   d. Teaching staff take interest in your personal welfare
   e. Teaching staff assist you in your career decisions or issues of calling

6. **Spiritual activities on campus (Reliability: alpha= 76)**
   a. Availability of retreats/prayer days for students
   b. Reading of Scripture devotionally and spiritually
   c. Service opportunities in the residential community dealing with social justice issues, eg poverty

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Theological Education for African Ecumenism – Proposals from the Perspective of Christian Spirituality

Christo Lombaard

Introduction
In this chapter the future, past and present are briefly explored as they relate to Christian spirituality as an emerging growth point for ecumenical theological education. This gives the contexts in which to explore what spirituality and mysticism are, and how these two inherently experiential aspects of the Christian faith may become key markers in the further development of specifically ecumenical theological education across the African context. Suggestions are made for a theoretical framework and curriculum proposals including educational exercises to enhance sensitivity towards spirituality in African ecumenism.

A Spiritual Future
Among the purposes of theological education and ministerial formation is the preparation of the next generations of Christian leaders for the coming years’ demands upon them.1 Changed contexts mean changing futures, which are best entered into being aware of the firm probabilities and the vague possibilities tomorrow’s tomorrows can, foreseeably, bring. Such foresight does not apply only to the broad eschatological frameworks of Christianity, but also to the socio-politico-economic dynamics of coming decades. This kind of outlook on the future requires thinkers who can foresee possibilities and trends related to these dynamics, who can act both to shape them and to be relevant to them.

This orientation to the future is often among the prime expectations of leaders. For the church, specifically in coming decades, that future will certainly include the requirement that spirituality be increasingly on its agenda: what Rahner had recognised in the 1980s already, i.e. that the future Christian would be a mystic,2 can in our times be traced ever more clearly, namely as a “turn” towards spirituality in both church circles3 and the world at large.4 No doubt then, the church in its full ecumenical diversity will have to take matters of spirituality and mysticism seriously – to believe, to be church, and therefore to train its ministers, pastors and priests.

The ways in which the spiritual demands of the future are met can draw either on vague, populist awareness of spirituality, which will be shallow5 and hence unsustainable, or on the depths of experience that lie richly, more integrally-viable, within history. The history of Christianity namely provides spiritual resources that have not been explored fully, in ways that render them as nurturing and as enriching as they ought to be. To counter one popular misconception about the value of studying the past: the history of

Christian spirituality\(^6\) is not just a source that can prevent us from repeating the mistakes of the past. Rather, history gives us examples of holy women and men who have, in their contexts, as individuals or as groups or as part of movements, shown traits of faith that may inspire us to be and to believe, namely as greater beacons of faith, in loosely parallel ways, in our contexts.

Who and what the most meaningful examples of depth-of-God experiences are, will differ for various expressions of Christianity; at times, the significance of the same valued figures or movements from the past may be perceived differently among the diverse expressions of Christianity. Yet, these past figures from within the narrower confines of Christianity, or from the ranges of broader humanity, have generated streams of faith; all of us who come after them, find ourselves in their wake. This wake is namely the vast number of impulses that together compose the present Christian identity of individuals, groups, denominations and more, frequently without even realizing the sources of what is, implicitly, held so dearly. Yet, when we find again for the first time\(^7\) the originators of these impulses, of these wakes, their faith wisdom “rings true” for us,\(^8\) forming / informing / reforming us anew, as we recognize and re-cognize their value for us, as we through their examples experience differently, and deeper, our existence coram Deo. The implicit therefore becomes explicit; the vaguely felt becomes the profoundly experienced.

In this way, we find ourselves within our history;\(^9\) in the past, we discover our being. Nobody exists outside of the preceding stream of human memory, even if such deep memory wells lie dormant, as unknown reservoirs: pools of life-giving pasts outside of our active consciousness, yet undeniably there. Once fountains of such life-giving sustenance are again unearthed, and surface, we see ourselves revealed anew in them, in their collected ponds of still reflection: in the past we find out how who we are has been formed, quietly, soundlessly, around us. We are awash in history. Our pasts are our birth waters.

That brings us to our now. Many churches and church leaders, in the struggle to keep coping with the demands of their context, opt as a reflex for the popular responses of that context. If much has to be done, as for instance, management techniques are adopted in order to remain on top of things, to remain relevant, too much is lost if the church trades in its self-understanding for that of a business, for instance.\(^10\) The reflex may well be unconsidered: if the church becomes a corporation, in language and structure, in functions and self-awareness, its core identity as a community of believers becomes repressed. The authentic identity withers, as the body of Christ is subtly ushered into forms that serve faith poorly – to keep to the current example: if the religious community becomes a company, for instance. The same occurs when the church becomes primarily a political entity, or a cultural enclave, or an instrument of moral enforcement. As important as some of these and other matters are, being present to God, being in the presence of God, should never be relegated by these matters to some subservient part of church life. Through every activity of the faithful, God should speak.

Then, future and past may coalesce into the present experience of a believer – which summarizes the above five paragraphs. What will be crystallizes through what has been into the present – which is: being

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present to the world in the presence of God. The growing realization\(^{11}\) that there is a valid call for spirituality as a certain kind of ecumenical thread across churches, must therefore be given expression to in our time, educationally too. Naturally, therefore, a clear enough sense should be attained of what this thread, consisting of the braided twines of spirituality and mysticism, really is. Spirituality and mysticism often require the impossible: in the academic world, description.

**Spirituality and Mysticism**

Though difficult to capture in words, many people, and most religious people, have an innate sense of the above-human, namely as a kind of existential superstructure that is so evocative that it can give meaning to and make sense of life, while life itself remains hardly explicable.\(^{12}\) This sense of a fuller existence is *spirituality*, which finds expression in various ways: in Christianity, through the embracing connectedness with the Trinity and the essential gifts of God to those who sense this embrace. Such experiences of God come to the fore differently in diverse contexts, and uniquely to each individual. Yet none are somehow “more” spiritual or “less” spiritual than the others: spirituality is in this sense much like humility – if boasted about, it instantly wilts.

Certain experiences of this life-with-God are of such an intensity that it goes beyond the norms of what most religious people ever encounter. These rare experiences consist of one or more occurrences of an intimate, powerful, life-changing union with God (with the “union” variously interpreted literally or metaphorically), described as *mystical experiences*.\(^{13}\) Such intense closeness to God at times leads to periods of contemplation, either by the mystic person himself / herself or by those whose lives have been touched, through personal acquaintance or through historical study, by the mystic person. This is because of the arresting authenticity of the experience, directly (by the person concerned) or indirectly (as an awareness by others), of – in the classic formulation of Rudolph Otto – the holy *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*.

Such mystical experiences, contemplations, fasting and other related expressions of being touched by God again do not render those involved as super-Christians or as somehow more worthy of God’s love than the rest of humanity. Rather, these persons and acts (or “non-acts” such as silence or abstinence) are gifts to the community of the faithful that call for special care from this community, because they have had an engagement with God of such intensity that it transforms not only them but also those around them, including the church. Mysticism is thus not wholly otherworldly (as is often mistakenly assumed about all forms of monasticism); a mystic encounter continues to touch this world through many concrete, uplifting reverberations.

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\(^{12}\) The very valuable explanations of natural science on where life comes from / may have come from, still leaves many people with the lingering questions: “Yes, but is that all? Why do I sense something more to my life that atoms and genes and how they had developed?” Next to nature, the sense of the supernatural remains, in such a way that scientific explanations do not speak to them. To put it too roughly: natural science and faith have languages with distinct registers. The logics differ. The two musical systems both sing in harmony, but not to one another. Their beauties are dissimilar.


Because of different histories, ecclesial traditions, cultural backgrounds, language heritages, personalities, age and other factors, spirituality and mysticism come to the fore differently in different contexts. How God is heard and how God is given voice to, how the Holy is felt and how the Holy is given expression, is not universally the same. Therefore, in ecumenical context, the concept of interspirituality has become important. Interspirituality entails a heart-felt appreciation of, an empathetic responsiveness to the variety of spiritualities one encounters. This is usually related to other religious traditions, but is not meant to exclude Christian traditions other than the own (in which case the Bible retains its importance, along with other central Christian identity markers), and – very importantly – is not intended to draw into question the security of the own faith, but to enrich it. God namely shows humanity many faces (a position accepted, though in different ways, by most thinkers on the theology of religions), and we may live more fully coram Deo by also valuing the divine visages as experienced outside our usual lines of vision. To see God directly, as Psalm 18 testifies for instance, would leave us in terrors; to peer at the divine through others’ lenses, though, would enlighten us. This could happen in many ways, including:

- in the good that may come from the intersection of my spirituality with the other’s;
- in learning from differences, both who the other is and who I am;
- in enriching the respective spiritualities, as relevant aspects of one spirituality which is brought over quite naturally into the other.

Spirituality or mysticism is thus not the sole prerogative of the lonely believer. However intensely personal these foundational, yet uplifting, experiences of faith are, the contexts from which they spring and to which they speak are just as important.

Ex Africa...

Among the features that help constitute one’s spirituality, is geography: where we live co-creates our identities. Being born or living a great part of one’s life in a specific country and on a particular continent therefore naturally affects one’s spirituality; that is no less true of the African context, or better: contexts, than it is for any other region of the world. Although common perception may at times relate spirituality to a world-denying asceticism that retreats into its own existence, in practice most spiritualities include thoroughgoing, practical involvement with most aspects of ordinary life.

Initially to learn, then to experience and to practice, and on the pathway of the growth of faith, later to study one’s spirituality on African ground, in itself includes particular dimensions, some of them distinctive. The way core values of being human are socially constituted, the way land is thought of, and the relationship between the individual and the group are three examples of this. However, certain pitfalls (which are common to all geographies) should in this respect be avoided, of which three are listed here:

Uniqueness and diversity: Because of simply too little knowledge, an assumption can be made that one’s own spirituality (ways of experiencing one’s faith, and ways of giving expression to those inner experiences) should in this respect be avoided, of which three are listed here:

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senses, sensitivities and experiences) is unique, thus forgetting traits that may be held in common with other church denominations and other individuals in other regions of the world. A romanticism of the own should thus be avoided, which is often uncritical, does not stimulate self-awareness, and hinders growth towards spiritual maturity. Provincialism, pride or hubris is always best avoided. Diversity that is appreciated for the differences and commonalities, where such exist, remains spiritually edifying, nurturing maturity of faith.

Naming and undoing: One of the dangers of close-up analyses of personal religious experiences is that the vocabulary for conveying this to others does not exist. Words may thus be borrowed from other languages (for instance, “soul” from English, with which to name the continued presence of the deceased in many African worldviews); yet, these words probably capture only some of the intentions one wants to share, and then these words add their own implications. Great care should be taken to find words that share the denotations and connotations intended between communication partners. Preferable to trading in parts of the authentic concepts of faith in one culture for the sake of translation into another, would be to keep to the original word, and then to circumscribe its meaning/s carefully. In this way, the diversity and the respective authenticity are both enhanced.

Victimhood: South African sociologist Prof. M. Rabe has made the observation that, in many societies, people tend to identify themselves substantially according to the last major tragedy that had befallen them collectively (e.g. slavery, colonialism, an earthquake, an act of war). Although one’s past is of great importance in constituting who we are, also spiritually, too much is lost if that past tragedy remains the prime determiner of one’s self, even decades later. Remaining, psychologically, a victim of a past calamity leads to neuroses, which implies an unhealthy spirituality. A positive spirituality would draw on such negative matters and grow past them so that from the past the future is steered in better directions, already in the present.

From within whichever geography spirituality is lived, vigilance is required not to do the self, the group or the geography itself a disservice by either disavowing it or by drawing on it negatively. For that, all these aspects – spirituality, the self, the group, and geography itself – are just too valuable.

**Suggestions for Inclusion in Curricula**

In order to enhance the practical educational value of the theoretical framework set out above, four exercises have been designed that may be included in or adapted to ministerial formation courses. Education related to spirituality is no mere reflex matter that happens by itself. What is taught and inculcated has to be carefully considered in order to prepare students to have insights and intuitions. Therefore the formulations below are directed at students.

On a methodological note: important aspects that have been taken into consideration when designing the exercises, such as that they do not assume advanced knowledge of spirituality or mysticism, take seriously both the ecumenical and the African contexts, and are meant to kindle an appreciation for the own spiritual identity of students by also realizing and valuing alternate constructions of and expressions given to Christian identity. Though each of these suggested exercises may be undertaken on their own, depending on the time available and other contextual factors, the greatest value would be gained if all four were to be incorporated into a one module.

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23 Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
Exercise 1 – “Holy silence”: sensing ecumenical links and differences

With a group of five or six members of your church denomination, arrange a devotional meeting of being silent before God for about 10 minutes. During this meeting, each member focuses in silence on experiencing the quiet presence of God. Neither one’s own emotions nor the togetherness should be the direction of thoughts during this “holy silence”; all must be centered on God.

After going through this devotional “holy silence” exercise, discuss in the group the experience just shared. Make notes of the most common reactions described by the participating individuals.

Over a period of four more meetings (not necessarily on days following one another directly) exercise with the same group, always followed by the discussion. Keep taking notes and keep track of how the described reactions change or remain the same.

Repeat this cycle of five meetings with another group, but this time none of the other participants may be from the same church denomination as you.

After this second cycle, compare your notes of the two groups, and evaluate the typical reactions to this exercise of “holy silence”. Consider questions such as:

Could any differences be noted between the typical reactions of the two groups?
What could such differences (if they occurred) be attributed to?
What were the similarities in the two groups’ typical reactions?

Exercise 2 – Finding meaning in African saints

Identify any three African saints who come from different centuries and countries, with both genders represented, and study their lives intensely.

Draw up lists to indicate which aspects of which of these three saints appeal to you;
Analyse reflectively why it would be that these specific traits appeal to you;
Suggest ways in which these attributes that appealed most to you may be “brought home” in our time, within your life or that of your religious community, indicating also how changed contexts can be dealt with.

Exercise 3 – Writing ecumenical spirituality

South African Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner Prof. P. Meiring had once suggested that, as a way of understanding one another better, a group of representatives from different denominations ought to start writing each other’s church histories, rather than their own.

This suggestion may be fruitfully adopted as an ecumenical spirituality exercise: in a group of four to six people who know each other fairly well, from as diverse as possible a range of denominational backgrounds, assign to each person one group member whose spirituality he / she has to describe. This written description should focus on two aspects: what are the major impulses, those most noticeable, that have created the religious identity of the person, and what are the characteristic, the most evident, ways in which that person gives expression (through what they do or do not do) to their life of faith?

The experience of hearing one’s own spirituality described in another person’s terms, particularly from a different church perspective to one’s own, is often laden with surprises, and can lead to great self-insight. Therefore, in this group, the respective spiritual characterizations should be read out loud. This has the added advantage that each writer also has the validity of his or her observations peer-evaluated. (Naturally, the atmosphere should be one of mutual support and understanding.)

Exercise 4 – Re/defining spirituality

Find in academic and / or in church publications five definitions or descriptions of spirituality, and five of mysticism. Using these, draw up your own definitions of both spirituality and mysticism. (Tailor the language to be simple enough that students in their final year of schooling will understand the definition.)

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
After drawing up this new definition, consider how any of the other broad church traditions (African-initiated, Anglican, Charismatic-Pentecostal, Coptic, Lutheran, Orthodox, Reformed, Roman Catholic) may put different emphases from yours on their definitions of spirituality and mysticism. If clergy members of these denominations can be found, a worthwhile further exercise would be to ask them whether they would agree with the observations you had made.

**Bibliography**


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*Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa*

James Amanze

1. Introduction

This paper chronicles the origin and development of the ecumenical movement in Africa from the beginning of the 20th century to the present. It begins by looking at the various factors that gave rise to the ecumenical movement in Africa. After that, it traces the various initiatives that were made in different African countries towards the realization of organic church unity for the purpose of strengthening the mission of the church in Africa. Finally the paper argues that if the ecumenical movement is to continue to flourish in Africa in the 21st Century, it must adopt new approaches of ecumenical engagement in order to embrace all members of the Christian family such as Evangelicals, Pentecostals, members of the African Independent Churches and significant others. This can be done through the Global Christian Forum which has so far proved quite effective.

The primary objective of this paper is to assist theological educators and students in institutions of higher learning to appreciate the role that the African church has played over the years in its efforts to bring together the divided Christian family in order to achieve organic church unity. The paper will also help theological educators to see the need to include ecumenical studies in the curriculum in order to broaden the theological knowledge of those being trained for the mission of the Church in Africa today and beyond.

2. The Missionary Origins of the Ecumenical Movement in Africa

Peter A. Heers in his paper titled “The missionary origins of modern ecumenism” has pointed out that “the contemporary Ecumenical Movement has its roots in the Protestant missionary movement of the 19th century and its inspiration in the desire of Evangelical Protestant to achieve a unity in fellowship among themselves for greater success in the mission field. This is in line with Willem Saayman’s contention that “The ecumenical movement does not derive simply from a passion for unity; it sprang from a passion for unity that is completely fused in mission”.

D. Crafford has identified four major factors that led to the ecumenical movement in Africa. One of these was the emergence of great influential missionaries such as J. R. Mott and J. H. Oldham. These two people did their best to involve African churchmen in the work of the International Missionary Commission (IMC) and to establish missionary councils on the African continent. Their contacts with Africa produced eminent people such as Willis King, and James Aggrey, who contributed a great deal to the wider ecumenical movement in Africa. Credit is also given to the influential ecumenical activities of people such as Z. K. Matthews, Pierre Benignus, J.S. M'timkulu, J. M. Kibira, John Mbiti, Burgess Carr and others for their invaluable contribution in the formation of ecumenical organizations such as the All Africa Conference of Churches.

3 D. Crafford, “The ecumene in Africa” in Missionalia, 8:1, 7.
Coupled with this, the growing spirit of nationalism, independence and pan-Africanism contributed significantly to the ecumenical movement in Africa. As a result of the emergence of the movement towards independence, many African countries embarked on a search for self-hood and national unity. The divided churches were regarded as instruments of division. Political leaders, therefore, urged Christians to be a force for national unity. For instance, in order to achieve national unity, the government of Zaire went to the extent of forcing the Protestant Churches into a united church. At the same time, the government of Kenya advocated a policy of *harambee* (cooperation) and encouraged the churches to develop a theology of *harambee*. It is also held that the new spirit of pan-Africanism, which was a natural reaction to colonialism, created a ready atmosphere for pan-African Christian gatherings. 

In addition to this, the communal life of the African people contributed greatly to the spirit of ecumenism in Africa. It has been observed, for instance, that Africans have always displayed a spirit of social harmony and good relationships. In this regard, ecumenical efforts are welcome as a means of restoring and enhancing the communitarian society.

Furthermore, it has been noted that certain ideologies in Africa contributed, to a certain extent, towards the ecumenical spirit. The philosophies of humanism and *ujamaa* as advocated by Kenneth Kaunda and Julius Nyerere respectively, instilled in the minds of Africans a sense of humanhood, which in turn promoted a spirit of ecumenism among Christians.

Apart from the above factors, it has also been noted that urbanization, which has brought different ethnic groups together in towns and cities, has created a spirit of tolerance and dialogue among people. It has been observed, for instance, that it was pressure of urban problems in the urban areas of the Zambian Copperbelt that caused Christians from various denominations to spontaneously establish a union church in Zambia. 

Events in the missionary field in Africa point to the fact that towards the end of the 19th century the Church in Africa was mature enough to be aware of the evils perpetrated by a divided Church among the peoples of Africa. This awareness led to the formation initially of missionary conferences and national Christian councils and later to regional and continent-wide ecumenical organizations. Their objective was to move towards church unity and to enhance great ecumenical co-operation in tackling issues that affected the life of the Church in Africa. By and large, the driving force that convinced the churches to work for church unity in Africa was the desire to tackle the problems faced by the churches in the missionary field. Alec R. Vidler puts it this way:

Many thorny problems arose in the mission field which Christians from different churches could profitably study together with a view to arriving at a common mind and avoiding a conflicting witness; for example, what should be done about matrimonial relationships of converts in polygamous societies? Also, with the growth of a more positive and sympathetic attitude to non-Christian religions and cultures, the Younger Churches, whatever their denominational origin, were equally confronted by such questions as how far non-Christian religions should be regarded as a *praeparatio evangelica*, and their sacred books as counterparts to, and even a substitute for the Old Testament, and again just how far the Christian mission could rightly go in becoming genuinely indigenous. For instance, should an attempt be made to purify and, as it were, to baptize the initiation rites of pagan tribes or must they be altogether eschewed? 

It will be seen from the above text that the ecumenical movement in Africa was indeed intertwined with the desire to succeed in the mission of God which was considered as the primary objective of the missionary work in Africa.

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4 Crafford, “The ecumene...”, 7.
3. African Initiatives in the Ecumenical Movement in the 20th Century

As noted above, ecumenical relations in Africa did not come out of the blue. They emerged out of the missionary factor in the twentieth century. Such initiatives are traced back to 1900 when the Nyasaland United Missionary Conference was held in Nyasaland (now Malawi) at Livingstone. It was attended by all the missions in the country except the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. This meeting of Protestant missionaries was followed by a second conference in 1904 in Blantyre. A third meeting of a similar nature was held at Mvera in 1910 by which time it became known as the Conference of Federated Missions of Nyasaland. The objective of the conference was to hold discussions and exchange experiences with the intention of adopting a common policy in mission work. At the end of the meeting, a Consultative Board was appointed to function between the meetings of the conference.7

At the same time, the tidal wave towards organic church unity was underway elsewhere in Africa. For example, in 1902 Christian churches in Congo formed the Congo General Conference of Protestant Missions. Another meeting of this Conference was held in January, 1906 at Kinshasa (Leopoldville). Many representatives from Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Germany, Denmark, Norway and Sweden attended this conference. The delegates at the conference adopted a resolution which condemned the atrocities perpetrated under the concession system in the Congo State. It was approved and signed by fifty two missionaries.8 The idea for greater cooperation among the churches was also ripe in South Africa. As a result, in 1904 the first General Missionary Conference was held in Johannesburg. It was attended by 104 delegates representing twenty five missionary societies. This conference was followed by another which was held in July 1906 again in Johannesburg. At this conference a constitution was adopted and a number of resolutions were passed on the question of comity arrangement and cooperation among the churches. The delegates were not happy with the idea of just adopting a constitution. They went further by setting up a Board of Arbitration comprising five members elected by the conference whose task was to assist in disputes when consulted.9 A third conference of this nature and with the same objectives in mind was held in Bloemfontein in July 1909. This conference, which was attended by seventy five members three of whom were Africans, represented twenty societies thirsting for greater cooperation on church matters in the missionary field.10

A similar movement was going on in East Africa. In 1908 the churches in Kenya decided to go beyond the comity arrangement and cooperation in the translation of hymns and Scripture to what they envisaged as the “united church of Africa”. It is reported that in their bid to work for greater church cooperation, Dr Henry Scott, the leader of the Presbyterians in the Nairobi area, met Bishop J. J. Willis of the Anglican Church and other missionaries at a conference which was held in Nairobi. It was attended by forty missionaries representing eight missionary societies in the region. At this conference it was proposed that the different missionary societies in Africa should launch one African Church which would be self-governing, and self-propagating in British East Africa. The conference representatives agreed upon four points which, in their estimate, would form the basis for one African Church namely, (a) the Bible as the standard of belief, (b) The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as the expression of faith, (c) the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper and (d) duly ordained ministry.

At the end of their conference the following resolution was passed. It stated: "This conference regards the development, organization and establishment of a united, self-governing, self-supporting and self-extending native church as the ideal of our missionary work."11 To this end the churches decided to form

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8 Groves, The Planting, 291.
9 Groves, The Planting, 291.
10 Groves, The Planting, 291.
what they called a "Federation of Missions". Encapsulated in this idea were the following arrangements: (a) that each mission would be responsible in its own area, but would recognize fully the Christians from another area; (b) that missionaries would visit one another's stations, preach in one another's churches and join in ordaining one another's African pastors. Bishop J. J. Willis, one of the pioneers in this new thinking, proposed that mission work should be on "converging lines" in order to produce one African church.12

In West Africa the spirit of ecumenical relations was also taking shape. John B. Grimley and Gordon E. Robinson in their book *Church growth in Central and Southern Nigeria* have intimated that in West Africa the spirit of cooperation among Protestant Churches was manifest right from the very beginning of missionary work in the region. The Sudan Interior Mission, the Church Missionary Society and the Sudan United Mission displayed a spirit of close accord in their efforts to attain their common goal of winning Africans to Christ. To this end, in 1910 an inter-Mission Conference was held at Lokoja. The above churches discussed a number of ecumenical issues which included, among other things, church organization, training of Nigerian helpers, polygamy, wives for converts, the dowry system, the posture that a Christian should take in prayer, a common outline of worship, scripture translation, grants-in-aid for schools and the liquor traffic.13

Further ecumenical efforts were also underway in Tanganyika (Tanzania). It is reported that in August 1911 a conference was held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. This conference was attended by 14 missionaries representing the Berlin and Bielefeld Missions, the Church Missionary Society, the Leipzig Mission and the Moravians. The principal subject of discussion at the conference was the need to deploy missionary forces into the interior to combat Islam, which had made great advances among the local population.14 At the same time, the ecumenical movement was accelerating its pace in West Africa. In November 1911 at the invitation of the Scottish Presbyterians in the Calabar, Nigeria, another conference was held to which a total of thirteen delegates representing Anglicans, Primitive Methodists, Qua Ibo Mission and the United Free Church of Scotland Missions attended. The delegates discussed a wide range of issues including conditions of church membership, Christian education, and the attitude of the Church towards African customs. The idea of a Federation of Native Churches was also introduced. The spirit of the conference was expressed by A. W. Wilkie, one of the delegates, in the following words:

> We are not here primarily to establish in Africa Presbyterianism or Methodism or any other-ism, but to preach Christ and to take a lowly place, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, in laying the foundations of a Church which shall not be foreign to the African.15

As time passed on, the wind of change continued to blow on the face of the African continent towards great cooperation among Christian Churches. As people were yearning for church unity in many parts of Africa a number of ecumenical movements were taking shape in Eastern, Western, and Southern Africa. For instance, in February 1912 a conference of Protestant Missions was convened in Sierra Leone at the initiative of Bishop Walmsley. At this conference the advance of Islam in Sierra Leone became the subject of discussion. There was a call among Christians for a concerted action against what appeared to the missionaries as a threat from the Arab world. Apart from this issue, the delegates also discussed mission comity arrangements and translation of Scripture.16

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16 Groves, *The Planting*, 293.
It is important to note that the African Church had a far higher dream of church unity than that held by their mother churches in Europe and America where Christians were still embroiled in the doctrinal differences created by the Reformation. In this context, it can be argued that Africa was far ahead of time on the issue of ecumenical relations. For at a far higher level in some parts of Africa the concept of a federation of the various Christian denominations had been in the pipeline for a long time. To this end, different churches in East Africa held a conference in 1913 at Thogoro, Kikuyu, the Headquarters of the Church of Scotland Mission in Tanganyika (Tanzania) which was attended by sixty two delegates from the Church of Scotland Mission, Africa Inland Mission, the Church Missionary Society and the Methodists. The delegates proposed a scheme of federation of churches based on (a) the loyal acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as the supreme rule on matters of faith and practice, (b) the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as a general expression of fundamental Christian belief (c) recognition of common membership between the churches in the Federation, (d) regular administration of the two sacraments baptism and the Lord's Supper by outward signs and (e) a common form of church organization.  

The scheme as outlined above was accepted by all those who attended the conference which was ended with a common celebration of the Lord's Supper. In November 1913, however, the scheme was derailed when Frank Weston, the Anglican Bishop of Zanzibar, in a strongly worded letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, accused his fellow Anglican bishops in the scheme namely, W. G. Peel and J. J. Willis of heresy and schism. The matter was referred to the Consultative Committee of the Lambeth Conference. Although the Archbishop of Canterbury rejected Bishop Weston's accusations against Peel and Willis, he considered the concept of a Federation of Missions as proposed by the African churches in East Africa as inappropriate at the time. Thus the See of Canterbury put an end once and for all a courageous attempt by the churches in British East Africa to establish a united Christian Church suitable to the needs of the Africans in the region. Roland Oliver, in The missionary factor in East Africa noted that it the Kikuyu Conference was a significant landmark in the ecumenical movement because it raised issues which were of world-wide importance and which profoundly affected all later schemes for union between Episcopalians and non-Episcopalians.  

Interestingly enough at the same time as the Christian churches in East Africa were engaged in various attempts to establish a United Church of Africa, similar steps were being undertaken in West Africa. It is reported that in Nigeria a much more significant inter-Missionary Conference was held at Miago in 1920 at which conference the Sudan United Mission presented a draft of a constitution proposing a United Church of Africa. This ambitious programme, of course, did not materialize. It was far ahead of its time and people agreed to settle for much more practical ecumenical issues. 

African initiatives in ecumenical ventures were also high on the agenda in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) where an unusual extent of cooperation was being experienced. In 1914 the Conference of North-Western Rhodesia was formed with Edwin W. Smith as its first president. It became in 1922 the General Missionary Conference of Northern Rhodesia. This conference held a number of ecumenical meetings in 1924, 1927, 1931 and 1935. What was significant about this Conference was the comprehensiveness of its membership. It is reported, for instance, that by 1922 the Conference had a broad based membership consisting of representatives from the Brethren in Christ, the Dutch Reformed Church, the London Mission, the Paris Mission, the Primitive Methodist Mission, the Seventh Day Adventists, the South African Baptist Mission, the United Free Church of Scotland, the Universities Mission to Central Africa, the Wesleyan Methodist Mission and the Jesuit Fathers. Between 1927 and mid-1930s the membership of the Conference increased with the inclusion of representatives from the mission of the White Fathers

17 Groves, The Planting, 294.  
18 Groves, The Planting, 295. See also Anderson, The Church, 71-2.  
20 Grimley & Robinson, Church Growth, 78.
(1927) and the Capuchins and the Franciscans (1931) as full members. In the height of great excitement for this unusual cooperation Edwin Smith declared: “In the deepest experience of our hearts Catholics and Protestants are one: the living experience of the risen, glorified Christ is, thank God, our common possession – working together and praying together we shall grow into a larger unity.”

But alas, this tremendous experience and deep conviction that the Church is one and that all Christian people belong to a large extended family was short lived. For in 1933 the Secretary of the Conference was informed by a higher Roman authority that Roman Catholic missionaries would no longer remain in full membership and that their presence would be that of associate members only. The existing literature seems to indicate that this move was not surprising since in the 1920s the position of the Roman Catholic Church towards the ecumenical movement was clear. The encyclical *Mortalium Animos* (1928) declared that the only way in which the unity of the Church could be achieved was "by furthering the return to the one true church of Christ of those who are separated from it" something that would involve their believing in "the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff in the sense of the Ecumenical Vatican Council with the same faith as they believe in the incarnation of our Lord.”

It appears that in the 1920s Africa began to take a centre stage in ecumenical efforts. In this regard, specific reference is made to Willis King an Afro-American who later became the Bishop of the Methodist Church in Liberia. It has been documented that King was given the opportunity to speak at the World Student Christian Federation that was held in Peking, China in 1922. King, it is held, made a deep impression among the participants to the extent that "the important policy decisions made in Peking concerning race relations and the building of ecumenical student work in Africa was, to a great extent, due to him.”

One of the chief advocates of the ecumenical movement in Africa was James E. K. Aggrey from Ghana (Gold Coast). He made a passionate appeal to the churches in the north to adopt a much more sympathetic approach in their dealings with Africa and its people particularly in the area of education. Aggrey’s call was taken seriously by people both in Europe and America. Therefore, great efforts were made to advance ecumenical ventures on the African continent especially in the field of education in which Aggrey collaborated fully.

As time passed on, the impetus of the ecumenical movement in Africa continued to gather momentum. African educational issues featured prominently in ecumenical discussions and programmes. One of the ecumenical landmarks during this period was the launching of the Institute of African Languages and Culture in London and the creation in 1929 by the International Missionary Commission of the International Committee of Christian Literature for Africa.

By and large, ecumenical concerns in the 1920s placed great emphasis in the field of general and theological education. For example, in September, 1924 a very important conference on Christian Education in Tropical Africa was held at High Leigh under the auspices of the International Missionary Council. A number of people attended this conference representing different societies at work in Africa. It is reported that among the principal subjects that were debated at this conference was the question of cooperation of the Christian bodies in Africa with the various governments in areas such as education, the

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22 Groves, *The Planting*, 133.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
adaptation of education to African cultural and social needs and the adoption of up-to-date methods of promoting Christian Education in Africa which could meet the peoples' needs in the context of their social setting.\(^{29}\)

A. G. Blood has also reported that an International Missionary Conference on African problems was held at Le Zoute in Belgium from 14 to 21 September, 1926 under the auspices of the International Missionary Council. Representatives at this conference included some Africans. It is held that many important issues affecting the Church in Africa were discussed. These included, among others, the building up of the African Church, Christian marriage and polygamy, education, land, labour issues and others. The representatives envisioned a new Africa, which should be a "Christian land in all her parts and activities: Christian in commerce, in good government, in education, in methods of investigating and treating diseases and its solution of the labour problem".\(^{30}\) In the 1930s Africa continued to be the focus of ecumenical concern of the IMC. For example, in December, 1938 at the third meeting of the International Missionary Council which was held at Tambaram, Madras, Africa was well represented by representatives from East, South and Central Africa. At Tambaram a number of issues affecting the life of the Church in Africa were discussed. These included polygamy, witchcraft and the growth of African Independent Churches. The belief in witchcraft and the practice of polygamy were considered as sub-Christian and the emergence and proliferation of African Independent Churches was considered as the antithesis of the Christian mission of drawing people together into the Body of Christ. In view of the seriousness of the practice of polygamy, as it affected the life of the Church, African representatives asked the International Missionary Council to undertake research into this issue and other related matters related to the African way of life.\(^{31}\)

In the 1930s, however, there was a general desire to launch an investigation concerning theological education so much needed in the life of the Church in Africa. It was observed at this period that Africa lacked adequately trained ministers and this constituted a major obstacle in the growth and development of the Church continent-wide. Lack of theological institutions and theologically trained ministers was a serious handicap to the African churches. This awareness for the need of skilled manpower development in the field of theology necessitated the ecumenical cooperation of the churches in this area of education.\(^{32}\) In this regard, the post-war period witnessed the first attempts in ecumenical theological education in church ministry. These attempts led to the formation of joint theological ventures in Kenya and Ghana.

Ecumenical efforts in Africa continued unabated throughout the 1930s. During this period two significant proposals were made towards closer unity among the churches in East and West Africa. Once again in mid-1930s Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodist Churches came up with further plans for a united church modeled in the pattern of the United Church of South India. This plan like the Kikuyu one also did not receive Lambeth approval and, therefore, failed to materialize.\(^{33}\) Similarly another corresponding movement was ripe in West Africa, in South-Eastern Nigeria where the Evangelical Union had succeeded in drawing together the Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist Churches and the Qua Ibo Mission into a regular association. This closer association of the churches led to the formation of a Committee on Church Union in South-Eastern Nigeria. The proposed constitution for such a united church made provisions that in the new dispensation the Presbyterian and Episcopal systems would be preserved in the government of the Church. A constitutional episcopate was accepted as the basis of the union. The United Church that would come out of this arrangement would be expected to be independent but it was hoped that it would work towards greater union of churches in West Africa. It is reported that though the


\(^{30}\) Blood, *The History*, 300.

\(^{31}\) Groves, *The Planting*, 236.


people on the ground were enthusiastic for such a scheme, the plan failed because, once again, Lambeth approval was not forthcoming.34

In South Africa the ecumenical movement that began in 1904 continued unabated. Its continued existence in the 1930s is attributed to the influence exerted upon the churches by John R. Mott who visited South Africa in 1934. After due consultations with the churches a significant step was taken towards the formation of a Christian Council of Churches with the object of fostering fellowship in thinking and planning. To this end, a formal appeal was made to all the churches and missionary societies in September, 1935 to form such a council. As a result of this appeal, the Christian Council of South Africa (CCSA) was inaugurated at Bloemfontein in June 1936 with practically all the non-Roman communions represented.35

In later years this council became the vanguard in the fight against the crimes perpetrated by apartheid policies in South Africa.

It is interesting to note that in the context of Africa church and politics have been reinforcing each other. For example, one of the outcomes of the first Asiafrica ecumenical conference that was held in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955, was that it strengthened the African political leaders to work resolutely for a free Africa. This movement in turn influenced church leaders in their quest for self-hood. In this vein, attempts to unite the Church continued vigorously well into the 1960s. For instance, in Malawi a union between the Presbyterian Churches and the Dutch Reformed Church resulted in the creation of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). Talks for church union of different churches became common place in Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, and other countries in Africa. In Zambia such talks resulted in the formation of the United Church of Zambia in 1965 after twenty five years of discussions between Congregationalists, Anglicans, Methodists, Paris Evangelical Mission and the Dutch Reformed Church, although the Anglicans and the Dutch Reformed Church did not participate in the union. In Zaire, as a result of political pressure from President Mobutu Sese Seko, different Protestant Churches were forced to join the Church of Christ.36 It appears that, by and large, organic Church unity succeeded in Central Africa and, to some extent, Southern Africa but has been a disappointing failure in West Africa and somewhat in East Africa.

During the period under discussion, ecumenical relations in South Africa continued to gather pace. In 1968 a Church Unity Commission was established to proceed with talks on unity between the United Congregational Church, Bantu Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church of South Africa, Tsonga Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church of South Africa and the Church of the Province of South Africa. These attempts, however, were not crowned with the desired goal.37 One of the interesting developments of this period was the role played by the South African Council of Churches. The Council adopted a critical approach to apartheid as advocated by the South African Government. It worked tirelessly for the emancipation of the South African people regardless of colour, race or religion. Its efforts were crowned with success when Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990 and a new era began which culminated in the general elections in 1994 for a democratic government for all South Africans.

The post-apartheid era in South Africa has seen the development of a number of ecumenical ventures in several fronts. In the first instance, this period has brought about the formation of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. This is a merger of two Reformed Churches in South Africa; namely, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa. These two churches were established in 1857 as racial churches for black people and people of mixed-race (Coloureds) by white Dutch Reformed Church. The formation of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa is seen as a powerful signal to the world of the repudiation of racism and classism in the church and a move towards

34 Groves, The Planting, 233.
35 Groves, The planting, 227.
37 Barrett (ed), World Christian, 624.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
healing in the Body of Christ which transcends all racial divisions and to a much more integrated Christian fellowship.\(^{38}\)

Another important development during this period has been the ecumenical dialogue between Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians towards great church cooperation. To this end a consultation was held on 17th March, 1992. The primary objective of the consultation was to clear the way towards mutual recognition of ordained ministries. The consultation mandated the Church Unity Commission comprising the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Reformed Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, Evangelical Presbyterian Church and United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, to prepare proposals for such mutual recognition of ordained ministries.\(^{39}\) After due consultations with the churches concerned in the scheme recommendations were made in July 1994 that such mutual recognition of ordained ministries should take two stages. In the first stage member churches would be asked to recognize each other's ordained ministers as true ministers in the Church of God and allow them, while remaining ministers of their own churches, to exercise a preaching, teaching, pastoral and sacramental ministry in any Church Unity Commission church. In the second stage the churches would seek consensus on the ministry of oversight which in Anglicanism is focused in the bishop and in the other churches is vested in a corporate body such as presbytery. It is hoped that if such a consensus were achieved it would pave the way for full reconciliation and interchangeability of ministers. Discussions to this end are continuing.\(^{40}\)

In another ecumenical venture, there have been initiatives to unite the Presbyterian church of Southern Africa and the Reformed Presbyterian Church. These churches have been involved in serious negotiations which would lead to the organic union of the two churches. Both churches approved union in principle at their 1996 assemblies and instructed the negotiating committee to prepare a plan of union for consideration in 1997.\(^{41}\) Apart from the above ecumenical efforts, another ecumenical development of great significance took place in the Apostolic Faith Mission which is South Africa's oldest and largest Pentecostal denomination. Since 1913 the Church was divided on racial lines between a black church and a white church. Unity discussions began in 1975. The reunion of the Church which took place in April 1996 brought together blacks, coloureds, Indians and white groups into one Church. This union became a visible and outward demonstration of the unity of God's people in a society where the Body of Christ was divided along racial lines between blacks and whites.\(^{42}\)

Movements towards great cooperation and unity have been registered in the Lutheran Churches. Lutheran Churches in South Africa, which have also been divided along racial lines since 1912, continue to work towards a single, inclusive Lutheran body. The wish of the parties concerned with church unity is for union to occur as soon as possible. There are, however, difficulties along the path to church unity. These include: church order, how dioceses should be formed, and the legal and financial relationship of congregations to the Church as a whole.\(^{43}\) Last but not least, there have been talks towards church integration in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Since 1920s the administrative structures of the Church have followed a pattern of racial division especially in the Cape and Transvaal areas. Attempts are currently been made to unify the divergent structures of the Church which keep people structurally divided.\(^{44}\)


\(^{41}\) Best, *Survey*, 15.

\(^{42}\) Best, *Survey*, 37.

\(^{43}\) Best, *Survey*, 38.

4. Institutional Ecumenism as a Barrier to Greater Ecumenical Relations in Africa

It has been noted above that since the beginning of the 20th century the Church in Africa has been engaged in ecumenical activities designed to bring church unity in the missionary field. In early 1960s, in order to deepen the roots of ecumenism in Africa, the mainline Protestant Churches took a step further by creating regional and continental ecumenical organizations that could coordinate ecumenical efforts within regions as well as continent-wide. In this section we shall briefly make reference to three such organizations namely, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), the Evangelical Fellowship of Africa and Madagascar (EAEM) and the Organization of African Independent Churches (OAICs).

In the first instance, the 20th century saw the formation of the AACC in Kampala, Uganda in April, 1963. It brought together representatives from 100 churches and 42 countries in Africa. This was done under the belief that “the purpose of God for the churches in Africa is life together, in a common obedience to him for the doing of his will in the world.” The AACC defined itself as “a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and only Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit”. At the inaugural meeting in Kampala the primary objective of those present was formation of a united Church of Africa. According to John Poulton, the idea was to form a united Church of Africa without much concern for theological differences which genuinely divided churches elsewhere. 

Secondly, the 1960s also witnessed the formation of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM) whose primary objective has been to enhance cooperation among evangelical churches. The AEAM was formed in February 1966 by national evangelical fellowships across Africa after they realized that there was a need to form a continent-wide organization to strengthen their evangelical efforts. To this end, 192 Christian leaders from 23 countries met at Limuru, Kenya, to form the AEAM. Its purpose has been "To provide a spiritual fellowship among evangelical Christians who profess the same faith. To alert Christians to trends and spiritual dangers, which would undermine the scriptural foundation of the Gospel testimony." Since its inception, the AEAM has been functioning as (a) the axis for evangelical witness throughout Africa and Madagascar (b) a mechanism for the furtherance of the gospel and (c) as an institution that provides a working fellowship for all evangelical churches and para-church organizations in Africa.

One of the distinctive features of the Church in Africa in the 20th century has been the emergence and proliferation of African Independent Churches. Right from the start these churches faced great opposition not only from the mission churches but also from colonial as well as independent governments. In order to enhance cooperation among themselves and to have a more representative body on the African continent, the independent church movement formed the Organization of African Independent Churches (OAICs) in 1982. The OAICs has been instrumental in bringing together heads of churches from Africa, Asia, and Europe, with diverse ideas and suggestions as to how their churches can truly be independent, able to withstand opposition and at the same time not be inward-looking, but able to reach out other continents of the world.

It should be noted that the AACC, AEAM and OAICs have contributed tremendously in the advancement of ecumenism in Africa. In their own different ways, they have promoted evangelism, theological education, family life, and have tackled effectively the refugee question and degradation of the environment. They have also been engaged in conflict resolutions across Africa, have promoted democracy, enhanced the dignity of the African people, and have fought effectively against poverty,

ethnicity and discrimination against women. In recent years, they have been in the forefront in the fight against the HIV and AIDS pandemic. These achievements are a living sign of their strengths and effectiveness. However, their strengths have also been a source of their weakness. This is because the AACC, AEAM and the OAICs operate under certain guidelines that authenticate their identity quite often at the exclusion of others.

It seems to me that the quest for identity, dictated by their organizational and operational structures, have prevented full participation of other ecumenical organizations in their activities. Sometimes the institutions themselves have been hostile to one another thereby undermining the very ethos of the ecumenical movement in Africa. For instance, there are instances when the AEAM has been working in opposition to what the AACC does in the missionary field. This trend seems to have a global perspective. For example, Wesley Granberg-Michaelson has noted that when the network of evangelical institutions emerged after the Second World War, they were generally antagonistic to other ecumenical bodies. In the U. S, for instance, the National Association of Evangelicals was formed as an alternative to the perceived “liberalism” of the National Council of Churches. Again, when the World Evangelical Fellowship was established, it provided a global fellowship to evangelical churches as bodies not willing to trust the opportunities and agenda offered by the World Council of Churches. What this means is that, quite often, institutional ecumenism has tended to create negative attitude of one ecumenical institution against another to the detriment of the ecumenical movement as a whole. This has been one of the challenges facing the ecumenical movement in Africa in the 20th century. I concur with Granberg-Michaelson when he argues that when “ecumenical institutions continue operating in the present patterns, they become increasingly more marginal in the global Christian community, despite whatever activities they are carrying out.”

5. Quest for New Approaches in Ecumenical Relations in the 21st Century

Granberg-Michaelson in his paper titled “The future of Ecumenism in the 21st Century” has argued convincingly that if ecumenism is to find its place in the 21st Century “it must find fresh forms of expression, new avenues to overcome divisions, and inspiring vision that spiritually engages the churches and its members in this calling”. According to Granberg-Michaelson, the future of ecumenical relations world-wide lies in answer to three crucial questions one of which is whether ecumenism will be ecumenically inclusive or institutionally protective. He argues that the future of ecumenism lies on the inclusive participation of all stakeholders. At present, the disturbing fact is that the churches around the world, that are fast growing and with the most vitality, are not connected to the institutional or relational fabric of the ecumenical movement as a whole.

If we apply Granberg-Michaelson’s ideas to Africa, we shall realize immediately that the future of African ecumenism lies not so much on institutional protectionism but on ecumenical inclusivism. The prospects of flourishing ecumenical relations in Africa are phenomenal for it is in Africa more than anywhere else that the number of people, who believe in the saving power of Jesus Christ, is growing in leaps and bounds especially among Evangelicals, Pentecostals and African Independent Churches. This is in sharp contrast with the mother churches overseas where church membership is shrinking. This being the case, there is an urgent need for mainline Protestant Churches to build links with Pentecostals, Evangelicals, Roman Catholics, Orthodox Churches, African Independent Churches and the newest

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Charismatic Churches. According to Granberg-Michaelson, this is an absolute imperative in the 21st century.53 Granberg-Michaelson, has observed that quite often, ecumenical bodies have been content in keeping the Pentecostal and Evangelicals on the margins relating to them with less intentionality and interest. This has slowed down the pace of the ecumenical movement and the best way out of this quandary is to be as inclusive as possible. Granberg-Michaelson puts it succinctly thus:

The 21st Century offers new possibilities for a more inclusive ecumenical effort that can seek common witness with strong emerging evangelical voices, churches and alliances. But to do so, ecumenical institutions and agencies will have to confront their formal boundaries, their informal biases, and even their subconscious prejudices that stand as barriers to these possibilities. As we look forward into the first few decades of the 21st Century, an ecumenical body with evangelicals, Pentecostals and Catholics remaining out of the room, or at best as polite observers, will have failed in its foundational mission and forfeited its capacity for common Christian witness.54

With the above text in mind, it seems to me that one of the daunting challenges facing the ecumenical movement in Africa today is how to expand the barriers of institutional ecumenism. At present, there is a general agreement among scholars that an inclusive form of ecumenical relations may need to take the form of the Global Christian Forum (GCF) which so far has proved workable. For lack of space, we shall cite here two examples to show how this has worked in recent years.

Granberg-Michaelson has reported that in 2005 a GCF conference was held in Lusaka, Zambia. About 70 church leaders from all parts of Africa and all parts of Christ’s body, gathered together. According to the report, the representatives came from the Baptist, Anglican, Pentecostal, Reformed, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Seventh Day Adventist, Evangelical and Lutheran Churches. Others came from the All Africa Conference of Churches, Association of Evangelicals in Africa, the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, the World Student Christian Federation, World Vision International, the United Bible Societies, the African Theological Fellowship, various national Councils of Churches and African Instituted Churches. What was important about this gathering is that it had never happened before and people learned a great deal from one another. They discovered that despite their differences, they had a lot in common that bound them together as the body of Christ.55

A similar conference was held in Limuru, Kenya in November 2007. According to sources at hand, 250 church leaders were present from more than 70 countries. Representatives came from different organizations and churches including African Instituted Churches, Pentecostals, Mainline Protestant Churches, Anglicans, Roman Catholics and various Orthodox groups. It is estimated that around 40% of the representatives were from Evangelical and Pentecostal groups, many from the global south. What was important about this conference is that it was truly a global gathering. It enabled the representatives to build respect and trust in one another, removed their ignorance and prejudice and helped them to recognize and appreciate their differences and things that they had in common which bound them together as Christians.56

It is important to note that the GCF approach has a number of advantages. In the first instance, it offers participants the opportunity to share with one another their personal journey with Jesus Christ through story telling. The method of story-telling enables people to relate to others who had similar elements to their story and that similar faith and experience are easily recognized even though terminology or worship patterns may be extremely varied.

53Granberg-Michaelson, “The future”, 5
Coupled with this, the story-telling method creates deep fellowship which, in turn, creates an effective basis for discussions. It also creates a fertile ground for informal personal networking. In the process, people discover vital aspects about one another. This is difficult to achieve in normal circumstances. People also appreciate other peoples’ forms of worship and other traditions as they pray together.

In addition to this, the GCF creates “open space” where participants feel welcome and accepted and where genuine fellowship occurs. Since the representatives are made up of participants only the sharing of their experiences of their spiritual journeys with Jesus embedded in the process becomes the basis for further relationships, discussions, prayers and Bible study.

Besides, since the GCF is recognized as a “new table”, Pentecostals and Evangelicals as well as other people are willing to come as equal partners. Such participation helps to build ecumenical relationships on a wider basis than hereto before. It has been suggested that if the sharing process that takes place in the GCF could be replicated at the regional, national and local levels around the world, it could have great impact in Christian life and mission at the grass roots level.

Moreover, the GCF process represents the hope of ‘transformed ecumenism’ because it gives a different context in which to address the differences that exist within the Christian family worldwide. So far it appears that many people who have been exposed to this process are already discarding the historical baggage that they inherited in the past including denominational divisions and prejudices.

Furthermore, it is argued that the GCF represents a ‘renewed theology’ because it returns the focus to God rather than to peoples’ doctrinal understanding. It, therefore, emphasizes peoples’ engagement with God and with each other as disciples of Christ rather than abstract propositions about God.

To crown it all, the GCF offers openness to learning from others rather than unwarranted dogmatism in one’s received traditions. This enables people to develop a dynamic approach to faith and doctrine rather that a static one. This is possible because the GCF envisages a flexible network suitable for mission rather than a rigidly ordered structure.57

On the basis of all the above, I am in full agreement with Granberg-Michaelson when he says that the “future of ecumenism must be shaped by a creative and inclusive ecumenism, rather than a protective institutionalism, by compelling spiritual vision rather predictable organizational momentum and by deep change rather than incremental change”.58

### 6. Concluding Remarks

This paper has tentatively reconstructed the history of ecumenical relations among the churches in Africa from 1900 to the present times and has noted its successes and failures. It has been pointed out that the history of the ecumenical movement is intertwined with the history of Christian missions in the 19th century. The paper has noted that ecumenical activities in Africa can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century and have continued to the present day in different forms. It has been suggested in this paper that if the ecumenical movement is to continue and flourish in the 21st century it should include other stakeholders such as Evangelicals, Pentecostals, African Independent Churches and other members of the Christian family. This can be achieved through the appropriate instruments of the ecumenical movement, like National Council of Churches, the All African Conference of Churches in taking up some of the broadened terms of reference which was created through the Global Christian Forum59 which has so far proven to be an effective means of bringing people of different ecumenical organizations as individuals together to an open forum as equal partners.

59 See website: http://www.globalchristianforum.org/
As indicated in the introduction of this paper, it is hoped that the efforts carried out by the African church both in the past and present towards achieving Christian church unity will inspire theological institutions to include ecumenical studies in their curriculum. There is no future of African ecumenism without a solid base of studies, research and training for African ecumenism in theological education on the African continent. Such a curriculum on African ecumenism should include not only the historical perspectives of the ecumenical movement but also its theology and its application in the life, work, worship, spirituality and practice of the Church in Africa today. Introductory textbooks for the development of such a curriculum already exist.\(^{60}\) One of these is *A history of the ecumenical movement in Africa* (1999), which was published by the author for this very purpose.\(^{61}\)

**Bibliography**


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\(^{60}\) See for instance the core bibliography for courses on ecumenism and World Christianity which was published by WCC-ETE: http://library.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcclibrary/Core_biblioography_ecumenism_Version_20100808.pdf

\(^{61}\) Amanze, James, N: *A History Of The Ecumenical Movement In Africa* (Gaborone: Pula Press, 1999)

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
SUNDAY SCHOOLS AS THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN NURTURE AND THEIR RELEVANCE FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Peter M. Mumo

Introduction

The introduction of western Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa in the Nineteen century impacted profoundly on African peoples. The African continent represents the fastest expanding field of Christianity in the world.\(^1\) The missionaries who introduced Christianity in Africa deployed a variety of strategies. One of the most significant institutions they used was Sunday school programme. Though foreign to Africans, Sunday schools have been instrumental in recruiting Church members, founding of new Church congregations and socialising Church members. It is important to note that nearly all Church denominations and local Churches in Africa have a Sunday school programme.\(^2\)

This article analyses the arrival of Christianity in Africa and the role played by Sunday schools in its growth and expansion. It also examines the objectives of Sunday schools by assessing their contribution in Christian nurture and the challenges Sunday schools contend with in Africa. Finally the article investigates the relevance of Sunday schools for theological education in Africa.

Arrival of Western Christianity in Africa

Christianity was introduced in sub-Saharan Africa beginning in the nineteenth century. Earlier attempts in introducing Christianity by the Portuguese did not bear much fruits. The pioneer missionaries to East Africa who included J. Rebmann and J. Krapf encountered numerous challenges such as dense forests teeming with wild animals, hostile communities such as the Galla, non-existent infrastructure, illiteracy and lack of a lingua franca. It was only at the East African coast where Kiswahili was commonly used by the coastal peoples. Despite these odds, they managed to go to the interior of Kenya and Tanzania where they managed to convert a handful to Christianity.\(^3\) Though the pioneer missionaries did not achieve spectacular results, R. Oliver, credits them with having crafted a vision of a chain of mission stations in the interior of Africa.\(^4\) The pioneer missionaries translated the New Testament into Kiswahili language and also wrote Kiswahili-English Dictionary.\(^5\) These became significant to later missionaries in Africa. The colonial governments engaged in the development of infrastructure in various parts of Africa. For example, the construction of Kenya-Uganda railway line in East Africa acted as a catalyst of expansion and growth of Christianity.\(^6\) After its completion different missionary societies poured in large numbers to different East African countries. They set up mission stations across the sub-Saharan Africa. In the mission stations they used various strategies to reach Africans. For example, they started schools, health centres and other institutions which were intended to bring about social transformation. Among some of the missionaries the

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\(^{5}\) W.B. Anderson, The Church in East Africa, 5.

main reason of starting literacy classes was to enable Africans to become literate so that they could read the Bible.

Through the use of education several Africans were converted into Christianity. Despite these efforts many Africans still followed the African Traditional Religions and culture. It took time to convince them to be converted. Although the missionaries were allowed to start mission schools in Africa, the secular aspect of education was given more emphasis. Hence the missionaries could not impact as deeply as they wished. On top of this, the schools attracted followers from other denominations which limited a free hand in Christian nurture.

There were still other Africans who were not reached through these strategies. Hence the missionaries had to use other exclusive ways in which they could socialise Africans according to their denominational orientations. One such method was the introduction of Sunday schools. Each missionary society introduced a Sunday school programme. Through the use of Sunday schools and other methods Christianity managed to reach African villages and acquired a large following.

**Introduction of Sunday Schools in Africa**

A concise Dictionary of Ecclesiastical terms defines Sunday school as:

A school, mainly for children and young people held on Sundays for instruction in the Bible and the teachings of the Church.7

Before discussing the founding of Sunday schools and their role in African society, it is significant to state that the founding of Sunday schools was not the beginning of giving religious education to children and young people.8 Different cultures have always had different ways of imparting religious education to children and other members of the society.9 For example, among the Jews the responsibility of conducting religious education was bestowed on the tribe of Levi which was considered as the national religious educators.10 When Jesus Christ was a child he went through the Jewish religious education system. Africans likewise had an elaborate system of imparting religious and other forms of education. The entire African way of life was interlaced with different types of education. There were proverbs and wise sayings which had profound message to pass to society on all aspects of life.11 Rites of passage were loaded with education dealing with all aspects of life such as morality, spirituality, relationships and life skills. On African education system J.S. Mbiti observes:

Initiation rites have a great educational purpose. The occasion ... marks the beginning of acquiring knowledge which otherwise is not accessible to those who have not been initiated.12

Sunday schools were founded by Robert Raikes in Britain in 1780. He intended to provide education to children who had no access to it. Due to his philanthropic concern he saw it fit to make a contribution in the lives of children who were socially neglected by starting Sunday schools. In his Sunday schools there was reading, spelling, worship, study of the Bible and catechism. This humble beginning marked the origin of an institution which was to transform the realm of Christian education for many years to come.

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Sunday schools were introduced in Africa as a component of the Christianity the western missionaries propagated. In Europe and U.S.A. where the missionaries came from Sunday schools had become a part of the Church programmes. On the transformation of Africa, J.N.K. Mugambi writes:

The modern missionary enterprise which introduced Christianity to the interior of East Africa grew within that background in which Christian culture was incorporated to form “Christian civilization”.

The main objective of many missionaries coming to Africa was evangelization of Africans. Wherever they went, they started mission stations at strategic positions and then started spreading the gospel. The mission stations acted as oases of a new change. It was from the mission stations that Christianity spread far and wide.

In Britain and U.S.A. Sunday schools were initially started to equip poor children with literacy skills and Christian teachings whereas in Africa Sunday schools were introduced to instruct children in the “word of God” and whenever possible to convert them into Christianity. Some missionaries were convinced that conversion of children was easier than that of adults. Adult Africans by the time the missionaries wanted to convert them had already acquired African religion and culture. Some of them had already made life-long commitments such as marrying several wives or had adopted social habits which were contrary to Christian teachings. The children were considered to be fresh and less influenced by African culture.

After the missionaries discovered the great potential in children conversion, they started missionary schools which provided secular education. At the same time they started Sunday schools in areas where their influence had penetrated. The first Sunday schools were organised in communities where at least some Africans had been converted. For example, at all mission stations Sunday school classes were conducted. In the first Sunday schools children were taught lessons prepared from the Bible. The people who attended were mainly children but due to curiosity some newly converted grown-ups attended. The first Sunday school teachers were mainly the wives of the missionaries.

To entice more children to attend Sunday schools the missionaries gave presents such as clothes, sugar and sweets. The effort of opening Sunday schools in unevangelised areas paid dividends because though initially children enrolled later adults were converted. In fact in many Church denominations in Africa, Sunday schools are the first to be started in new areas and then local Churches are founded. Sunday schools have become some of the leading educational programmes in the Church in Africa.

Despite suggestions to extend Sunday schools to adults, Sunday schools in Africa attract mainly children of three years of age and adults of up to twenty years of age. Enrolment in Sunday school is very robust. For example, in a study conducted in A.I.C Kenya, it was found that in many Churches Sunday schools have higher enrolments than other educational and even Church services. Though Sunday schools are very poorly equipped, they continue to attract thousands of children and young people in Africa.

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Contribution of Sunday Schools in Christian Nurture

Although Sunday school is an institution many people have heard about, participated in and sent their children to, very few people in Africa have proper understanding of it. From its inception, Sunday school was mandated with the responsibility of providing young people with teachings which would contribute to improved life and wellbeing. Over the years many Church denominations in Africa have developed elaborate curricula for the Sunday school programme. In Africa Sunday school associations have not been founded in all countries. South African National Sunday school association started in 1915 has been active in coordinating Sunday school activities in various denominations in southern Africa. It helps in supply of informational literature, holding of conventions and provision of services. In East Africa evangelical denominations have cooperated in production of learning materials for Sunday schools.

In a study which was conducted in Africa Inland Church in Kenya, East Africa, it was found that the Sunday school programme has four objectives. Let us analyse these objectives and examine their contribution to Christian nurture. The first objective of the Sunday schools is providing Bible teachings. Sunday school lesson books contain Bible stories which are extracted from both the Old and New Testaments. Sunday school pupils also sing Christian songs and Choruses which are full of Christian messages. The pupils are also expected to recite some memory verses from the Bible. During major Christian occasions such as Easter and Christmas Sunday school pupils recite verses from the Bible. In the Africa Inland Church Kenya, just like in other denominations in Africa, Sunday school pupils perform some skits prepared from the Bible.

The above mentioned activities performed by Sunday school pupils expose the young people of Africa to the contents of the Bible. Although the approaches used in different Church denominations may be different, the children are provided with Bible teachings. They come to know important personalities and events in the Bible. The Bible teachings assist them to know how and why things are the way they are. They come to learn about the origins of the world, the purpose of human life and destiny of human life. They learn about the origin of sin and God’s plan for salvation.

Sunday schools offer the Church in Africa an opportunity to nurture Church members. In the African traditional society educating children was the responsibility of both the family and the society. After Christianity was introduced the school and Church became the main sources of education for members of the society. School education is geared towards employment hence it stresses on equipping with knowledge and technical skills. Children come into contact with the church through Sunday school and through it they are exposed to appropriate lessons that deepen their understanding of the Bible and life. In other words Sunday school equips children with an education for life and being. For example, they come to know God as the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end (Revelations 1:8). They are encouraged to become children of God. They are taught that God expects them to do His will. They are also taught how God loves them and expects them to love him and also to love their neighbours. There cannot be peace if people do not co-exist peacefully. Children are also provided with a moral code. From tender age, the children are imprinted in their conscience with the knowledge of how to differentiate right from wrong. A sense of fairness, equity and justice is ingrained in their minds.

Another objective of Sunday school is to bring children to Christ. Though some children are not in a position to accept Jesus Christ as their personal saviour; by being exposed to Jesus Christ from tender age provides them with a role model. Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, is the excellent example children in


Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Africa are exposed to. It is significant that despite the decay, secularism and materialism depicted in the mass media, children are exposed to a person, who being God chose to die for the sins of the world. Jesus is introduced as an ordinary human being and also as the son of God.

By attending Sunday school children meet with other children and teachers who represent a world view different from the polluting environments they live in. At Sunday school they are taught Bible stories which depict people with good qualities worthy of emulation. They are exhorted to have good qualities such as humility, peace loving, and love for one another, decency, justice, fair play and kindness. Such experiences assist children in moulding their character and strengthening their conscience.

By being Sunday school pupils at a time when their conscience is in the process of formation, though they may not accept Jesus Christ as their personal saviour a very strong Christian foundation is laid. Attendance of Sunday school prepares children and young people for salvation. On salvation E. Eavey writes the following:

> Conversion should not be taught or urged as the ultimate end of all the teaching...conversion should be shown to be a beginning not the goal or end.... it is entering the door with a view of a living."\(^{26}\)

Sunday schools lay the foundation for children’s future Christian development. Although Sunday schools introduce Christianity to children slowly and gradually, through it they come to have basic knowledge of significant personalities and events as recorded in the Bible. For those children and young people who after Sunday school fall off Church participation, the Sunday school teachings they receive remain the only systematic knowledge of Christianity they have.

The third objective of Sunday school is to relate Bible teachings to daily life.\(^{27}\) Sunday schools aim at relating the lessons from the Bible to the daily life. The stories found in the Bible took place many centuries back and also concern people and cultures that are unfamiliar to children being taught.\(^{28}\) Sunday schools aim at making children understand the meaning of the stories in the Bible by relating them to the things they see and experience. After relating the stories to daily life, the teacher is supposed to show his/her pupils how to behave when confronted by similar situations.\(^{29}\) Though this objective is pertinent to making Sunday school lessons relevant, the calibre of Sunday school teachers in most cases are academically challenged to creatively apply the lessons.

The fourth objective of Sunday school is to prepare for Church membership.\(^{30}\) Sunday schools are a training ground for Church membership. They act as agencies for recruiting new members for the church. The curriculum of a Sunday school of a specific Church denomination is designed in such a way that it emphasizes the main teachings of the Church. Through such lessons children are prepared for eventual full Church membership. Sunday schools act as a nursery through which new Church members are recruited and nurtured.

Sunday school pupils and young people are considered as a very important segment of the Church because through them the continued existence of the Church is assured. Through Sunday schools children are drawn into Church participation in Africa. Sunday school children come from both Christian and non-Christian families. Children from non Christian families are encouraged to attend Sunday school by children from Christian families who are their play mates at school and home. Some parents who are not Christians encourage their children to attend Sunday school so that they acquire good qualities.


After children join Sunday school they go through several classes. The number of classes in a Sunday school depends on the number of students and age groups. In the various classes children are exposed to a variety of Biblical teachings. By the time young people stop attending Sunday school, most of them are already full members of the Church. As they attend Sunday school, they also attend catechetical classes that eventually lead them to being baptized.

Sunday schools also recruit future Church leaders. Some of the Sunday school teachers end up becoming Pastors. Some former Sunday school teachers join other careers and are drawn into the Church as Church elders. Attendance of Sunday school inspires many African Christians to become church leaders in various church programmes.

Problems Afflicting Sunday Schools in Africa

The programme of Sunday school is haphazardly introduced in many Church denominations in Africa. Due to lack of proper planning, professional implementation and inadequate supervision, Sunday schools are afflicted by a myriad of problems and challenges. Though Sunday schools play a useful role in the Church their attractiveness and effectiveness are marred by the manner in which they are conducted.

One common observation on Sunday schools is that they are led by children. In a study done on Sunday schools in Machakos District, Kenya, the ages of Sunday school teachers were given as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 – 17 years</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 20 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 years</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 and above</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>75</td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The results indicated that in the eight Churches studied only 24% of the total Sunday school teachers were seventeen years old and below. Although the statistical figures indicate that the majority of Sunday school teachers are grown-ups, there is a problem with some individual Churches which does not come out in the above table. In one Church it was found that 80% of the total Sunday school teachers were seventeen years old and below.

Some Church denominations have done a good job by ensuring that Sunday school teachers are a mixture of young and grown-ups. There are many other Church denominations where Sunday schools are led by children and young people. There are also many other cases where there are very few Sunday school teachers. This has impacted towards compromising the quality of Christian nurture given. Training of Sunday school teachers is another problem facing Sunday schools in Africa. Some Church denominations have not created opportunities for training Sunday school teachers. In a study conducted in Africa Inland it was found out that Ukamba Bible College and Scott Theological college have course units which equip trainee pastors on how to train Sunday school teachers.

Sunday schools in Africa are affected by insufficient facilities. In many Church denominations no deliberate efforts have been made to provide the basic facilities such as study rooms, seats, writing materials, blackboards, lesson books, teaching aids, registers and stationery. Lack or inadequacy of the above facilities has hampered the smooth running of Sunday schools.

There is lack of awareness about what Sunday school does in the Church. The levels of lack of awareness are not limited to the laity only it is also found among the clergy. Many pastors/priests and

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Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Church elders rarely visit Sunday school classes to assess their effectiveness or shortcomings. Some Church members do not know what the objectives of Sunday school are. Some parents simply send their children to Sunday school because they see others doing it.

**The Relevance of Sunday Schools for Theological Education in Africa**

According to K. Dickson, Theology entails reflection, the reflection has situation reality and there is communication of this reality. Theology involves a critical exercise which endeavours to understand and apply Christianity in the contexts of Christians.\(^{33}\) To A. Boesak, theology is a critical reflection on society and the life of the Church.\(^{34}\) On the other hand African scholars have defined education as community’s way of passing on her accumulated knowledge and insights to its members to enable them ensure the continuity of the community.\(^{35}\) J.N.K. Mugambi defines theological education as the institutionalized process through which the theologians of a particular religion are trained.\(^{36}\) S.K. Mackie argues that time has come to conceive theological education in a much broader way as the education of leaders who express their Christian vocation in many different ways and not necessarily as full time Church workers.\(^{37}\)

It is evident that Africans are in dire need to be equipped with skills of critical analysis, problem-solving, decision making, conflict resolution and effective planning.\(^{38}\) Hence the theological education needed in contemporary Africa should equip the clergy and other leaders of society so that they are able to empower their followers and create critical awareness.

Sunday schools have contributed in introducing young Africans to the basic concepts of Christianity. As discussed above from the age of three years of age children and young people are introduced to the core teachings and practices of Christianity. By being exposed to these concepts Africans are introduced to the Christian world view. In many ways the Christian world view has similarities and differences with African world. Although at this age no critical articulation is done, the materials students of Sunday school are exposed to contain ideas which are systematically presented.

The four objectives of Sunday school are intended to communicate significant knowledge about Christianity. For example, the objective of giving Bible teachings is intended to present well articulated knowledge, though in a simplified manner the major doctrines of Christianity are communicated to young people. The objectives of converting into Christianity and preparing for Church membership are also of theological relevance because theology has to be done within a community of believers. The fourth objective of relating Bible teachings to daily life involves theological articulation. As argued earlier some Sunday school teachers in most parts of Africa are not competent to achieve this objective due to their limited knowledge and skills. Some of the materials prepared for Sunday schools tend to lean towards western Christianity and practices. The African world view is ignored or given in negative light.

The current trend in Africa and globally is that of inculturation of the Gospel in peoples world views. The available materials for Sunday school are not adequately contextualized to address the African situation. Even some of the pastors are not theologically trained to address the Africa’s concerns.

Sunday schools are relevant in theological education because they equip prospective students of theological education with basic knowledge on which they base their theological articulation. Most of those

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who enrol in Bible schools, theological colleges and universities have gone through Sunday schools. For example, in a study which was done on theological education in Africa Inland Church it was found out that the first students of the pioneer Ukamba Bible School which was started in 1928 had gone through Sunday schools. Majority of those who enrol for theological education are former students of Sunday schools. Among many Churches in Africa, the Sunday school programme is the only systematic educational programme. In fact it has been suggested that Sunday schools be extended to all the members of the Church. Unfortunately this has not been actualized. The materials used in Sunday Schools attempt to articulate the major doctrines of the Church.

Sunday schools have the potential of empowering young Africans to be knowledgeable about Christianity and African culture. Theological education in many parts of Africa has not succeeded in equipping pastors with skills which enable them to bring new ideas in the Sunday school programme. In some Churches Sunday schools are run the same way they were run during missionary period. The materials used for Sunday schools need to be redesigned so that they critically address the African perspective. Children in Africa need to be sensitized from early age about the African challenges. There is need for retraining Sunday school teachers so that they may be effective in articulating Sunday school teaching in a way that will stress African identity, the place of the gospel in the African situation and the challenges besetting African societies.

The other area of Sunday school which is relevant in theological education is curriculum development. In this area the curriculum used in Sunday schools can benefit greatly from the theological articulation. The content of the curriculum of Sunday schools can be reflected upon to bring out a programme that takes care of African concerns. Instead of making Sunday schools a place to simply memorise memory verses, singing and relaxing, efforts can be made to enrich the curriculum so that it addresses the concerns of Africans in the twenty first century.

For example, in a study done on Theological education in Africa Inland Church it was found out that the curricula of Scott theological College and other A.I.C bible colleges there are specific courses designed to empower pastors to be involved in children ministry. The most common course is on training Sunday school teachers. Because of this course when pastors leave theological colleges they become instructors of Sunday school teachers. This move has greatly benefited Sunday schools in Africa Inland Church.

Also in line with Global Alliance for advancing holistic child development, Scott Theological College offers courses which equip pastors with skills for dealing with children issues. One such course entitled Introduction to Ministry, covers topics such as general characteristics of children and spiritual needs of children. In another course, Theology of Ministry, topics such as principles of Sunday school, organising and administering educational programmes, recruiting and training of Sunday school teachers are covered. Yet in another course, Christian education for children, topics such as needs of children, how a local church can have an effective ministry to children, principles of scripture memorisation, ways of explaining the gospel to children and principles of storytelling are covered.

Improved Sunday schools will benefit Church members when they are mainstreamed in the programmes of the Church so that they are not seen as an appendix of the Church. If Pastors are well trained and actively involved, Sunday schools will play a more significant role in a changing African society.

Christian educational programmes in Africa are run by some individuals who are not theologically empowered. Some of them have minimum secular education and theological training. This has hampered the transformation of Sunday schools. In many Churches Sunday schools have continued as business as usual. In other words they continue operating without changes even when the situations they operate in

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Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
continue changing. There is need to deploy well trained theologians in Sunday schools and other Christian educational programmes.

Conclusion

Sunday schools are an important organ of the Church in Africa. Despite the haphazard way they are run and the challenges they encounter they still remain robust. They continue to enrol large members and give Christian nurture to millions of Africans. They have aided theological education in nurturing Christians in the basic concepts of Christianity. Churches in Africa need to invest in Sunday schools by equipping them with facilities, personnel and relevant learning materials.

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1. Case Study – A Sunday Morning in Kinshasa

The big suburban church in Kinshasa has a famous Sunday School. The church invested in the infrastructure, erecting an all-purpose education centre that also serves as a kindergarten and general training centre during the week. The Sunday School is well organised, with committed and disciplined teachers assigned to various tasks according to a detailed roster. Children are divided into classes according to age, starting at about 4 years, running through to 14 years of age. Although some of the classes are big, up to 50 children in one room, the teachers (moniteurs) are allocated two or three to a class, which helps with the general order.

The teachers are well prepared. They use an international curriculum with neat student books and teacher's manuals and children are assessed regularly, with an annual examination leading to a certificate for the faithful and a final 'graduation' when the children turn 15.

Sunday meetings follow a regular schedule: The children are dropped off by their parents, many of whom leave to attend the main worship service in the worship centre. Before being dispatched to their classes, children and teachers meet together in a plenary for announcements and special arrangements, lead by the Sunday School superintendant. In an orderly fashion children then move to their classes. As the children enter the room, they are assigned to their seats by an assistant teacher, filling up the desks from the front. The assistant teacher wears a sash embroidered with the word 'Silence!' and carries a pointing stick. He normally performs the roll call, checks the student's books and awards merits or demerits according to punctuality, assignments and general behaviour. During the class he will move around, helping the teacher by maintaining order.

The teacher begins the day's lesson by writing the number and title of the lesson on the blackboard, allowing the children to copy it in their exercise books. She or he then recaps the previous Sunday's lesson, appointing children to recite the memory verse, sometimes handing out a short test. Depending on the level of the class and the curriculum, the lesson of the day will either focus on a story from the Bible, with a moral lesson attached, or dogma, with a moral lesson attached. Normally a memory verse will be drilled in, primarily by repetition. Singing and visual aids play a bigger role in the junior class groups.

The lesson closes with a prayer (often by a child as punishment for misbehaviour in class) and the children are sent home with a memory verse as assignment.

Parents from all over the city like to send their children to this particular Sunday School, because of the smooth operation, the above average facilities, the discipline, the programmes and material and the fact that French is used as language of tuition (improving the language proficiency of especially the preschoolers).

The church leaders are mystified by the gap in church attendance of the age group 15-25 years. They consider investing in a better sound system to draw more teenagers to church.

2.1 A short history of an “education” paradigm – Sunday School

On a Sunday morning in 1780 an English newspaper editor by the name of Robert Raikes (1735-1811) gathered a group of ‘ragamuffin’ children of chimney sweeps together in a home across the local prison in Sooty Alley, Gloucester for a lesson in reading and spelling. This is traditionally considered as the birth of the Sunday School Movement. Others, notably the Reverend Thomas Stock and the playwright Hanna More, joined in and helped to expand the work. Within 20 years the number of children – and adults – involved in Sunday Schools grew to 200,000 and the Sunday School Movement rapidly grew to become an influential global phenomenon.

Two things are worth noting concerning the Sunday School Movement:

1) It was not the first time Christians responded to the need for education. Even during the time of Raikes other similar schools were running in Britain and elsewhere, aimed at providing education to those who for some reason did not have access to the existing educational systems. In fact, it could be said that Raikes built on a tradition that went back to the very beginnings of the church and before. In 64 AD, noticing the plight of children who grow up without fathers and therefore are denied the opportunity for education, the high priest of Jerusalem, Yehoshua ben Gamla, established a system of elementary schools in every community, where children began studying at age six or seven.

The church followed suit. While the role of the parents in educating their own children remained the first concern, the church recognised her responsibility in filling the gaps where parents either were absent or incompetent in fulfilling their educational duty. As Wilfrid Ryan et al. states: “No document could be more explicit than the Decree of the Third Council of Lateran (1179): ‘That every cathedral church have a teacher (magistrum) who is to teach poor scholars and others, and that no one receive a fee for permission to teach’ (Mansi, XXII, 234)”.

From the onset the church of the reformation responded to the same need. The Church of Scotland, for example, set out a programme for spiritual reform in January 1561 setting the principle of “a school teacher for every parish church and free education for the poor” provided for by an Act of the Parliament of Scotland, passed in 1633, which introduced a tax to pay for this programme.

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1 For the sake of comparison education is defined in its narrower sense as the “discipline that is concerned with methods of teaching and learning in schools or school-like environments as opposed to various nonformal and informal means of socialization.”. Dictionary.com. © Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/education (accessed 2.5.2012).


6 Wilfrid Ryan, “Schools.”


What was different in Raikes’ case was that his movement started outside the official church, and although many local parishes gave their support, it took a considerable time for the official church to accept the Sunday School Movement as a legitimate partner.9

2) The Sunday School movement had a definite social aim. “Sunday school founders were less concerned about the recipients’ religious indoctrination than about the growing numbers of working children who seemed to be slipping through the cracks in the educational system”10.

Sunday School was about more than reading, writing and arithmetic, however. It was seen as a tool to social reform. Raikes and others were deeply concerned about the moral decay amongst the worker class citizens of England and saw the key to a better society in educating the young. “If the child could learn morals and establish good ethical foundations at this early age then society as a whole would be better tomorrow.”11 Values such as self-discipline, industry, thrift, improvement, egalitarianism and communalism were seen as ‘respectable’ and parents of the workers class wished to see these developing in their children. This was one reason for the popularity and rapid growth of the Sunday Schools.12 The Sunday School Movement also helped to combat the cultural vacuum created by the industrial revolution. According to Saterley: the Sunday School also became “an important hub of social interaction for a class of children and parents who were rapidly moving away from small, close-knit, rural communities to large, over-populated, urban centres”.13. Sunday School brought members of the working class together for a variety of social activities, including arts and crafts, sports and bazaars.

Although it was not regarded as the first priority, Sunday School inevitably had an evangelistic slant, too. Thomas points out that it was less pronounced in the beginning “It was the intent of its founders to place a Bible in the hands of the children in hopes that, as they learned to read and write, the words they were learning would lead to life transformation”14 but as time progressed evangelism as the focus of Sunday School grew in importance. “Within the next 100 years the evangelical Sunday School became the primary outreach arm of the church.”15

Several factors contributed to this shift, including the reformation of public education in Britain, the spreading of the Sunday School movement to nations where different socio-economic conditions prevailed and the rise of great revival and mission movements with their emphasis on taking the gospel to the nations.

Recent decades saw another development, which, according to Thomas, is primarily instrumental in the plateauing and even decline of the Sunday School movement and its ability to assimilate new members into the church. “It has only been within the past few decades that the emphasis on evangelism shifted to an emphasis on discipleship and fellowship.”16

Where the early Sunday Schools were outward-focussing, initially on social issues in the society and thereafter on the spiritual needs of a lost world, the modern Sunday School turned to serving the insider.

9 “In 1907 the World Sunday School Association was formed which in 1947 changed its name into World Council of Christian Education (WCCE) which was integrated into WCC only in 1972”. Dietrich Werner. “The Church and The Child – Some Ecumenical Perspectives”, presentation at ’Now-and-Next Conference’, Nairobi, 2011.
12 Laqueur, T.W., Religion and Respectability: Sunday schools and working class culture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 44.
16 Thomas, “The Role”, 5.
Space does not allow an investigation into the reasons for this shift, but there seems to be a link between the focus of a church’s children’s ministry and the growth of the church. This will be discussed later.

2.2 Sunday School in Africa

Christian education in Africa goes back to the very first century. According to tradition the apostle Mark planted the first African church in Alexandria, Egypt, thereby beginning a vital phase in the theological establishment of the Christian faith, in which North African church fathers such as Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, Origen, Athanasius, and Cyril of Alexandria played leading roles. It is clear from their own histories that education played a major role in their formation and that they encouraged education for all – not only adults, but children, too.

From Alexandria Christianity spread to other African regions: Maghreb (North West Africa), Nuba (Sudan), Ethiopia (Abyssinia). The Ethiopian church, in fact, has an interesting origin, which all started with Christian education. Two Christian boys from Tyre, Frumentius and Edesius, was on a voyage on the Red Sea with their uncle when the ship was attacked and all but the two brothers were killed. They were captured and sold as slaves to the king of Aksum in Ethiopia, who was so impressed with their education and Christian lifestyle that he put them into responsible positions and eventually freed them. After the king’s death they were appointed by the queen to educate her children, amongst whom the heir Ezana. The brothers introduced the gospel to the crown prince and his people and Ezana became the first Christian monarch of Ethiopia. He installed Frumentius as the first bishop or ‘Abune’ of the Ethiopian Church (333 AD, merely two decades after Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan legalizing Christian worship in the Roman Empire!)

It took over a millennium before Sub-Saharan Africa was introduced to Christianity on a significant scale. Although some church planting was done by Catholics in Western Africa and Protestants in Southern Africa since the sixteenth century, it was David Livingstone’s 1840 trip into Africa that set the table for the so-called ‘scramble for Africa’, with missionaries preceding, accompanying and following colonizing armies. The missionaries not only planted churches, but also established hospitals and schools. From the very start Sunday School was an integral part of the strategy as a tool for evangelism and faith formation. With the secularisation of education in Africa and the lessening of the church’s influence in schools, Sunday School has become the primary (in some cases the only) place where the church actively meets children.

2.3 Implications of the “educational” paradigm – social exclusion

Space does not permit a fair appraisal of the Sunday School Movement in all its facets. There is ample evidence of the tremendous value that the movement had in the growth of the church and the establishment of a better society. “When it comes to reaching people and effectively assimilating them into the life of the church the Sunday School ministry still remains one of the most effective tools some 200 years after its beginnings.” Thom Rainer writes: “Sunday School has been among the key methodologies of the past two centuries to train adults and youth in the depths of the Bible.” An article for BBC News states: “The social impact of the schools in Victorian times was anything but conservative and establishmentarian. Women were given a rare opportunity for public office, and they exercised major influence as teachers; the male superintendents often built a power base in the school hall and went on to become political leaders.”

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18 Thomas, The Role, 1.
19 Thom S Rainer. The Bridger Generation (B&H Publishing Group, 1999), 187.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
The positive impact of Sunday School can neither be restricted to its early years or to the society of Victorian Britain. Generations of church leaders all over the world can trace their spiritual roots to a Sunday School class and a devoted teacher somewhere in their childhood. This is as true in Africa as in any other part of the world.

Having said this, there are also serious concerns about the Sunday School, in particular as it often functions in the current church in Africa. With reference to the case study from Kinshasa above, some of these concerns will be raised.

The first concern relates to the linguistics surrounding Sunday School: “school”, “teachers”, “classes”, “lessons”, “curricula”, “certificates” – terminology copied from the field of education and carrying a particular set of values. With the terminology comes a paradigm that has been referred to earlier as “educational”, in the sense of “concerned with methods of teaching and learning in schools or school-like environments”. Considering the original purpose of the Sunday School in its eighteenth century British context, this makes sense. Raikes’ Sunday School was supposed to be “educational”! He purposefully copied the terminology from the field of education, because he desired the marginalized to share in the whole experience and the benefits of official education. What has happened since then, however, is that the context and therefore the goal of Sunday School has changed completely. Instead of providing primary education to children in a society who are excluding them from the educational system, Sunday School has become the primary tool for faith transmission to children inside the church. What has not changed is the educational paradigm. The Sunday School in Kinshasa is a carbon copy of a standard public school in the same city. The style, the strategy, even the classes are based on the public school matrix. The children hardly notice any difference.

In the Sunday School in Kinshasa the Bible became a text book equal to the mathematic or science text books in the public schools. Learning the Scriptures, church history or dogma became arduous brain work with little relevance to life. The moral lessons are repetitions of what the children constantly hear at home or school and often does little more than adding to the children’s guilt and confusion. Sunday School examinations are feared or loathed by the biggest section of children, and respect for the teachers, in particular the disciplinarian assistants, is often superficial. (Maybe the Sunday School in Kinshasa is even worse than the original schools of Robert Raikes and Hanna More. Raikes is described as 'cheery, talkative, flamboyant and warm-hearted' while More is quoted to say that it was possible to get the best out of children if their affections 'were engaged by kindness'.) The antagonism seems to increase with each progressive year until the “students” merely endure and wait for the freedom of the final “graduation” from Sunday School. It is hardly surprising that many “disappear” from church until they have their own children of Sunday School going age!

The danger of the “educational” paradigm is that faith becomes a subject and the transfer of faith is attempted by a transfer of knowledge, with a (sometimes vague) hope that this knowledge will lead to life transformation. In principle and in practice faith formation is reduced to an intellectual exercise that easily becomes separated from everyday practical Christian living. The result is a fragmented life where spiritual growth becomes a temporary, isolated process determined by a one hour information download once a week, measured by performance in cognitive examinations and rewarded with certificates and graduations. With this type of “educational” foundation it is difficult to bring adult church members to an integrated life of faith and commitment to God and his Kingdom. Richard Osmer remarks: “Where do we stand after one hundred years of experiential, discovery-oriented Protestant religious education focussing on children’s self-expression and development? These children have grown into adults who know little Bible and theology, have acquired few practices of Christian discipleship, and are accustomed to a low commitment

Christianity centering on personal needs. The educational ministry alone has not brought us to this point, but it has done its part.”  

A second concern raised by the Kinshasa case study relates to the position of the children in the church. The strategy of the church is to separate the generations into homogenous units, ‘after their kind’: toddlers with toddlers, children with children, adolescents with adolescents, adults with adults. The purpose is noble – to respect the needs of each generation by giving them the opportunity to be ministered to in their own paradigm, language and style. The result is, however, a form of ‘generational fragmentation’ that runs through the whole church. And inevitably, despite the goodwill of the adults, the children are bearing most of the consequences. They are separated from their parents and siblings without their consent. They are posted to the building ‘outside’ (fortunately comfortable enough, which is more than can be said of most Sunday School venues in Africa). They have to adapt to the needs of the adults. If it happens that they wander into the ‘adult worship service’ they are ignored and, unless they can adhere to the adult rules, they are basically unwelcome. Neither are they welcome in the meetings of other age groups. The fragmentation extends into the rest of the church life, too. Midweek meetings are segregated, often even separating men and women. The sad fact is that not only the children are marginalized, but that many people feel excluded on different levels – sometimes even the pastor.

A third concern is less conspicuous in the case study, but very real: the walls of separation do not only run inside the church, but also around the church. Not only are the children of church members largely excluded from the rest of the church, but even more so are children outside the church excluded from what is happening inside. The church leaders will deny this and point to their open door policy and their zeal for the lost. The problem is that they have blind spots regarding some of the meta-communication of the church. By insisting on French as the language of tuition in their Sunday School, for example, they have gained the favour of some parents, but they have unwittingly shut the door on a large number of children from less privileged backgrounds who avoid situations where they cannot express themselves in their mother tongue. The Sunday School books, the exams (with the accompanying ridicule of the one who fails), the pretty Sunday dresses, the huge offerings, the nice buildings, the fancy cars parked outside... all proclaim: this is not for the meek and poor and sick and uneducated. This is not for children.

This church in Kinshasa is not struggling. On the contrary, it is regarded as a progressive, vibrant congregation with vision and energy. The church is growing, with new members joining every week. Members identify with the church and like to call it their spiritual ‘home’ where they feel included. The question is: Who are excluded and why? And: Does the Sunday School in its current form with its “educational paradigm” offer enough to address this social exclusion? Or are there other ways?

3. An Alternative Paradigm: “Hospitality”

3.1 Case study: A Friday Evening in the Boland

Portia is a six year old orphan living with her uncle Klaas and aunt Susan and four cousins in a small shack on the farm where her uncle is employed. It is Friday evening and she is walking with her foster family to a neighbouring farm. As they enter the house from the cold winter rain, their host, a single mother with three children, welcomes them with a round of hugs and a warm mug of soup. Others start to arrive, and within a short while the little home is packed with a boisterous mixture of people. There is Marilyn, head of the local clinic, with her mason husband and two children. Sophy brought her aging father and mother, her brother’s teenager daughters and a handful of children. Sarah has not conquered her addiction to alcohol

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23 A rural grape farming region in the Western Cape province of South Africa.
yet, but she accompanies her two talented children and her sister. Aunt Alice brought her grandson. His father is in jail and his mother serves in Cape Town as a domestic servant. Uncle Danster is a widower and always ready with a joke. He is celebrating his first year of sobriety tonight and enjoys the remarks drawn by his flamboyant new hat.

The group always meets on a Friday evening. They always follow the same ritual – first the welcoming hugs followed by a simple meal of soup and bread. Then some crazy game in which all can participate. Then a round of sharing: everyone tells of an incident in the past week. It takes some time, but all are attentive and show their appreciation or sympathy according to the story. Tonight Uncle Danster is the star and Portia runs over to give him a kiss. She knows what he was like on a Friday evening before he gave up alcohol. Someone starts a song, leading in the next phase of the meeting. The songs of praise and worship flow into a time of prayer. As usual, each child is allowed to select an adult as prayer partner for the evening and they pray honest, caring prayers for each other. Then uncle Klaas gives the Bible to Portia and ask her to read from John 13. An interesting discussion ensues in which all participate, trying to find the meaning of Jesus’ words (uncle Klaas helps where needed) and looking for practical applications in their own farming and living contexts. The evening normally ends with a decision based on the text: as an expression of their faith and love the group will perform some acts of kindness in the community the coming week. Tonight is different, though. Beneath all the joy there has been some sadness, too. The group is about to divide to form two groups. They have been planning this for a long time. The houses are too small, others are eager to join and there are more that need to be invited. Uncle Klaas calls for two basins with water and two towels. He takes two candles and hands one to Sophy. She will be the leader of the new group. Together they light the candles after which uncle Klaas kneels down to wash Sophy’s feet, just as Jesus did in the text they read. After he finished, Sophy takes her basin and the two proceed to wash all the feet in the room. Portia cannot stop her tears, being deeply aware of the respect that these two noble grownups are showing to her and the others.

The evening comes to an end with the usual commitment, song and benediction. With a hug and a hearty farewell they disperse. The cold and rain cannot dampen Portia’s joy as they walk back; she knows she is at home; she is part of a family far bigger than she could ever have imagined and she is loved, and this is all that matters.

And besides, in two days time it will be Sunday and will she be seeing all of them again in church!

3.2 Key aspects of hospitality

In a previous chapter the concept of hospitality as a key Biblical principle has been discussed in depth. With reference to Jesus’ words and actions as recorded in Matthew 18 and other texts, it was pointed out that children are of immense importance to God and that our attitude towards them becomes a measure of our understanding of and submission to the values of the Kingdom. In the words of Matthew 18:5 – to welcome a child in the name of Jesus is to welcome Jesus. Social inclusion of children (as representatives of the socially excluded) becomes an act of spiritual dimensions. It becomes a Kingdom-act. In the same way social exclusion of children is an act with spiritual consequences, too. “It is better for you to drown” is Jesus’ frightening warning.

The challenge of the church is to take this warning seriously and to revalue its ministry with children in terms of the word “Welcome!”

Hospitality has many facets. In ancient Greece three basic rules applied to hospitality (Philoxenias): 24

(1) The respect from host to guest. The host must be hospitable to the guest and provide them with food and drink, a bath and protection. The host must lend a (sympathetic) ear to the stories of the guest and

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refrain from asking questions until the guest has stated his/her needs. (2) The respect from guest to host. The guest must be courteous to their host and not be dishonest or burdensome. (3) The parting gift (xenion, ξεινηίον) from host to guest. The parting gift is to show the host's honor at receiving the guest. Sometimes gifts are given on arrival or exchanged at departure. 25

Similar rules applied in other ancient cultures. The story in Genesis 18 of Abraham receiving the three strangers is a striking example of typical ancient Middle-Eastern hospitality. The Good News Bible puts it beautifully: “You have honored me by coming to my home, so let me serve you.” (Gen 18:5). The twist in this story is of course that the Guest is the one giving the parting gift!

The concept of honour and respect is an integral part of hospitality. When Jesus applied the concept of hospitality to children, he alluded to the same principle: “See that you do not despise one of these little ones”. (Matt 18:10). In the case study above Portia experienced this kind of hospitality in the small group of believers. Unwittingly the group applied the ‘rules of hospitality’ with tremendous effect. (1) Portia was received and accepted without conditions. She was served with food and drink and she enjoyed the protection and attention of the whole group. (2) She returned the respect by participating, by sharing honestly and by serving with what she had. (3) She received the blessing of prayer, love and the benediction of Christ on departure. For her Jesus is real and relevant. Faith is real and relevant. The community of believers is real and relevant.

Inclusion of children in the ministry of the church calls for a strategy that goes far beyond the traditional Sunday School approach. Four principles come to mind when thinking of hospitality towards children in the church and these four will be briefly discussed: Hospitable children's ministry is relational, intergenerational, narrative and missional.

3.2.1 RELATIONAL

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’ The whole Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets depend on these two commandments. (Matt 22:37-40)

With these words Jesus summarized the essence of our being – it is all about relationships. We are because we relate. This is what it means to be in the image of God, because, as Philip Butin pointed out, “God is essentially relational” 26 God is the original relational Being. He is the Creator of community. The Triune God is community. Miroslav Volf refers to the “communion of the divine persons” 27. Created in his image, we share his relationality. We find our identity not in independent solitude, but in relations – with God, with others and with our environment. The church is the primary context where this image of God should be expressed: “God intends the divine koinonia to be reflected in human koinonia.” 28 Volf agrees: “As Christians, however, human beings cannot live apart from fellowship with other Christians.” 29

This is vital in our understanding of our ministry with children. Instead of socially excluding them, we need to relate to them. Instead of treating them as objects or passive recipients of our activities, they are to be treated as partners in the community, as participants in the fellowship of believers.

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27 Miroslav Volf, After Our Likeness (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 204.
28 Butin, Trinity, 90.
29 Volf, After our Likeness, 206.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Relationships are built on communication and effective communication implies understanding of each other’s actions, words and intentions. We use language in its fullest sense for communication. When people discover a common language between them, they connect and a relation is formed.

Connecting to children requires an understanding of their preferred modes of communication. While children use speech to communicate as soon as they can master it, Gary Landreth, renowned play therapist, made an important observation when he stated: “Play is the child’s language and toys are his words”. Children of all ages use different forms of play to interact with each other and the world. They express their emotions and thoughts in concrete ways and toys become the visible manifestations of these concepts. Children find it easy to assign meaning to lifeless objects and can use time and space in a creative way to communicate.

To enter into the world of children requires the ability to speak the language of ‘play’. It requires freedom from adult preoccupations and reservations and a willingness to really humble oneself and become like a child. Social convention and cultural norms often make this difficult for adults. Adults are made to believe that they have outgrown childhood and that it is shameful to return to its habits and behaviour. This notion needs to be challenged, however. Jesus certainly did not see childhood as a shameful, worthless stage in the life of a human. The early church understood what Jesus meant. According to Martha Stortz the church father Augustine of Hippo found children fascinating. “He did not portray them as miniature adults. Rather, Augustine portrayed adults as grown-up children – only more complex.”

To enter a child’s world is the most natural thing to do, because we have never really left that world. We have merely traded “nuts and balls and birds” for “money and estates and servants”.

The leaders of Portia’s spiritual family did not forget what it means to speak the language of children. For their own pleasure and that of the children they included games in their weekly program involving touch, eye contact and laughter and this greatly contributed to the relationships of trust and understanding between adults and children. It seems a far cry from the relationships in the Sunday School in Kinshasa.

Play is not the only mode of communicating and connecting with children. Stories, music, humour, touch, protection, encouragement – in short, activities reaching out to the hearts of children, showing respect and fulfilling their needs – all are expressions of love that strengthens relationships and enhances growth. Hospitality speaks the language of love.

3.2.2 INTERGENERATIONAL

Faith is caught, not taught – Anonymous

One of the most challenging trends in the modern church is what we saw in the story of the Kinshasa Sunday School – the trend to specialise to the minutest details. In the context of this article this specialisation is seen in the way children and adults are categorised, separated and interacted with in highly specialised ways. First Graders are not treated in the same way as Second Graders. It is argued, and fairly so, that toddlers and teenagers have (almost) nothing in common and therefore cannot share a fulfilling time of fellowship. It is indeed true that their needs, interests, communication modes and styles, levels of understanding and reasoning differ vastly. Teenagers, as do toddlers and pre-teens and young adults, find it
easier and more interesting to interact with their peers. There should be enough room for this and enough
sensitivity from adults dealing with different age groups to adapt to the needs and levels of each group and
individual.

Having said this, the absolute specialisation has had some very unfortunate spinoffs. Some of these have
been mentioned above, such as the fragmentation in the church and the lives of children. Children are
passive and subordinate rather than active participants, depriving them of a sense of purpose and
involvement. Children miss out on the formative value of spending time with different generations. Scottie
May et al. warn: “If children belong only to a Sunday school class or midweek club, the church’s formative
influence in that child’s life is limited. Unfortunately, in many churches today almost all activities for
children and teenagers are with their peers and the few adults who lead the programs.”

The opportunities for faith transmission become alarmingly few. The dictum quoted above: “Faith is caught, not taught” tries
to capture this idea. As a person ‘catches’ flu (is infected with flu), faith is, transmitted from person to
person by close proximity over an extended time. Faith is ‘contagious’, it cannot be “taught” (in an
educational mode).

The children are not the only ones to lose out in a segregated church, however. Adults need the children
as much as the children need them. Jesus’ instruction to ‘welcome the little ones’ held a blessing not only
for the ‘guests’, but even more so for the ‘hosts’, because it would be an opportunity to receive Jesus!

As an alternative to segregated church ministries, an intergenerational model is promoted which
emphasizes relationships between age groups and encourages mixed-age activities. It is more than sharing
the same space. “[I]ntergenerationalism goes deeper than various age groups of people simply being
together. It insists on a definite interaction, relationship and conversation between the three or four
generations present. It carries strong concern for ‘bridging’ generations into acceptance, belonging,
communication and conversation that provides maximum potential for the interflow of personal faith.”

In intergenerational ministry all generations learn from each other, ministered to each other and grow
together. In the ‘Boland farm’ case study Portia’s spontaneous congratulation of Uncle Danster was as
valuable as Uncle Klaas’ washing of her feet. The intergenerational extended spiritual family in the case
study had all the benefits of a true learning community who were discovering the fullness of living in
Christ together. They were pilgrims on a journey to Christian maturity.

What is important to notice is that the Boland farm ‘family’ was a deliberate activity stemming from a
culture in the local church which they were part of. The same values that were present in the house meeting
applied to the Sunday worship meetings and other church activities. It was an expression of what Claydon
et al. proposed: “It would need to be a whole-church commitment because it’s not about programmes or
about church numbers. It’s about creating a church climate where adults and young people learn to love
each other, share their life experiences, serve each other and help each other to discover more about
following Jesus.”

The fact that it was deliberate and well structured did not mean that it was manipulative
or results driven. The structure gave security and shape to the meetings while values such as honesty and
respect provided direction and life.

In the local church in the Boland farm story there were separate meetings for interest groups, too. They
had a women’s ministry, youth and children’s clubs, a sobriety society and others which catered for
specific needs and ran special projects. The church leaders, however, were clear on the true nature of their
church and continuously sought ways to bring generations together in house meetings, in the worship
services, weekend camps, outreaches and outings. They encouraged open communication and gave the

34 Scottie May, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehouse, Linda Cannell. *Children Matter: Celebrating their Place in the
Church, Family, and Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 139.

_Handbook of Theological Education in Africa_
different generations opportunities to express themselves publicly. The result was that the different
generations came to understand and value each other better, helping to shape the church into a close-knit
spiritual family.

3.2.3 NARRATIVE

My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will teach
you lessons from the past – things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. – Asaph (Ps
78:1-3)

Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable –
Matt 13:34

With these stories and ten thousand others fortify his hearing, as thou dost offer him also examples drawn from
his home. – John Chrysostom (347-407 AD)37

Children – and adults – love stories. Maybe it is because we are created in the image of a ‘storytelling’
God. In the words of Elie Wiesel: “God made humankind because God loves stories.”38 Probably because
we are (unconsciously) aware that we are stories, we find it fascinating to be spectators of the stories of
others, whether factual or fictitious. We identify with or distance ourselves from the emotions and actions
of the characters in stories, assess them according to our own value systems, scrutinise their choices and try
to find meaning in their lives. In effect it is a search for truth and often unknowingly, we weigh up the
options offered in stories as options for our own lives.

Storytelling can be seen as a special form of play, where the mind is ‘at play’ even when the body is
inactive. Stories create a world of imagination and therefore a world less threatening for a child or adult
who struggles to face the harsh reality of his own world.

The remarkable thing is that because of this distance between the world of stories and the real world, the child
can come closer to his true emotional world when listening to stories. Therefore stories have the power to change
his world of feelings and beliefs. Because he can identify with the heroes in the stories, he can start living a new
life in his imagination, from where it can be transferred to his real life.39

The importance of the narrative in the church’s ministry with children cannot be stressed enough. It
should operate on all levels – telling stories for the pure joy of it, as people in all cultures have been doing
since the dawn of man; teaching through parables, in the way Jesus did; telling the stories of God and his people to instil faith and obedience, as Asaph did; telling stories to shape habits, as Chrysostomos did.

Narrative goes beyond mere ‘storytelling’, however. Narrative means a way of life, where the individual and
group understand their identity as stories. A church that starts to live as a story God is telling or people who allow God to ‘tell their stories’ are on a journey full of possibilities. Narrative children’s ministry
means allowing children to live inside the stories that God is telling, to hear and see and copy and borrow
from others’ stories and to become storytellers in their own right.

37 John Chrysostom. “An Address On Vainglory And The Right Way For Parents To Bring Up Their Children”
Translation by Max I. W. Laistner in Christianity And Pagan Culture In The Later Roman Empire (Cornell University
Press, 1951), 52.
(accessed 2.5.2012).
148.

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
In the ‘Boland farm family’ Portia had full access to a variety of stories: seeing and hearing the people-stories around her with all their tragedies and triumphs, listening to the stories of old told by the grandparents, learning from her peers and being allowed to share her own stories. She lived inside the story told by the group and found meaning and direction in the Story of God as told in the Bible.

3.2.4 MISSIO

“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” – Jesus Christ (John 20:21). Over the centuries many individual church members heard and obeyed the command “Go!” We have seen how for many centuries the Sunday School Movement had a ‘missionary’ character, driven by people who saw it as their calling to reach out into the world of suffering and spiritually lost children with the good news of love and peace. We also heard the lament from Thomas and others that there has been a decline in the impact of Sunday Schools since they started to shift towards “an emphasis on discipleship and fellowship.”

The answer to this decline, however, is not in reviving the Sunday School movement to its former glory. The answer is in the church discovering its original calling and purpose. The answer is in becoming a missional church.

Missional (from the Latin missio, ‘sending’) means that the church has the character of ‘being sent out by God’ into the world to bring good news. It is God’s initiative, however; God is going out and sending at the same time. In going, the church merely follows. “Mission is, quite simply, the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus, wagering on a future that verifiable experience seems to belie. It is the good news of God's love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world.”

Participation in this calling of the church implies at least three dimensions of action which is formulated here as applied to children:

- That congregations will participate in preaching the knowledge of the Gospel to all children, while the adults with their children will remain a learning-community of Jesus;
- That the everyday lives of all church members will be characterised by an attentive seeing of all children, and a gracious love that will reach out to all children, especially children in need, for example traumatized children that suffer as a result of social exclusion, poor children, street children, child labourers, child prostitutes, children that are sexually abused, child soldiers, orphans, HIV affected and infected children;
- That church members will stand up and be advocates for fairness, justice and righteousness, for peace and reconciliation for the sake of children, not only in the church but also in society and public life.

Missional children's ministry is not only mission to children, but also mission with, by and on behalf of children. In Olson’s words: “children’s ministry in four ways: ministry to children, with children, by children, for children.” This is crucial and can change the whole concept of not only children's ministry, but also our understanding of the missional church. The slogan of the Lausanne Movement “The whole Church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world' very much includes children as part of the whole church, part of the whole gospel and part of the whole world.

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40 Thomas, “The Role”, 5.
42 Coenie W Burger, Gemeentes in die kragveld van die Gees. Oor die unieke identiteit, taak en bediening van die kerk van Christus (Stellenbosch: BUVTON, 1999), 83-84.
Portia in the “Boland farm family” was very much aware of her own position in the ‘missional church’. She enthusiastically participated in outreaches, service in the community and prayer for the world and was not only well equipped (from accompanying the experienced elders) but also eager to share the good news with her peers and others in the community. Witnessing for her was not an activity, but a life style she shared with her church.

4. Application in Church Ministry – The Eightfold Ministry of the Church

...those enrolled by genealogy, males from three years old and upward—all who entered the house of the LORD as the duty of each day required—for their service according to their offices, by their divisions. – 2 Cron 31:16 (English Standard Version)

While Ezra was praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a large crowd of Israelites – men women and children – gathered around him. They too wept bitterly. – Ezra 10:1

All of them, including wives and children, accompanied us out of the city and there on the beach we knelt to pray – Acts 21:5

The services or ministries of the church have been described in different ways. With reference to the Reformed theological tradition Malan Nel distinguishes the following eight services:45

- Koinonia (Fellowship);
- Kerugma (Preaching/Proclamation);
- Leitourgia (Worship);
- Didache (Teaching);
- Paraklesis (Pastoral Care);
- Marturia (Witness);
- Diakonia (Service/compassion);
- Kybernetes (Leadership and administration)

45 Malan Nel, Jeugbediening. ’n Inklusiewe gemeentelike benadering (Pretoria: Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing, 1998), 84.
In the “educational paradigm” children will find a place somewhere in the ministry of Didache, with either segregated participation or total exclusion from most of the other ministries. In the “hospitality paradigm” children are welcomed as full recipients and participants in all the ministries. In the Old Testament and the early church this was normal practice, as the quoted texts above suggest.

5. Conclusion

While the “educational paradigm” had its place in the history of the church and brought knowledge and hope to many generations all over the world, it did not wholly serve the church in the long run. A new paradigm is needed, based on a deeper understanding of the Triune God, of the missional church and of children as full participants in the Kingdom of God. A paradigm of hospitality could open creative new ways to include the excluded.

This might be the time for the church in Africa to rediscover what John Calvin realised centuries ago: “children are as vital to the ongoing life of the covenant community as elders, pastors, and deacons. Children do not grow into participation in the worship, service, and life of the community, but partake of it and contribute to it from the first day of their lives.”

The church leader of our generation will do well in welcoming the little ones in the name of Jesus. By doing this, Jesus will be welcomed, too.

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1. Introduction

The following article originated at curriculum development workshops for seminaries at different venues in Sub-Saharan Africa. Its goal is to give guidelines towards finding a hermeneutic key to do theology contextually as a response to a process of spiritual discernment, which will lead to a contextualized, missional theological curriculum and training. It briefly describes elements of the history and context of theological training in the Christendom paradigm. It has little faith in the future of this paradigm. It argues that the southern shift of the heartland of Christianity points us towards a new direction. The article recommends: look at the changing context, the influence of globalization and the information revolution and revisit key theological parameters in Scripture. Observe what is happening in missional congregations and let all of these developments guide us on a journey to discover a new hermeneutic to do and teach theology in Africa.

Doing theology can take its cue from Mary, mother of Jesus. Theology is words about God; witnessing about an encounter with God. Theology comes at the second hour. Revelation comes first: God’s mission erupts through the words of the messenger disclosing how the reign of God will be born in the womb of a believer. When Mary answered: “I am the Lord’s servant, may it be to me as you have said” she was doing theology. She was struggling to discern what God’s words to her meant in her context and she started discussing it with Gabriel, Elizabeth and others. Her theology centred on God coming to us in and through Jesus Christ in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Theology is a womb thing, it takes place in the deepest place where life is born.² It leads to rejoicing and worship. The Magnificat (Luke 2:46-55) is worship from the first Christian congregation … where the majority of believers were women!

The article argues that we need a new hermeneutic for doing theology³ in seminaries that will lead to addressing curriculum issues.⁴ With curriculum we understand more than simply the syllabus, the content

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³ This is not a new debate. I have been greatly influenced by Farley, 1983, Kelsey, 1992, Keck, 1993 and the ensuing debate. The ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials list 17 post 1993 articles under the heading Between Athens and Berlin: the theological education debate. Locally Conradie (1997:349-361) contrasted three models of teaching or doing theology, i.e. the Athens, Berlin and Calcutta models. This article says: look at the context and origin of the Christendom paradigm of the Western world, look at the changing context, the influence of globalization and the information revolution and revisit key theological parameters in Scripture. Observe what is happening in missional congregations and let all of these developments guide us on a journey to discover a new hermeneutic to do and teach theology. The context to which this article speaks and the original audiences to which it was addressed, is seminaries founded by mainline denominations that all have a Western and thus Christendom background. As such other urgent issues like addressing traditional African worldview issues such as tribalism, witchcraft, nepotism, power struggles etcetera are not confronted – important as they are.
⁴ This article demarcates and describes a hermeneutical key for doing missional theology in Africa today. The workshops addressed aspects of curriculum development at theological seminaries, amongst others by Prof Arend Carl.
of the teaching at a theological school. For us the curriculum refers to the culture of education. A curriculum disciples believers called to the ministry in a way of life. Traditionally this took place at seminaries.

It is clear that Jesus’ ministry concentrated on training 12 disciples, leadership development, is a modern way of referring to it. His first disciple was his mother, Mary. Cultural patriarchal curtains hide a lot about their relationship – but she was, by way of metaphor, the first visiting professor, when Jesus started training the 12 at a wedding in Cana in Galilee (John 2).

With these remarks I have indicated the theological parameters of this article. I believe we need seminaries with contextual curricula and responsive training that stays in touch with what is happening in congregations. As theology comes at the second hour so seminaries came much later. Responsive training and curriculum development are conceived as a spiritual discernment exercise, as a walk-with-God thing. Without the Holy Spirit’s life giving presence there is no life, no real theology. Worship is a close second, look at Mary and Elizabeth – they were rejoicing in worship. Worship clears the mind and opens the heart for curriculum development and responsive training.

2. Understanding the Problem

African theologians and seminary staff are confronted with new realities and challenges that are not addressed by the curricula that they are teaching. I want to map the problem with which we are confronted before indicating some parameters of the challenging journey of discovering new avenues for theological education and responsive training.

History helps one to understand the problem. Lamin Sanneh asked: Whose religion is Christianity? Jenkins’ trilogy indicated how the heartland of Christianity is moving South. The decline of Christendom with its strong European DNA structure is a reality. In the Western theological world, from where Africa inherited most of its theology, the story of theology and the importance of professional

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See: Carl, 2009, 37-60. On curriculum see: Kelly, 2009:5-12; 89-117; Marsh, 2009:3-20. ACTEA’s (2010) “Proposed revisions to ACTEA standards and guide to self evaluation. Draft approved by ACTEA Executive Committee for circulation and public comment, 1 August 2010” played an important role in the curriculum standards discussed at the workshops. ACTEA is the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (http://www.theoledafrica.org/ACTEA/)


6 Barth, K., The Doctrine of Reconciliation (Church Dogmatics Volume IV-2) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958), 614.

7 Emily Brink writes in the Reformed Communique (2011:2) that research in 13 countries show “that churches are hungry for spiritual and worship renewal in the face of unprecedented social and political change...”

8 For this discussion in Kenya, see LeMarquand & Galgalo (2004).

9 Sanneh, Lamin, Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).


11 My understanding and use of the word Christendom is similar to that of Andrew Walls discussed in the second chapter of The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), 34-47. Walls explains that Christendom is “a conception in which Christianity was essentially linked to territory and the possession of territory.” This led to the idea of a Christian nation (p.35). “The Protestant Reformation resulted in the division of Christendom, but not in the abandonment of the idea (p.37).” Colonialism exported Christendom to the new world but one should also say that many missionaries broke with the idea and opposed cultural imperialism (p.42).

theological training at universities go back to the Reformation and Enlightenment13 and even before that. Intellectually the Reformation had to confront aspects of erroneous doctrine in the Roman Catholic Church. As such it needed well schooled clergy that were able to empower the laity with biblical knowledge in order to confront the Roman Catholic Church. It was an enormous intellectual challenge.14 During the Enlightenment period theology had to compete with the growing rationalism in a world that was moving away from superstition. The discovery of ways to print books at Gutenberg helped people to become literate and the natural sciences proved superstition wrong. Non-verifiable belief became a private affair.15 Theology became one of many academic disciplines competing for power and respect in the university-world.16

At the same time most European nations were involved in colonial enterprises and needed the support of their respective churches. The missionary movement had a major impact on the church and in the colonies. Not all of this was bad—by no means! However, in universities and seminaries leaders were trained to lead the faithful in pursuit of Christendom ideals and dreams. Nation states were building colonial empires and needed the legitimizing support from their national churches. Eventually, in 1914 and again in 1939, there was war. These devastating wars were followed by a cold war. Unspeakable atrocities, suffering and pain were experienced. It led to the demise of the church in the West. The church was compromised and discredited. The Western seminary is a product of this history carrying its DNA structure in its bones and fibre.17

3. The Context is Changing

The globalized world requires a new paradigm in leadership and training. I want to explain this by referring to the basic hypothesis of the most quoted sociologist18 and highly respected intellectual leader Manuel Castells. I will be referring to the second book of his trilogy on The information age: economy, society and culture, The Power of identity.19

Castells describes how the world is changing in this period of late modernity through the combined impact of globalization, informationalization and technology. Information technology based on the Worldwide Web (www) is restructuring the economy and capitalism as well as society. The networking form of organization and its varied forms of communication, its flexibility and power is transforming society, culture and the way we experience time and space. We have a new world characterized by the networked society in which social movements are playing an ever increasing important role. Social movements20 construct identity.

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15 Bosch, Transforming Mission, 266.
16 Heitink, Gerben, Practical Theology: history, theory, action domains (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 19-34.
18 The 2000-09 research survey of the Social Sciences Citation Index ranks him as the world’s fifth most-cited social science scholar, and the foremost-cited communication scholar. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manuel_Castells Downloaded 10-12-2011.
20 Social movements are: purposive collective actions whose outcome, in victory as in defeat, transforms the values and institutions of society. Since there is no sense of history other than the history that we sense, from an analytical perspective, there is no “good” or “bad,” progressive of regressive social movements (Castells, 2004:3-4).
Castells’ basic hypothesis is that the social construction of identity and the content of that identity take place in a context marked by power relationships. Identity is formed in one of three ways:

1. **Legitimizing identity**: is generated by civil society and introduced by the dominant institutions of a society and those in authority. It works top-down and dominates. It is illustrated by the nation-state and the Christendom church. It is driven by ideology.

2. **Resistance identity**: is generated by those actors who are devalued / stigmatized by the logic of domination. They form communities or political parties or rebel groups in order to resist unbearable opposition / oppression and build upon already existing identities defined by history, geography, biology, belief, race / ethnicity etc. It is a defensive identity and is best illustrated by religious fundamentalism like the Religious Right in the USA and, in the world of Islam, Al-Qaeda. It is mostly motivated by anger and fear. From January 2011 the Arab world awakened to this surge to resist dictators. In Egypt and Tunisia heads of government were overthrown leading to widespread unrest, even in Swaziland demonstrations erupted.

3. **Project identity**: is built when social actors build a new identity that redefines their position in society and by doing so, seek the transformation of the overall social structure. Examples are feminism and the ecological movements. This identity produces subjects. Subjects are not individuals but the collective social actors through which the individual reach a holistic meaning in his / her experience. It is mostly motivated by a justice-based intellectual dream and inspires hope.

The short reference to how Castells describes sociological processes in modern Western history serves to illustrate what legitimizing identity formation is and how the European nation-states and their Christendom denominational partners applied it. In retrospect it is clear how they manipulated the minds and cultures of people, exploiting them to benefit from their scramble for political and economic power and empire building. The opposing interests and ideologies of the competing Western and Eastern nations eventually led to war.

From Castells’ analysis it is clear: power is in the process of being redefined. It is moving from physical power to intellectual power; from Macht (German) or Might to Mind; from guns to information. Power has moved to the network society where there are two major actors. The first is the power elite. Castells calls them globapolitans, they are the people that controls the flow of money, the main financial actors in the informationalized global neo-capitalistic economy. The second major player is social movements – of which the church can be one! It will, however, have a radically different identity than that of Christendom.

In *The power of identity* Castells describes how the different identity formation processes works, illustrating them with case studies from all continents. With information technology becoming available to all people, power balances shift. Urbanization is accelerating all over the world. People form new social networks in order to face new challenges. The nation state is in demise and democracy is under attack.

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23 Websites describe the overall picture of the unrest:
   http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5h1SuWoxedHkDxFEC_wPJebK70yRQ?docId=9f8a6814f1f54ba4867c8d7817a5bcb8 (accessed 21.3.2011).
28 Walls’ *The Cross-Cultural Process* (104-110) view on the nation-state from a historian’s point of view is prophetic and interesting when he speculates about a “post-nation-state” situation where movements may play a more significant role.
Patriarchalism, the founding structure of all contemporary societies (rife in Africa), built on the power and authority of men over women and children, is experiencing an irreversible transformation. The structure and culture of families are changing worldwide. Nothing seems to be the same any longer.

4. Uploading: Harnessing the Power of Communities

Brian McLaren remarked: “If you have a new world, you need a new church.” The church is, of course, a creation of God. What McLaren means is that the church in so many cases lost its true identity and by the grace of God, that identity needs to be rediscovered.

The cultural tectonic plates of our world are shifting. Thomas Friedman’s bestseller *The world is flat* helped me to understand one of the most fundamental implications of this shift for the church and theological education. The book is a vivid collection of stories illustrating to which extent the economic playing field is being levelled. The world became a village. Friedman used a different hermeneutic to confirm what Castells explained in sociological terminology. The first of his ten “flatteners” was the fall of the Berlin wall 11/9/1989… being the tipping point that unleashed forces (social movements) that ultimately liberated countless people. The first of the major breakthroughs was brought about by the information revolution that started in the mid-1980s. The unrest in the Arab world from January 2011 onwards echoes the same sociological phenomenon.

I found the fourth flattener, uploading, the most important one to understand. It is about harnessing the power of communities. Friedman defines uploading as:

The newfound power of individuals and communities to send up, out, and around their own products and ideas, often for free, rather than passively downloading them from commercial enterprises or traditional hierarchies, is fundamentally reshaping the flow of creativity, innovation, political mobilization and information gathering and dissemination. It is making each of these things a bottom-up and globally side-to-side phenomenon, not exclusively a top-down one. … Uploading is, without doubt, becoming one of the most revolutionary forms of collaboration in the flat world. More than ever, we can all now be producers, not just consumers.

This is a major new trend with enormous potential for congregations and seminaries alike. Friedman says: “Our communication infrastructure has taken only the first steps in this great shift from audience to participants, but that is where it will go in the next decade.” The top-down approach is replaced by a bottom-up and especially side-to-side movement. It is a revolution of collaboration: users become producers, not just consumers. It is a massively emancipating move. The best illustration of the paradigm difference is to compare the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, authored by specialists and highly qualified academics to the achievement of Wikipedia, a network based encyclopaedia, started in 2001, being a collaborative effort by voluntary participants that within a very short time outstripped the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* role.

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31 The church is, of course, a creation of God. What McLaren means is that the church in so many cases lost its true identity and by the grace of God, that identity needs to be rediscovered.
34 Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 51-5.
35 Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 95.
36 Friedman, *The World is Flat*, 96.
Britannica in becoming the most used and biggest source of reference. Rephrasing this in Castells’ sociological categories one can say that legitimizing identity formation is replaced by the power that social networks and movements have to pursue project identity formation.

The best illustration of this phenomenon in Africa may well be the intensely emotional conflict that most mainline denominations are experiencing in worship liturgy (Long, 2001; Brink, 2011:2). The liturgy was directed from the pulpit by an ordained minister strictly according to the prescribed order. Mass prayer changed all of this. Audiences became participating producers forming social networks which one can visually see as people are sending one another SMS’S. We are on our way to understand something about rethinking curricula and responsive training and the power of congregations where the Spirit of God is active.

5. A New Hermeneutic for Seminary and Congregation

Uploading as harnessing the power of community, of social networks where people are participants and not simply an audience, should ring a few theological bells starting by listening to 1 Cor 12, Rom 12, Eph 4:1-17! Apply this phenomenon to the history of the expansion of Christianity and suddenly lights go on. Andrew Walls’ The cross-cultural process in Christian history helped me to understand the growth and decline patterns between North and South as well as in the course of history. In short he illustrates four patterns in history:

1. “The Christian story … is not a steady triumphant progression; it is a story of advance and recession.”
2. “Christian faith must go on being translated, must continuously enter into the vernacular culture and interact with it, or it withers and fades.”
3. Islamic expansion is progressive; Christian expansion is serial (:30). The heartland of Christianity moved from Jerusalem to Asia-Minor to Africa, to Europe. It is moving from the North to the South. No church, no place, no culture owns Christ.
4. A significant feature of the demographic and cultural shifts in the Christian centre of gravity is that each threatened eclipse of Christianity was adverted by its cross-cultural diffusion. Crossing boundaries have been the life blood of historic Christianity. The energy for these crossings has come from the periphery rather than the centre.

37 From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page: Welcome to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia that anyone can edit. There were 3,592,063 articles in English (March 2011).
Soko’s doctoral dissertation dealt with the schisms in the Reformed Church in Zambia. Pentecostal and charismatic influences (Kalu, 2008) are changing the liturgy of mainline denominations. Mass prayer depicts these tendencies. Mass prayer that leads to chaos should surely be addressed with the principles of 1 Cor 11-14. The church in Africa needs teaching! However, the paradigm has changed and theological training & curricula have to take cognisance of it. The pulpit is no longer the castle of a king and a one-man-show!
In his discussion Acts 15 plays a major role. Paul and Barnabas met with the apostles in Jerusalem and the “synod” decided not to make proselytes but to entrust converts with the gospel. Conversion meant turning to Christ and following Him in your culture and place using your mother tongue to worship Him. It does mean addressing what is wrong in your culture (Acts 15:20). Rom 1:1-2 reminds one that this can never be a superficial process! The letter to the Ephesians is a prime example of handling the cross-cultural process. Where this happens, the gospel takes root in new soil and grows! Sanneh illustrates how this happened in Africa after the missionaries left (circa 1962). Between 1970 and 1985 Africa saw 16,500 conversions a day with Christianity numerically overtaking Islam. It had its own leaders, sang its own music, preached in the vernacular and worshiped and grew by multiplication on congregational level – with very little seminary involvement at all. The growth of the church in Africa is in sociological terminology social networks working on the uploading principle even before the heyday of the information revolution. Christianity is a religious social movement. Congregations that proclaim the Gospel in their own culture are busy with, again in sociological jargon, project identity formation. The project is local congregational manifestations of the Kingdom of God of being drawn into the missio Dei (Bosch, 1991:389, Guder, 1998:81-82).

6. The Paradigm Shift

The argument will now be summarized. Christendom is in decline. We understand that it has major fault lines in its epistemology. Van Huyssteen explains:

Postmodernism is, as I see it, first of all a very pointed rejection of all forms of epistemological foundationalism, as well as of its ubiquitous, accompanying metanarratives that so readily claim to legitimize all our knowledge, judgements, decisions and actions. Foundationalism, as is generally defined today, is the thesis that all our beliefs can be justified by appealing to some item of knowledge that is self-evident or indubitable. Foundationalism in this epistemological sense therefore always implies the holding of a position of inflexibility and infallibility, because in the process of justifying our knowledge claims, we are able to invoke ultimate foundations on which we construct the evidential support systems of our various convictional beliefs.

The seminary is a product of late Christendom and modernism. It usually forms denominational proselytes and Western theology proselytes.

Theologically we see the Acts 15 principle, the cross-cultural dissemination of Christianity taking place in Africa and elsewhere. It was well illustrated by the Lausanne 3 meeting at Cape Town. The church is

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45 A proselyte was someone who was circumcised and who was to adopt the Jewish tradition and obey the Torah. It means he (sic!) has to leave his own culture behind and convert to a new culture.
46 Sanneh, Whose Religion is Christianity?
47 Sanneh, Whose Religion is Christianity?, 15.
49 Missio Dei literally means the mission of God. It is God’s agenda for the world. This is what the church should discern and be involved in: God’s agenda. The problem with the Christendom paradigm was that ideological agendas of denominations and nations influenced the agenda of congregations. For an excellent short article on the term missio Dei, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missio_dei (accessed 21.3.2011). See also: Bosch, “Transforming mission,” 389; Guder, “Missional church,” 81-82.
50 A helpful interpretation of how to deal with the changing theological reality can be found in Osmer (2008:129-173 and even more so: Green & Robinson (2008).
growing. Millions of Marys, Elizabeths and Zechariahs are breaking out in song and worship all over our continent. They are doing theology, because they experienced the presence and power of God. They are forming congregations, they need discipling.

The point should be clear: we have a new world. We have a new church. We need a new approach to leadership development, to the formation of prophets and apostles for the church. Making disciples needs a contextual reformulation for our day and age. The key to it will be in the congregations where the Spirit is moving, where Mary and Elizabeth – later followed by Zechariah (when he got his voice back) – are singing and worshipping because they have been in the presence of their Saviour and Lord. They are an example of responsive training, they were taught with a completely different curriculum compared to that of synagogue stuff! Note: project identity formation took place: the project was the living and proclaiming of the Kingdom of God.

7. Discovering a Missional Hermeneutic

Seminaries that are stuck in a Christendom DNA structure will find it hard to survive. They train proselytes; they are following the principles of legitimizing identity formation and are focused on denominational survival. There is no future there. We should take our cue from Mary, the mother of Jesus. Doing theology is getting engaged in the missio Dei.

What I am saying is that if we study missionial congregations and our attitude is one of humility and an openness to listen to countless Marys, Elizabeths and Zecharais in Africa, we might be taken on a journey where we can learn something about responsive training, about how seminaries can train leaders that will be able to upload and form social movements called congregations where project identity formation envisaging the Kingdom takes place. We have a new world, we need a new church. A new church will eventually spawn a new form of theological training.

At the 2010 meeting of SAMS (South African Missiological Society) SAPMC members gave papers in which they described what they are learning from Southern African congregations on a missional journey. I will illustrate how one should learn by listening to the Marys in congregations. Three spiritual practices taking place on a congregational level, dwelling in the world, dwelling in the word and plunging were, amongst others, described. Together they represent a journey in discernment based on a praxis

21.3.2011).


54 Newspapers reported that three of the once-famous Dutch seminaries are closing: Kampen, Antwerpen and Leiden. On the internet the following note was found: De Protestantse Theologische Universiteit (PThU) verhuist naar de Vrije Universiteit (VU) in Amsterdam en de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (RUG). De huidige drie vestigingen, Utrecht, Kampen en Leiden, worden gesloten. Volgens het College van Bestuur van de PThU is dit de beste manier om het voortbestaan van de PThU uit de lage termijn te garanderen. http://www.pthu.nl/ (accessed 23.4.2010).


Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
methodology. It reaches out and get involved, it learns, reflects, evaluates, adapts and continues the doing-reflecting-doing spiral. This is a first step towards discerning and developing a new missional curriculum focussed on the missio Dei.

8. Dwelling in the World

It is a new world. In this new world the Christendom church is dying. The missio Dei is focussed at this world so it makes sense to understand what is happening in the world because Christians are to be its light; Christians are to be salt in this world.

I will now illustrate how transformation took place on a congregational level in the South African Partnership for Missional Church (SAPMC). The logic is that we should follow the same process if we want to discern a way forward in theological education, in curriculum development. There are no final answers in this article! We are only at the beginning of a process of transformation.

Congregations seeking a way forward form a cluster after obtaining their respective church councils’ permission. They appoint leaders to guide them through the process. Laity play a key role, but not without their clergy’s integral involvement. The cluster of congregations then departs on a missional discernment journey of approximately three years. This journey has four phases during which they seek to build five capacities:

1. Discovery building the capacity to listen.
2. Engagement building the capacity to take risks.
3. Visioning building the capacity to focus.
4. Practice and growth building the capacity to learn and grow.
5. The fifth capacity, sharing and mentoring, is built throughout the process.

Clusters meet nine times over the three-year period and these meetings have the following set of activities that form the agenda of each meeting:

- Dwelling in the Word
- Reflection on what was learned
- Learning from one another
- Function-orientated teaching
- Practising the teaching by dwelling in the world.

In most congregations this starts with congregational discovery and training members to listen. Developing listening leaders and listening teams is done by teaching basic principles of applied ethnography. The very elementary research that members do is revealing the congregation and the world in ways not known before. The cluster events gradually prepare and lead the way for crossing boundaries towards the wider world. At the seminary we train students and ministers in congregational studies which involve them in doing different analyses like a cultural or identity analysis of a congregation as well as a contextual analysis which involve discovering the macro, meso and micro context of their community and society. This involves answering the question how globalism influences your society and faith community. Every member lives and works somewhere in the world and is taught or sensitized to listen,

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57 Hendriks, “Trauma and conflict”, 109-19.
60 Hendriks, Studying Congregations, 69-103.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
deliberately and spontaneously, to what is happening in the world. Everyday encounters can become missional events if coupled with dwelling in the Word.

9. Dwelling in the Word

Throughout the journey “dwelling in the Word” plays a key role. In all the SAPMC meetings Luke 10:1-12 was repeatedly read, reflected upon and discussed. It becomes a well-trodden path that challenges one to “step out” in faith on a journey across new frontiers, being guided by scriptural / spiritual principles. Nel summarized it well:

The methodology of Dwelling in the Word consists of reading a chosen text aloud in a group. After the initial reading of the text, time is given for silent reflection on the meaning thereof. Every group member is then instructed to find a “reasonably friendly-looking stranger” with whom to share what has been “heard” in the personal reflection on the text. After sharing in pairs, members report to the group what they have heard from their respective partners. The group is then invited to discover the meaning of the text for their specific context by asking: “What is God up to here?” and “What is the Word of God for us in this place and time?” These two questions reflect the specific theological aim of Dwelling in the Word as to invite the participants thereof into the world of the text, and in so doing to join in the mission of God (the missio Dei) to the world. As such, it is part of the SAPMC journey to discern to whom God is specifically sending the participants as individuals and as a faith community. In the SAPMC, the expressed aim of the process of corporate spiritual discernment through Dwelling in the Word is to discover the preferred and promised future of God for a specific faith community.

I am now following the central argument of Nel to explain this spiritual exercise that is so profoundly reshaping lives and congregations. Keifert called it the most significant innovation for building the missional capacities of a local church (2006:69). Dwelling in the Word stimulates the ability of congregants to imagine their everyday life within the narrative of Scripture. If groups start doing it together, it shapes a communal spiritual discernment capacity. Mouton added to this:

This communal missional imagination empowers congregations to develop a missional understanding of the Scriptures, which will gradually change and re-shape the culture in the congregation. Those currently outside the congregational community will become more and more important. Soon congregations will ask: But to whom is Jesus sending us? Which part of the harvest was prepared in advance by the Father and the Spirit to whom Jesus is sending us, his body, now?

We are reminded of what Newbigin said: “the only effective hermeneutic of the gospel is the life of the congregation which believes it.” Newbigin argues that a text like Luke 10:1-12 is acting like a hermeneutical lens which shapes the way you look at and experience the world. The word indwells the reader; he/she is beginning to understand the world through the text. It awakens imagination through the presence of the Holy Spirit and opens new plausibility structures of how to act and what to do. If this is done in a group, it activates communal spiritual discernment. God’s missio gets underway in ways that were usually completely unpredictable. The interesting thing is that it usually comes from the fringes, from where it was not expected. Walls remarked that history shows this is a typical thing in missionary boundary

62 Nel, “Dwelling in the Word”.
63 Mouton, “To Plunge,” 2.
crossing events. The SAPMC own research shows to which extend dwelling in the word lead to spontaneous missional behaviour.

Nel latches on to Keifert when he very aptly explains the difference between this movement and what typically happens in a seminary. The old notion was that theology is done in the academia and then applied in congregations. Exegesis is done according to a set of exegetical rules that often negate a missional reading of the text. It often focuses backwards or inwards but seldom outwards in dialogue with the world. The that academic exegesis is often an exercise in boundary marking instead of a boundary crossing one. He classifies dwelling in the word as a form of reader-response criticism practiced by ordinary, average readers, not academically trained exegetical specialists. My understanding of theology is that it takes place when God intervenes... check Mary’s example, it’s a womb thing that unleashes or give birth to Christ walking out ahead of us. Dwelling in the word puts one “on track” ... the missio Dei track.

10. Plunging

“Plunging refers to the capacity to cross the congregation’s cultural boundaries, which includes conceptual and geographical boundaries.” In this section I am drawing on Mouton’s paper in which he sees plunging as a South African innovation of the methodology of Church Innovations. During the nine cluster meetings, described above, the phases and capacities develop the plunging skill as a concrete skill of reaching out to the world to discover where the missio Dei wants to take us. This is when and where people really experience “mission” or being sent. One can say that it is an antidote to the deadly virus of institutionalization when a congregation starts taking care of itself. Mouton answers the “Why plunge?” question in the flowing way:

1. It reconnects the congregation with its context and with God’s actions and as such it is refreshed and energised. The cross-cultural movement always does this.
2. The teachability of a congregation immediately expands. In Luke the “no purse, no bag, no sandals” advice addresses the power issue. Being a servant and eating “whatever they provide” say something about the way this is done.
3. The invisible walls of our own culture and setup soon become clear. The world of “the other”, the stranger, the widow and orphan usually is a different and unknown world and hospitality acquires a new meaning.
4. New community formation takes place.
5. The new community forms something like a bridge community that guides the ministry forward and act as guide for all concerned in the process of discernment of where to go with the “new creation.” As such it illustrates the praxis methodology of being a missional church and doing theology. It allows itself to be discipled by the Triune God, realizing that life is a journey and roadmaps don’t exist. It’s like the manna in the wilderness. There is enough for each day.

11. Concluding

Theologically speaking we need something of the hermeneutic outlined above which is akin to the training Mary received. It is about following Jesus in the world. It should happen as a response to God’s Word and God’s call. Responsive training is discernment in progress on the discipleship journey. The congregation is

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70 Mouton, “To Plunge”, 3-4.
the habitat of doing theology, of this journey, because theology is about the mission of God. Theology is sustained by the manna of every day, received while on the journey. Theologians are, in the first place, the people to whom God has spoken, who believes that nothing is impossible with God, who answers to this call by saying (Luke 1:36):

I am the Lord’s servant. …May it be to me as you have said.

We have a new world. Globalization is a reality penetrating even to the most remote villages of Africa. We are discovering how to be a missional church in this new world and how important congregations are as the places where primal theology is done. Seminaries should therefore reconsider their very being and functioning.

We do understand that proselytizing is not what Act 15 decided on. We do realize that what happened after Acts 15 is what today can be called “uploading”. The Wikipedia principle is simply new language for a very basic assumption of Christian faith. The body of Christ is a missional body and each and all members are gifted to take part in the missio Dei (1 Cor 12, Rom 12, Eph 4:1-17). It does require a discipleship process.

History shows that churches die when they neglect this and grow when they are obedient and reaches out to Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.

So where does this leave us with our seminaries and their curricula?

It is obvious that the traditional seminary and traditional way of doing theology are about 500 years old, a product of Christendom. We are in the liminal sphere in which a new epoch is taking shape. More than ever seminaries now need congregations where God has moved the waters and healing takes place, to guide them. Discernment is living from manna on a journey and seminaries should be invited to join that journey. If both congregations and seminaries can travel without bags and purses and sandals and eat what food there is on the table, the journey will continue and the road will unfold and peace will be with them; a peace not like that of the world.

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Introduction

TEE has been a significant part of the Africa Theological landscape since 1970 when the first two TEE programs were established in Ethiopia and Zambia. During the past 41 years the program has been through a number of changes. The two TEE programs were established after a workshop to look into expanding TEE in Africa which was organized by the World Council of Churches in Nairobi, Kenya. The extension in Africa was rapid such that by 1977 a survey revealed that “there were already fifty seven programs in Africa and Madagascar with a total of 6,869 Extension Students”.

This article explores the beginning of the TEE Method, and Early Developments in Africa. It also highlights some of the efforts being made in recent years in re-enforcing and making available the TEE option to the Churches in Africa.

The Method and Its Beginnings

The beginning

The TEE Method of theological education started as a creative response to a growing crisis in the Presbyterian Church in Guatemala in the 1960s. Among the challenges that the Presbyterian Church in Guatemala was facing was the inability of its only seminary – Seminario Evangelico Presbiteriano de Guatemala, to train enough ministers to cope with the ministerial needs of a rapidly growing Church. The Church did not have the resources to increase the capacity of the seminary. Most church leaders who were serving in the rural congregations had no training, yet could not leave their families to go to the residential college. Even if they were able to leave their families, the college could only train a few people at a very high cost. Further, pastors trained in seminary developed expectations of a “professional” salary, though minimal, and majority of the Churches were too poor to meet those expectations. As a result even those the limited number trained could not all be employed by the Church. According reports of all those trained over a period of 25 years, only about 10 could be hired by bigger Churches. The seminary was increasingly discovering a change in attitude and theological approach of those being trained which made it difficult for them to fit back in the community that had sent them to college. This was a compound problem which required a radical response, and the seminary found the solution in decentralizing the seminary. Tutors from the seminary began to prepare courses and go out to where the people were. They established centers where students would come together once a week and have a session with a tutor from the seminary. The tutor would help them review the lesson of the previous week. Using the same text books as those used at the seminary, the tutor would then introduce and give input on the next lesson and give the students work to do at home for the following week. This new approach meant that the seminary could reach more students within their setting, reduce on costs, and also deal with the problems of uprooting the students.

from their context which brought about the problem of changing their theological approach. While in 1962 the seminary could only enroll 6 students, with the new approach the enrollment increased to about 200 students.\(^2\)

**The TEE Method**

The TEE method of Theological Education is a distinct, though varied, theological approach and method. It comprises three key learning components or “pillars” namely self study (cognitive input), group study (seminars), and practical work (field experience). Ted Ward used the ‘rail line’ analogy to illustrate how these three pillars or primary components relate:

**SELF STUDY:**
Self Study represents the first rail. This part of TEE involves the student or learner getting cognitive input through the study material. The traditional TEE study material is normally in form of “programmed instruction” which “allows the learner to progress in small, manageable steps, at their own pace, while providing positive reinforcement through active participation and self checking without the need for a dedicated full-time instructor.”

**PRACTICAL WORK:**
Practical Work or Field experience constitutes the second rail, providing real-life experience for the material learned in the cognitive input phase. Since the use of “programmed instruction” allows the learner to work on their own, the field experience is provided naturally in the course of daily ministry activities. Thus, the concepts learned in the cognitive phase can be directly applied, adding further positive reinforcement.

**GROUP STUDY:**
The final component representing the railway sleepers consists of Group study discussions or seminars which are conducted on a regular basis. In most cases, these seminars are conducted weekly. These seminars provide a forum for dealing with any issues the learners may encounter during their self study and practical work. This is done through discussion and networking with other learners. The group meetings also provide accountability, and testing. Just as rail sleepers provide stability and unity to the rail line, seminars provide accountability and continuity to the TEE program.

**Spiritual Formation:**
Fred Holland a TEE practitioner who wrote a number of the TEE texts published by Evangel Press, made another addition to the three component model outlined above. Fred noted that the three component model, while imparting knowledge, was not necessarily creating strong leaders and therefore proposed a modification.

Holland retained the three components in Ward’s “Rail line Analogy,” but added the component of “spiritual formation” as the foundation for all the other aspects of TEE. This was the ground on which the rail line rested. According to Holland “While cognitive input and field experience prepare the learner for the human-to-human realm of ministry, it is ‘spiritual formation’ that builds the learner’s relationship with God, keeping them tied to the source of all ministry.”\(^3\) As Holland notes:

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\(^2\) Kangwa Mabuluki, “Diversified Theological Education: Genesis, Development and Ecumenical Potential of Theological Education by Extension”, in Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, Joshua Raja (eds), *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity: Theological Perspectives, Ecumenical Trends, Regional Survey* (Oxford: Regnum, 2010).

The foundation that makes service experience, home study, and seminar discussions into acceptable ministry training is spiritual formation, which encourages devotion to God, dedication to service, and growth in personal holiness. It is a planned-for part of the model. It does not simply happen while TEE is done. Spiritual formation is the positive response to all that God is calling us to be.4

Holland’s observation and addition was important but in some TEE programs, the devotional part which is easier and viewed to be more important became more prominent at the expense service experience, home study, and seminar discussions, thus reducing the TEE programs to a little less than just devotional bible study instead of theological engagement.

Early Developments in Africa

The early developments of TEE in Africa happened differently according to regions. Ross Kinsler5 provides a summary of these early developments according to regions, which is summarized below.

East Africa

In East Africa region the initiative was driven mainly by the former Association of Evangelical Bible Institutes and Colleges of Africa and Madagascar and the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar. The two organizations introduced the method to various Churches and set up the preparation of study material in English, Swahili and other languages which were published by Evangel Press based in Nairobi. They published over forty programmed texts. Other Churches that put a lot of effort in utilizing TEE were the Africa Inland Church, the Anglican Church, the Assemblies of God, Africa Gospel Church, and the Church of God. In East Africa alone TEE Programs were, and are still present at different levels in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and the Sudan.

Southern Africa

In Southern Africa region, the early TEE Program which started in Zambia in 1970 was confined to the Brethren in Christ Church in Southern Province of Zambia and never extended much to other Churches. It was a more Ecumenical program started later in 1979 by the United Church of Zambia and the Anglican Church that spread to other Churches and took on a national status with a coordinating office at Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation in Kitwe.

But the most significant development in Southern Africa was the setting up of the TEE College in South Africa in 1976. The initiatives spearheaded by the Association of Southern Africa Theological Institutions and the South Africa Council of Churches, started with a consultation in 1975. Once operational under an independent board made up of representatives from the seven sponsoring churches namely African Independent, Anglican, Congregational, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, and Roman Catholic, the college produced high standard study material at various levels which serviced and helped to establish TEE programs in Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. Zambia and Malawi have since managed to produce their own material, with Malawi advancing significantly by offering an advanced diploma in Theology through University of Malawi in Zomba. Other countries like Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Mozambique are still using South Africa TEE College material and in most cases also enrolling their students with the college.6

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4 Baylor “A Brief History of Theological Education by Extension”.
6 The TEE College South Africa in Johannesburg has also received registration and accreditation as a Higher Education Institution by the government and can offer higher education qualifications which are recognised nationally and internationally.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
West Africa

In West Africa region most of the information available was from Nigeria where by 1978 there were already eleven extension programs with a total of 5,923 students. Though statistics were not available there was evidence that there were TEE programs in other West African countries like Cameroon, Ghana.

Relevance of TEE in Africa

The situation which led to the start of TEE in Guatemala as elaborated above is in many ways the same situation prevailing in Africa, the Church is growing rapidly, seminaries, Theological Colleges, and theological departments in universities are struggling with financial challenges and are not getting sufficient students to enroll. The relevance of TEE in Africa cannot therefore be over emphasized.

Accessibility

The financial and academic qualification demands for ones entry into classical theological training in Africa has prevented many able leaders and potential leaders in the African Church from being actively involved and contributing adequately to ministry. Because of lack of formal theological training they are kept out of the circle of “qualified leadership” of the Church. This is a great disadvantage to a Church which is growing rapidly in a context that requires the maximum involvement of all God’s people.

One distinct advantage of TEE is accessibility. Through TEE many Church leaders gain access to good quality theological training and preparation for ministry. Financially, TEE provides accessibility because it is cost effective. Because the training is extended to the learners it means that they can continue with their income earning work while studying. The method is also cost effective because it cuts out board and lodging and some other costs related to residential training. There is also the advantage of academic accessibility in the sense that TEE incorporates a strong practical component which in most cases adequately compensates for short fall in theoretical academic aspect. The fact that TEE mostly targets adults also means that some may have matured and gained more knowledge than they did at the time they were taking their school leaving examinations. Kinsler and Emery affirm that “TEE is a movement for the full incorporation of God’s people.”

An Alternative form of training

The summary three point relevance of TEE in Africa outlined by Agustin and Rosario Battle way back in 1983 still rings true, namely that

1. It brings into the life of the Church many people who have never before had access to theological preparation
2. It is an alternative to the traditional way of theological training and an opening to new ways in the future because it has given flexibility to educational work
3. It is a psychological preparation for the acceptance and development of new ways of training God’s people.

Not only does the TEE method make Theological Education accessible at all levels, but it is an important tool to correct the heavy theoretical bias of the formal theological Education which has been a carryover from the general model of education. The classical model of education has been criticized by

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educators like Paulo Freire\(^9\), as being teacher centered where the teacher is the only source of knowledge which is passed on or “banked” in the learners. Through its emphasis on group study and practical work, the TEE method makes possible the “theology from below” approach where the teacher, tutor or facilitator is also open to learning from the learners.

The African Network of Institutions of Theological Education Preparing Anglicans for Ministry (ANATEPAM) in their bulletin of November 2001 which was dedicated to “Understanding TEE” stated that

It has been the view of our Governing Council that TEE is a creative, relevant, contextually –appropriate programme of theological education for Africa. It is capable of providing training for laity and ordinands that is efficient, cost-sensitive and broad based.\(^10\)

\(^9\) See the writings of Paulo Freire especially “The Pedagogy of the Oppressed”.


African Instituted Churches

Because of its accessibility and adaptability, TEE has made it possible for the African Instituted Churches (AICs) to have access to proper theological education. The meeting of leaders of the African Instituted Churches in Cairo convened by the Bishop Antonious Markos of the Coptic Orthodox Church in 1978, opened the way of AICs to TEE. The meeting led to the formation of the Organization of African Independent (Instituted) Churches (OAIC) based in Nairobi. As part of efforts of supporting member churches, the OAIC established a TEE program which produced more than 60 TEE texts in Swahili, English, and French. They also initiated a training program for TEE leaders and trainers at their headquarters in Nairobi where TEE facilitators from AICs in different African Countries were trained.

What begun as TEE has developed into in house theology training programmes for several churches in East Africa and more so in Kenya. However, TEE remains an important aspect for ministerial formation and laity training facilitated by the graduates of theology.

Currently there are examples of great advancement in TEE training for AICs, for example the Centre for Constructive Theology at the University of KwaZulu Natal in Pietermaritzburg trains AIC leaders in different regions of South Africa, the Good News Theological College and Seminary in Ghana has a very strong TEE Program which caters for AICs the program is coordinated by the Regional Staff of the OAIC, and the TEE Program in Botswana Kholaghano College has a very strong and active participation of a large number of AICs, just to mention a few.

Challenges in TEE Progress and Development

As noted earlier since its entry into Africa in the 70s TEE has gone through ups and downs, with some TEE programs dying and new ones coming up. There are various reasons which in my view led to the lack of concrete and sustained development of most TEE programs in Africa, despite its appropriateness to the situation in Africa. Four reasons are worth pointing out here.

1. Dominance of missionaries and mission personnel in establishing TEE

Most TEEs where established at the initiative and funding of foreign missionaries and missions. As such the set up followed the availability of the funding which could not be sustained with local resources leading to most TEEs dying or not operating as they should after the departure of the missionaries.
2. Lack of a common forum for mutual support and collaboration

Despite some efforts for regional and continental consultations, associations and publications to link TEE programs, most TEE programs operated in isolation and confined to denominations. Weak TEE programs which did not have formal structures could not stand on their own. That is why the All Africa TEE Association at its third Conference in Ghana in October 2010 emphasized the collaboration and mutual support as one of the key tasks of the TEE Movement.

3. The perceived conflict between residential seminaries and TEE Programs

The conflict between TEE Programs and Residential Seminaries has most of the time led to the sidelining and diminishing the value of TEE. In most cases emphasis has placed on the advantages of TEE against Seminary Training, especially the financial or cost factor. This cost factor understandably causes strong reaction because it was and still in most cases made without duly emphasizing the need for seminary training which is still essential to produce academic and professional theologians.

There was and still is need to emphasize how TEE and Theological Seminaries are essential and complement each other in theological development of both clergy and lay people. The good aspects of TEE (Practical work, adaptability to context, cost effectiveness etc.) are also required for seminary, just as the important aspects of seminary (academic emphasis, high quality study material etc) are also required and must also be emphasized for TEE. In fact it is important to note from the genesis of TEE in Guatemala that it was an effort where the two co existed.

There are a good number of cases where the TEE programs exists side by side with seminaries or Theological Department; the Presbyterian Church in East Africa TEE Program is based at The Presbyterian Church University in Nairobi; in Ethiopia the Mekani Yesu Church TEE Program based at the Mekani Yesu Theological Seminary in Addis Abeba, The Uganda TEE Program is based at the Christian University at Mukono (now almost collapsed due to lack of funding), are some such examples.

For the situation in Africa, the solution is not Theological College OR Theological Education by Extension, but it is Theological College AND Theological Education by Extension, because each has a role to play and the focus should be to address the short comings and weaknesses which are present in each method.

4. Departure from the actual TEE method

Some of the TEE programs could not survive or operate effectively because they could not maintain the basics of the TEE method. Fremont and Sara Regier observed this in the report of their 1994 Research Project of Africa Non-formal Theological Education (which included TEE). They observe that;

Much of what is called TEE is a far cry from the classical Ross Kinsler model. TEE originally came out of an era of popular liberation movement in Central America stressing bottom-up theology. Much of the TEE training content in Africa is more top down. What is called contextualization (making the training relevant to the particular situation and environment) is too often little more than putting African wraps onto Western thought. Often weekly TEE seminars, intended as facilitated discussion and application sessions, become teaching or even preaching. In too many cases the local TEE program is not really owned by the local church…Some TEE programs are so strongly focused on evangelism that the equipping hardly occurs.11

Following the pillars of TEE requires a lot of discipline and commitment and regular review of the progress. TEE is contextual, as such, the details of how the program is carried out differs from country to country.

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country, but when the basics of the TEE method is not followed, the program does not produce the desired results and the negative things said about TEE begin to become true and the program is abandoned.

Recent Developments and the Future of TEE in Africa

Formation of the All Africa TEE Association

The “Journey of Hope” Theological Conference organized by the World Council of Churches, Ecumenical Theological Education Unit (WCC-ETE), in Kempton Park South Africa, marked another turn for TEE in Africa. The Conference which was a follow up on the outcome of the 2001 Harare WCC Assembly brought together practitioners in all kind of theological education and training. The objective was to review the whole process of theological education and chart new direction for theological training and formation in Africa. TEE was represented by practitioners from Mozambique, Angola, Zambia, Botswana, Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda. The interaction among these TEE people revealed lack of collaboration among TEE programs which would benefit from mutual collaboration and support. This realization led to the resolve to do all possible initiate and strengthen means of contact and collaboration among existing TEE programs in the continent and effort to help introduce the TEE method of theological education to countries where it was not available but needed.

At this point there was a TEE Association existing in East Africa, so the representative from Uganda was tasked to use the network of this Association to organize a continent wide conference for all existing as well as potential TEE. The process that followed led to the holding of the first All Africa TEE Conference in Mukono Uganda in 2003 under the coordination of Uganda TEE.

At the Mukono Conference it was realized that most of the TEE programs had both slowed down drastically and only existed in name or had collapsed all together. On the other hand the need for TEE programs was quite clear, Churches were growing rapidly, resources to fund theological colleges, seminaries and theological faculties were drastically reducing. Concerns about the levels and quality of TEE were expressed but it did not downplay the relevance and need for effective TEE programs. So the effort was directed to find ways of supporting and re enforcing this method of theological training. The conference resolved among other things to start a TEE Association which would serve as a forum for jointly addressing some of the issues affecting TEE. A continuation committee composed of seven people from different sub regions was constituted. A decision was also made to hold another All Africa TEE Conference in Zambia in two years time, which among other things it was hoped would formalize the Association.

The continuation committee provided a good contact point and brought the needs of TEE to visibility, such that when the Ecumenical HIV&AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA) was considering special training of trainers for special groups which are key in contributing to the realization of the goal of an HIV/AIDS competent Church in Africa, TEE was also identified as one such group. A Training of Trainers course was conducted at Limuru Conference Centre in 2004. At this workshop a major decision was reached to request EHAIA to produce an HIV/AIDS Theological Syllabus with ten accompanying module outlines for TEE programs in Africa. EHAIA responded positively to this request and set in motion a process to produce the material which was published on CD Rom in 2008.

The second All Africa TEE Conference was held in Livingstone Zambia in October 2006. The Conference brought together 34 TEE Practitioners from 15 different countries which included India, Holland, and USA. The conference worked on three key projects namely reviewing and launching HIV/AIDS Theological Syllabus and Modules, evaluating and assessing the progress on the publication of the book “Mission by the People of God” which was to be a follow up to the book “Ministry by the People of God” published by the WCC in 1975, and outlining the program focus for the Association.
The Association was formally launched as the All Africa Theological Education by Extension Association (AATEEA) and the first Executive Committee elected which included a volunteer General Secretary Rev. Kangwa Mabuluki who could help coordinate the program of the Association using the TEE program in Zambia of which he was the director, as a base.

The initial tasks for the Association included; serving as a forum for collaboration and mutual support among TEE programmes in Africa; arranging and conducting training programmes and seminars aimed at improving the competence and effectiveness of the TEE practitioners and staff; arranging and encouraging introduction of TEE in countries where none exists; and exploring and initiating creative ways of enhancing collaboration between TEE programs and Theological Colleges and Seminaries.

Despite the challenges of limited resources and all the teething problems of communication and finding out contact addresses and persons in various countries, the Association Executive Committee made every effort and successfully organized the third All Africa TEE Conference in Dodowa (Greater Accra), Ghana in October 2010. The Conference was attended by 49 Delegates. This conference finalized the constitution and affirmed that the All Africa Conference would be an important rallying feature which would mostly involve training workshops with the business meeting only taking a day or a day and half.

At the Dodowa Conference, the General Secretary gave a report which indicated tremendous progress and increasing relevance and need for the AATEEA. There were many requests from various countries requesting for support to either establish, revive or strengthen the TEE program. Such countries included DR Congo, Tanzania, The Gambia, Liberia, Zimbabwe, and Angola to mention some.

Through the Association TEE had gained recognition and had representation on the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Theology Advisory Committee, and on many sub regional ecumenical bodies.

The Future of TEE in Africa

As earlier noted the relevance and value of TEE for Africa has always been apparent. Noting some of the issues that had led to the weakening and collapse of some of the TEE programs in Africa, there are key areas which need addressing if the current revival of TEE work is to continue for the immense benefit of the church in Africa.

1. The strengthening of AATEEA and through it Joint production and use of study material, monitoring standards and accreditation. As noted above these are the essential tasks as set out for AATEEA.

2. Helping the church in Africa realize again the value and indispensability of TEE – and ownership by the Churches – Fremont and Sara Regier observe in their 1994 Study that

In our study we heard reports about the rise and decline of individual TEE programs which are dependent on the commitment and skills of the charismatic leadership and adequate resources. This is part of the reason why TEE programs can rise up fast and collapse even faster. Some of the TEE programs we visited did not have a high profile among decision makers in the Church. There was little commitment to TEE and effective program management. Because vision was not shared by African Church leaders obstacles were not confronted nor was attention given to making it work.12

TEE is an instrument of the Churches in Africa and therefore ownership is critical for both sustainability and quality control. Part of the onus for this is on the TEE practitioners who should make every effort to ensure the involvement of Church decision makers in the governance of TEE programs.

3. Extend use of TEE method of education to development and social education, thus increase relevance and possibility of financial sustainability for TEE. The TEE method of study, as we have

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12 Fremont and Reiger, *Africa Non-formal Theological Education*, 47.
noted in this article, does not only challenge the traditional method of theological education, but also challenges the traditional method of education in general. The method can therefore be used effectively for community education areas of social concern or themes such as environment, health, justice and human rights etc.

4. Increased collaboration between TEE and Theological Colleges and Faculties

TEE is the best way to go without the neglect of the other forms of theological education.

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Introduction

Theological Education in Africa is in a state of significant change as Seminaries, Colleges and Universities respond to the realities of Africa in different ways in an attempt to fulfill the needs of the churches and para-church organisations which they are serving. This paper seeks to examine the contributions made by distance and open learning models used in disseminating theological education in Africa with special reference to Zimbabwe. The focal point of this paper is to highlight the contributions made by the open and distance learning models in reaching the learner in different parts of the world. For this to be achieved the following questions need to be answered: What is Open and Distance Learning (ODL)? What are the ODL models? What is Theological Education (TE)? How do ODL models benefit TE in Africa? What could be the challenges of ODL models of teaching TE in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular? How do ODL models apply to TE in Africa? Data for this paper were collected through documentary analysis, interviews and observations.

As a force contributing to social and economic development, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is fast becoming an accepted and indispensable part of the mainstream of educational systems in both developed and developing countries, with particular emphasis on the latter. This growth has been stimulated in part by the interest among educators and trainers in the use of new, Internet-based and multimedia technologies, and also by the recognition that traditional ways of organizing education need to be reinforced by innovative methods, if the fundamental right of all people to learning is to be realized. The globalization of distance education provides many opportunities for developing countries for the realization of their education system-wide goals. Two main factors have led to an explosion of interest in distance learning: the growing need for continual skills upgrading and retraining; and the technological advances that have made it possible to teach more and more subjects at a distance.

Linda Cannell, a cynical critic of the conventional learning of theology asks: “What is the point of a seminary education that requires more time than people are willing to give, more money than people are able to pay, more disconnection from family and career than people are willing to tolerate, and that seems to be less than effective in equipping women and men for leadership and ministry?” This entails that the model of theological education we have inherited in Africa is that of the full time residential student yet this model is now under pressure precisely because of the high cost of tuition and accommodation coupled with the loss of income for the duration of studies. In Africa, a number of seminaries, theological colleges and theological departments in state universities operate against the background of calamitous poverty. The students and their churches are cash skint. They are running out of money since they are regarded as the cash cow of theological institutions. Some African countries have survived horrible protracted wars while others have suffered the resultant destruction of infrastructure and services. Some still operate in very unstable environments such as Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia, Libya, Egypt and the DRC for example. In the past decade, Zimbabwe was the prime example of a basket case economy where a seminary had to cope with runaway inflation. With the introduction of multicurrency in Zimbabwe, the majority of students were

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1 Open and Distance Learning: Trends, Policy and Strategy Considerations (UNESCO: Division of Higher Education, 2002).
2 Linda Cannell, “A Review of Literature on Distance Education,” Theological Education 36:1 (1999), 63-72.
forced out of institutions of higher learning. Such a move affected the teaching and learning of TE. It is in light of this background that this paper is going to look at the contributions made by ODL of TE in Africa with particular reference to Zimbabwe. However, for one to understand the issue under discussion, there is a need to understand what we mean by Open and Distance Learning and Theological Education.

Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

According to Richard S. Ascough, ODL is a unique, world-leading style of learning which enables students to learn in their own time, at home, work place or wherever they choose – reading, watching or listening to material supplied, doing course activities and assignments with regular support from their tutor. In this case, students enjoy full support throughout their studies, with a tutor (or study adviser depending on the teaching arrangements for the course they choose) to guide, advise and offer comprehensive feedback on their coursework. The tutor can be contacted by phone or online, and will lead group tutorials and seminars. Support is also offered by other ODL staff and by fellow students at tutorials, or as part of the global community of ODL students who can be reached through online forums.

A student can also meet other ODL students face to face, at tutorials and informal study groups. There are even clubs, societies and social events organised by their student unions. Tutorials are mostly optional and give students a chance to meet their tutors and fellow students; and to receive guidance and feedback on their assignments.

Theological Education (TE)

In 1946 Hugh Hartshorne raised the following question: “What is it that makes something theological education?” According to Hartshorne, this is not as simple a question as it seems to be. Obviously, one can not find out what TE is by looking in the dictionary. It is what it has become in institutions organised by churches and church people to prepare men, and more recently women, for church leadership. Each institution reflects the specific theological bias of some group and exists in order to perpetuate this bias. For Hartshorne, as one approaches it, one becomes involved in such varieties of theory and practice that one hardly knows what they are talking about. For Brian Edgar, what determines TE is its content. For him, theological education is that education that is specifically about theology, God or about the experience of God. In addition to content, it is also possible to suggest that the purpose is definitive of what makes something theological education. After all, is it enough to say that knowledge is sufficient to qualify something as theological education if it does not also intend to develop character and skills in life and holiness? Does the method play a role in defining theological education? What process is to be followed? Does it involve academic research or is it a personal search to find the ultimate good?

Many scholars involved in theological education would also suggest that the ethos is as important as the content and the method. Thus, the spirituality, both individual and communal, which permeates the educational process, is critical. Of course, this relates to the context in which the education takes place.

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4 Cannell, “A Review of Literature on Distance Education.”
6 Hartshorne, “What is Theological Education?”, 236.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Some prefer the academy, others the church and some the wider community. The difference is theologically significant.\(^9\) One cannot really discuss the defining characteristics of theological education without also paying attention to the people involved. Does the faith of those involved define in some way some education as being theological even if the content is not overtly so?

So, given these seven important dimensions of the education, what is it that makes it theological education? It is not hard to conclude that theology actually permeates the whole enterprise. It is even less difficult to see that the numerous possibilities mean that there can be significant differences in what is considered theologically central for the educational enterprise. From the above dimensions, theological education can be defined as the tutoring of religious doctrines of the church. But TE quickly expanded to include various other subjects, including even sermon-making, religious studies and church administration, which the latter, by some strange leap of logic, became ‘practical’ theology. Thus, by calling all courses ‘theology’, the term ‘theological school’ was justified.\(^10\)

According to Douglas Rutt, theological education has alternatively been viewed as the training of religious technicians (ministry skills) and the formation of religious leaders (ministerial character). For Rutt,

This bifurcation is unfortunate since those who engaged in various types of ministry need three different sets of formation which are: a biblical and theological basis that gives them deep understanding to draw from, a spiritual formation that enables them to be and to continue to develop as the type of person who can minister long-term and is appropriate for others to follow and emulate, and a set of ministry skills that makes the person effective at serving others in ministry. If any of these three elements is missing, the curriculum of TE is lacking and the outcome is a poorly equipped, perhaps unequipped person, who is liable to fail in fulfilling their calling.\(^11\)

**Background to Theological Education in Africa**

It was only natural that early missionaries in Africa believed the goal of educating an African clergy could best be accomplished through the establishment of institutions like those they had attended. This usually meant a residential seminary programme, lasting several years, with an academically well-trained faculty and students whose educational level was comparable to that of divinity students in the west.\(^12\) The model of development which was in vogue during the period from the end of World War 2 until 1960 also accommodated this approach. Those who were interested in the growth and prosperity of their people would follow the example of the more prosperous nations in the west, it was thought, including the example of the western model of education.\(^13\) Unfortunately, the residential model of seminary education for church leadership has not lived up to its expectations. Several problems inherent in the model along with varying cultural dynamics raised questions as to its viability for the future. The costs, usually underwritten by a foreign mission board, have been exorbitant. In spite of such a heavy financial

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10 Hartshorne “What is Theological Education?,” 236
commitment, however, the seminary was graduating an average of only 1.5 candidates per year. Emilio
Castro adds other factors which need to be taken into consideration which are as follows:

The residential model encourages professionalism, understood as a “competitive desire to climb the promotional
ladder,” something which should not be a part of the Christian community. The residential or professional model
is very difficult to sustain among a people who are already living in poverty, therefore the economic viability is
called into question. Extraction from the cultural milieu of the student makes it difficult for him to return to his
former lifestyle.14

In Mozambique the Nazarene seminary has only 30 full time students but it oversees lower level lay
training programs for 1000 people in 50 extension sites. One seminary in Kenya runs classes for 60
teachers during the school holidays for people who are already in ministry and leadership positions in their
local churches. Many seminaries hold in-service training events for pastors. A number of recent seminars
in Chad, Senegal, and Cote d’ Ivoire have been around the subject of HIV and AIDS.15 Three seminaries
are experimenting with evening classes for young professionals. Models of distributed education are
appearing. It might be by extension campuses where the lecturer goes to another town, or by distance
learning (text based or electronic), or by short course residencies or block release. Whatever the case, it is
clear that the mode, time and place of delivery is changing to ODL models.

Open Distance Learning Models

In principle, distance educators may be able to choose from a wide range of technologies, from print and
broadcasting to a variety of applications of computer based information and communication technologies.
In practice the choice is likely to be constrained by practicalities and costs, as well as by educational
purpose.16 As a starting point, the planner in ODL institutions needs to consider how far the institution and
the learner both have access to a particular technology: broadcasting, for example, may look attractive to
the planner but is no use if most students are outside the range of a transmitter or broadcasting time is
available only at inappropriate hours. Information about costs may be next in importance, as technologies
vary in their costs and their cost behaviour. The most significant difference in behaviour is between costs
where economies of scale are possible, such as radio, and those where they are negligible, such as face-to-
face tutoring or marking individual assignments. In choosing technologies it is also necessary to distinguish
between their two main functions of distributing teaching material and allowing interaction between tutor
and student. Again, economies are more likely to be available in distribution, where it costs no more to
broadcast to a thousand students than a hundred, than in interaction.17 The division between the two
functions is usually clear-cut. Radio, for example, is a one-way medium which can only distribute teaching
to learners while telephone tutoring, or face-to-face meetings, allow interaction. The new information and
communication technologies provide the single main exception to this rule; if students have internet access
then it can be used both to distribute teaching material to them and as a means of two-way communication.
One consequence of this is likely to be a reduction in the institution's costs and an increase in the student's,
where responsibility for reproducing printed matter is shifted from the institution to the learner. But this is
very much the exception: more often the planner needs to balance the advantages of, say, broadcasting

14 Douglas J. Mattson, “Learning Style Diversity in Post-Secondary Distance Education,” Christian Perspective in
Education 1: 2 (May 2008), 1-36.
15 Edward A. Buchanan, “Virtual Theological Education: Cybertraining for Evangelization and Discipleship,” Faith
16 Buchanan, “Virtual Theological Education,” 29.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
against print as media for distribution and face-to-face against written opportunities for feedback from students.  

There is no simple match between educational purpose and technology. Generally, there is a case for using more than one technology in open and distance learning, partly because this is likely to be more interesting for the learner, partly as an insurance policy (if the mail does not get through the broadcast may), partly because there may be educational advantages in using one medium rather than another (audio tapes have an advantage over print in teaching the pronunciation of the teaching institution), such as access to broadcasting capacity for example, and others about what is needed by the learner. In looking at these options, the planner will also need to consider where the costs are likely to fall and how they are shared between the teaching institution and the learner. These are shown in table below.

It should be noted however that technology choice is likely to be a function of access, cost and educational function. A technology is useful only if both the institution and the learner have appropriate access to it. The cost structure, and the possibility of economies of scale, differ from one technology to another. Plans also need to consider how far costs, in relation to any particular technology, fall on the tutor or the student. In making an educational choice, the key distinction is between the use of technology to distribute teaching material and to allow two-way communication for tutor-student, and possibly student-student, interaction. The table below shows the ODL models that can be used for theological education in Africa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology and Application</th>
<th>Strengths and weaknesses</th>
<th>Prerequisites</th>
<th>Cost behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Print</strong></td>
<td>Permanent, convenient, medium can play variety of roles. May not motivate students if used alone.</td>
<td>Modest for production and reproduction. Lengthy preparation time. Arrangements needed for physical distribution.</td>
<td>Fixed costs for development of master copy. Variable costs for reproduction and distribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Radio</strong></td>
<td>Can be topical and lively. Can reach all or most teachers at the same time. Ephemeral, constrained by available time slots and sometimes regulation.</td>
<td>Basic studio and production facilities. Access to broadcasting agency. Availability of radios and mains, electricity or batteries.</td>
<td>Production cost. Higher than for print. Most costs fall on producer not receiver. Economies of scale possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audiocassettes</strong></td>
<td>Can provide useful, permanent resource without time constraints inherent in radio. Demands physical distribution.</td>
<td>Modest, subject to technical quality required. Needs physical distribution and availability of cassette recorders.</td>
<td>Costs for production, reproduction and distribution. No economies of scale.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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18 Boyce and Nysse, “Technology and the Classroom,” 418.

### Television

| Visual interest and appeal. Not always accessible to teachers. | Access to broadcast production and transmission facilities. | High central costs for production and transmission; may be 10 times cost of radio. Economies of scale make appropriate only for large audiences. |

### Audio and video conferencing

| Can support development of scattered groups of teachers. Needs access to sophisticated equipment at both ends. | Detailed preparation needed for multi-site group discussions. Technical facilities both for institutions and teachers or groups of teachers. | High cost (especially for video) for conference equipment. Costs may be acceptable if there are significant reductions in travelling costs for learners. |

### Computers

| Potential availability of huge amount of material. | Needs availability of software, technical support services, and training opportunities for teachers. | Costs incurred for hardware, software, maintenance and training. Significant costs borne at reception end especially for peripherals (e.g. printer, toner, paper). |

### Computer communication

| Ease of communication balanced against costs and convenience of access to computer facilities. | As for computers but also demands working access to internet service provider. | As for computers but local costs increased savings for institution if used to distribute materials but costs then falling on recipient. |

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**Great Strides Made by Distance and Open Learning Models of Theological Education in Africa**

The Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) in Zimbabwe is a case in point. One of the most notable opportunities provided by the introduction of the Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies and Theology at ZOU is that TE is now open to so many people who would otherwise have failed to acquire this qualification. According to Molly Manyonganise, most students enrolling for the ZOU programme are already employed in churches, faith-based organisations, schools and para-church organisations. The introduction of TE at ZOU was welcomed by religious institutions, especially church organizations. The reason being that their pastors could further their studies in theology without necessarily removing them from their work stations. The Zion Christian Church administrator in Masvingo said:

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We are ecstatic about the introduction of the theology through distance education because we know our ministers and other office-bearers can learn while at the same time executing their duties in their congregation. We understand very well that ZOU’s motto is ‘Learn while you earn’ but ever since the introduction of this programme in our pastoral circles we are saying ‘learn while you serve’. So we don’t even hesitate to sponsor our people who want to join the ZOU TE programme.

Thus the introduction of TE through the ODL models by ZOU in Zimbabwe opened avenues for many to realize their academic and professional dreams. With ODL, Gilliat-Ray\(^2\) says “religion is being relocated out of ‘traditional’ spheres to new contexts where it then takes new shapes and appears in different guises”. As such, Open and Distance learning is an important means of breaking down the classroom walls by enabling students to study in their own time and offering them access to a wide variety of resources.\(^2\)

The study of TE through the open and distance learning model in Zimbabwe by ZOU has been commended by students as giving them the hands-on experience. For example, they are able to apply knowledge as they acquire it rather than wait until they finish their course, as is the case in a conventional set-up. One student who is a pastor in the United Methodist Church testified that he had always used the pulpit to castigate those infected by HIV and AIDS. However, after attending a tutorial on the Phenomenology of Religion course and being taught how to apply the principles of epoche and empathy, he was now able to empathise with both the affected and infected. Prior to this he had received anonymous messages from his parishioners asking him whether he had a heart for the infected people. After he had shown this empathy, the same parishioners thanked him for being considerate. As a result, the HIV infected people in his church are feeling free to disclose their status because they are now assured that the Pastor will not condemn them. This is just one incident that proves that the Zimbabwe Open University through its Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies and Theology Programme has managed to engage religious institutions to be proactive in HIV and AIDS mitigation.

In a country like Zimbabwe where there is religious and cultural diversity, TE has never been more relevant than it is now. With ZOU present nationwide through its regional centres, it has become possible to influence religious tolerance among citizen. Molly Manyonganise, a female lecturer at ZOU’s National Centre asserts that:

One day she invited a Muslim Sheik to come to her office for an interview. When the man came in the company of a friend, he was shocked that she did not extend her hand as she greeted them. As matter of interest he asked her why and she told him that though a Christian, she knew that according to Muslim tradition it is forbidden for a woman to have a hand shake with a man who is not her husband and vice versa. She had to reiterate that in the academic study of religion we encourage respect and tolerance for other religions. You will not believe it but these were impressed and from then on her interview with them went on very well.\(^2\)

This in a way helped in dispelling negative perceptions on the teaching of religion through the open and distance learning mode where people think it is not very effective.

\(^{21}\) Pasipamire, Interview, 05/08, 2011, Mbungo, Masvingo, Zimbabwe.


\(^{23}\) Gilliat-Ray, “Breaking Down the Classroom Walls.”

\(^{24}\) Manyonganise, “Challenges and Opportunities,” 3.

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*Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa*
Challenges of Open Distance Learning Models of Theological Education

Despite the opportunities presented, TE has its own challenges. Some interviewees cited certain courses that require face to face interaction with students as presenting challenges, for example, courses that deal with the Hebrew and Greek languages as well as Homiletics.25 Such courses require a distinctive pedagogical approach especially with regard to correct pronunciation of words and perfect reading of the scriptures. Homiletics, which teaches students the art of preaching, requires that they do micro-preaching in class so that the tutor is able to evaluate the students’ level of understanding in the course. In this case, the use of the hard copy module alone presents problems in that students are not able pronounce Hebrew and Greek words through reading only.

The Zimbabwe Open University has ten regional centres scattered around the country. In these centres, each programme is looked after by a regional programme coordinator. It is the duty of the programme coordinator to look for qualified part-time tutors. However, of the ten regional centres, only Harare has a coordinator and coordinators of other programmes are baby-sitting religious studies and theology. The implication is that students with queries may not get enough assistance since those baby-sitting are not knowledgeable in the subject. The Mashonaland East Regional Director said: “It is difficult even to market the programme because there is no one to answer questions that pertain to the programme when we go as a region for our marketing tours.” This therefore implies that there are some students who fail to enrol for the programme due to lack of necessary information.

In addition, interviewees noted with concern the non-availability of part-time tutors in the various expertise areas. This has resulted in academic staff at the national centre going to some district centres to conduct tutorials. With only three members at the ZOU national centre who are supposed to manage the programme, it becomes difficult for them to cover all the affected regions. This problem is compounded by the fact that at times part-time tutors who would have promised to conduct tutorials do not turn up. In such cases, the programme coordinator ends up taking all the courses even in areas he/she is not an expert. Given the scenario, where only one region has a programme coordinator, it therefore follows that regions where part-time tutors fail to turn up fail to salvage the situation and students end up losing the much valued tutorial time.

The other challenge raised by interviewees is the lack of standardisation when marking assignments. Assignments are marked in the regions by different markers. It is unfortunate that discrepancies are noted when full-time lecturers are marking end of term examinations. At times students from one region perform very well while those from another region perform very badly. This raises questions as to whether all the students nationwide are being taught religious concepts correctly. For example, an analysis of the May-June 2011 examination for the second group of students showed that the majority of them failed to distinguish between studying theology and professing religion. Most of their answers, especially in courses such as African Theology and Christian History and Thought, turned out to be very dogmatic instead of being academic. This, according to one of the interviewees, is a result of students mistaking TE with Bible study which they do in their churches. This mistake is found even within communities. Most communities underrate the programme with the common belief that it is uncomplicated and also due to the false illusion that the programme’s objectives is to perpetuate Christian values. As such, the programme has failed to attract students with other religious backgrounds apart from Christianity.

Lecturers themselves face challenges as they try to develop themselves academically. Programme leaders and chairpersons are sort of managers in their own right. They are managers of programmes and most of the time they will be doing administrative work. No research day is set aside for them. One lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy laments the lack of time to visit the library to do

research and write modules. Due to this administrative portfolio, members in the Department feel that it is important for the university to establish departmental libraries at National Centre.

Theological Education by Extension: A Recommended Strategy of ODL Models

In light of the above challenges faced by ODL in disseminating TE in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, the writer of this paper proposes that Theological Education by Extension (TEE) be adopted as a best mechanism used to complement ODL models.

Over the last 40 years or so, TEE has proven to be a well-balanced alternative to traditional Bible School or seminary training. For the reasons stated above, other Christian movements in the world, such as Cambodia, which have recently experienced sudden growth, have adopted and adapted TEE to train pastors and church leaders in their respective countries. TEE proved to be a capable alternative for training Christian pastors and church leaders in Guatemala, and other church and mission organizations in Central and South America regions. In the 1970s, the Christian Movement in Africa experienced a sudden increase in church attendees. In order to overcome the lack of qualified church leaders, they also turned to TEE. It should be noted that while the use of TEE has declined in recent years, the method is still employed in many locations of the world today. But what distinguishes a TEE programme from a correspondence or most other distance learning programmes, according to TEE experts such as Ralph Winter, Stephen Snook, and Graham Chipps, includes the following:

**TEE trains older, more recognized community leaders.**

This is so because many societies around the world equate age with wisdom and leadership. In poor and rural societies, the older more established leaders cannot afford to leave their families or church communities for long periods of time to be trained for ministry. Conversely, the younger people who are trained in traditional seminaries fail to gain respect as leaders when they return to their home villages. TEE attempts to direct training to older more recognized leaders.

**TEE employs programmed learning instruction in self-study courses.**

Theological Education by Extension courses employ program instruction and learning techniques in their self-study courses. Programmed instruction and learning is an educational technique first postulated by researcher B.F. Skinner.

In a nutshell, Skinner discovered that vertebrates of different types learned in much the same way and found that reinforcement promoted learning more than threat of punishment. He also observed that subjects learned faster when they were taught in small incremental steps and reinforced accordingly. From these observations, courses were devised by which students’ answers were immediately reinforced by the curriculum. TEE adopted this educational format.

**TEE establishes regionally accessible study centers.**

Theological Education by Extension seeks to establish regionally-placed study centers for easy access by potential students. As is inherent in the phrase “by extension”, TEE programs emphasize taking

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instruction out to the people where they live. Traditional seminary is often costly because prospective students have to relocate and pay for room and board as well as tuition. TEE is more affordable because it eliminates the need to pay extra housing costs.

*TEE promotes active participation in the local church.*

In addition, Theological Education by Extension programs require students to take an active role in the local church. TEE students do not merely study to gain head knowledge of the Bible and Christian doctrines; they also train in practical ministry and apply that training to their respective church ministries. Since TEE students do not move away for training, they remain present to help with the work of their local churches.31

**Conclusions**

The paper has noted that in Zimbabwe and Africa at large, the teaching of TE through ODL models has its own advantages and disadvantages. The advantages highlighted are that the institutions which use ODL models are able to reach out to a larger student population at one time through the establishment of regional and district centres, thus fostering religious tolerance in a continent with diverse religious backgrounds. It has also been shown that leaders of different religious institutions who would have failed to enter into conventional universities due to work commitments, have the opportunity to obtain their degree through ODL institutions like Zimbabwe Open University, University of South Africa and many others. Different stakeholders have commended the TE programmes which make them relevant in their various communities as they participate in solving challenges prevalent in these communities, such as HIV and AIDS pandemic, environmental degradation, human rights, gender, poverty, education and health and political issues. The paper has however, highlighted the challenges of teaching TE through open and distance learning models. Some of these challenges have to do with language courses such as Hebrew and Greek, which require that students have face to face lectures with experts in the area so that they are taught correct pronunciations and translations. Some courses that have a practical element, such as homiletics, also pose problems in distance and open learning institutions. Problems of standardization in teaching and marking students’ work have also been underscored. The paper therefore recommends that ODL institutions like ZOU should make a deliberate effort to centralize the marking of assignments so that regions with problems can be noted before students write examinations. It is also important to have programme coordinators for the teaching of TE through ODL models in all regions, for effective monitoring and evaluation of the programme. This would go a long way in salvaging situations where part-time tutors do not attend tutorials. In the case of ZOU, it is important to capacitate national centre staff members in areas of research and publication by establishing a Departmental Library.

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MENTORING YOUNGER SCHOLARS IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

John de Gruchy and Lyn Holeness

The focus of this essay is primarily on the mentoring of younger scholars who are being trained to become the next generation of theological educators in Africa. We also have in mind the mentoring of those in theological training more generally for ministry within the church, especially ordained clergy and others in leadership positions. Yet this requires at the same time the recognition that those already engaged in theological education need to be encouraged and equipped to become mentors of those they teach. In other words, we must address the whole constituency engaged in the process, including those in institutional leadership who are responsible for overseeing theological education.

Failures in theological education are by no means always associated with inadequate curricula, resources, or scholarly competence; they can often be attributed to a break down of relationships between educators and those they teach. We are aware of theological seminaries in African rural areas where both human and other resources are very limited, but where theological formation is of a high standard. We are also aware of the converse. The reason often has to do with the presence or absence of good mentors. While it is necessary to overcome lacks in resourcing, it does not necessarily follow that in doing so there will be an inevitable improvement in the quality of theological education and formation. Much depends on both the academic and mentoring capacity and quality of the theological educators.

Mentoring has become a subject of considerable and urgent attention in recent years. This has resulted in the development of mentoring programmes in a growing number of academic institutions worldwide, not least in Africa. While we can and must learn from these broader academic programmes, we recognize that the character and needs of theological education make mentoring essential in a way that might not always be true in other academic environments, even though the need for mentoring is important in all. The reason is that theological education is about the holistic formation of future church leadership at all levels, something that is of vital importance for the future of the church and its mission in Africa.

In an article on mentoring in theological education John Cosby reminds us that “mentoring has a long and proven track record. Since the dawn of recorded history mentoring has been used to prepare leaders for important roles”. ¹ In the Greek Odyssey it is the sage Mentos who is given responsibility by Ulysses for the training and preparation of his son Telemachus to assume the throne, thus becoming “the quintessential developer of future leaders and the source of our word, mentor”.² Both Old and New Testaments provide numerous examples of experienced leaders developing leaders of the future through intense and ongoing mentoring relationships.

Our aim in this brief article is to describe the nature of mentoring, to indicate its importance of theological education in Africa, and to encourage the formation of mentoring programmes where these do not exist. Such programmes are necessary both for the training of potential mentors and for the mentoring of those who are in theological training. The relationship between developing mentoring skills is also linked to the need for more adequate training in pastoral care for especially within the theological education sector these cannot be separated. We will also stress that there is a link between good mentoring and the formation of good pastors within the theological education process.

¹ John Cosby, “Introduction to Mentoring: Mentoring in Theological Education”
² Cosby, “Introduction to Mentoring.”
Our Experience in Mentoring

We were asked to write this article partly because of our experience in both theological education and the mentoring of theological students, and partly because in recent years we have been involved in the Emerging Researcher Programme (ERP) at the University of Cape Town (UCT). While this was primarily conceptualized as a mentoring programme it has provided us with considerable insight into what mentoring is about. Established in 2003, the programme was developed to meet a specific need, namely to grow a new generation of academics across the disciplinary spectrum through the transfer of skills from an older and more experienced to a younger generation of researchers. Many of these younger academics were coming into academia from a low base of research and teaching experience, a not uncommon factor within the African context. They were also finding it difficult to provide adequate supervision and mentoring for their own students, not least because their own training had not always provided good role models. Since the ERP began, well over five hundred academics, from Lecturers to Associate Professors have participated. We now have considerable evidence, as well as anecdotal indicators, that it has proved its worth.

Two aspects of the ERP relate to the mentoring of theological students and theological educators. First, the methodology employed in developing the ERP was shaped by a variation on the see-judge-act model that has become familiar to many engaged in doing theology in recent decades. Put differently those of us mandated to develop the ERP were asked to reflect back on our own experience as senior academics, critically evaluate what we had sought to do and what was achieved during our formal tenure as educators, and then design the programme and its various interventions. So in drafting this article, we will in large measure be reflecting critically on our own experience in mentoring over the years in order to offer some concrete proposals for mentoring theological educators and theological students in Africa.

Second, in developing the ERP we soon recognized that one of the crucial aspects for a successful programme was providing one-on-one consultation for those in the programme who expressed the need for advice, direction and support over and above what they were receiving in the more structured side of the programme, or within their own academic departments. They were not only interested in developing their skills as researchers, but seeking more personal direction for their academic work and career as a whole. What also became evident was that personal and professional lives could not be neatly separated. An interesting feature of the ERP, with relevance for the agenda of this article, is that many participants consider the mentoring elements of the programme to be the most empowering for their development. This signified an important shift in the original vision for the ERP, best described with reference to the distinction between “coaching” and “mentoring.”

Coaching, Mentoring and Apprenticeship

A coach is normally understood as someone whose main interest is to prepare someone for the next game or, if you like, the next musical competition. The focus is specifically on ensuring that the skills of the player or musician are fine-tuned sufficiently so that the game or first prize may be won. The coach is naturally interested in the well-being of the player or musician, but primarily for the sake of achieving these short-term goals. A mentor also wants a student to achieve his or her goals, but sets these aims in a wider framework, namely the well-being and development of the person as a whole towards the fulfillment of potential. So while an “academic coach” might enable a student to win a scholarship to a prestigious university, it might be at the expense of the student’s health through being pushed too hard. Whereas mentors “focus on the person, their career and support for individual growth and maturity,” coaches are

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“job-focused and performance-oriented”. While the boundaries between these models may be fluid, mentoring is grounded in a power-free relationship which facilitates personal growth and self-discovery. Coaching, on the other hand, has a set agenda to develop skills, change behaviour and produce results in the immediate future.

The ERP’s original mandate fell primarily in the coaching category, but as already indicated it soon became evident that in many cases it had to go hand in hand with mentoring. This meant that interpersonal skills were as important as professional ones in guaranteeing the success of the programme, so that each interaction becomes a blend of the two. It is at this point that the ERP experience intersects most notably with that of growing younger scholars in theological education.

The mentoring process may helpfully be understood as an apprenticeship as this was understood in the days when an apprentice worked closely under the care of a master craftsman (they were virtually always male) in a trade. A master craftsman would normally have four or five apprentices working with him in his workshop. He would impart his knowledge and skill to each by working alongside them, helping them to develop one stage and step at a time. Sometimes apprentices would also attend night school in order to gain additional knowledge to supplement what they learned on the shop floor. The process was usually long, often tough, and seldom well paid. At the end, however, the apprentice had become a master-craftsman, and sometimes developed skills well beyond those of his own master. The Master of Arts degree was, in those somewhat far off days, that which qualified someone to teach others – something we now usually associate with a PhD – a “master scholar.” In some universities the tutorial system when functioning at its best still reflects this relationship.

In his 2009 lecture “Theological Education for a Mature African Church”, Danny McCain draws attention to the example par excellence of the mentoring of spiritual leaders: that practiced by Jesus. He notes that Jesus’ model was simply the traditional mentoring type in which he invited twelve of his students to live with him for three years, traveling around with him and absorbing knowledge and wisdom from him as they went. This is an example of apprenticeship par excellence.

**Eight Theses on Mentoring**

Reflecting back on our own experience we will formulate eight theses on mentoring, applying them to theological education in Africa where this may be different in some way from other contexts, especially given the lack of resources in many African contexts. These theses sum up what we have said thus far, but in a way that may help to guide those who are involved in mentoring others, or in designing mentoring programmes.

1. **Mentoring is more than transferring academic skills or knowledge.**

   Mentoring is not the same as teaching or supervising research, though it may accompany both. Theological educators cannot be mentors to all whom they teach, unless the number is small, nor is it always advisable that they should because a mentor is not primarily in the business of transferring academic knowledge or skills. Where teaching staff numbers are limited, as is often the case in Africa, it is often necessary that all those who teach should also become mentors, and as such be encouraged and helped to develop these skills. But realistically not all will be mentors in the fullest sense.

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4 Matt M. Starcevich, “Coach, Mentor: Is there a difference?”

5 Starcevich, “Coach, Mentor.”

6 Prof. Danny McCain, “Theological Education for a Mature African Church”
(2) A successful teacher is not necessarily always a good mentor.

Let us take, for example, the field of biblical studies. Good teachers of Old or New Testament studies should have an adequate knowledge of the requisite languages, critical historical scholarship, exegesis and hermeneutics and so forth. To provide the necessary training in biblical studies they should become masters of their subject, and skilled at introducing others to what they know and how to use their acquired skills and knowledge in their ministry or in becoming theological educators themselves. But this does not mean that such teachers are good mentors.

Every faculty of theology or seminary needs people who are qualified and competent in the major theological fields. But we need to acknowledge and act on two things particularly in the African context: (a) that not every theological educator is necessarily a good mentor, therefore others who have the necessary gifts and ability, should be encouraged, equipped and designated as mentors; (b) that every theological educator, especially in his or her formative years should have a mentor, or mentors, to guide their development so that they can reach their full potential and, if they become theological educators themselves, will more than likely have mentoring skills. This leads to our third thesis.

(3) While some mentoring skills may be innate, becoming a good mentor is usually something learned over the years through observation and practice; if you have experienced good mentoring you are more likely to become a good mentor in turn.

Many established scholars looking back over their careers can point to senior colleagues who guided and nurtured them as they set out on their academic careers, and who stood by them over the years as counselors and friends. These senior scholars were often their teachers, and sometimes their dissertation supervisors or research advisors, but not always so. They provided not only intellectual stimulus and training in academic skills, but also a living model of what it meant to be a good scholar and a well-rounded human being whose academic work was integrated into his or her life as a whole. This is obviously of critical importance in theological education which is qualitatively more about spiritual formation than the disembodied imbibing of information or learning skills. While not all theological educators have been fortunate to have good mentors, and have, as a result, been left to their own devices in constructing their academic careers, those who have had mentors have benefitted enormously. But this is too often something that is left to chance rather than built into the process.

(4) Good mentoring in theological education benefits from prior pastoral experience

There are academics who have a natural ability to mentor others. In the case of theological educators this is often related to pastoral skills developed outside the academy. This is one reason why pastoral experience prior to becoming a theological educator is important, for not only does it mean that the educator has some knowledge of what it means to be a pastor in a congregation, but hopefully he or she has learnt the skills of listening, empathy, and counseling. These are the hallmarks of a good mentor in the academy as much as elsewhere. Such mentoring skills need to be wedded to academic ability as well, for a good academic mentor is first and foremost a good academic. We need theological educators who strive to be good mentors, and good mentors who strive to be good scholars, teachers and pastors.

(5) The mentoring relationship is holistic, needs to be based on mutual respect and trust, and should move towards a sense of collegiality.

One of the exercises we do in the ERP is to ask those participating to speak about the kind of supervision they received when they were graduate students. The responses vary considerably from glowingly positive to decidedly negative. This does not necessarily determine the success or otherwise of their own academic careers, but there is usually consensus that those who had good supervisors had a great advantage in going forward. When pressed on what constituted a good supervisory experience, the response invariably

Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa
includes comments on the relationship that developed, a relationship that was intellectually challenging and professional, but also supportive and encouraging. The point here is that good supervision appears to have been combined with good mentoring. In other words, building a nurturing relationship between the senior and the more junior theological educator that enabled the latter to achieve his or her potential. In the process they often became colleagues. Such collegiality is a fundamental building block of a good academic institution. If you attend scholarly conferences you will soon see how such collegiality can develop and be sustained through the ongoing networking of former professors and students, as well as amongst the students themselves now that they in turn have become teachers and professors. Mentoring, in fact, is essential to the development of a community of scholars whether located in a particular institution or scattered across the world. Such collegiality can and should enhance the koinonia that should lie at the heart of the life of the theological seminary.

(6) Mentoring often entails a medium-to-long-term commitment.

In our experience, one of the most enjoyable aspects of the academic life is the way in which supervising and mentoring graduate students develops over the years. Obviously this does not happen in all cases, nor need it do so, but when it does it can be enriching for both parties. Indeed, the process that began in the university or seminary classroom continues well beyond graduation.

There are practical dimensions to this longer term commitment. Former students often require testimonials in order to apply for employment; they might need introductions to publishers and editors in order to facilitate the process of publishing their work; they may ask for critical comment on work that they have done or for some word of advice and guidance at various stages of their career. They will in all probability have several other persons to whom they can turn for these things, but it is often their former teacher become mentor who provided a role model for them in the formative years of their academic journey who is approached. This longer term commitment is of particular importance when it comes to theological education because of its value in the life of the church as a whole.

(7) A good mentor avoids the danger of dependency.

There are several skills that a dissertation supervisor has to develop which are quite challenging. One of these is to ensure that while you as supervisor may play an important role in the formulating of the research question and the structuring of the dissertation, the dissertation is not yours but the student’s. Another is to give the student sufficient freedom to explore tangents and go down paths that might seem to be leading towards a dead end. This is especially the case in the early days of the dissertation process. The student needs freedom to explore the terrain for him or herself, even if you as supervisor are not convinced of the usefulness of the outcome. Another skill is knowing when to rein in the student and suggest a way forward in a non-threatening or dominating way. And last of all, knowing when the dissertation is ready to be submitted for examination. All of this has to do with finding a balance between control and freedom; recognizing the boundaries of responsibility; the fine line between direction and interference.

The mentoring relationship is similar. Our model here might be the parent who knows how to allow the child to become a mature person who is able to stand on his or her own feet. This is not an easy lesson for mentors to learn; but it is an essential one. As in all relationships, so the mentoring relationship can become one of power especially when the person being mentored is dependent in some or other respect. But mentoring should never become dominating or overly directive, leading to a dependency that is unhealthy and unhelpful, just as a good mentor will sense a growing dependency on the part of the person being mentored, and take steps to prevent this.
(8) Successful mentoring relationships are contingent on a good match

A mentoring relationship cannot be forced. For it to be productive the individuals involved need to feel comfortable with each other, and there are several reasons why this might not always be the case. The first and most obvious is that the two personalities might quite simply fail to “gel” with each other, so that the necessary rapport is not established. A second reason might involve past experiences with each other, so that some historical situation precludes the possibility of a viable mentoring relationship. This may be academic or more personal in nature. The third reason we cite here is more complex and very relevant in the African context and increasingly elsewhere in our multi-cultural global society. For mentoring to be successful there must be both an understanding on the part of the mentor of the social and cultural milieu of the one being mentored, and an ability to enter and identify with it as much as possible.

A Final Word

Good mentoring programmes obviously depend on the availability of good mentors, for mentoring is not primarily a matter of programming, but of people who are dedicated to the task and have gained the necessary skills and ability to be good mentors. This is why it is important to identify and mentor potential mentors, and to encourage them in this special ministry. Fortunately, at least in our experience, this is more likely and common within theological educational institutions than elsewhere, but even so it cannot simply be left to chance. It requires sustained faculty discussion on the ground to determine what is needed in a particular educational location and milieu, along with careful planning, in order to achieve its goals. But in the end it depends on recognizing the “mentoring gift” in those who have it, and enabling them to use it to the full so that it can enrich the educational process as a whole and not just those students fortunate to have them as their own mentors.
MENTORING YOUNGER SCHOLARS IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Esther Mombo

Introduction

Mentoring is probably the single most powerful vehicle for transferring learning and experiences to one another and it is an empowering process. The commitment to empowerment of a group, be it scholars or professionals, requires various consternated efforts, through training, education, coaching, counseling and mentoring. Investing in a mentoring or coaching program for women scholars in theology some of whom become clergy is critical for their leadership and personal development. Having a good professional mentor or program has helped to increase the number of women scholars to develop set behaviors that will have desired impact.

The mentoring process requires some of the following, having mentors, designing the program of mentorship and pairing mentors with mentees when the situation is conducive. This paper looks into how the mentoring process has taken place within theological education of women scholars training for church ministry at St. Paul’s university beginning with the story of women’s entry into theological education.

Women in the Study of Theology at St. Paul’s University

The entry of women in the study of theological Education in Kenya goes back to the 1940s when Friends Africa Mission (a Quaker programmed meeting) admitted the first students to the institution, was among whom Rasoah Mutua, to study with the pioneer men. Each denomination which had women in theological studies will have its story. Theological Education for women in St. Paul’s traces back to 1903, when the first woman joined the Divinity school (later St. Paul’s United theological college); she was referred to as a Bible woman. There was no space for her to join the class of the men who were being trained for ordained ministry. Instead she was admitted to the wives’ class. The aim of the wives’ class was to prepare women for the creation of Christian families. In the early years of St. Paul’s, it was only wives of students who came to the college. These women were trained in parallel programs that were deemed useful for their ministry alongside their husbands.

It was not until 1976 that Mildred Achola, later Deaconess Mildred Owani, was admitted to the college as a refugee from Uganda during the days of Idi Amin to study theology alongside the men and not as a wife of a student. She describes her life in St. Paul’s in these words:

‘As a refugee, life at St Paul was not easy. Apart from that, I was the only female student and worse still, unmarried! My male counterparts never wanted me to reason with them. They would say it was wrong for a woman to reason (they called it arguing) the way I did as it would make nobody marry me. They would say: “Men love women who only listen and accept things”. My fellow theologians said taking me as a wife would mean marrying a fellow man. Some of them said I was rude while others said I was a difficult lady because I refused their proposals. I used to tell them openly that sex outside of marriage was not for me. Others thought I


2 See Emily Onyango, “Training of Women at St. Paul’s”, in Emily Onyango (ed) For God and Humanity: 100 Years of St. Paul’s United Theological College (Eldoret: Zapf Chancery, 2003), 76.
Deaconess Mildred Owani was joined by Nyambura Njoroge who was the first woman to be ordained in the Presbyterian church of East Africa. For Nyambura there were social challenges as well but as she entered ministry she realized how the curriculum of the time had not exposed her to the challenges she faced in the parish ministry and she observes that

“All classes were taught by expatriate staff except African Tradition Religion (ATR) and denominational studies, in my case Presbyterian tradition. In my view, both subjects were treated with less vitality! All lecturers were male. As a result, all our studies lacked rigorous scrutiny of the patriarchal-colonial-missionary-hierarchical theology, beliefs and practices in the churches and theological institutions (most then bible schools and pastoral institutes) in Kenya and Africa, since we had students from other African countries. Despite being located at the heartland of what was once known as “white highlands” with stretches of tea and pyrethrum plantations and the BATA shoe factory not far from the market where I shopped regularly, nothing prepared me for the ministry with people living in extreme poverty and indignity as a result of colonialism and oppressive government machinery in independent Kenya. Nor was I prepared to minister in the urban or the rural-urban cities, towns and slums of Kenya in the 1980s, yet all my six years in the parish were in Nairobi city, mostly what was known as African quarters in colonial Kenya. Never were we taught about violence in the family (extended African family and polygamous marriages) Christian or otherwise, in the manse and in the church hierarchy in all my classes. In particular nothing was taught about emotional violence that is experienced by women in church and ecumenical ministry as well as in theological institutions, which are still very male dominated after 30 years of graduating women with theological education at least in Kenya.”

For both Mildred and Nyambura, the environment was alien to both in all areas as it was not only a male world but they did not have role models; therefore they were pioneers. As well as an alien environment in terms of gender, it was also alien in terms of the nature of theological Education offered at the time. Because of their experiences, the mentoring of women in theological Education and ministry has become an important feature of training as their numbers have increased steadily and slowly.

Between 1976 and 1999 the numbers of female students was between two and six each year. The college was not prepared for women students both as regards the physical and social space, let alone the theological space. The women had to create their own space in a male dominated institution which was in doubt as to what these women were to become, since theological Education was linked to ordination. The ordination of women was still a debate even though in the early 1980s one Anglican Diocese and the Presbyterian Church began ordaining women. The road to the ordination of women for different churches is a subject of a bigger study.

In the eighties and nineties very few women came to St. Paul’s since theology was linked to ordination. The irony of this was the reality of the churches, where women in overwhelming majority occupied the pews in most of the churches, while a minority of men inhabited the pulpit and altar. In the millennium things began to change in St. Paul’s for the numbers of women doing theology. The reasons for the change were many, including the engendering of theological education.

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3 St. Paul’s University Voice, October 2009, 32-33.
4 Nyambura Njoroge interviewed 16.03.2011.
5 Esther Mombo and Heleen Joziasse (eds), *If You Have No Voice Just Sing! Narratives of Women’s lives and theological Education at St. Paul’s University* (Zapf Chancery, 2011).
6 *If You Have No Voice*, lists of women graduates from 1976-2010.
Engendering Theological Education

The task of engendering theological education was about opening the study of theology to all the people of God. This was based on the fact that being a Christian was based on the baptism rite through which one’s identity was defined and not one’s gender.

There were two movements to the project of engendering theological Education in Africa, which also impacted St. Paul’s. These movements brought to light the plight of women in the churches. The first was the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998).

‘In 1988 the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women was launched. It was aimed at empowering women to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, their churches and communities. To affirm – through shared leadership and decision making theology and spirituality – the decisive contributions of women in churches and communities; to give visibility to women's perspective and actions in the work and struggle for justice, peace and integrity of creation….to encourage the churches to take actions in solidarity with women.’7

A visit to St. Paul’s during the decade for information on women and theological education revealed that fewer women doing theology than men and the institution did not acknowledge the presence of women, even the few that were there.

The second movement was the Circle of the Concerned African Women Theologians (Circle), which was launched a year after the 1988 Ecumenical Decade of the Churches and Women. The Circle was inaugurated at Trinity College Legon near Accra Ghana in 1989. It is an ecumenical and interfaith body of African women theologians tracing their background to such organizations as the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), the Ecumenical Association of African Theologians (EAAT), and the Conference of African Theological Institutions (CATI). However, the Circle was different from the other ecumenical bodies whose membership is predominantly Christian. Members of the Circle included women who belong to Christianity, Islam and indigenous African Religions.

The Circle was aimed at empowering women to study and write theology, which would impact the churches. The themes of the circle included re-reading the Bible, an objective critique of African culture, violence against women, interfaith issues and HIV and AIDS. The first movement had little or no impact in St. Paul’s because theological education was linked to ordination still making it difficult for women to access the same.

St. Paul’s chapter of the circle was inaugurated in 2000 when there were only ten women among 100 men. The curriculum of learning had no space for gender issues, let alone issues to do with women, both in theological education and ministry. Women were not seen or heard in the institution. The same was true for the church. With the inauguration of the Circle of St. Paul’s, there was a conscious effort to increase the number of women in the institution.

Separation of Theological Education and Ordination

Engendering theological education took different forms. First it was to encourage women to study theology, which has been a preserve of men because of some of these reasons. Secondly, it was the way scripture had been interpreted and some forms of traditional African cultures had been used to deny women entry into theological college. Thirdly, Theological Education was linked with ordination and churches had not fully accepted to ordain women.

For these reasons women remained on the periphery of church ministry, engaged in service roles rather than leadership roles. But with the re-interpretation of scriptures and the de-linking of theological education from ordination, women who would not previously have had a chance to study and serve in the church, were able to do so. The separation of theological education from ordination opened up the gateway to women from a variety of backgrounds to study.

This opened a way for more women to enter theological education as before it was difficult for female candidates to face training committees and defend their call to ministry, as they were judged in accordance to their social location and or marital status. This affected women across the board in different ways. Those who were married had to justify their calling in regard to the position of their husbands and whether they had approval to study theology for ordination. Those who were single were equally disadvantaged because the boards feared they would be married off during their training, thus the sending churches would lose out. Those who were single mothers did not have a chance because of the social stigma placed on them by society in general but especially the church. The widows were no better of a situation because of the social stigma on them as well.

The underlying factors for all this was the fear of female sexuality within the patriarchal society, where women were perceived as morally weak and those who wielded the power to lure men into sin. Bringing them to the ‘holy ground’ or male space in the study of theology would contaminate the space. A critical analysis of such beliefs reveals how the teaching on sexuality was skewed towards exclusion of women from participating in the ministries of the church. Such beliefs and practices were influenced by some African beliefs and the teachings of church fathers on women’s sexuality as revealed in the sayings of the church fathers.

In order to deal with the above it was important to unlink theological education from ordination at both policy level and the teaching which had influenced the churches on human sexuality. It took a while to deliberate on the change of policy at the college level, to open the gates to all the people of God to study theology disregarding their gender or sexuality. To separate learning theology and ordination because teaching theology was the work of the college and ordination was the work of the church. The rules for learning theology were different from the rules for ordination.

The policy was finally changed and both women and men, who would not have had a chance to study theology, managed to start their studies. The link of ordination to theology meant that the churches paid for theological education, with the change of policy, a door for self sponsored students was opened. Although the gates were opened for all to study theology, the women still faced the challenge of funding, as most of them had no resources to fund their studies. Because of the conviction of a few women in the college and alumni who were convinced that it was important to increase the numbers of women doing theology, funding agencies were approached to support the cause. It is out of the generosity of both local and international groups that women were able to join the college. In 1999 there were only ten women in the college, but by 2011 the number had risen to one hundred.

A Gender Sensitive Curriculum

The second process of engendering theological education had to do with the curriculum in terms of structure and content, to ensure that it was open to prepare men and women for ministry in the church of the millennium. This process has encouraged the mainstreaming of gender in the curriculum, including the development of a gender sensitive curriculum in which issues affecting people in society were addresses such as Gender Based Violence, HIV and AIDS, Theologies from the Perspectives of Women, Theology, Wealth and Poverty, Theology and Power, Gender and Theology, Masculinity, Law and Society

Engendering theological Education on the curriculum front consisted not only of adding units to the curriculum but providing room to clarify theological vision, reformulate theology and offer a theological
curriculum, which was both relevant, and life affirming for both men and women. This process, among other things, led to a continual examining and re-examining of policies, structural and organizational dynamics as well evaluation of impact in terms of empowered persons and transformed lives. This process, which is still ongoing, has provided for increased gender awareness and critical self and program assessments in areas such as power analysis, social dynamics and theological critique of cultural and contextual chauvinisms in the areas of new curriculum development such as gender and development.

One of the courses that contributed to the mentoring process was that of theologies from women’s perspectives, which is not only contextual but also one of the liberation theologies as observed by Phiri:

African women’s theologies are a critical, academic study of the causes of women oppression; particularly a struggle against societal, cultural and religious patriarchy. They are committed to the eradication of all forms of oppression against women through a critique of the social and religious dimensions both in African culture and Christianity. African women’s theologies take women’s experiences as its starting point, focusing on the oppressive areas of life caused by injustices such as patriarchy, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, capitalism, globalisation and sexist. It sees a need to include the voices of all women, not just theologians, because it acknowledges that the majority of African women are engaging in oral theology.

Engendering theological education also means ensuring that the delivery of theological information acknowledges the presence of women, not only as objects of study but as participants in the study. The methodology includes reading articles and books written by women, especially by members of the circle of concerned women theologians whose work covers several areas of theological study including: the bible, culture, violence, interfaith relations. Listening to experiences of women is a focal point in view of women naming themselves other than being named. Most of these issues are raised in most subjects of theology but especially in the area of theologies from women’s perspectives. The teaching methodology throughout the course is interactive, combining lectures with discussions, individual research, group work, reading assignments, and interviews. Apart from written sources, oral sources are used, beside television programs and articles in newspapers. Students analyze sermons and liturgies, interview women at the grassroots about for instance their images of Jesus. Participants analyze the policies of their denominations on different issues including, violence, marriage, theological education and compare them with recent discussions in both national and international scenes. In this course theology is related to the actual experiences of women in the church, and male students can share in these experiences. The narrative method is a major pillar and a fundamental source for doing African Women’s Theologies (AWT), since AWT are founded in the experiences of women through their stories. By listening to stories, women’s voices come to the fore so that they are not objects of study but subjects in theological education.

The Tamar Campaign

The process of engendering theological education paved the way for the college to be involved in movements such as the Tamar Campaign, which was launched in association with the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the great lakes and the horn of Africa.

The Campaign’s main objectives include breaking the chains of silence and denial regarding physical, spiritual, mental and verbal abuse of children and women; and developing practical and pastoral response and action towards safety, security, justice and healing of survivors and counseling for perpetrators of violence.

In other words, it is to involve the church in Kenya to

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• Speak out against abuse of women and children
• Promote Bible studies on violence against women and children
• Create awareness on different kinds of gender-based violence
• Preach against abuse
• Create awareness of the link between gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS
• Provide support and opportunities for healing for victims of sexual violence
• Collaborate with the police, hospitals and civil society organizations to utilize community policing (which shall be launched a day after Tamar Campaign) to address gender-based violence
• Provide opportunities for the rehabilitation of perpetrators

The Tamar Campaign draws its basis from the Bible story in 2 Samuel 13: 1-22, a case of incest, where Tamar is viewed as not only a symbol of the violence that women undergo, but also as a symbol of strength because she spoke out. Verse 12 “Don’t my brother, do not force me. Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don’t do this wicked thing”, symbolizes the cry of those undergoing all sorts of violence in the society.

The process of engendering theological education paved way for dozens of women every year, who felt an inner calling to study theology and to come to St. Paul’s. These women among the people of God study theology irrespective of age, marital status, occupation and ethnicity. Through grants which were wholeheartedly offered by different churches worldwide, the University has been able to support most of the women with partial grants and the women themselves have worked hard to contribute to their learning and their day to day upkeep.

**Mentoring Process**

The above narrative shows the process of ensuring that women had an opportunity to gain access to the study of theology. As far as the mentoring process is concerned, the first process is to gain entry and the second aspect is the accompaniment for the women during their studies. In this process the women scholars are helped to develop professional ethos, an underpinning characteristic of their profession. Mentoring the women meant transferring professional knowledge, technical expertise and organizational awareness to the women during their learning process. The process empowers the women to be more motivated, productive and innovative. In order to fulfil the above process, the women are not treated as one big identity but in groups with similar challenges in terms of their social location. The groups are many but for working purposes the following are distinct.

• Single women
• Single mothers
• Widows
• Married women
• Women with disability
• Women who are HIV*

**Single Women**

The first group are the single women as a distinct group. Because society has placed so much value on marriage and family life, the struggles for single women are more than for married women. There are many socio-cultural notions in the Kenyan set-up which are negative for single women. Firstly, as a single woman you are viewed as somebody who lacks wisdom, a person who has no role, and somebody who has no knowledge. Secondly, single women are always seen as women (desperately) looking for a man.
Therefore you embody a threat to men, and thirdly as a single woman you are always under suspect: Who is your authority? You have no authority unless you have a man who backs you.

Some single women struggle through theological education just because they are single and in the end they are pushed to get married. Therefore there are women who get married, not because they choose but heed to social pressure. If one lands in a marriage it is not easy to come out of it, so most of them live a life of pretence. They have to show the surrounding world that it is working and it is wonderful but given a choice they would live on their own.

The choice of remaining single is a difficult one because of the emotional, psychological and sexual harassment that one goes through. Single women are constantly asked when they will get married or why they are not getting married. In Church interviews this is one of the questions and the answer to it determines ones fate in the church. Single women are often a subject of ridicule if not illustrations in weddings or other public gatherings. They are sometimes accused of being rude, arrogant and those who hate men. These are based on assumptions that it is them who have refused to get married, choosing to remain single which is not an acceptable norm. As well as emotional and psychological harassment, single women are a target for sexual harassment from all quarters of the church. But since this remains a taboo subject in the churches, women keep quiet about it or share with those they trust. In case of pressing charges against those who harass them, the woman is blamed for doing so by both men and women. The fact that being single is a sexual threat to society, harassment in this front seems to be ignored or down played.

Mentoring means ensuring that single women have some form of community to avoid isolation. The difficulty is that there are few role models in this area for the single women to see or identify and or associate with. In mentoring one points the women to women’s groups in the church and one would naturally expect that membership in these forms ones community. In some church groups membership is for all, in some there are classes of membership from associate to full membership and single women are associate members, and in some, single women have no space. Mentoring is a process to support single women, to find a niche in society and to ensure that they are not defined by their marital status but on the basis of being in Christ.

**Single Mothers**

A second group is for single mothers. Being a single mother is a very precarious situation to be in and somehow a very sad situation too. First of all within church circles and or theological education circles, a single mother is viewed as one who has broken the norm. Second, within the church your child is the symbol of your sin. There is the notion that having been ‘too easy or sexually immoral to have had a child out of wedlock. While people forget that actually as a woman you are a target from day one and it is by grace that you manage to be without a child before you get married.

Maybe you have been trying to run away, but this one particular time you were not able to resist. Some of the single mothers attend the same church as the person who fathered their children. The men have gone on with their lives and have gotten married and are now among the ones judging the single mothers and or condemning them. Many of the questions that a single mother is haunted with include: Who is the father of this child? Why did you not get married to the father of this child? But men are not blamed for what has been termed as ‘hit and run’. The man who lied to a woman that he was going to marry her but left her with a child and fails to marry the woman has always a virgin to marry.

Single mothers are even more a target to sexual harassment inside the church than single women. The fact that you got already one child makes it obvious you can get another one without problems. Single mothers are seen as easy targets. Men make advances to them saying: “What are you keeping or guarding? You already have a child.”
There are also the problems of raising children as single mothers because all children know that they are a product of two people. No child is settled without knowing both the parents and when the children hit the crisis of identity and begin to ask questions such as: Who am I? Show me my father! The single mother faces a tough task. If the child happens to openly show defiance to the norms of society, the single mother is blamed. While in families when children become rowdy, it is the mothers who are largely blamed. Society laughs and ridicules single mothers for being poor mothers when the reality is that there are many homes with single mothers because of absent fathers, and the church is identified with being a family.

When theology was linked to ordination, no single mother would make it through the church committees to study theology. With the separation of the study of theology from ordination, single mothers who were interested in studying theology were admitted to the university. With the way society views them, the college community was no different.

The mentoring process for these groups, is first to create a space for the single mothers to deal with self condemnation and guilt which the church community makes them go through. Mentoring calls for affirming the single mother as a capable person in total, as a mother and one with gifting that the community needs and she can grow them and use them. As a child of God through baptism, the mentoring process is to help the single mother unlock the gifts and use them positively.

Widows

The third group is that of widowhood which another precarious state as the community has various cultural views on the widow and the church has not been able to entangle herself from similar views on the widow. First problem is one related to sexuality. Because your husband has died, what are you going to do with your sexuality? The second problem is that in our society and in the different cultures, widowhood is viewed with a lot of negativity. In some places they use phrases and terminologies suggesting that you as the widow are the one who has killed your husband. Having been married you are single again, you have no authority, and thus one is viewed as a sexual threat. There are all sorts of cultural rituals and inhibitions, which limit you as a widow inside and outside the home. Culturally, widows have to be inherited, but most Christian widows refuse to be inherited by other men. Therefore people look at them as if they have lost something, as if they are a half human being.

There are some churches where they will give a widow another position, in the name of pity, but actually they no longer want you there in the leadership. There are some churches where women are removed from the altar as soon as they become a widow. Sometimes in due time they are taken back. Widows face all sorts of harassment including control of their behavior. During the burial of their husbands they are given instructions about their sexual behavior in phrases such as “Your husband has died, now you have to remain with Jesus, He is your husband.” This is a very painful message, as it enhances control and isolation for the widows. The same is not said to the men when their wives die, it is natural and acceptable for the man to consider marriage as soon as he is ready for the same.

Mentoring for this group involves challenging the cultural and church views on the widow and joining the college to study is one of these processes. Mentoring frees widows from the cultural views and ties and helps them to live an affirming life away from the shadows of church views. The mentoring process helps the widows re-interpret the marriage vows made during the wedding that as Christian’s marriage ends at death even if in some of the cultural traditions marriage is regarded for widows as one that continues even after death.

Mentoring for widows, empowers them to move on with life using the gifts God has given them to both study and serve.
Married Women

The fourth group is that of married women. This group while, studying theology, struggle with several tensions including submission and authority over the men. The other tension is that of full motherhood and full student life. For married women studying theology face a struggle with identity in the area of appropriating power and position and moving away from the confines of the defined roles of women as taught by the different church traditions. The married women deal with tensions at different levels from family, church and society.

The tensions have to do with areas such as submission and obedience, authority, power and leadership. These are areas within society that are gendered such that for a married woman students, they face the questions of how they will relate to their husbands when they have a degree and perhaps the husband does not have it. Or what whether they will have authority over their husbands and whether they are defying the norm. You can only be a good housewife, but you cannot be a housewife and a pastor at the same time.

At family level, the level of education of the partners within marriage can be a blessing or a source of tension. This is due to the fact that education is gendered and both church and society assume that men should have more education than the women. But if the level of education of the man is lower than that of the woman it is problematic.

As well as educational levels, for most married women studying, for some of the married women, there is little or no support from their spouses so they have to work hard in raising support from friends and or family. This is despite the fact they have with them children and are full time mother and student. Therefore for some married women throughout the period of studying theology, there is tension. For some women when they have finished studying and have opportunity to serve, the tensions decrease while for some these tensions remain even after finishing the studies.

Mentoring for these women has meant supporting them to find a voice in a very patriarchal structure and to be able to voice it. Mentoring means naming themselves and the identity they wish to have.

Differently Abled Women

The fifth group is that of the differently abled women or those who are living with disability. Within most churches, people living with disability are excluded from participation because of what Anderson observes as an able-bodied centered world view, people with disabilities are silently marginalized within Theological education. When theological education was linked with ordination and only people who would be ordained could have access to it, there was little chance for women living with disabilities to join any theological education program. With the separation of theology from ordination women with disability have had a chance to join the institution. Even if women with disability have had a chance to study theology, the church has not been supportive of people living with disability hence the women face further challenges when they complete studying theology.

Mentoring process of women living with disability is physical, emotional and spiritual. Physically it means ensuring that they have access to the places of learning so that they are not excluded from the able bodied centered institution. Emotional mentoring accompanying them in the space which does not acknowledge her existence. Spiritually it has to do with issues of inclusion of her perspectives of spirituality. Mentoring has to bring to light and challenges exclusion, marginalization and offer space of inclusion in all spheres. This requires a challenge of mainstream views on disability, based on the cultural traditions and biblical perspectives.

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Women Who are HIV+

The sixth group of women are those who are HIV+ and have made their status known. While the subject of HIV and AIDS is discussed more than before, it is also taught in some institutions, there are still challenges for women who choose to study theology and go public about their HIV status. The challenges include stigma and exclusion and a future question of opportunities to serve after their studies.

Mentoring process for this group is inclusive of journeying with the women in their struggle to find a voice and for their perspectives of theology to be included. Mentoring also includes creating a community of people who are open to journey with each other and support one another materially, emotionally and spiritually.

Conclusions

The above narratives show the story of women in theological education using the case of St. Paul’s United College now St. Paul’s University. In order to mentor the women, they had to gain entry to the university. While this was not easy for pioneers because the aim of theological education was ordination, the separation of theological education from ordination, opened up doors for the different women in society to find space in theological institutions.

In mentoring women who are doing theology in preparation for ministry and or scholarship several aspects have to be taken into consideration. These include the social location of the women, aspects of exclusion and discrimination, different forms of violence (e.g. sexual and physical). To provide space for them to understand the right and the wrong approaches to culture and traditions that are used to deny them access and opportunities for growth. Mentoring helps the women to see that they need to be critical of all cultural contexts and make choices as individuals and not as a group even if they belong to different groups.

Mentoring as a process in which those that are being mentored, such as the different groups of women above, are helped to ask the right questions, take risks and know the responsibilities that come with the risks. Mentoring brings to light the intrigues of power within the institutional church and how women can negotiate their space within these powers. Issues of acceptance, betrayal, isolation, pain within the power structures are discussed in view of helping the women to prepare themselves to participate in the life of the church and/or scholarship as equal partners in the ministry, even while the realities are different.

In mentoring one is affirming scholar’s belief in Jesus and being able to grow with a joy of being in Christ. This joy of being in Christ is one which they have to offer in the ministry of scholarship and or church. As mentors we share experiences of our life journey being aware that mentees have to make choices on the routes they need to take and bear with the challenges of those routes.

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Godwin Ironeng Akper

Introduction
Theology in academia investigates scientifically what God is doing in our changing and challenging African contexts.² The church witnesses to the pluralistic and complex African context, with the difficult and often overbearing challenges of poverty, HIV and AIDS and poor infrastructure, among others. In such a situation, the task of academic theology is to serve both the church and the contexts of its witness. Therefore, it is imperative for any academic study of theology to relate closely with the church and society (world).

It is, therefore, not out of place to investigate the relationship between academic theology – especially in public universities – and the church it serves. This involves looking at the roles played by academic theology in fostering the life and witness of the church to the world, and for the purpose here, the African world. But how does the church relate with academic theology? What role is academic theology playing in fostering the life and witness of the church in the challenging African world? For lack of time and space, it is difficult to discuss these questions, capturing the whole of Africa, with its diverse and complex challenges. A discussion of these questions, using a particular African context, a West African perspective, is in order.

Structurally in what follows, an overview of the West African context is presented in the first instance. This is followed by a discussion of the relationship between academic theology and the church, specifically looking at some factors responsible for the gap between the two. Some contributions of academic theology to its two-fold contexts of church and society are also highlighted. Academic theology and the church are urged to close gap in order for the society to appreciate their relevance and value.

Discerning the Context
Eddy van der Borght at the VU University in Amsterdam reminds theologians that academic “theology is challenged to go beyond mere description of evolutions of concepts or of comparisons of theological expressions of faith.” But to “engage in more constructive types of theology that express creative thinking.” To do this effectively, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Olav Fykse Tveit, suggests that academic theology engage in a two-fold task. According to him,

Academic theology, especially at (public) universities, is therefore charged to support the church in her mandate to communicate the Gospel to the society of her establishment. Academic theology is also to contribute towards changing the overburdened situation in the society of its establishment. This means that academic theology must relate well with both the church and society (world) in order for it to accomplish this two-fold task. The church on her part has to accommodate criticisms from academic theology and seek to understand the world (society) that is to listen to the church’s gospel. Academic theology is to seek to understand both the church and society, since they are the primary contexts it serves. Thus, in what follows, the paper gives an overview of the current challenges faced by the church and the West African world (society).

As a region, West Africa is made up of eighteen countries that speak mostly English and French, with Ghana and Nigeria, being the most populous and to some extent, the subject of academic discussions regionally and internationally. In this paper, reference is made to Ghanaian and Nigerian contexts. While this may not necessarily represent the whole of West Africa, it will at least give some insights into the discussion on academic theology and the life and witness of the church in West Africa.

Paul Gifford says that the region sub-Saharan Africa is vast, and its condition he characterizes as “marginalization”. For Gifford, this region is so characterized because it is excluded from the processes that are driving the world, and the culprits, he maintains, are African leaders. The West African sub-region is part of sub-Saharan Africa, and can be characterized in a similar way. Disturbing incidences such as politically motivated murders, intra-ethnic and communal crises, denial of citizens the right to elect their own leaders by manipulating electoral processes and rigging of elections, human rights abuses, abound. While African leaders are to a large extent, responsible for a number of the vices mentioned above, ordinary (the citizens) Africans themselves are also responsible for a number of others. Ethnic hatred, domestic violence, lack of sensitivity to other people’s needs and interests (selfishness), moral decay in rural and urban communities, among others, cannot be blamed on leaders alone. In Nigeria, the series of bombings and killings associated with boko haram (the radical Islamic sect that claims western education is an abomination) are carried out by ordinary Nigerians, not the leaders.

The church is not free from some of the vices mentioned above. Aquiline Tarimo, speaking of ethnicity, laments “even in the church ethnic tensions are strongly experienced.” The Ghanaian theologian, Abamfo Atiemo, reports that following the colonial-missionary legacy, churches in Ghana are planted among specific ethnic groups. More worrisome is the fact that “liturgical lingua franca” became a major factor that “perpetrated and perpetuated the carving out of denominations among ethnic groups in Ghana.” A similar situation exists among Nigerian reformed churches. All the three reformed churches planted by

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4 At a recent joint conference of academic societies in the fields of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu Natal in Pietermaritzburg, 18-22 June 2012, almost all papers on issues from West Africa mentioned Ghana and Nigeria. For example, the papers presented on Prosperity Gospel focused on Nigeria and Ghana.
7 One may argue that those behind boko haram activities are wealthy Nigerian leaders. This may be true, as ordinary poor Nigerians could not afford to finance such activities. However, none of the wealthy Nigerians has ever attempted suicide bombing, it is the ordinary Nigerians that are doing it, perhaps, out of conviction that they are on a God-sent mission.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Sudan United Mission in central Nigeria are identified with three specific ethnic groups, so that to be a member of the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria is synonymous to being a Jukun, (a tribe) person. Similarly, to be a member of Reformed Church of Central Nigeria is to be a Kutev (another tribe). Therefore, Aquiline Tanimo’s claim that the church is a role player, in the sociopolitical disorder of the African continent, can hardly be disputed.\footnote{Aquiline Tanimo, “Ehnicity”, 1.}

As Gifford asserts, it “is in these conditions that Christianity is literally exploding”\footnote{Paul Gifford, “Trajectories of African Christianity”, 276.}, although the quality of such a booming Christianity is questionable. Academic theology therefore has an enormous twin task of “speaking” to the church and to the West African society. However, it is one thing for academic theology to consider speaking to a context, be it church or society, it is entirely another for such a context to listen to, or accommodate such a context. How the church relates to academic theology, especially in public universities, determines how well academic theology could perform its own task of supporting the church’s witness to the society. For the West African region, faced with a number of challenges, a question to ask is: do the church and academic theology see the need to engage each other in partnership for the purpose of addressing these challenges? How does academic theology relate with the church?

\section*{Academic Theology and the Church}

If academic theology is to be of any assistance to the church in addressing sociopolitical challenges of any society, it must relate well with the church. The church too must accommodate the critical minds of academic theology in order to witness prophetically to the context that is to listen to her gospel. The interdependence and mutual relationship between the academic theology and the church is vital, otherwise the society may miss seeing their value. Speaking specifically of academic theology at seminaries, Douwe Visser admits there “will always be criticism of the academic distance between the church and the institution where ministers are trained”.\footnote{Douwe Visser, “Reformed Theological Education – A General Introduction”, in: Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang and Joshva Raja (eds), \textit{Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity, Theological Perspectives, Ecumenical Trends, Regional Surveys} (Dorpspruit: Cluster Publications, 2010), 664.} The distance between the church and academic theology in public universities is even wider. In Nigeria today, theology is a discipline of study only at three universities out of the one hundred and four active universities in the country. Interestingly, only one of the three universities is a Christian mission university. The other two are public, one state and the other federal. In Ghana, there is no public university offering theology. University of Ghana, Legon has five affiliate theological institutions but its divinity department is turned into a religious studies department. It goes a long way to prove the point that theology is hardly seen as the “\textit{Regina Scientiarum}”, as was the case in the middle medieval period of John Calvin and his contemporaries.\footnote{Visser, “Reformed Theological Education”, 665.} Academic theology has to “fight for its position,”\footnote{Visser, “Reformed Theological Education”, 665.} not only in the public sphere, but also within the church.

Despite the problems confronting Nigerian church and society today, the church hardly see the need to engage academic theology in addressing those challenges. It is almost as if the church does not see academic theology as having any contribution to make that could support her witness to the world. Key decisions are taken on doctrinal issues without involvement of theologians in the academia.

There is a wide gap between the church and academic theology, and “this has had a paralyzing effect, not the least on the missionary outreach of the church.”\footnote{Visser, “Reformed Theological Education”, 665.} While academic theology is catching up with global changes, most churches in Nigeria are still stuck in a narrow minded patriarchal style of life and

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item Aquiline Tanimo, “Ehnicity”, 1.
\item Paul Gifford, “Trajectories of African Christianity”, 276.
\item Douwe Visser, “Reformed Theological Education – A General Introduction”, in: Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang and Joshva Raja (eds), \textit{Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity, Theological Perspectives, Ecumenical Trends, Regional Surveys} (Dorpspruit: Cluster Publications, 2010), 664.
\item Visser, “Reformed Theological Education”, 665.
\item Visser, “Reformed Theological Education”, 665.
\item Visser, “Reformed Theological Education”, 655.
\end{thebibliography}
ministry. One of the Reformed churches in Nigeria opted in 2005 out of the then world Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) because her General Secretary took the church’s women leader to Accra 2004 meeting of WARC. To the church, it was an attempt by a theologian to begin to engage women in crucial theological discussions, and if not checked, could lead to women seeking to occupy positions of leadership in the church! For this church, it will be a while before Visser’s claim that “Reformed theology is no longer something of the male Western world” could be true of her.17 Perhaps this may be one of the casualties of the distance between academic theology and the church, because academic theology, especially in the few public universities in Nigeria, has grown pass this stage.

A number of reasons account for the distance between the church and academic theology in West Africa. The fear of doctrinal pollution as seen in the action of the reformed church mentioned above, the difference in interlocutors of theology between the church and academic theology, the purpose of theological education, the difference in view about the vocation of the theologian between the church and academic theology, among other reasons account for the distance.

The fear of doctrinal pollution
Public universities in West Africa are controlled by agencies of the states that established them. The curriculum is approved by accreditation agencies of such states and the church is not involved in the development of theological curricula in public universities. For this reason, self-acclaimed conservative churches are suspicious of any theological training and viewpoint arising from public universities. The inclusion of gender studies, for example, in curriculum of state-owned institutions is not acceptable to churches that want to preserve their doctrines. Some churches see academic theology as mere intellectual exercise that is of no value to church life and witness.

Interlocutors of theology
The subject of theological discussion in the church is at variance with what is obtained in academic theology, especially in public universities. While discussions on ethnic animosity, religion and social cohesion, poverty and poor governance, critique of public policy and formation, effects of HIV and AIDS pandemic, social justice, gender equity, communal crises, among others abound in academic theological circles, the church is to a large extent silent over most of these issues. Even when some of these issues are raised within the church ranks, there are usually dissenting views on the matter, asking why the church should get involved at all. Recently in Nigeria, there were series of bomb attacks on churches in the northwest state of Kaduna by the radical Islamic sect, boko haram. While a number of Christians were mourning victims of the attacks, some Christians filed a case before a Muslim judge in the area seeking annulment of election that elected some into leadership positions of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). Meanwhile, academics were holding symposiums aimed at fostering peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims living in the troubled areas. In other words, while the academia was concerned about the social disorder, the church was busy with church politics. Another example is the lack of interest on the part of the church in resolving ethnic royalties and hatred within its ranks. There are a number of published works by West African academic theologians, decrying ethnic royalty as it threatens the life and witness of the church. But such works hardly impact on the church’s thinking on ethnicity and ethnic identity. The point is that church and academic theology have different theological priorities and theological interlocutors, hence, the distance between them.

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17 Visser, “Reformed Theological Education”, 655.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
The purpose of theological education

Isabel Phiri at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg in South Africa, asserts that for the church, the purpose of theological education is mainly ministerial training. Academic theology, especially at public universities does not seek to train ministers. Its task is akin to those of social sciences like sociology, economics, political science, and ethics, among others. Thus, it analyses societal issues and suggest solutions to social challenges faced by the society. It also criticizes the church on a number of issues. Many churches find it difficult to accommodate criticisms from academic theology. They look at academic theology as antagonizing the ministry of the church. This lack of accommodation of academic critique of the church goes a long way in widening the already existing gap between the church and academic theology. The church sees the vocation of theologians as that of training ministers for ministry. Engagement of theologians in public sphere is seen by the church as an unacceptable worldly practice. For a church that maintains this view of academic theology, it will be a while before such a church could “listen” to any prophetic voice from academic theology.

Conclusion

Academic theology has a two-fold task of speaking to the church and to society. For the church to benefit from academic theology, the church should accommodate criticisms from academic theology, and be more open to new thinking. Academic theology too needs to seek to close the gap between it and the church. At present, it appears academic theology is serving the West African society, but the church is yet to identify the potentials of academic theology. The church and academic theology are urged to close gaps between them, so that academic theology will become a veritable tool in the hands of the church as the church witness to the society of her existence. This way, it is hoped that the society will get to appreciate more, the value of academic theology and the church, in its changing and challenging situations.

Bibliography

Onwunta, O., The Impact of Ethnicity on the Missional Strategies within the Presbyterian Church of

19 In a sermon in 2010, Emmanuel Usue of Benue State University in Nigeria suggested a name change for his church in a public sermon. He was suspended forthwith for teaching something new without first seeking approval of his church.


Tveit, O.F. “Theology and unity I the changing landscape of world Christianity”, Key-note Address during Oslo Consultation on the ‘the future of theology in the changing landscape of universities in Europe and beyond’, 6th June 2012.


No one likes to buy a product which turns out to be a waste of money. We expect to receive a good product which does what the advertisement says it would do and which will last a reasonable length of time. So then, how do we know if students are receiving a good quality education? It is after all an expensive exercise either for the student or the sponsors. Years ago universities were difficult to get into and tended to be elite establishments. Today however there has been a very rapid increase in all sorts of providers of higher education with the associated explosion in the number of tertiary level students. This commendable trend in the majority world does nevertheless raise the question of comparable standards or, put another way, of the quality of the degree offering institution. Added to this trend there is also that of student mobility which requires credits to be transferred between tertiary level institutions. This immediately raises the thorny matter of comparable standards. It is easy enough to have a good graphic designer produce a lovely brochure with claims to be a ‘world class’ institution, but how do you know? The answer lies in the important matter of quality assurance.

What is Quality?

This is actually not a straightforward question to answer because there are a number of possible answers to the simple question.

1. Quality is ‘zero defect’, or Quality as ‘exceptional’. This approach is sometimes used in advertising products. We would not expect a Rolls Royce motor car to breakdown. In fact it would be very embarrassing to be stranded at the side of the road because Rolls Royce’s do not break down! But in any human organization the human fallibility factor is too great for us to use this definition, no matter how nice that would be. This definition assumes good equipment, up to date facilities, and considerable financial resources, many of the things that our African colleges could only dream of having.

2. Quality as ‘minimum standards’. If the goal is not perfection as in the definition above, then the next definition would be to meet certain minimum standards that would ensure ‘good enough’ quality. This is the model which accrediting agencies use. They do not look for perfection but that the college can meet a set of standards (a minimum threshold) that are laid down by the accrediting agency. This typically sets minimum faculty qualifications, minimum library holding both in number of books as well as their distribution over the subject being taught, compliance with certain levels of administrative efficiency, financial solvency and the like. This is the norm-referenced approach to quality. Another related method is that of peer review in which one college is compared with the standard of others. Any negative comparisons require remedial action and any superior aspects are cause for celebration! These minimum standards need to be on a par with generally accepted standards in higher education. The assumption is that if a college meets those criteria, then it is a ‘good school’ even if it is not the best. We should note that the criteria set minimum standards but do not set any upper limits. More and more governments today are becoming involved in the process of ensuring standards, even of theological colleges. The evangelical stream of the church has had the benefit of ACTEA (The Accrediting Council of Theological Education in Africa) to thank for setting and monitoring standards for 30 years.1 ACTEA has had to adapt to the challenges

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1 The ACTEA Standards cover the same broad areas as do the standards set by the South African Council on Higher
of change in order to set new standards for distance learning programs, for masters and doctoral degrees and to take into account the changing nature of information technology. This alerts us to the fact that any set of criteria are not set in stone but must be revisited in the light of all the changes currently underway in education.

3. Quality as ‘Fitness for Context’ is the next definition. This is where the debate around contextualization of theological education becomes relevant. Our context is that of Africa with its particular needs and realities that include poverty, AIDS, war and violence, gender issues, rapid urbanization, a youthful demographic profile, other resurgent religions such as Islam, the Pentecostalisation of Christianity and so forth. Do our curricula address these matters as we train ministers for the Church in Africa? In 2004 I organized a conference on HIV and AIDS and the Curriculum to which 97 people came from 17 African countries and from 32 colleges. Fewer than five of them taught a course in HIV back then, and they were preparing people for ministry in Africa, not Iceland!

4. Quality as ‘Fitness for Purpose’. In this definition the actual competences of the graduates (the ‘product’ of the seminary) on the job are evaluated against the educational objectives of the college. Thus if the college exists to produce pastors and ministers for the Church one needs to find out if the Church is satisfied with the training the students have received. It would be a sobering exercise for every college to bring together small groups of graduates and ask them three questions: ‘Which courses that you attended have been valuable to you in your ministry?’, What courses were a waste of time because you have never used the material since leaving college?’ and ‘What do you wish you had been taught that would have helped you in your ministry?’ The point behind these questions is simply that some of our courses are irrelevant and negate the ‘fitness for purpose’ idea of quality.

5. Quality as ‘Value for Money’ or put in another way ‘Quality as The value Added to a Student’. This is a relative measure. For instance, which institution gives better value for money, one in the United States that costs $25000 or one in Africa that charges $1000 a year in fees? Is the overseas college 25 times better than the one in Africa? The top universities such as Oxford or Harvard attract the top students who have probably had a privileged education already and are already high achievers. These universities add value to be sure. But is the total value added perhaps greater for an under-prepared student starting from a low base, from a poverty stricken rural community in Africa who is enabled to study and pass a degree in your seminary?

6. Quality as Transformative. Students have to learn a large body of knowledge which the Christian tradition has generated. But this raises the question of ‘So what?’ – so what difference will all this learning make to the graduate student and will the student make a difference in the lives of the parishioners and in the community? It would be a shame if a graduate finishes his/her theological studies stuffed full of static historical information which does not lead to transformation. Knowledge plus skills equals competency, that is, the ability to be effective. There is another important aspect to the subject of transformation. It has to do with our personal transformation. When ministers fail it is seldom because they did not learn enough church history or Greek. They fail most often in the areas of personal relationships, in unhelpful leadership styles or in the area of morality (money, sex and power). The Church is mandated by the Lord to make a difference in the lives of others by way of effective pastoral care, proclamation of the gospel, working for justice, grounding believers in the Word of God in order that they be rooted in Christ and transformed in their world-view.

Education which suggests that they share a common understanding of quality. See the bibliography for web site details.
It is evident from the six descriptions of Quality listed above, that the notion of ‘quality’ is a fuzzy one because there is no universal law. Put another way, quality has many dimensions which overlap and interact with each other.

A major shift is occurring in higher education away from measuring the inputs only, i.e. the teaching content, towards outcomes based education based on systems of quality assurance.

What do you think?
- Which definition of quality appeals to you?
- How is your college doing in terms of each of these definitions?

**Why Worry About Quality?**

The answers to this question are largely pragmatic.

The issue of quality will affect your ability to attract students. Car makers in the United States suffered terrible consumer reports on the build quality of their cars and so Japanese competitors were able to penetrate the American market to such an extent that old US manufacturers experienced financial difficulties. There is an inherent cost as a result of poor quality.

Quality is important in order to maintain standards and, in fact, to improve standards. In this rapidly changing world just standing still, that is being the same as ever before, is enough for an institution to fall behind. The very nature of quality audits enables an institution to adapt and to change.

Quality is important for accountability to the various stakeholders. By stakeholders we mean the Board, the staff, the students, the Churches, the governments, the donors and society at large. More and more governments in Africa are taking responsibility for accrediting theological education and are thus becoming important role players of quality assurance today. Another stakeholder, are the universities in Africa and abroad because if an African student wishes to do postgraduate study abroad the issue of the quality of the undergraduate degree becomes of paramount importance. The standards of our African seminaries must therefore be comparable with international standards.

Then there is the primary theological perspective. Doubtless we are also accountable to God for the whole enterprise of theological education as we prepare His people to work in His church!

The issue of quality affects the image and credibility of the college and thus the ability to attract students and thus the financial viability of the college.

Quality relates closely to end-user satisfaction. In our case it is the Church and other NGOs. If the graduates are unable to work effectively in their chosen vocations because of inadequate training, then the sending agencies will look elsewhere for the training of their people.

For Reflection.
- Can you formulate some theological principles for understanding quality in theological education?

**Dimensions of Quality in Theological Education**

A theological college is a set of interlocking systems each of which affects the others. There is the whole academic component which includes the curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning processes. There are physical resources such as the library, buildings residences, grounds and offices. There is the administration which keeps records, does the correspondence and manages the finances. There is the human resource management of human capital which includes job descriptions, annual staff appraisals, contracts, conditions of service, staff development, grievance procedures, information flow etc. There are

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2 See the website of the Times Educational Supplement for their listing of the top universities in the world. The University of Cape Town is the only one in Africa to be included in the Top 200 universities according to their criteria.

*Part IV: Key Issues and New Frontiers in Theological Education in Africa*
the students with their needs for finance, accommodation, recreation, pastoral care and so on. There is the issue of leadership and governance which includes the Board and the internal management of the seminary. There is the public relations and promotional side of the college. Then there is the hidden or soft system of patterns of communication (or lack thereof) and of relationships. This is not an exhaustive list but merely illustrative of the understanding of the interlocking set of systems in a college.

It is clear therefore that the notion of quality in a theological college does not refer only to the academic side of the operation. Twenty years ago the Japanese introduced into manufacturing and industry the practice of Total Quality Management (TQM) and this has spread to other activities today.

TQM is based on the belief that:

*Every aspect* of an organization can be improved. There needs to be organization–wide quality management. Thus people must be open to change because there can be no improvement without change. The highest order question is the one of ‘fitness for purpose’ of the institutions mission and goals. Institutional drift over the years might have led to a number of activities which are a sidetrack from the core purpose. Another related concept is institutional alignment. By this we mean that every activity and all the resources need to be allocated rationally in keeping with the organisations goals and mission. (If libraries are key to the learning activities of students, then they need to receive a commensurate budget.)

This improvement is seen to be *incremental* and a *process* rather than one big ‘fix all’ event. Continuous improvement week by week, year by year will bring the desired results.

*Everyone* must be involved, not just the top management. A secretary in the front desk is best placed to suggest changes that will make her work easier and more effective. The academic dean is a key player regarding the educational content, systems and processes but a departmental head also has the responsibility to improve matters in that department.

Having said that, it is vital that the *leaders are convinced* of the need to improve or else there will be lip service and not transformation.

A *culture* of thinking and doing ‘quality’ must eventually pervade the seminary – from the Board to the weekly waged worker. Complacency is like a cancer which eventually leads to death and must be eliminated. The quest to become a quality institution must become a core value which is institutionalized and internalized.

*Training* is an important component of improvement. It assumes that with value added skills, the worker will perform better. It has a *developmental* function rather than a judgmental one. Staff training also validates a person by recognizing their worth and contribution sufficiently that they are worth investing in. Everyone could benefit from extra training, the bookkeeper could do an upgrade on computer-based bookkeeping, the handyman could do a course on welding, the lecturers could do some in-service training on adult education. Even the Board needs training as to their roles and responsibilities. If there is a person who refuses to grow and who has become a block to improvement, then it is time for that person to move on and out! A farmer has first to remove the rocks before he ploughs and plants his crop.

- Ask everyone in your institution to suggest one way that they could improve or one change they would like to suggest to improve their department. Take the ideas seriously because there is collective wisdom among the people and then decide how to implement the suggestions.
- Feedback leads to change which results in improvement.

**Implementation**

Establish consensus that improvement must be at the center of all efforts to develop an institutional culture of quality assurance.

Agree that quality processes must be participative and developmental, rather than imposed.

Implement mechanisms with sanctions when poor education and administration is tolerated.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Establish a Quality Promotion group that reports to the Management Team. The focus will be on being accountable and on seeking improvement. Self-evaluation is not about self-deception or self-justification. It is about seeing your institution as it really is and finding ways to improve it. This Quality Promotion group will then establish TQM circles in each area of operation; subject departments, the finance department, publicity and fundraising, housekeeping, grounds and maintenance, library etc. Meet regularly and decide on each occasion on one action to take to make an improvement.

Be restlessly dissatisfied with things as they are. Seek to improve.
Be determined to do the best to the glory of God.

For Action.
• What will you take away having read this chapter?
• What difference will this make to you and to your institution?
• How can we keep this discussion alive about quality in theological education on our continent? How can regional and national associations of theological schools play a more effective role in quality assurance?

Glossary

Accreditation is the certification of an institution or a department for a particular period of time in terms of a threshold standard.
Assessment is a process of evaluation of performance of an institution of higher learning based on certain established criteria.
Benchmarking is a tool used by analyzing the best practices of other organizations and how to achieve them in order to improve performance.
Quality Assessment refers to a number of measures of effectiveness as defined by various stakeholders in education.
Quality Assurance refers to the process of maintaining standards reliably and consistently by applying criteria of success in a course, programme or institution.
Quality Audit is the systematic and independent examination of an institution.
Quality Control is the internal process of checking whether the minimum standards are being met.
Standards are formally documented requirements and specifications against which performance can be assessed both in terms of processes and outcomes.
Total Quality Management is the application of quality principles to every aspect of the organization – its processes, products and services.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Web Links
Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa: http://www.theoledafrica.org/ACTEA/Standards/
Postsecondary_EN
American Society for Quality http://www.asq.org
Australian Universities Quality agency http://auqa.edu.au
Commission for Higher Education in Kenya http://www.che.or.ke

Commonwealth of Learning, Canada http://www.col.org
European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education http://.enqa.eu
International Network for Quality assurance Agencies in Higher Education http://www.inqaahe.org
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education http://www.qaa.ac.uk
Times Higher Education Supplement http://.thes.co.uk
A major conference was held in Johannesburg in 2011 under the aegis of the World Council of Churches
which examined different models of quality assurance from various international contexts. Papers are available on their website
http://wocati.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/WOCATI-Consultation-2011-
Do a web search for these following people who were the founding fathers of quality control in industry.
Those web pages will give you a useful summary of their work and list their important writings. Edwards Deming, Philip Crosby, Joseph Juran and Tom Peters.

References
PART V

SELECTED INNOVATIVE MODELS AND CASE STUDIES OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA
Introduction

Jamaica was the main area of British conquest and colonisation within the Caribbean. Although the island was divided up into parishes based on the English system, the established English colonial church lacked sufficient quality clerical resource and was therefore unable to offer a credible and effective ministry to the settlers and enslaved Africans. The non-conformist evangelical missions therefore found room for their work in Jamaica because of the absence of an effective established church. Central to their missions was their firm belief, zeal and commitment to their understanding of the gospel. They started from a perspective of what they considered to be the heart of the Gospel. The Gospel was seen as ‘good news’, something to tell, to proclaim through preaching, first of all, then followed by teaching. The evangelical faith which they sought to share contained the following features:

- Faith in the atoning death and resurrection of Christ;
- The need for godly righteousness, sober life and holy living;
- Emphasis on futuristic eschatology and the promise of life after death;
- The need for forgiveness of sins through repentance; and
- Condemnation of sex outside of marriage.

The arrival of reformed missionaries from Scotland and England to Jamaica during the first half of the 19th century did not herald, in any significant way, a new phase or chapter for the mission of the church in the country. Like other missionaries that had arrived before them, they, too, were offering to the enslaved and oppressed African-Jamaicans a religious product which, like the inhumane political system that governed them, essentially reflected the perspective, practice and structure they had developed and learnt within their European environment. Their presence however, did signify an addition to the theological and ecclesiological milieu with missionaries from the reformed tradition.

The arrival of Presbyterian and Congregational missionaries at this stage of the island’s development, helped to shape the kind of missional response that they offered. These missionaries had not been key players like the Baptists and, to a lesser extent, the Methodists, in the struggle for the abolition of slavery. Their late arrival within Jamaica, coupled with their early attitude of ‘not my business’ approach to the island’s political issues, ensured that their missions failed to attract a large membership from the black Jamaican population. In addition to the doubts of the blacks over the commitment of the missionaries to join in the struggles for their freedom, the missionaries were in no way united in perspective and practice.

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2 Osbourne and Johnston, Coastlands and Islands, 60-73.
3 Osbourne and Johnston, Coastlands and Islands, 60-73.
4 Robert Stewart, Religion and Society in Post Emancipation Jamaica (Knoxville: University Press, 2001) – the following were the main churches, denomination, and Missionary Societies in Jamaica during all or part of the nineteenth century: Moravian, 1789; Black Baptist, 1783; Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society, 1789; Baptist Missionary Society, 1814; Established Church of Scotland, 1819; Scottish Missionary Society, 1823; Anglican Diocese of Jamaica, 1825; Church Missionary Society, 1825; Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1834; London Missionary Society (Congregational), 1834; American Congregational, 1837; United Christian Missionary Society (USA), 1856.
They had various conflicting missional identities. Some existed to serve the spiritual needs of the white population, whilst others allied themselves with the concerns of the black majority. This contrast could be seen in the presence and thrust of the ‘mission’ of the official Scots Kirk. Their Kirks in the towns of Kingston and Falmouth were essentially ‘whites only’ ministries, whereas the Presbyterian missionaries from the Scottish Missionary Society focused on outreach to the African–Jamaicans. One thing was quite clear about the mission model employed by the reformed missionaries and that was that their strategy of penetration depended heavily on foreign support.

European Protestant missionaries brought to Jamaica an evangelical Christianity that emphasised preaching, instruction and observable response in word, moral behaviour and church adherence. Whilst the Presbyterian and Congregational missions shared these general evangelical perspectives, they had specific reasons for choosing the Jamaican society as the context for their mission engagement. Unlike the missions of the Moravians, Baptists and Methodists, which began during slavery, the reformed missions came at the close of slavery in 1834. This meant that the issues surrounding the abolition of slavery and the creation of a new society figured highly among their reasons for starting their mission to Jamaica.

Because the missions from Scotland developed from different spiritual embryos, their development within the Jamaican culture was one of living with and in contraction. Their Presbyterian identity invited both acceptance and rejection from the different social classes within the society. On the one hand was the mission of the established Church of Scotland that primarily served the needs of the ruling class of planters and merchants who defended the system of slavery. The Jamaican legislative Assembly recognised this Church as the second established church and voted £9,000 towards the building of the Scots Kirk and, in addition, an annual grant of £700 towards the minister’s stipend.

On the other hand were Presbyterians from other evangelical missions from Scotland who sought to distance themselves from the Kirk in an effort to gain credibility among the African-Jamaicans that they served as religious educators. Interestingly, it was planters from estates in the rural areas that invited missionaries from the Scottish Missionary Society to work among the African-Jamaicans. The locations of their mission stations in towns and on sugar estates suggest that they had a preference for the settled community to whom they could impart systematic teachings. Unlike the Baptist and the Methodist missionaries who were implicated in the 1831 slave rebellion Gardner reported that no estates on which the Presbyterians had influence suffered any destruction. This could be due in part to the late start of their mission. It could also be that their model of ministry and mission among the African-Jamaicans exercised greater control over their behaviour. Whatever may be the reasons it placed the missionaries in good light only with the authorities and with their headquarters. It was the Baptist Church that the black masses regarded as the church that was most willing to defend their interest during difficult times because their leaders participated in their struggle for freedom. It could also be argued that the reformed theology that they embraced gave approval for separating themselves from the socio-political issues of the day that required opposing the colonial political establishment and the planter class. These were the very people on whom they were dependent to have access to the African-Jamaican population to carry out their ‘spiritual duties’. This strategy of doing mission was contradictory in design and practice.

8 The first missionary to arrive was George Blyth in 1824 and he went to work on the Hampden estates in the parish of St James. He was followed by James Watson and John Chamberlain in 1827 and they went to the rural towns of Lucea and Port Maria respectively.
The coming together of the different Presbyterian missions in 1848 resulted in the new Mission (Church) being formed which became the United Presbyterian Mission in Jamaica.\textsuperscript{10} From this early stage, the church realised that the duplication of ministries constituted a waste of resources within a context where the mission had not achieved a self-financing status. Their financial dependency was directly linked to a deeper theological dependency on Scottish orthodoxy that acted against their own contextual interest.

It was the emancipation of the Africans in 1834 that acted as the catalyst and which influenced the LMS to agree that ‘it was right to increase their exertions’ \textsuperscript{11} and send missionaries to Jamaica. The LMS mission thrust to Jamaica had two clear priorities. The first was their evangelical mandate to ‘preach the gospel to all people’ and the second was to meet the educational needs of the emancipated African Jamaicans.\textsuperscript{12} It was felt that the newly emancipated people were owed a debt, which had been accumulated over many generations of enforced slavery sanctioned by the British crown. James Thompson, a local settler encouraged the LMS to start a mission to the island. He argued in a letter to the society that:

\begin{quote}
We owe a debt here which we do not owe to any other part of the world...and we ought by all means to discharge that debt or a large portion of it...at least in the first instance before we think of distributing our forces over the world.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

Other sympathetic planters such as Joshua Tinson recommended that education with agricultural instruction should become the priority of the missionaries. He argued that this focus would result in the African-Jamaican becoming ‘honourable’.\textsuperscript{14}

From as early as 1789, the Society had expressed interest to start a mission to Jamaica. However, its ecumenical character and commitment prevented it from taking action when the Methodists who had earlier begun working there, expressed concerns over the plans of the society.\textsuperscript{15} However, the LMS decided that in spite of the work of other Societies in the country that the great need of the people for Christian education and instruction required their involvement.\textsuperscript{16} One could argue that it was more that altruistic reasons the LMS chose to start the Jamaica mission. Jamaica was a prime colonial asset to the British Empire and their presence there would accrue much needed publicity that eventually would impact positively on their attraction of much needed funds. The opinions of these planters should not be regarded as the typical attitude of the planter class to the missionaries and the educational needs of the African people. Generally speaking they were very hostile to anyone whose aim it was to change the status quo and so affect their economic well-being. Their wealth was built around the African people being kept in servitude and would therefore not be prepared to allow the missionaries to use their influence and leadership to change the social and economic status of the enslaved people. Where planters co-operated, it was because it was in their interest.

Unlike the Presbyterians missionaries who opted for towns and estates, the LMS missionaries, along with their successors\textsuperscript{17}, felt that the area of greatest need was not in the towns but in the deep rural areas.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[13] Letter of James Thompson to William Ellis, Foreign Secretary of the LMS, dated 3.7.1834 Kingston, Box 1 (Jamaica 1834-36).
\item[14] Letter of Joshua Tinson dated 31.12.1834 to William Ellis, Foreign Secretary of the LMS, Box 1 (Jamaica 1834-36).
\item[15] Letter from Dr Thomas Coke, 26/2/1798 to the Directors of the LMS, Box 1 (Jamaica1834-36) SOAS Library (LMS/CWM manuscripts).
\item[17] According to Lovett, (377), The LMS mission began in December 1834 with the arrival of six missionaries and their families; Messers J. Woolldridge, Hodge, Barrett, Slatyer, Vine and Alloway.
\end{footnotes}
They went especially to the central hilly regions where many of the freed slaves had begun to establish settlements. They also felt that pioneering evangelism could best be carried out in the rural areas. However, in the parishes of Manchester, Clarendon and parts of St. Ann, LMS missionaries found that African-Jamaican Christian groups that were generally called Native Baptists were hostile to their presence because they were seen as competitors. There was mutual condemnation of each other’s religion. Barrett, the LMS missionary in Four Path complained that the Native Baptist groups were openly living in whoredom. Although the LMS were new on the scene, they, too, easily fell into the trap of open hostility to African-Jamaican Christian groups. These groups were deemed to be morally suspect and therefore could not be Christian. At all costs they were to be stopped so that the missionaries could propagate the ‘true religion’. On the other hand, Native Baptists viewed the missionary community as lacking in ‘spiritual authority’ and therefore incapable of equipping them with the necessary power to overcome the forces that threatened their lives.

As for the Presbyterians, their attitude to Jamaican Christian groups was best expressed in the actions of missionary Waddell. He expelled members from his congregations who were found using Mayal medical practices. He was so opposed to the Mayal groups that he went to one of their ceremonies and deliberately broke up their ritual with the worshippers looking on, ‘baffled’ and ‘disconcerted’ as if they had seen a mad man. What Waddell saw was not indigenised Christianity but heathenism that had to be opposed at all cost. The gulf between Reformed Christianity and African-Jamaican forms was deemed to be irreconcilable. The indigenising process of infusing missionary hymns and prayers into African-Jamaican demonstrative religious traditions was considered by the Presbyterian missionaries to be unacceptable.

The response of the Presbyterian missions was not to indigenise its ministry or contextualise its theology to meet the felt religious needs of the local people. Rather its response was to mobilise the members’ zeal for external mission to their ancestral homeland of Africa. The vision for the mission to Africa had emerged from as early as 1839, when the members of one of Waddell's congregations formed their own missionary society with the stated aim of raising funds to finance a mission to Africa. It was not until 1841 that the Jamaican Presbytery passed a resolution committing itself to facilitating a mission to Africa. Request was sent to the Scottish Missionary Society seeking its support for this objective. The subsequent support and development of the mission saw African-Jamaican lay-leaders under the leadership of the Scottish missionaries working together in Calabar, Nigeria. The focus of the mission was on evangelism through education. A number of Jamaicans served the mission as head teachers until 1950. Although the mission to Africa came eventually under the Scottish missions, the Jamaican have always cherished its role in taking the initiative and offering ongoing support for the work.

The dysfunctional socialisation process that Africans were forced to experience upon their arrival in Jamaica ensured that they had an unhealthy human development. With the colonial authority ensuring that their family life and work were controlled through strict sanctions, it was in the area of education or schooling that the missionaries sought to influence the socialisation of the Africans.

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18 This was to distinguish them from those Baptists belonging to the British Missionary tradition. However the difference was not always obvious and persons moved easily between Christian groups that identify themselves as Baptists.
19 Slayter, 23/2/1836, LMSf530.
20 H. Waddell, Twenty Nine Years, 191.
21 H. Waddell, Twenty Nine Years, 160.
22 H. Waddell, Twenty Nine Years, 206-210.
23 Francis J. Osborne and Geoffrey Johnston, Coastlands and Islands, 172-173.
Evangelization through Education

James Bergquist and P Kambar Manickam have coined the term ‘Missionary Standard Model’ to describe the universal evangelisation pattern which was used by the Euro–American churches and missionary societies during the 19th century missionary movement. This model revolves around the presence of the ordained clergyman who is both leader and manager of the mission ‘station’, the central unit within the organisation’s conversion process. The reformed missionaries who went to Jamaica were also advocates of this mission model. Because they had hardly any experience of how to develop a Christian mission in a slave society with a strange culture, they had little choice but to seek the support of sympathetic plantation owners in order to establish their mission. Another key contributing factor was the absence and/or weakness of mission stations of the established church, particularly in the rural areas of the country.

The colonial church’s investment in education was not merely for altruistic reasons. It was part of the strategy of influencing and ultimately controlling the people. For the proponents of western culture, education was meant to play a crucial role in the transmission of its values. The Christianity that non-conformist missionaries brought was generally identified with Western education. For the Reformed missions in particular, the two most important tools for evangelising the African-Jamaicans were preaching and teaching. In most cases, catechists accompanied missionaries who were sent out. Most of the African-Jamaicans whom they wished to become members of their Churches were considered to be illiterate because their “illiteracy” was defined in relation to the perceived literacy of the Europeans. Their orality was not recognised as an effective medium for the missionaries to communicate the gospel.

This was a major problem for the Presbyterian missions, whose ecclesiology was strong in rules that stated how the Church ought to be governed. For this model of government to function well, it required that, at the very least, the leadership of the local Church should be reasonably educated. The ecclesiology of the missionaries therefore disqualified most of the African-Jamaicans from functioning as ordained leaders of the Church.

The reformed missionaries refused to allow their local congregations to elect their own local Elders and Deacons. Their assessment was that the local people were not spiritually mature to choose the right lay leaders. What the missionaries were really scared of was the prospect of their Church’s development being heavily influenced by African spirituality rather than by that coming out of their European context. Therefore they shunned indigenous methods to engender a culturally appropriate response to the gospel.

From 1840 onwards The Presbyterian and London Missionary Society (LMS) missions had to face up to serious socio-religious challenges that questioned their willingness to become indigenised national Churches. Their controversy with the Baptist Church over their use of the ‘Leader and ticket system’ and baptism to increase membership was presented as a theological issue. However, the underlying issue was deeply cultural. What they were opposing and rejecting was the acceptance of African religious and cultural symbols as valid Christian instruments to receive and understand divine revelation. The position taken by the reformed missionaries helped to shape the future development of the Presbyterian Church of Jamaica (PCJ) and the Congregational Union of Jamaica (CUJ). They wanted a church that would develop according to their Euro-centric understanding and experience of the Christian faith.

The missionaries regarded as their top priority the task of teaching the people to read and write. This was done primarily to get them to comprehend the scriptures and so become committed to Christ, his
Gospel and the Church. For the missionaries, the primary purpose of education was to advance the mission of the Church. They saw a literate person as making a better Christian and Church member. From the beginning of the reformed mission enterprise, the local African-Jamaican people participated in the construction of schools and churches. They gave free labour and whatever financial resources they could afford. They saw in these schools a sign of hope, not so much for themselves but for their children. Commenting on the relationship between socialisation and schooling Anthony J. Gittins claimed that:

Missionaries who thought that western-style education would solve the problem of making Christians were of course wrong; not all were simple. But many did fail to notice that or comprehend that as fast as they educated the infants, the adolescents were leaving the school…The promise of the classroom seemed to evaporate once the doors were opened and the pupils left schools. Likewise, if adults felt themselves overlooked by missionaries in favour of the children, then they began to identify missionary Christianity itself with their children and not themselves.28

The mission schools were primarily catechetical centres. Catechists became central to the development of schools because missionaries were occupied in Church planting and general supervision of the mission station. For the catechists sent out to Jamaica, their role was to support missionaries, in communicating moral and religious instruction to the Negroes; and if they were to be licensed and ordained they were required to pursue a course of study under the superintendence of the Presbytery of Jamaica.29

The reformed missionaries’ understanding of their mission in Jamaica is best demonstrated in the weekly activities that they carried out. The most important day of the week for the missionaries was Sunday which was regarded as the Sabbath, a day of rest for worshipping God. It would be a time of numerous public services that would begin with singing, prayer, Bible reading, and a sermon during the morning session. This would be followed by an afternoon session involving Bible teaching in which the worshippers were expected to memorise portions of scriptures. The teaching of catechism was of paramount importance because acceptance into the church was based upon strict expectation regarding the knowledge of scripture and church rules.30 Paramount to this Reformed ecclesial identity was the centrality of the Sacrament of Holy Communion and extra care would be taken to determine who would be admitted to this rite.

The missionaries struggled to evangelise the local people they adopted systematic ways of organising their missions. James Bergquist and Kambar Manickam have aptly described the system as the concentric circles model.31 Appendix 2a offers a diagrammatic illustration of the division of labour among the different category of workers at the mission station. Around the missionary, being the central male figure of the mission station revolved everything. He had the final word on everything. The next circle of influence was the few local ordained male ministers. There was no gender justice in this mission model. Although women served in critical areas of the church, there were not recognised as ordained leaders. The strategy of the missionaries was to restrict ordination only to a few nationals. The result was that from very early in the missions, ordination became an elitist status symbol linked with power, control and social separation of the ordained leadership from the church membership. Ministers were ordained to the Word and Sacraments. These tasks were deemed to be their primary responsibilities. The ordained minister in the reformed tradition was expected to be ‘well trained’ and this meant that an understanding of church management based upon the educational model of the missionaries. Money was a scarce commodity for many of the African-Jamaican population. The missionaries who constituted the majority of the ordained

28 Anthony J. Gittins, Gifts and Strangers: Meeting the Challenge of Inculturation, 46.
29 H. Waddell, Twenty-Nine Years 278.
personnel received their stipend from the external sponsoring bodies. From this early stage in the development of the reformed churches in Jamaica, the seeds were sown for the development of churches lacking wholesome inculturation of the Gospel and indigenisation of their ministry and mission because the resources for their development were externally generated.

Catechists and evangelists constituted the next concentric circle. They were primarily responsible for preaching, teaching and evangelism but not the dispensing of the sacraments. Some missionaries functioned as catechists and evangelists before they were authorised to ordain local ministers. Teachers were the next circle of workers in the Reformed mission station. Their model of evangelisation through education required trained teachers to operate their schools. As employees of the mission station, they were responsible to impart Christian education. The head teacher was usually an officer of the mission and was expected to give leadership in the management of the local congregation. The final circle was the Elders and Deacons. They were appointed by missionaries to manage the local congregations. Some of them functioned also as lay preachers. However, their primary duty was to assist the missionaries and ministers with the pastoral care of members. Their style of governing the emerging local churches brought the missionary model into conflict with the cultural and religious heritages of the African-Jamaicans. Because the missionaries’ over-riding concern for a Euro-centric moral order shaped their relationship with the black people, they were unable to understand and express support for the cultural aspirations of the people.

Although the missionaries were the prime initiators in the founding of new congregations, it did not follow that the congregations themselves were structured and developed with a strong bias placed on giving expression to their own missionary calling. Attempts were made by some local congregations to develop their own missionary association. However, their mission perspectives and practices were restricted to the task of raising funds. It does appear that some missionaries, especially those from the Scottish Secession Church who were supported by local congregations, were more determined to promote the missionary calling of each local congregation.32

In spite of the efforts of the missionaries, most of their black membership was illiterate and this led to greater emphasis being placed on preaching for the understanding of scripture. This had a limited impact also because the African-Jamaicans did not easily understand the cultural medium used by the missionaries to communicate to them.33 Although the missionaries regarded schooling as a priority in their work, adult Jamaican regarded it as irrelevant for their oral culture. And because the schooling was done using the English language, it ensured that their education would not be truly assimilated. The Presbyterians through their training School in Montego Bay invested much more resources than the LMS to educating the African-Jamaicans. The best effort of the LMS was to be found in the establishment of The Ridgemount Training College in 1856. The three year curriculum illustrated the deep-seated commitment to a Euro-centric worldview.

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<td>English Grammar</td>
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<td>Natural Philosophy</td>
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<td>Exposition, essays</td>
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<td>Composition of sermons</td>
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32 H. Waddell, Twenty-Nine Years, 256.
33 Robert Stewart, Religion and Society in Post Emancipation Jamaica, 135.
34 Shirley C. Gordon, Our Cause for His Glory: Christianisation and Emancipation in Jamaica (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 1998), 21.

Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa
The Ridgemount educational experiment was short lived because it was under-resourced and failed to attract sufficient candidates. Shirley Gordon suggests, however, that reasons for its failure were more deep-seated. The further education that the African-Jamaicans sought was one not restricted to working within the church but that would take them into the wider society. Those that had graduated from the institution found that their career prospects were limited within the church and that they could only reach the status of assistant missionary. \(^{35}\)

Indeed, the perception that African-Jamaicans were educated only through the efforts of European missionaries is strongly disputed. The young school master, Barrett Mclean who attended LMS school at Brixton Hill and then went to Mico Teachers College, claimed that most of the missionary work was in fact carried out by ‘forgotten and neglected native teachers.’\(^{36}\)

This overwhelming dependence on the Western designed education for the development of the church had devastating consequences for its future impact in the society. This model of communicating the gospel has resulted in increased marginalisation of the church within the community of the poorly educated. Lenchak confirms that missionary emphasis on literacy and Western schooling was founded on the assumption that African culture was not considered adequate for expressing Christian truth and therefore Christianity needed to be expressed in western thought forms. Also that Christian doctrine and belief is best learned from books by reading.\(^{37}\) The strong oral techniques and tradition of African Jamaicans was not intentionally harnessed as a resource by which the gospel could be communicated.

It appears that the overemphasis of the Reform missionaries on literacy and Western schooling have sown seeds for the future cultural marginalisation of the Church. In the next chapter data on church membership will illustrate how middle class led congregations are culturally confused because a proper balance between allegiance to a missionary literary heritage and the dominant oral tradition of the people has not been achieved.

The university model education, which is the standard for the training of the ordained ministers, has increased the difficulties of the church in understanding and responding to the oral tradition. A Western ideological system and scholarship that undervalued African cultural heritage under-girded the educational policy.

The methods of acquiring new members by the reformed missionaries proved to be an area of significant inter-church rivalry. At the heart of the issue were the different theological responses to the socio-cultural realities of the Jamaican context. The Baptists had earned a privileged position of influence within the African–Jamaican community because of their solidarity with the people in their resistance against the evil system of slavery. Through their pioneering ministry they demonstrated to the people that ‘true’ membership into the church came through the rites of adult baptism by immersion. This baptismal act was a demonstration of the believer’s identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For these early Baptists, baptism was synonymous with Church membership and most African-Jamaicans believed them. The reformed missionaries claimed, however, that the practice of not investing in adequate time of training of the enquirers before baptism made a mockery of church membership. For the vast majority of Jamaican Blacks, baptism by immersion was a cultural necessity. Their attraction to the Baptist church was in part due to their emphasis on adult baptism by immersion that they found to be more culturally attuned to their African heritage. Robert Stewart emphasised that the propensity of Jamaican Blacks for baptism can also be connected to the Ashante belief in divine origin of water, the belief that every river or important body of water was related to the Supreme God as a son of God.\(^{38}\)

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\(^{35}\) Ibid, 22.

\(^{36}\) Ibid, 20.


\(^{38}\) Robert Stewart, Religion and Society in Post Emancipation Jamaica, 136.
However, the controversy was more than just an issue about the proper training of people before baptism. At the heart of the matter was the issue of what kind of church was most suited for the African–Jamaican people. The Baptist church, which was founded by African–Americans, presented itself as an indigenised church, governed by and for African–Jamaicans.39 The church’s ministry and mission reflected a strong influence by African religious orientations. Structurally it operated a decentralised class–leader system of local management in the churches. It was a church in which black leadership was the norm and appropriate African religious symbols were incorporated into the worship life of the people. Baptism by immersion represented a powerful symbol of purification to the African–Jamaicans. They also found the Baptists’ standards for church membership more in tune with their religious orientation than the other models offered by the mission churches.

The reformed missionaries demanded prospective members, who they called ‘enquirers’, to engage in a long learning process before they are considered for membership. Membership was then received through an act of confirmation. This was based on the premise that those approved for confirmation were first baptised or christened as children. Those who were not could be baptised as adults, but through the mode of sprinkling. The socio–economic impact of slavery on the black people of Jamaica led to a severe weakening of the institution of the family. Family life, as developed by the African–Jamaicans, before and after emancipation, did not allow for stable relationships in which a married mother and father could care for children.40 The planters strongly disapproved the teaching of the Christian missionaries on marriage as inappropriate for black slave labourers. This had significant implications for the practice of infant baptism. Doctrinally it could be dispensed only to children whose parents were Christians and de facto were married. Both requirements proved to be generally absent within the black family unity. The family relationships developed by African–Jamaicans did not subscribe to European values and therefore proved to be very resistible to the missionary model. The underlying cultural expectations of the purpose of conversion were to make the black people develop European 'manners'.

Of paramount importance to the Reformed missions was the centrality of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and the necessity to keep the Lord's Day (Sabbath) holy. Both proved very difficult to practise within the black community. The qualifications for admission to the Lord's Supper were very strict and only few blacks qualified. The missionaries required high moral standards especially the need for couples with children to be married.41 The issue of the Sabbath was a lost battle. The local people needed the day that the missionaries identified as the Sabbath as an opportunity for them to work their grounds, attend market and generally to provide for their families.

From this early stage in the mission development of the reformed churches, it was clear that their success or failure would depend, to a great extent, on the quality of their contextual responses to family life challenges of the African–Jamaicans. Key tenets of their Euro–centric reformed ecclesiology were not culturally attuned to social realities of the local context. It was imperative for their mission model to become theologically and culturally conducive to the context.

Most of the African-Jamaicans who desired church membership were illiterate. This was a major problem for reformed ecclesiology that was strong in rules that stated how the church ought to be governed. It was this allegiance to promote an educated leadership that led the missionaries to disqualify most of the African Jamaicans from functioning as ordained leaders of the church. Unlike the Baptist Church model that encouraged local leadership development, the Reformed missionaries refused to allow their local churches to elect their own Elders and Deacons. Their assessment was that the local people were

39 The coming of George Lielse and Moses Baker to Jamaica in 1793 established what Harold Turner describes as the first African-American overseas missionary enterprise from North America. Unlike the mission enterprises from Europe Lielse was supported by no church or agencies.
41 Letter from SMS to H. Waddell, 23/4/1832, MS 8984.

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*Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa*
not spiritually mature to choose the right to lay leaders.\textsuperscript{42} The missionaries were really scared of the prospect of their churches’ development being heavily influenced by African spirituality rather than those coming out of the European context.

African-Jamaicans had to face and make a stark choice: to which of the worldviews would they give their allegiance; Europe or Africa? In the missionary culture of Europe they were offered respectability and some social mobility through education. The plumbline of missionary Christianity was the ideology of respectability in dress, language, theology and economics. It was a total lifestyle package. It was selective in membership and meant to attract those African-Jamaicans who would relinquish their traditional worldview and embrace the competing worldview of the missionaries. African-Jamaicans wanted respectability but not at the expense of relinquishing their traditional worldview that affirmed their identity. Within a socio-political culture built on violence and oppression, their primary need was for empowerment to overcome the forces that denied them the achievement of their full human potential.

Shirley Gordon sums up the predicament that missionary Christianity faced after emancipation:

The decline of missionary influence after the first years of emancipation was not only due to lack of resources to expanding their proselytising values. The situation was that the poor and the struggling population found a more acceptable and religious expression in a synthesis of traditional Afro-Jamaican beliefs grafted upon Christian teachings and applied, under Jamaican leadership, to the circumstances of Jamaican communities.\textsuperscript{43}

The world of the African-Jamaicans had fundamentally changed after emancipation. Freedom had not bestowed upon them the social mobility that they had expected. Missionary Christianity did not allow them the freedom to take full responsibility for and to find meaningful solutions to their problems. Most African-Jamaican sought alternative solutions outside of the influence of missionary Christianity.

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\textsuperscript{43} Shirley C. Gordon, *Our Cause for His Glory*, 85.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
Esther Mombo and John Chesworth

Beginnings in Frere Town

St. Paul’s has a long-standing reputation, which is known and respected for providing high quality training of Theologians and Pastors for service in the Christian Churches. Approximately one hundred students graduate each year, many taking up positions of leadership within a relatively short time. Many of the leaders of Churches in various parts of Africa, such as Bishops, Moderators, General Secretaries and Archbishops have been trained at St. Paul’s.

The origin of the College goes back to the early years of Missionary work in East Africa. In 1875 the Church Missionary Society (CMS) founded a settlement for freed slaves at Freretown, near Mombasa. In 1888, the Rev. E.A. Fitch began a Divinity class designed to offer some practical skills and Christian leadership training to these freed slaves. The Divinity class offered training to six teacher-evangelists who were ordained deacons. Thus began the training of indigenous persons for the ordained ministry of the modern Christian Church. The CMS 1889 Annual Report says, ‘The Rev. E. A. Fitch, spent a few months at Frere Town, which he employed in commencing a Divinity Class.’

Born about 1860, Fitch had come from England to East Africa in 1884 as Bishop Hannington’s chaplain. He was at Frere Town from 1887-1888, and from 1890 he was at Rabai as Bishop Tucker’s examining chaplain. In 1894 he returned to England on furlough, where he died from a sudden illness. Fitch’s role in theological training was brief. More long-lasting was that of Rev. John Edward Hamshere. Born in 1867, Hamshere came to East Africa in 1893. In 1894, he began work in theological training at Frere Town. In December 1894 he wrote, ‘I have, two, Thomas Serenge, who having taught in the Rev. T. S. England’s school, has entered the Divinity Class, my first student. The Bishop [Tucker]’s plan is to teach and prepare teachers, evangelists and pastors. We have made this beginning, and though small, the bare fact that we have begun, to me seems ground for rejoicing. Christ’s Church here wants such men sorely, and though we have just these two, we have good ground for hope that development is in the near future.’

In his December 1895 letter, Hamshere names the other student from 1894 as Musa from Mamboia, who did one year of training. By then, there were seven students in the Divinity Class: ‘One from Mamboia, one from Taveta, and the rest from Frere Town. A seventh student completed his course – a very elementary one of necessity – and returned to Mamboia’ (CMS Annual Report 1896). In 1897 three students from Uganda attended the Divinity class, left there by Rev. G.K. Baskerville, as he went home on furlough.

To cope with the 20th century Missionary expansion, the CMS stepped up the training of Christian Converts for full-time ordained ministry of the Church. It was then that the decision was made to create two parallel streams, a Divinity School and a Normal School. When CMS wanted to determine where the
training centre should be located. Interestingly the entire complement of CMS workers, including the ‘Native Pastors’ were asked for their opinions concerning where the new Divinity School and Normal School should be located. The opinions are summarised in the Corresponding Committees ‘day book’. The suggestions, range from staying in Frere Town or Rabai, to locations around Taveta to Kikuyu. Hamshere among others was vehement in his opposition to continuing in Frere Town. The opinions having been solicited, they were discussed by the London Committee and Bishop Peel was asked, his opinion was anything but decided. Eventually he felt the strong advantages of Frere Town, where existing buildings could be partly used.

On the 28th July, 1903, the Rev. H.K. Binns laid the foundation stone of St. Paul’s Divinity School at Freretown. The institution continued with small numbers, being closed at times, when the missionary in charge went home on furlough. During the First World War it operated from Taveta for a period. In 1926 the Divinity School was closed until the arrival of Rev. H.J. Butcher in 1928, initially he was based at Kikuyu hoping to set up a United Divinity School. When this plan collapsed he went to Frere Town to re-open the Divinity School and subsequently oversaw the move to Limuru.

With the Divinity School re-opened in September 1928 with sixteen students, five accompanied by their wives. The students represented six different tribes. Four of these were deacons who had returned for final instruction and did not move to Limuru. Whilst the other twelve who did make the move, are described as comprising: three from the coast, one from Taita, one from Nairobi, two from Kikuyu and five from Kavirondo.

From 1930 the Divinity school was re-opened at Limuru, on land offered to CMS by a retired British businessman, Ernest Carr. CMS sold its property at Frere Town. The CMS parent committee agreed to a £2,000 loan. Hamshere’s successor, Hubert John Edwin Butcher, moved the Divinity School in 1930 – our other major date.

### The Move to Limuru

In 1930 the CMS Divinity School moved from Frere Town to Limuru. Rev. Hubert John Edwin Butcher was the first principal there. It was in many ways time for a change. The climate on the coast was harsh for students from the Highlands, where the major growth in the church was taking place. Climatically, it took the institution from one extreme to something like another. Limuru is a very cold place for those used to the climate around Lake Nyanza, let alone students from the coast. Students have been known to do examinations in overcoats and Balaclava helmets, which is hardly ideal. As early as 1932 Butcher’s annual letter observed that Limuru was ‘bitterly cold’ during the rainy season, and expressed gratitude for the fireplace in the classroom. In 1946 M.G. Capon, at the end of his time as principal, was working to move the Divinity School to a site six miles from Nairobi, because Limuru was too cold, and the site too small, short of water, and insufficiently flat.

The institution in its early years was not so different from what it had been on the coast. It was still called the Divinity School. Butcher was the only staff member at first, with help from his wife Elizabeth, who taught the wives. When the Butchers went on furlough, the school was still suspended, and the students worked as catechists. All teaching was still in Kiswahili. The initial chapel was a grass thatched wattle and daub building. Would it have been good to keep it like that to link with the context? Or would

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3 3rd October 1901 Letter from Hamshere, Gives reasons at some length in favour of a site in the Dabida range, such as Kaya or Mlaleni [in Taveta].
4 In his Annual Letter for 1928, he refers to the fact that in January 1928 ‘efforts were being made to establish a United Divinity School in connection with the Alliance of Protestant Missions, and it was hoped that the buildings might be created on land adjoining the Alliance High School at Kikuyu.’ In June of that year the Church of Scotland stated that it could not give sanction to the plan ‘for constitutional reasons’.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
that have linked the Church to a romantically conservative idea of the African context, and rendered it less fit to meet the challenges of modernisation before and since Uhuru? Certainly it never crossed Butcher's mind that they did not need stone buildings for the chapel and common room.

Indeed in one respect the situation after the move seems to have been worse than before. In 1931-2 there were eighteen students from nine different tribes, but there was accommodation for only two student families. One or two others were able to live within walking distance, but only a small number of the wives could receive training, [from Mrs. Butcher, the Principal’s wife] along with their husbands.

In 1933, however, a CMS grant and ‘unexpected gifts from private sources’ enabled a chapel, common room and more accommodation for student families to be built. Young men from the Government Native Industrial Training Department who had been pupils in various CMS schools did the actual building work. From then most students brought their families. Butcher and his wife clearly laid great stress on the wives’ preparation, and a school was started for the children. Furniture from the Frere Town School was used in the new chapel.

But in other ways the beginning of the Divinity School in Limuru looked forward. Butcher wrote in September 1930, ‘We have, however, made a start towards the ideal of a united training institution. It may even be a step towards an African Church with a united ministry.’ He referred cautiously to the awakened desire for self-government in Kenya, and it seems that he could see that the church needed to prepare for that. Certainly the following year, mentioning the political climate again, he wrote of the aim to make ‘the native church’ indigenous and self-supporting, organised and disciplined by its own members. He wanted the Divinity School to help in that by training suitable leaders. Butcher wrote in the CMS Church Missionary Outlook of November 1932, ‘Now in the mission field there was never such an urgent need as at the present time for the preparation of leaders, upon whom the burden and responsibility of the local churches may fall, and who shall be fitted to take over the permanent development of their church when the foreign missionary shall no longer be available.’ He cited language, climate, financial difficulties and ‘racial feeling’ as making this urgent. (1) The united college and independence for state and church in Kenya have come, though they took some time. The united ministry is an aspect of Butcher’s hopes still in the future.

Butcher gave a snapshot in 1930 of the nature of the student body at the move. The last class from Frere Town moved to Limuru. It was of nine deacons training for the priesthood, four of whom had already been priested, and had returned to complete their studies; an easy start, wrote Butcher. In the second term in 1930, the School was, he claimed, ‘bigger and more representative than ever before.’ There was a class of twelve: three from Elgon Division; three from the Church of Scotland Mission at Kikuyu; one from the coast; one from Taita; one from Nairobi; two from the Kikuyu country; and one from Embu; plus five deacons training for the priesthood: seven tribes, two dioceses two missions, commented Butcher.

The road still seemed hopefully open for a quick progress to a truly united college, at least for the future Anglican Church of Kenya and Presbyterian Church of East Africa. In 1931 there were six students from the Church of Scotland Mission, and Butcher was hoping [in a comment he wrote was not for publication] for students from the United Methodist Church Mission. In 1932, the student body increased by four, three of whom were from Tumu Tumu and the Church of Scotland Mission. Somehow things failed to go forward at that point.

In 1934, as Butcher prepared to go on furlough, a crisis blew up. The African Independent Schools had split from the Church of Scotland Mission and African Inland Mission over the question of female circumcision. They applied to send men for training at Limuru. The college was ready to receive them, if they would accept the Bishop’s authority, arguing that this would prevent them from either Roman Catholicism or Independency. But the Church of Scotland Mission and AIM, perhaps scenting ‘sheep stealing’ or an implied criticism of their stance, argued such a step was disloyal to the Alliance of
Protestant Missions forged at the Kikuyu Conference. In his letters after his furlough Butcher mentions neither the Independent Schools nor Church of Scotland students.

In the meantime Butcher got on with training clergy. In 1932 (2) he wrote about students throwing themselves with earnestness and a desire for knowledge into ‘the mysteries of the Articles, Creeds and Church History’. He noted that the curriculum for students in 1935 included Bible subjects and English. In 1936 he noted that students carried on preparation classes for baptism candidates.

Butcher, like his predecessor, worked on Kiswahili resources. On his furlough in 1932 he was writing a Church history in Kiswahili and English for use in the Divinity School and schools which taught in English. Towards the end of Butcher’s time, an African clergyman was finally appointed to the staff. Rev. Elijah Gachanga became Vice-Principal of the Divinity School and joint Secretary of the African Church Council. By 1942 Obadiah Kariuki had joined him.

United Theological College

From 1930 the Divinity School had received a few students from other denominations, but it continued as an Anglican Institution until 1949. Starting in 1940 African leaders had called for a joint Divinity School, in 1945 they called for it again, feeling that joint training would be the first step towards church union. In 1949 it was decided that the denominations should work together for an experimental period of five years. Then the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) and the Methodist Church in Kenya joined and brought in their ministerial candidates. In 1954 the transitional Union was accomplished when the three Churches formed a College Council to run the affairs of the College; and on the 1st January 1955, the CMS St. Paul’s Divinity School became St. Paul’s United Theological College. In 1973 the Reformed Church of East Africa formally joined the other three Churches as the fourth Participating Partner. On the 18th of March 1993, the National Council of Churches of Kenya in its corporate identity was admitted by the Governing Council as the fifth Participating Partner in the ownership of the College.

Development of a Suitable Curriculum

What curriculum should be taught at the Divinity School, what language of instruction should used have been questions for St. Paul’s from its inception. In the beginnings of the Divinity School, the language of instruction was Kiswahili. The aim of the college was to train leaders for the African church which was young but in a dynamic context. After the Second World War, the teachers began a discussion on introducing English as a medium of instruction and a critical approach to the study of theology. The reasons for this included,

African Christians have been sheltered from many matters of theological controversy. They have not been able to read English books, they have had little contact with the Christians of other than their own traditions, and the missionaries have taught them much of one kind. Now very many are able to read English in the army and they have been brought into contact with European and African Christians and chaplains of widely different types. This implies that the Divinity School has to pay attention to controversy matters that in earlier days hardly needed a mention. With this understanding, the need to recruit from secondary schools and not primary schools was emphasised by the liaison committee. 6

Students with secondary school level of education were already in the teaching profession. Thus the first class of 1944 was composed of Festo Olang, Josiah Magu, Hesborn Nyongo, Nehemiah Mwanda, Daudi Petro, and Allan Madoka, most of whom were teachers already influenced by the East Africa Revival

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5 Material for the section on the United Theological College is drawn from ‘St. Paul’s as an ecumenical training institution’, in Onyango, For God and Humanity, 61-76.
6 Cited in Onyango, For God and Humanity, 22.
movement. This later would create a challenge for the theological approach and or enquiry with the medium of English instruction was intended.

For the new class, the intention was to be prepared to evangelise and not to spend time on theological enquiry and critical approach to biblical study. The introduction of critical method of study laid a foundation for St, Paul’s approach to theology which helped in the development of curricular to date that is relevant and contextual.

The period of nationalism and independence led to other questions of the type of leaders that the young church required. The quest for an African leadership for the church was growing louder each time and this posed a challenge for the United theological college to rethink again the levels of education for church leaders in a nation with an increasing educated mass. The college had to think about training leaders who could the needs of both the rural and urban population. Without changing the curriculum, the college thought about adding a unit on the urban society.

a) Urban course

With the support of the National Council of Churches an urban unit of study was introduced to help the trainees to understand the theological issues for the urban society as most of there training offered to them was focused on the rural society.

b) London University Bachelor of Divinity

The 1960s posed even a greater challenge for the college in view of preparing leaders for an emerging nation. The search for a relevant and high level of education led the college to introduce an external degree program with the University of London. Four suitable students, two Anglicans, one Presbyterian, and one Quaker were registered. The students and staff involved considered that the course, with all the required examinations, could be successfully completed in the minimum permitted time. Despite the committed efforts and concern, none of the students actually gained the BD for several reasons including the wide scope of contents of study when only a few sections were examined, the pressure on the students who had been selected to take this degree and the time required to cover the syllabus. As well as these the students felt that they were guinea pigs of this new program as some of the staff members did not have confidence in them residues of colonial hangovers.

Although that was extremely disappointing for the College Council and members of staff, it highlighted the urgent need for the development of an East African degree in theology, particularly as, for some years, London suspended its external degree programme.

c) Nairobi University Certificate in Religious Studies.

At the beginning of the 1970s, Nairobi University set up a Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies with Bishop Stephen C. Neill (who had undertaken the IMC Theological Education Survey for Africa in the 1950s) as it’s first Professor. This development coincided with the increased interest by various Churches in accredited certificate in theological study. Some of them expected to offer ‘Theological Education, by Extension (TEE).

That was a means by which serious study of the Bible, Church History, was provided to members in general, through part-time attendance, either at evening classes or at weekends, over several years. With its popularity, Nairobi University launched an external Certificate in Religious Studies. The certificate was

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7 The story of East Africa Revival is recorded in ‘The East Africa Revival History and Legacies Ed. Kevin Ward and Emma Wild –Wood. The movement called to Christians to repent and commit themselves to the zeal of Evangelism.
8 Onyango, For God and Humanity, 36.
welcomed with many Bible colleges and it was taken by both laity in different professions but who needed to gain entry into the churches. The certificate was taught at St. Paul’s to the people training for ministry.

\textit{d) Cambridge University Diploma/Certificate in Religious Studies.}

St Paul’s College Certificate-level students, for whom a Diploma course had been available, and who did not seem likely to gain an opportunity for further studies overseas, opted to register for this Cambridge external programme, which had much to commend, especially in terms of flexibility. It involved part-time study and St Paul’s, undertaking minor consultancy and supervisory responsibilities, as well as providing library facilities. This Certificate and Diploma was also not viable.

\textit{e) Makerere Diploma in theology}

The story of the Makerere Diploma in theology is traced to the International Missionary Council (IMC) meeting in Ghana in 1958. The meeting was important because it contributed to setting up of setting up of regional Councils in various parts of the world, one of these being the All African Conference of Churches (AACC). The conference also noted the growth of church in the then developing countries and the need for support in theological Education. The direct result of this meeting was the establishment of Theological Education Fund (TEF) with its offices in New York, which were moved to Bromley, London, and finally to Geneva. In the East Africa region Makerere University was on the way to setting up a department of Religious studies and it was chosen as an institution to house the TEF. This had implication for theological education in the region, the representatives of St Paul’s considered that, at that time, an intermediate level of training was needed. Ultimately, it was agreed that, while Makerere should be a vital element in developing three of the existing theological colleges, Makumira (Lutheran) near Arusha in Tanzania, Mukono (Anglican) near Kampala in Uganda, and St Paul’s (United) near Nairobi in Kenya, all in the eastern region. An East African Diploma in Theology was developed according to an agreed syllabus and taught at the three theological colleges mentioned, and would be examined externally by Makerere university, department of Religious studies.

\textit{f) ATIEA Bachelor of Divinity}

The search for a relevant curriculum did not stop with the Certificate and Diploma offered by Nairobi and Makerere universities which most of the church leaders received. Towards the end of the 1970s, the Association of Theological Institutions in East Africa (ATIEA) had grown, and it provided a forum it provided a forum in which all ATIEA members, including the Catholic Seminaries participated. The meetings included theological discussions among Professor and Lecturers from different institutions including the Makerere Department which offered the Diploma in Theology. ATIEA made inroads in preparing and setting up a 3-year Bachelor of Divinity degree within the Eastern Africa context.

The degree started in 1978 and was taken by St. Paul’s, Bishop Tucker Theological College in Uganda, Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary in Ethiopia, and St Paul’s in Kenya. The ATIEA BD was structured in accordance with the degree programs in the then public universities in Eastern African. However, only three institutions were directly involved and wishing to register students, Bishop Tucker Theological College in Uganda, Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary in Ethiopia, and St Paul’s in Kenya. Degree classes began in all three institutions towards the end of 1978.

This BD was not located in a university but it was modelled according to Eastern Africa University principles and practice including the following aspects: An agreed entry qualification for all students, agreed syllabus with mandatory and elective subjects; an agreed assessment of course work and examination and a grading system, a mandatory research paper in the final year and an academic board to determine the results for each student.
Those who worked on this degree ensured that it served the context in which the students were studied. Among the things that were included in this syllabus for it to be contextual and relevant were, East African Church History; African Traditional Religion, and Africa Theology.

The first graduates of this degree include a first woman to study in St. Paul’s and the class of 1980 remains a very significant class because of who they became in society. Graduates included the Rev Dr. Nyambura Njoroge, Program Executive for Ecumenical HIV and AIDS initiatives in Africa and formerly in the Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE Program) of the World Council of Churches, The Rt. Rev. Gideon Githiga Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Thika Kenya, and The Rt. Rev, Dr. Stephen Kanyaru, presiding Bishop of Methodist Church of Kenya and others.

The Road To Becoming a Private Christian Ecumenical University

The journey to becoming a university begun in 1985 when the Kenya Parliament passed the Universities Act and began the process of regulating higher education in the country. A number of things prompted the government to do this. Firstly, there was a proliferation of Christian educational institutions in the country that seemed to have no relationship with one another. Secondly the Commission was re-conceiving the entire educational system at the tertiary level and moving in the direction of what came to be known as the 8-4-4 system. In 1986, the development committee of the college council proposed to upgrade the college into a university, or at least, a university theological college able to offer Master and PhD degrees.

The commission of higher education later visited the college and interviewed some members of the council, tutorial staff and students. The commission outlined some of the requirements for accreditation: this included a strong financial base for the college through an endowment fund. The college was also to develop permanent and qualified national faculty. Finally the college had to develop curricular that were relevant to the needs of Kenya Society.

The early accreditation discussion with the commission regarded the possibility of creating a ‘Christian University of Kenya’, which would embrace many of the Theological Institutions in Nairobi as well as St. Paul’s. On 4th May 1988 St. Paul’s was invited by commission to meet together with the government officials in order to determine the best course of action in light of that situation. Paul Chilcote of St. Paul’s was given the task not only of drafting the revisions of our curriculum as a whole, but also for preparing a ‘blue print document’ with regard to the relationships among our various institutions. The central principle that Chilcote put forward was one of ‘mutual recognition.’ In this case each Christian institution would recognize the validity and authenticity of the other schools under the aegis of a centrally administered ‘Christian University’ for the nation; institutions would agree to disagree, essentially on some matters of doctrine, but would embrace the same kind of ecumenical spirit that characterized St. Paul’s.

In the absence of an ecumenical consensus, the Commission advised St. Paul’s to forge ahead with plans of becoming a university in an independent manner. This had to begin with a review and development of a develop and adopt a curriculum that was truly contextual and sensitive to the cultural dynamics of the churches that St. Paul’s was serving. Despite the challenges that were faced in preparing the BD curricula, which was approved by the Commission in September 1989 and it replaced the ATIEA BD.

In 1988, while working on the BD Curriculum for the commission, St. Paul’s opened discussion with the denominational colleges affiliated to her in different parts of the country, on a St. Paul’s Diploma. This was launched in 1989 as the BD was approved and it ended the Diploma in theology through the Makerere University.

9 College Council minute 9/802, 16th September 1996 cited in Onyango, For God and Humanity, 52.
10 Onyango, For God and Humanity, 55.
12 Onyango, For God and Humanity, 92.
In 1990, the college was granted a letter of interim authority to operate as a university with a right to offer degrees still under the name of ‘St Paul’s United Theological College’. The letter of interim authority was a temporary provision, as a permanent ‘charter’ awaited accreditation. The journey of accreditation took another seventeen years due to several reasons including, staffing, physical infrastructure, financial viability, and internal competition of the different churches that supported St. Paul’s. In order to proceed with the accreditation process, the college required financial viability and this was a big challenge as noted then, the college lacked students as it was not only admitting for theology, it was only through diversification of both students and programs that it could achieve financial viability. \(^{13}\) This could not be realised because the denominations which sponsored students and managed St. Paul’s had already founded their own universities.

Despite the obstacles, the college was advised to continue discussion with NCCK with a view to developing an ecumenical university of St. Paul's Limuru.\(^{14}\) Staffing was another challenge for the accreditation process. Addressing the college in 1995, Professor Mungai of the Commission of Higher Education informed the council that if they were to succeed, they had to provide convincing information that they were able to attract qualified national staff and to retain them this was because in 1994, St. Paul’s suffered a major setback with the mass exodus of national staff. As well as staff exodus, the college administration was changing quiet often and this did not help in the stability of the institution.

On curriculum in 1995, the college council proposed diversification and the launching of three new programmes. The new programmes were Business Management and Administration, Social and Cultural Studies and a Master in Theology, but it could not launch these programmes immediately since they had not been approved by the commission and there were no adequate staffs to take on the teaching of the programs. Underlying these challenges was even a greater challenge with regard to the physical facilities. The college did not have adequate land as required by the commission which was a recommended for fifty acres as compared to the thirty four that the college had.

The process of accreditation stalled until the millennium when the college hired a new Principle Professor Godfrey Nguru to carry on the process. He acknowledge the fact of the challenges affecting the university and begun working on each one of them. Under his leadership, the college begun to rebuild a national academic staff which was willing to face the challenges and rebuild the university, among them were Esther Mombo, the current Deputy Vice chancellor of Academic affairs, and Prof. Joseph Galgalo the current Vice Chancellor. These two are the first PhD holders who did not leave after three months which was the practice of the university.

On the land issue, the college was able to purchase the extra fourteen acres of land to make it the required fifty. On diversification, the college put in place mechanisms to start the a business faculty by preparing a curriculum and admitting its first students in 2003, the same year the college celebrated one hundred years of faithful ministry. By 2004 when Professor Nguru was leaving St. Paul’s was on the way to accreditation. He was succeeded by Dr. Timothy Wachira under whose leadership the college was accredited three years later on 14\(^{th}\) September 2007. After this long process, St. Paul’s was chartered as a private ecumenical Christian university. The faculty of theology has remained the mother of all faculties and providing a base on which to grow.

Since this is a theological handbook of theological education, it is important to revisit the issue of a relevant curriculum which remains a challenge for most theological schools in Africa. At the start of this millennium and the in the process of accreditation the issues of the curriculum were revisited through the process of engendering theological education. This included a revision of the philosophy, theoretical framework and content of the curriculum, and its methods of delivery, which had turned dialogical in engaging people in dialogue with one another, their environment, context, faith, and praxis and in

\(^{13}\) Cited in Onyango, *For God and Humanity*, 55.

\(^{14}\) Onyango, *For God and Humanity*, 56.
discerning what was normative and binding, and what was contextual and relative. Engendering theological education challenged the traditional assumptions of what are normative – western theological model, African patriarchy, and male-centred theology, and proposed alternatives that were truly inclusive, affirming, relevant and fruitful for a meaningful life of faith. Engendering theological education recognised that theory did not always reflect any form of praxis and that constructive criticism and reflective interrogation were essential in theological inquiry and learning. Since theory often was abstracted from concrete contextual situations, true objectivity was not always definite. Therefore engendered theological education stressed contextuality, dialogue, openness, grace and willingness to learn and to discern God’s will and truth in every context. As a result of engendering theological education, theology was to be studied by all the people of God. The result of this was to see the growth of numbers in the people interested in the study of theology especially women and a few men for whom the structures of the church had closed out.

Through the engendering of theological education and in developing relevant and contextual programs, the faculty of theology spearheaded two unique programs such as a post graduate Diploma and master’s degree in Islam and Christian Muslim relations prepared in conjunction with project for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA). A Post graduate Diploma and masters degree in pastoral Care and HIV and AIDS, at a time when HIV and AIDS was a taboo topic St. Paul’s offered space for people to engage without fear. These programs brought to light issues that would not be raised easily in theological circles such as dialogue in a context of pluralism and suspicion of each other in religious circles. The programs also raised the questions of the role and place of women in a patriarchal church and society.

Conclusion

The story of St. Paul’s is a story of theological Education, its growth in a colonial context and how it develops in a changing context. The challenges of theological education in St. Paul’s are a story of many institutions that have been at the helm of offering theological Education. There is much more that has to be documented on theological Education in Kenya leave alone Africa.

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\[15\] The program was prepared by Dr. John Chesworth and Rev. Dr. Johnson Mbillah.

\[16\] The course was first prepared in partnership with MAP international, Oxford Centre of Mission Studies (OCMS) of united Kingdom and was offered through distance learning with the University of Wales. Today the program is accredited with the commission of Higher Education in Kenya.

Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa
CASE STUDY ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND THE AFRICAN INLAND CHURCH IN KENYA

Peter M. Mumo

Introduction

Christianity was introduced in Kenya by different western missionaries. Among the leading missionary societies were: Church Missionary Society (CMS) Mill Hill Mission (M.G.M) Holy Ghost Mission (H.G.M.), Africa Inland Mission (A.I.M), Church of Scotland Mission (C.S.M) and United Methodist Society (U.M.S). This article focuses on Africa Inland Church. It is argued that unlike other missionary societies which had mother Churches in Europe or America, A.I.M was interdenominational hence from the beginning there was need to develop its own theology and tradition. A.I.M was supported by individual western missionaries who belonged to different denominations but who shared similar goals. A.I.C was shaped to what it is today by a very strong group of conservative American and British evangelicals and biblically oriented pastors. Due to this historical background it evolved into a biblicist and Evangelical Church.

A.I.C has been in existence for 117 years, out of which theological education has been offered in continuity for 84 years. This article is a product of a research which was conducted on Theological Education in the Africa Inland Church Kenya.

The aims of the article are to:
1. Examine A.I.C.’s origins, expansion and challenges encountered.
2. Investigate the origins and growth of theological education in A.I.C Kenya.
3. Analyze the contribution of theological education to the growth and expansion of A.I.C in Kenya.

Origins of A.I.C Kenya

A.I.C Kenya traces its origins from Africa Inland Mission (A.I.M) which was started by Philadelphia Missionary Council. The latter was an inter-denominational society sponsored by Peter Cameron Scott to begin a chain of mission stations in East Africa in 1895. A.I.M was tailored to evangelize the inland or interior of Africa hence the name Africa Inland Mission.

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2 In Europe and North America in the nineteenth century there developed two schools of thought. The first school was composed of liberals who believed that scientific methods of inquiry could be used to acquire religious knowledge. The second school was made up of fundamentalists who opposed secularization and the application of scientific methods of enquiry in Christianity. The A.I.M missionaries belonged to the second school of thought hence aimed at preserving Christianity from pollution from secularization and liberal ideas. They had very strict moral rules.
3 A.I.C has a very strict belief in the verbal infallibility of the Bible.
By August 1895, Scott had brought together six missionaries who were ready to pioneer work for A.I.M. One of the six missionaries was Scott’s Sister. In London, the group of missionaries swelled by inclusion of another missionary. As they set out to Kenya, Peter Scott was the undisputed leader of the group. They arrived in Mombasa on 17th October 1895 and were received by the British Consul to Zanzibar.

On arrival at Mombasa the eight A.I.M missionaries found out that the coastal region had been occupied by the Church missionary society, the German Lutheran mission and the Methodist mission. Scott’s intention was to go to the interior of Africa as the name of his mission implied. The five male missionaries in the group started the trek to the inland temporarily leaving the three ladies in Mombasa. The torturous one month trek landed them in Nzaui in Machakos District on 12th December 1895 which they considered a suitable site for setting up of A.I.M’s first mission station. They were granted permission by Machakos District Commissioner to acquire land and erect buildings. As the other missionaries embarked on erecting a house, Scott travelled to Mombasa and brought the ladies left there.

**Expansion and Challenges**

After Nzaui mission station was set up it was followed by other two stations namely Sakai and Kilungu. By July 1896 the original seven missionaries were joined by other eight missionaries. They were divided into the three mission stations. In October 1896, Scott opened a fourth mission station at Kangundo. To Scott Kangundo was better than the first three mission stations. He wrote in his diary, “We found the place exceeded our expectations as it is perhaps the most fertile spot we have seen from the coast up.” Due to the favorable climate and geographical location Kangundo was made the headquarters of A.I.C operations in Africa. Scott intended to travel to U.S.A. for further consultations on expansion and consideration of A.I.M work with Philadelphia missionary council but this was not to be because he died on 4th December, 1896 at the age of twenty nine years.

The unexpected death of Scott and a succession of losses and disasters that followed moved A.I.M. to the verge of collapse. The death of Scott was not the only blow A.I.M was to suffer, after it A.I.M experienced a series of tribulations and misfortunes. The major problem was health related. Due to ill-health some A.I.M. missionaries were forced to leave the field. K. Richardson sums up the problems besetting A.I.M at the time as follows:

…one after another several of its valuable workers passed away … others had to give up for health reasons. Still others including the remaining members of the Scott family left to serve Africa in other ways.  

There was a time when William Bengert was the sole A.I.M missionary operating in the Inland of Africa. He chiefly operated at the Kangundo station.

The tribulations increased when rain failed in the whole of Ukambani followed by famine. Akamba people died in large numbers due to starvation. As if this was not enough, there was an outbreak of smallpox which claimed many lives. Akamba’s livestock died due to lack of pastures, water and an outbreak of rinderpest. During this period lack of personnel and funds rendered A.I.M missionary work ineffective in dealing with the problem of human suffering.

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9 C.S. Miller, *Peter Cameron Scott*, 46.
The tribulations that A.I.M. went through did not disintegrate it but instead awakened it to start afresh and move forward. In 1898 Charles Hurlburt was unanimously appointed General Secretary of A.I.M to replace Peter Cameron Scott. The penetration, spread and growth of A.I.M. in Kenya and other African countries were done under the stewardship of Hurlburt. Together with a myriad of other able missionaries and a battalion of African supporters Hurlburt removed A.I.M from the sad state of hopelessness to become one of the biggest mission societies in Africa. He moved its headquarters from Kangundo to Kijabe in 1903.

**Historical Growth of Theological Education in A.I.C. Kenya**

The origins of Biblical and theological education in A.I.C can be traced from the founder of A.I.M Peter Scott who having lived in U.S.A had seen how evangelization was facilitated by armies of trained evangelists and catechists. On his arrival in Kenya he instantly thought of training Africans who would be used to spread Christianity to all corners of East Africa and beyond. His conviction on theological training is expressed by C.S. Miller as follows:

"From the position of the many villages, hidden away in the cliffs of the hills, five to seven thousand feet high, it became clear to him that the evangelization of that area must be done by Africans themselves, and he longed for the day when such workers would be found among the Wakamba."

He was convinced that he and his missionary colleagues could not perform the gigantic task ahead of them and that only Akamba trained evangelists could do it. The period from 1895, when A.I.M ventured into Kenya, up to 1928, when the first Bible school was started can be called the pioneering period when A.I.M missionaries were chiefly concerned with evangelization and initiation of mission stations. The first regions in Kenya to receive A.I.M were Ukambani, Central province, Rift valley province and the region around Lake Victoria.

A booklet produced by W.F. Moffat memorial Bible Training Institute states the following on Biblical training.

"From the first, the missionaries and native Christians of Africa Inland Mission recognised the need of Bible trained leaders for the increasing number of Churches. Bible training classes were held on some stations to meet the need temporarily."

According to E. Birech a former Bishop of A.I.C Kenya, Bible training classes were conducted by the missionaries at the mission stations. When A.I.M began its work in Kenya there were no secular schools and Bible schools in operation. The A.I.M missionaries were in need of Africans who could assist them in the work of evangelization and consolidation of the sprouting local Churches.

The training that was accorded Africans at A.I.M mission stations was informal, general, unsystematic, inadequate and sporadic. A.I.M missionaries all along were aware that a formally trained African ministry would greatly transform their work in Kenya and beyond. Although some of A.I.M. missionaries were not highly educated and adequately trained they recognized the potential that lay in any trained ministry. A

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12 C.S. Miller, *Peter Cameron Scott*, 43.
16 Mumo, “A Study of Theological Education”, 98.
trained ministry was urgently needed to evangelize and articulate the emerging A.I.M theology. Some Bible Schools and Institutes in U.S.A stimulated A.I.M missionaries to initiate theological education in Kenya. One such school was Moody Bible Institute which was established in U.S.A in 1886 by D.L. Moody to train Church Ministers.

A.I.M missionaries decided to start the first Bible school for training Christian workers in 1918. Mr. and Mrs. Wight were selected and given the responsibility of working out the modalities of launching the Bible school. Unfortunately Mr. Wight became sick and died. This delayed the project for ten years.

In 1928 John Guilding launched Ukamba Bible School at Mumbuni mission station. It was intended to train Christian workers for the whole of Ukambani. The first three students who joined the Bible School were old men who were in-charge of local Churches. Among the first students some were completely illiterate. For example, when Samuel Soo joined it he spent a whole term learning how to read and write. The training was conducted in Kikamba language.

In 1969, Ukamba Bible School was transformed into Ukamba Bible Institute. In 1987, Ukamba Bible Institute was upgraded to Ukamba Bible College. English became the medium of instruction. Admission to the college is open to holders of ordinary certificate of education. It admits students from all parts of Kenya.

The second theological institution to be founded was Moffat Bible Institute in 1929 in Kijabe on the escarpments of the Great Rift Valley. It was established to serve the kikuyu and maasai communities. It started with four students. Initially it started a two year programme conducted in kikuyu. Shortly thereafter it changed into a three year programme conducted in Kiswahili.

During the 1930s a great debate on ordination arose. The missionaries had realized that there was a need for ordained ministers to provide services such as baptism, provision of Eucharist and presiding over marriage ceremonies. At the time although a few Africans had been trained none had been ordained. The ordained ministers within the ranks of A.I.M missionaries had been ordained by their mother Churches in U.S.A. The non-ordained A.I.M missionaries argued that they had more experience and education than African pastors hence they deserved to be ordained. The root cause of this argument was the superiority attitude some A.I.M missionaries had. Among the missionaries even in the other mission societies there was a feeling that African trained pastors were not equal with the missionaries. Historically when the missionaries came to Africa they had the misconception that it would take a long time to educate Africans to reach the status of the white missionaries. The missionaries were baffled when they found African pastors performing their duties without problems.

In 1943 an advanced pastoral training course of two years was initiated in Kijabe. Three students enrolled and were ordained in 1945. The three pastors were Benjamin Watuma, S.M. Nzioki and S.M. Soo. The pastors’ course continued up to 1969 when it was discontinued. The training in the theological institutions was extended from three years to four years.

In 1954 two more vernacular Bible schools were born. They were Kapsabet and Ogada Bible schools. Kapsabet Bible School was launched by R. Anderson to train Kalenjins through the Kalenjin language.

17 Mumo, “A Study of Theological Education”, 98.
20 Mumo, “A Study of Theological Education”, 103.
When it opened eleven elderly students enrolled as the first students. The students were drawn from the expansive Rift Valley Province where A.I.M had attracted a considerable following. Kapsabet Bible School did an outstanding job in training pastors for the Kalenjin area.

In 1969 Kapsabet Bible School was elevated into a Bible Institute. The elevation was necessary because in Kalenjin area and beyond there was need to provide a very high quality training to men and women whom God had chosen to serve as pastors and Christian workers.

In 1972 the status of Kapsabet Bible Institute was enhanced by the sudden closure of Ogada Bible School. In 1986 Kapsabet Bible Institute was converted into a Bible college. Since then it began to admit form four leavers. The training took four years to complete. Kapsabet Bible College is the major college serving all A.I.C’s regions in the Rift Valley, Nyanza and western provinces of Kenya. It has relatively accomplished the task of training man power for the area. It is ideally positioned to serve the area.

As alluded above Ogada Bible School was founded in 1954 to provide Biblical education in Luo language to inhabitants of Nyanza province. Unlike the other three training institutions already discussed Ogada Bible School from the beginning was not a success story. From its infancy up to the time of its collapse, it was characterized by low student in-takes, unsupportive environment and lack of a committed missionary teacher. Without adequate students the Bible school became economically unviable. In 1972 the Ogada Bible school closed, the two remaining A.I. M missionaries left and the remaining eight students were transferred to Kapsabet Bible Institute.

The four region-based Bible schools/institutes/colleges discussed above supplied A.I.M with evangelists and low level trained pastors. Due to the low educational qualifications of the students who were admitted in the institutions it was not possible to offer advanced theological education. The objective of creating the four Bible schools was to train evangelists who would assist the missionaries in evangelization. The Bible schools played a leading role in producing personnel for the ever increasing local churches. Historical developments in Kenya in the 1950s and early 1960s, pressurized A.I.M to start thinking of high level training for Church ministers. There were a few Kenyans who managed to go abroad for high level theological training but the low numbers of pastors who were produced could not meet the existing need. Furthermore it was expensive to train Kenyan Church ministers abroad. After 1945 the number of Kenyans with high secular education had greatly increased. African pastors were only in-charge of low levels of Church administration. During the 1950s and especially during the period of Mau Mau, it became abundantly clear that Kenyans were determined to be independent. The impetus of independence to a large extent led to the need of a theological college. A.I.M missionaries just like other missionaries operating in Kenya realized that time had come to train African personnel that were adequately equipped to take over the leadership of the Church in the event of their departure. The amazing spread of A.I.M. in Kenya led to the creation of higher institution of theological education.

Scott Theological College was started in 1962 in Machakos. Machakos was chosen because the first mission station was started there and Ukambani had the highest number of Bible trained ministers and more were interested in going for further studies. The name given to the new college was not difficult to come by. It was named in fond memory of Peter Scott the founder of A.I.M who had died and was buried in Nzaui in Machakos.

Scott Theological College was started with a staff of four teachers and sixteen students. It was started with two levels: there was a post-secondary class for students with a minimum of twelve years of education.

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30 Mumo, “A Study of Theological Education”, 125.
31 Mumo, “A Study of Theological Education”, 125.
and a post-primary class for those of standard eight education. Later it stopped admitting standard eight leavers and concentrated on admitting form two and four leavers. Since the level of secular education of students admitted had improved the first graduates of Scott Theological College were able to do a little better than those from Bible schools. Among the first students of Scott were Stanley Mbiti, Edward Nthiwa, Joseph Odongo, David Kirui and Jonathan Ngeno. Some of the first teachers of Scott were N. Davis and R. Woof.

The kind of training offered at Scott College was a three year course which was followed by a year’s ordination course. The medium of instruction was English. From the time of its inception Scott Theological College has gone through various up-ward adjustments. From 1972 it began to admit students with a form four certificate and especially those with a division three and above. In 1979 Scott was given full accreditation by the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA). It became the first post-secondary theological college in Africa to be accredited by ACTEA. In 1986 Scott’s Degree programme was fully accredited by ACTEA. It began to offer Bachelor of Theology degree. The accreditation of Scott made A.I.C to be in a position to offer the highest and especially university level theological training. In 2001 Scott was awarded a charter by the Commission for Higher Education as a fully pledged university. Students who join Scott are drawn from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Sudan and Canada.

A.I.C.’s institutions of Biblical and theological education have greatly multiplied and especially since 1962 when Scott Theological College was launched. Looking at the proliferation of Bible schools, institutes and colleges a trend emerges where each region of A.I.C is striving to have its own training institution. Some of the institutions have been launched with poor planning, inadequate personnel and facilities. Some of the institutions include: Mulango Bible Institute 1962, Nduluku Bible Institute 1973, Pwani Bible Institute 1976, Narok Bible College 1975, Nzaui Bible School 1980, Makueni Bible School 1986, Mutitu Andei Bible School 1988, Masinga Bible School 1989, Baringo Bible Institute 1990.

Notwithstanding efforts to have a well educated, highly trained and adequately equipped Church ministry the result has been that – with the use of traditional western methods of training – only a limited number of Church ministers have so far been trained. In 1972, A.I.C Kenya introduced Theological Education by Extension (TEE). Initially the programme was a success but from 1980s the enrolment began to drop. In 1990, the name of the programme changed from TEE to Biblical Education Extension (BEE). In the rural areas many BEE students have been unable to purchase some of the recommended books due to lack of money. The lack of dedicated and committed teachers has prevented BEE from being introduced in many local Churches.


In 1985, A.I.C. launched A.I.C missionary college with the intention of training Kenyan missionaries. The first class of eleven students finished a 15 months course and graduated in April 1987. The graduates are sent out to do missionary work in unevangelised parts of Kenya and East Africa.

32 Mumo, “A Study of Theological Education”, 125.
33 Mumo, “A Study of Theological Education”, 125.
34 Mumo, “A Study of Theological Education”, 125.
35 Mumo, “A Study of Theological Education”, 125.
**Contribution of Theological Education to the Growth of A.I.C Kenya**

Since the introduction of theological education in A.I.C Kenya, the Church has recorded tremendous milestones in all areas of its existence. For example, by 1971 A.I.C had a membership of 101,634.\(^{37}\) According to data collected by A.I.C head office in 1993 A.I.C membership had reached 2.4 million.\(^{38}\) The phenomenal growth A.I.C has recorded is reflected in the increase of local Churches. In 1971, A.I.C had less than one thousand local Churches while in 1993 the number of local Churches had grown to over four thousand.

Training of personnel has also witnessed tremendous growth. In 1971, there were 67 ordained pastors, 167 licensed pastors and 351 lay preachers. In 1993 A.I.C had trained 2,800 pastors out of whom 890 had been ordained. In view of the fact that training of personnel is very central in the development of any institution, A.I.C has founded several theological and Bible training institutions. In 1971, A.I.C had only six institutions which were actively training Church ministers. In 1993, the number of training institutions had increased to a total of twenty one. Below is a table showing student enrolment in various A.I.C Theological and Bible training institutions in 1994.\(^{39}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scott Theological College</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukamba Bible College</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moffat College of Bible</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapsabet Bible College</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulango Bible Institute</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndulukku Bible Institute</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pwani Bible Institute</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makuui Bible School</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masinga Bible School</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutito Andei Bible School</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nzaui Bible School</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethel Bible School for Sisters</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.I.C missionary College</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitolwet Training Centre</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diguuna Disciples Training Centre</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kao La Amani Training Centre</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravine Training Centre</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>695</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>1130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is assumed that the presence of so many Bible training institutions has influenced the practice of Christianity among A.I.C members.

Since theological education was introduced great emphasis has been placed on the Bible. Through the assistance of many trained pastors A.I.C Christians have been enlightened on the contents of Bible and its application in their daily lives. In many Christian homes especially among A.I.C members the Bible and hymn book are a must.

Theological education has been extended to a cross section of the A.I.C Kenya through the introduction of Biblical Education by Extension and lay training centres. Ordinary members of the Church have been given an opportunity to understand Christianity by being encouraged to join B.E.E. classes. BEE study materials have given Christians an opportunity to go through a systematic study. This has contributed in

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\(^{37}\) Mumo, “A Study of Theological Education”, 72.

\(^{38}\) Mumo, “A Study of Theological Education”, 72.


*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
deepening their understanding of Christianity. Church elders, through the lay training centres have been empowered with knowledge and skills of managing the affairs of the Church.

A.I.C’s theological education has contributed in the evangelization of Kenya and Africa. Ukamba Bible College and the other vernacular Bible schools contributed immensely in spreading Christianity in Kenya. Having been trained in their own mother tongues and equipped with Bibles written in the own languages, the pastors made a very significant contribution in spreading A.I.C to many parts of the country. By 1971 many parts of Kenya had been evangelized. The trained evangelists accompanied the A.I.M missionaries to spread Christianity to many parts of Kenya. After the missionaries were relieved of minding the local Churches which were under the able leadership of the trained African pastors, they managed to move outside Kenya. They spread Christianity in Uganda, Tanzania, Congo, Sudan and Central Africa Republic. A.I.M acquired clusters of mission stations in the above named countries. Commenting on what A.I.M achieved Mumo observes “From a humble beginning of having four mission stations in Ukambani in 1896 A.I.M had expanded by 1951 to cover the Eastern African region.”40 A.I.M grew into a giant organization. It celebrated its phenomenal growth in 1955 when it observed its sixtieth anniversary.

Another contribution A.I.C’s theological education has made is in training personnel for other Church denominations in Kenya. Although A.I.C’s theological education is tailored for A.I.C members training opportunities have been extended to other Churches in Kenya such as Church of the Province of Kenya, Redeemed Church, African Brotherhood Church among many others.

Due to laying strong foundation in theological education most of the teachers in the local theological colleges are Kenyans. Many students who were trained in Scott Theological College have pursued further studies and are now teaching in various theological colleges in Kenya and beyond.

Since A.I.C had no mother Church in Europe, through its theological education, it has managed to evolve its own unique identity. Although the training in the theological education was initially dominated by evangelicals from America, through the new crop of African theologians it has the opportunity of shedding off the western domination and embracing an African identity.

Prospects and Challenges of Theological Education in A.I.C Kenya

Since 1928 A.I.C has invested so much in theological education. The infrastructure is already in place. What the Church needs is to address itself to the effectiveness of the education provided. There is need to carry out adjustments in various levels of theological education. The continued relevance and usefulness of theological education will depend on how A.I.C addresses itself to the following issues:

Curriculum

Though the curricula are well formulated what should be avoided at all costs is indoctrination. The curriculum will be useful when it will ask the questions that disturb society. For example, a pastor who is to work in an arid area should be skilled in how to assist his parishioners to get water. The curricula should be rooted in African culture. The overdependence on western culture should be reduced. A.I.C African theologians should be more involved in the development of the curricula and writing of relevant literature. The curricula should equip pastors with innovative skills so that when they are deployed as teachers, accountants of the Church, administrators and counselors they can be productive.

Students

The number of Kenyans who have received secular education has greatly increased. The quality of students to be provided with theological education should be considered seriously. The colleges that have been

40 Mumo, “A Study of Theological Education”, 65.
training standard eight leavers and secondary school drop-outs should be upgraded to admit form four leavers with at least C. Tools of critical inquiry can be best utilized by those who have acquired at least form four level of education.

Financial Support
The A.I.M missionaries and other donors of financial and personnel support for A.I.C’s theological education is on the decline. The time has come for theological education to be supported by indigenous Kenyans. Theological education requires adequate financial support to be well equipped with facilities and personnel. The Church should adopt reliable sources of supporting theological education. A study done in Kapsabet Bible College showed that local support can be generated to support theological education.41

Pastors’ Salaries
A.I.C pastors are poorly paid. Those who have been trained have found the salaries paid to be below survival limits.42 Some Pastors have reacted by moving to other professions such as teaching, farming, business or have defected to other denominations. When pastors’ salaries are too low, the profession becomes unattractive hence it is difficult to attract the very best men and women to train as pastors.

Women
The role of women in A.I.C theological education is not clear. Other denominations have evaluated or are still evaluating the position of women in theological education. Women in A.I.C go through the same training as men but are prohibited from leading local Churches. Some of the problems experienced in A.I.C, for instance shortage of pastors, can be solved if women are given more responsibilities such as being in-charge of local Churches.

The unplanned mushrooming of Bible colleges some of which lack basic facilities should be curbed. The Church should increase the number of pastors with degree certificates so as to enhance theological articulation in the Church. Some of the Bible colleges should be upgraded to degree status.

Since 1928 A.I.C has been offering theological education to its own personnel, there is need to embrace dialogue and cooperate with other Christian denominations in theological education.

Conclusion
When A.I.M arrived in Kenya it was beset by a myriad of challenges. The A.I.M missionaries were visionary and wanted to see Christianity spread into the interior of Africa. The need for theological education was noted immediately the missionaries set foot in Kenya. In 1928 Ukamba Bible College was started in Machakos. It was followed by a chain of other bible schools in various regions of Kenya. The missionaries decided to train Africans in their own vernacular languages. This produced instant results. African pastors trained in their mother tongues and equipped with bibles translated in their languages were able to spread Christianity deep into African villages.

In 1962 Scott theological College was founded to equip African pastors with higher theological education. This ended up producing the leaders the Church urgently needed to root Christianity in the African environment. Theological education has impacted positively on A.I.C members. The Church’s membership has greatly increased.

42 Mumo, “A Study of Theological Education”, 89.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Bibliography


HIGHER EDUCATION AS MISSION: THE CASE OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Stephen Noll

Introduction

In 1997, the Anglican Church of Uganda took the bold step of converting its premier theological institution, Bishop Tucker Theological College in Mukono, into Uganda Christian University. Bishop Tucker College had a long and venerable history, having been founded in 1913, boasting one of the finest central buildings in Uganda (built from 1920-1925) and being the alma mater of most of the Anglican bishops in Uganda and also in Rwanda, Burundi and Congo. In light of this history, one of the founding intentions was for UCU to be “an authentically Christian university, not only in name but in substance.” Another motive was to preserve the heritage of Bishop Tucker College and its ministerial training program. This article is a brief reflection on the progress in the development of UCU.

Steps in Establishing the Christian Character of the University

Three main ways of establishing and preserving the Christian identity of the University can be summarized as follows: the first was to formulate a theological basis, which is called the “Instruments of Identity”. This basis has three main sections: a Rule of Faith, a Rule of Life, and a Rule of Prayer. The responsibility of endorsing and upholding the Instruments was given to the House of Bishops of the Church of Uganda as the proprietors of the University. Originally, the intention was to incorporate them into the University Charter, following the example of Daystar University in Kenya. This idea proved problematic; instead UCU refers to the Instruments at key points in the Charter. This has given the University the leverage to resist any secularizing regulation from Government or external funders.

Thus, whenever the University hires new faculty or senior staff members, the routine has been to conduct a personal interview with regard to their Christian faith and practice and ask if they can affirm the Instruments ex animo. These Instruments are not specifically Anglican but rather express “mere Christianity” as understood by African Evangelicals; in fact, many faculty members at UCU are Pentecostals and some are Roman Catholics. Nevertheless, the Instruments are included in the official prospectus and are expected to be “publicly recognized,” by the students, part-time and visiting faculty. This two-tier level of commitment has had advantages. It has allowed the University to bring in some excellent faculty members who are not hostile to Christianity but who could not affirm the full-strength confession; this included a Mormon professor who came to us via the Fulbright program. At the same time, these part-time and visiting lecturers have no voice in the governing affairs of the University. As for the students, Daystar University’s policy of requiring each applicant to give a faith testimony as grounds for admission was rejected on grounds that it would open the door for hypocrisy on the one hand and close the door for evangelism on the other. Under these guidelines, the University has admitted Muslims and other non-Christian students.

2 There was a lengthy discussion about a Seventh Day Adventist candidate and it was decided he could join if he were prepared to teach necessary classes on Saturdays.
3 Muslim students must take the religious core courses, including “Forming a Christian Worldview,” on the understanding that they will be graded according to their knowledge of, not commitment. We have never had a major problem with this position.
Secondly, UCU started offering core courses in the faith. The idea of core courses was an innovation in the British/Ugandan curriculum. UCU developed eight “Foundation Studies” courses. Four were explicitly Christian in the areas of Bible, Christian worldview and ethics. The other four were more general, covering writing and study skills, computing skills, basic mathematics, and a course in Health and Wholeness (which does have a religious component). These courses are required of all students in the University, not just the theologians. There was some resistance at first – “why do we have to take these courses outside our subject area?” – but over time they have been accepted by all and appreciated by many. Because these courses are taught through lectures and small groups, the university had to develop a cadre of tutors, some of whom come from the theology faculty, many of whom are UCU graduates.

Thirdly, there was a conviction that the University needed a dynamic chaplaincy program in order to breathe life into the skeletal structure of a Christian university. By God’s providence, Rev. Dr. John Senyonyi joined the faculty. Senyonyi had been working for twelve years at African Evangelistic Enterprise, which was founded by Bishop Festo Kivengere. To top it off, Senyonyi has a Ph.D. in statistical mathematics! Thus, he provided just the dynamism that was needed for the university to see the numbers in the chapel grow from one hundred to a thousand. UCU worship is a freestyle Anglican prayer service, with one mission week per semester dedicated respectively to evangelism, a call to mission and ministry, and leadership.4 Senyonyi was later succeeded by several other talented pastors, and he succeeded Prof. Stephen Noll as the university’s second Vice Chancellor in 2010.

These steps have worked together to give UCU a good start to meet the vision of an authentically Christian university. UCU has a dual character of “Christian” and “university”, thus reflecting the motto “Alpha and Omega: God the First and the Last” and its vision to be “A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa.” A Christian university is not merely a Bible school but an institution which looks to God as the source and end of all wisdom.

Problems along the Way

Despite considerable success in establishing the University as a Christian institution, there have been and continue to be major obstacles.

The first obstacle – attracting many nominal students – resulted from success. In 2004, UCU obtained the first Charter in Uganda under the Government’s enabling legislation (2001). After that date, the University became increasingly known in what is still a rather close-knit society. The law degree program, for instance, has proved very popular (what else is new!), as it was the first private degree program approved by the Uganda Law Society. As a result, the demand for entry has been increasing year by year. The growing reputation has allowed UCU’s programs to be filled and to be more selective in admissions (taking only one in five applicants in law). Such popularity means that some students are coming to UCU not because of its Christian character but because of its status. As noted above, UCU requires its students to “publicly recognize” our identity. One can guess that about one-third of the students are strongly committed Christians, one-third are practicing church-goers, and another third nominal, with a small number of Muslims.

One symptom of this luxury of riches in student numbers appears in worship. There are now about one thousand students at the major worship services on Tuesday, Thursday and even more on Sunday. That sounds wonderful, but it also means there are several thousand students who are NOT present. Another symptom of nominalism shows up in regular disciplinary cases of early pregnancy and drunkenness, especially among the majority who reside outside the campus. Of less moral weight but significant

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4 UCU runs a year-round calendar in which students attend two out of three semesters.
nonetheless has been the attempt to maintain dress standards. Many students (and parents) appreciate “smart” dressing, but others keep pushing the limit of “decency.”

A second obstacle has come in the area of pedagogy. There are two sides to this coin. To begin with, Uganda has been trapped in rigid models of teaching dating from colonial days. Many faculty members simply read from their notes, with the general goal of the courses being to prepare for exams. A number of seminars with faculty were conducted to address matters of pedagogy. There has been some progress but it has proved hard to break the mold. Secondly, almost none of the faculty has studied in a Christian university and hence they have little idea what it means to “integrate faith and learning.” In 2005 UCU received a grant for “Equipping Faculty to Integrate Faith and Teaching.” Under this program a number of seminars were held on how lecturers might change their programs so that they are informed by the Christian worldview. The presence of visiting faculty from Christian colleges has also provided encouragement and good models of teaching. Dr. Senyonyi has continued the goal of making faith integration an ongoing priority, but there is still much work to be done.

One interesting sidelong has been the role of the US Fulbright Scholar program. The US Embassy in Uganda has been impressed with the degree of personal support these visiting Fulbright faculty have been getting on the campus, and hence they have recommended a steady stream of Fulbright Scholars from US universities. Some are Christians, some not. However, the overall impact has been quite salutary. One professor from Bethel University in Minnesota has worked with UCU for ten years to establish a bachelor’s and master’s degree in nursing, which is among the first and best in the country.

Integrating the Theology Faculty into the Wider University Community

One of the trickiest challenges has been to integrate the theological staff and program into the wider university. Part of this problem is historical. As the theological college predated the University, there has been a feeling of loss and even resentment, not only among the theology lecturers and students but among the bishops. They have repeatedly worried that the University is swallowing up the theology program and that the “secular” students are compromising the theological students.

Steps have been taken to try to minimize this sense of loss. First, UCU has preserved the former name of “Bishop Tucker Theological College” by naming its faculty the “Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology.” Secondly, the faculty has now reoccupied most of the the original buildings seconded when UCU started. In particular, the theology library has been kept separate with the opening of the new University Library in 2011. Prof. Noll has also donated his theological library as a special collection for postgraduate students. Another significant area was to obtain scholarships for theology students. The student fees are divided into three portions so that the University, dioceses and donors can share the cost of theological education. Most of the students are on at least partial scholarship, and their numbers have gone up, from about 120 to 180, but the goal for the faculty to be financially self-sufficient has not yet been attained.

The main Bachelor of Divinity program continues to follow a rather traditional curriculum, but the faculty did take on several programs that are not aimed at ordination. The University worked with World Vision and other Christian development agencies to offer a degree on “Child Development and Children’s Ministry” overseen from the theology faculty. Early on, the faculty staffed much of the religious core courses and the theological students took those courses; however, more recently the theologians have withdrawn on grounds that these courses are not sufficiently rigorous for theologians.

Finally, the lower-level diploma course has been transferred to regional campuses and the faculty has added master’s and doctoral-level courses. The Master of Divinity degree is aimed at graduates with

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5 Bishop Alfred Tucker was the first missionary bishop of Uganda (1891-1911).
bachelor’s degrees in other subjects; this program actually attracts more younger students than the traditional B.D. degree. A Doctor of Ministry course has been offered in conjunction with Trinity School for Ministry in the USA. Students go to the USA for four weeks of intensive courses, and the rest of the work is done at UCU or on site in Africa. In addition, UCU has begun offering a “Ph.D. by research” degree. While there is some concern whether the faculty has adequate personnel and library resources for a doctoral program, there is a need for doctoral programs in Africa, particularly in Evangelical institutions. Many fellowships, like the Langham-John Stott program, are seeking to place students in Africa. A couple of Bishop Tucker faculty did their doctorates at University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. Nairobi Evangelical School of Theology is probably the best residential option in East Africa, but it requires four full years in residence, which has been difficult for many candidates.

The integration of the theological college into the University has been a success in many ways and, as argued below, the finances involved make it a necessity. There has, however, been continued resistance, both from the Bishop Tucker faculty and the university, in seeing theology as an integral piece of a broader university curriculum. Some undergraduates complain that “the reverends” get special preference, which is partially true. The tension has showed up in the annual campaigns for Student Guild President, which often pit a theological student against a law student. There has been a feeling among the ordinands and clergy that the Bishop Tucker School should be separate from the other faculties. Part of this attitude is a practical matter; for instance, it is hard to ask four married men to share bunk beds in a room built for 20-year-old students (many theological students are married and come without their spouses). There is a case to be made for some separation as part of clergy formation. But there is also an unfortunate “we/they” attitude that seems embedded in the culture of the Church of Uganda, partly due to the holiness (balokole) tradition. This barrier of separation needs to be broken down in order to embrace theology as a vocation for the whole of God’s people.

Financing Christian Higher Education

The daunting question is how to finance the education of Christian leaders. The example of UCU constitutes both an encouragement and a challenge. In 1997, when Bishop Tucker College was only a theological institution, its operating (recurrent) budget was about $135,000; its capital budget was about the same, and much of its non-fee income came from overseas sources, such as the Anglican Church of Canada and the Episcopal Church USA. As of 2011, UCU’s operating budget is about $10 million and its capital budget about $4.5 million. Within the Church of Uganda, UCU is the goose that laid the golden egg.

What may be more striking is that the growth in the operating budget has come largely from within; about 95% comes from tuition and other fees. The largest single private donation UCU received over the decade was $100,000. From 2000-2010, the University received a number of generous five-figure ($) gifts from churches and private foundations, but nothing like the kind of donations received by comparable US institutions.

The most successful arena for financing has been scholarship aid. The University has managed to source almost 1,000 scholarships per year by the time Prof. Noll retired in 2010. That was admittedly only 10% of the total student population, but it was significant all the same. Compassion International must be praised in particular for its visionary “Leadership Development Program,” which extended the personal

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6 Since 2003, the Church of Uganda has resolved to receive no funding from those North American churches.
7 Looking at scholarships from a purely bottom-line perspective, they do not directly fund the university.
support for underprivileged and high-achieving students through the grade school years all the way through university. The LDC program has given full scholarships to over 200 students per year at UCU.

University heads frequently lose sleep over the question of how to continue funding the high cost of quality tertiary education, with Ph.D.-level faculty, high-tech labs, and costly infrastructure. This insomnia has been fully experienced by the leadership at UCU. Help has come in the form of a land asset. Hamu Mukasa, Deputy Prime Minister of the Buganda Kingdom and an early benefactor of the Church of Uganda, gave one square mile (650 acres) of undeveloped land to the theological college in 1921 separate from the 86 acres of the campus. The first CMS Warden of the College likened this land to the endowment of an English public school. Unfortunately, neither the Church nor the College properly followed up on this insight, and today about 250 acres are occupied by “bona fide occupants” a.k.a. squatters with squatters’ rights. Since his retirement in 2010, Prof. Noll has been heading up a University-owned company to develop 250 acres of clear land as a planned residential community, with the basic goal of providing an alternative income stream to the University.

Returning to the question of financing ministerial education, the Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology, despite the tensions involved in giving over its campus to the University, has benefitted greatly from the development of the University. Its faculty is paid at base rates comparable to the other staff. Its facilities have been renovated. Most of its students are on partial scholarships and “international students” from East Africa have continued to come to Mukono to study.

In fact, one might generalize from this situation: The future of stand-alone theological colleges in Africa is grim indeed. Most of the smaller theological colleges either fail or survive on a starvation budget. A couple of these institutions have moved in the same direction as Bishop Tucker and UCU. For instance St. Paul’s United Theological College in Limuru, Kenya, has now added programs and become St. Paul’s University, while retaining its theology faculty; and NEGST, which was founded as a postgraduate institution only, has now become Africa International University, with bachelor’s degrees in Theology, Psychology and Counseling and Business Administration. Other churches, have founded universities apart from their theological colleges. The Anglican Church of Tanzania has founded St. John’s University of Tanzania in Dodoma, while retaining St. Mark’s Theological College in Dar es Salaam and St. Philip’s College in Kongwa (the latter only 75 km from Dodoma). In Nigeria, Ajayi Crowther University in Oyo and the Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary in Abeokuta are both rebuilding on earlier foundations and are about 125 km from each other. The same pattern can be seen in Uganda, where the Roman Catholics founded Uganda Martyrs University in Nkozi, the site of a former secondary school, whereas their priests’ seminary remained separate in Ggaba. The pattern seems to be that stand-alone universities have difficulties establishing a strong Christian identity while stand-alone seminaries struggle financially.

Anyone who has read George Marsden will be immediately cautious about the idea of merging theological faculties with a large university, as that pattern led in the previous century to the secularization of the university and the liberalization of the theological faculties. But that need not be the case. A

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8 It was found deucedly difficult to award need-based scholarships in Africa due to the lack of concrete financial data and the complex network of the extended family. Most really poor students never make it past primary grades because the state-run schools are so inadequate.
9 Some faculties, like law, award staff “comparability pay” beyond the University basic salary.
10 www.stpaulslimuru.ac.ke.
12 www.sjut.ac.tz.
13 www.acu.ac.ng.
14 www.umu.ac.ug

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
chastened second generation of Christian colleges has learned the lesson that universities and even seminaries need to be intentional in their commitment to the Christian faith.

In 2000, UCU joined the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities as its first African affiliate. Since then, five other African universities have become CCCU affiliates, along with 68 other colleges and universities around the world. Most of the USA institutions are small liberal arts colleges, whereas many of the global south universities are large full-service universities. The US institutions are focused on their own issues, such as protection from adverse legislation in the U.S. Congress, whereas the global universities face different challenges. The CCCU’s most successful linkage has been in the form of Study Abroad programs\(^ {16}\). While most CCCU programs are independent of a Christian university, UCU has been privileged to host the Uganda Studies Program, which brings about 75 US college students per year to study and live on campus and in nearby homes. Many people in the West have stereotypes of Africa as a nest of problems, but at UCU, American students can experience a campus-like atmosphere with African students who share their faith and the desire to better themselves through education. The Uganda Studies Program finances itself while bringing in a nice income for the University.

In conclusion, financing theological education in Africa presents a daunting challenge. Christianity is spreading rapidly in Africa. Much of this is happening outside the old-line missionary churches, in Pentecostal and African Independent churches. These churches may have some Bible schools, but often they have nothing at all to train their clergy. In Uganda, Evangelicals tried to reach out to Pentecostal pastors through Kampala Evangelical School of Theology, but that project has been plagued with financial shortages.

**Partnerships**

In April 2000, UCU founded a USA-support society called Uganda Christian University Partners, with the motto “thankful for your partnership in the Gospel until now” (Philippians 1:5).\(^ {17}\) The Uganda Partners organization has proved a great agency for linking U.S. donors to Ugandan students for scholarships. It also served as the US-based applicant for the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) program of USAID, one of the few foreign aid programs that actually contributes to “bricks and mortar” projects. Over the past decade, UCU received about $2 million from ASHA toward a men’s residence hall and the University Library.

There has been another trend worth noting: almost every Christian ministry and development agency has an educational component, and a university alone is able to credential that need. Let me list several of these briefly:

- In 2000, UCU agreed to offer a diploma in health administration to students of the International Christian Medical Institute (ICMI)\(^ {18}\), a charitable society based in Western Canada. These students are usually employed hospital administrators who are upgrading their education in a modular program. In the next decade, ICMI helped build an office-classroom block on campus and a Director’s house-guest house complex. It has added a bachelor’s degree, and its students now take the UCU core courses as well as the ICMI specialized courses.

- In 2004, the University was approached by Dr. Jean Chamberlain Froese, a Canadian missionary doctor with a passion for educating Africans about issues of maternal and child health. The agreement was made to locate the “Save the Mothers” program at UCU\(^ {19}\). Since 2005, Save the Mothers has been offering an innovative modular “Master’s in Public Health Leadership” degree

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\(^ {16}\) See www.bestsemester.com.

\(^ {17}\) Similarly, Daystar US has been assisting Daystar University over the years.

\(^ {18}\) www.icmicanada.com

\(^ {19}\) www.savethemothers.org
to professionals in Uganda. As with ICMI, Save the Mothers has helped build an office classroom block and a residence for Froese and her family.20

- As UCU developed its “Mass Communications” degree, the University was approached by the “Words of Hope” radio ministry21 based in Michigan, which produces vernacular Christian programs in Uganda and Sudan. Once again, Words of Hope built an office recording studio along with classrooms for the UCU students of Mass Communication.

In addition to these standout partnerships, many retired scholars or faculty members on sabbatical leave have enjoyed a stint on campus. One Australian professor of engineering ended up helping build the University water and waste water systems. At one point the University retained two lecturers teaching the “Elements of Mathematics” core course, one with a Ph.D. in mathematics and another with a Ph.D. in physics. Throughout the past decade UCU has enjoyed short-, medium- and long-term missionaries participating in various academic and practical aspects of the University. There is clearly a potential of expertise to be tapped from professionals in the West who wish to make a difference and enjoy the Eden-like setting of the UCU campus.

Conclusion

Christian higher education is derived from Christ’s Great Commission to “make disciples of all nations.” This gives it an evangelistic imperative. Paul Scotchmer has rightly argued that Christian universities are a “mission strategy”22. The mandate to “make disciples,” taken together with the desire for higher education, which is global in scope and at times verges on idolatry, has meant that well-run universities in poorer countries can flourish, even without massive investments from the West. In Uganda, most of these private universities have a religious foundation: Anglican, Roman Catholic, Nazarene, and Seventh Day Adventist. If properly managed, these institutions can share the wealth with a theology faculty and also reach out to the wider student community. A final reason for seeing the university as the proper place for the Christian mission: God is the foundation of all truth.

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20 Dr. Chamberlain’s husband employed his journalistic skills by helping to found The UCU Standard, the only campus newspaper in Uganda.
21 http://woh.org
Introduction

Constructing a theological programme at tertiary level in Africa is a complex project that must take into account a host of factors. The School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics (SRPC) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa is a good example of a deliberate attempt to construct a theological programme that would be shaped by African realities.

The early 1980s were a time of intense socio-political conflict in South Africa. The uprising of the youth in 1976 in response to apartheid educational policies reverberated across the country and across a decade, resulting in harsher and harsher state repression. The responses of the churches were muted, confined mostly to well-intentioned declarations and the prophetic witness of a few individuals. However, while the ecclesiastical face of the church tended to reflect rather than deconstruct apartheid, there were a number of vibrant theological contestations of the apartheid state and its theological underpinnings.

The two most significant theological projects, born out of the socio-political conflict of the 1980s, were Black Theology and Contextual Theology. Both theological projects were rooted in the realities of South Africa in the 1980s, as the state became more and more repressive. A key theological resource that emerged from these theological projects was the Kairos Document. As a collaborative product of a process of engagement between black youth and socially engaged theologians in the Institute for Contextual Theology the Kairos Document brought to articulation the ‘people’s theology’ of that time (kairos).

The genius of Kairos Document was that it not only offered an incisive socio-political analysis of our time, but that it offered an equally incisive theological analysis of that moment. According to this analysis three forms of theology were discerned in the South African context. There was ‘State Theology’, which was the theological justification for apartheid, put forward by the apartheid state and the mainstream Afrikaner churches. Less obvious, but equally problematic, was what the Kairos Document called ‘Church Theology’, the theology of the majority of our churches, irrespective of their denomination. ‘Church Theology’ tended to adopt a narrow understanding of ‘the spiritual’, refusing to become involved in the political struggle for liberation, except through prayer. What the Kairos Document called the churches to was ‘Prophetic Theology’, a form of theology that recognised the systemic and structural dimensions of sin. ‘Prophetic Theology’ required the church to take sides with the poor and marginalised against the apartheid state, using a prophetic re-reading of the Bible as the basic resource.

The Kairos Document became a significant theological tool for constructing the theological programme of what is now the School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics. In the early 1980s a small theological project was started in what was then the Department of Theological Studies at the University of Natal. This theological project sought to provide forms of theological education that would equip African Christians to engage with their contexts, within a prophetic theological framework. ‘What would it mean to do theological education prophetically?’; this was the key question.

At least four factors are central to the forms of theological education that have developed within the SPRC. Prophetic theological education must be contextual, ecumenical, interfaith, and interdisciplinary.

**Contextual**

Prophetic theological education must have its starting point in the African context. Theology must serve context. Both Black Theology and Contextual Theology emphasised this point. The first dimension, then, of a contextual approach to theological education was the recognition that context was not something to be avoided but was to be embraced. At that time there was a tendency to make theological doctrine the starting point of theological education. Whether reformed, evangelical, or pentecostal, theological doctrine shaped how African theologians engaged with their contexts. A contextual approach to theological education turned this around. It was African contexts that should shape how African theologians engaged with theology. This required careful analysis of the African contexts, enabling African theologians to understand what questions the realities of their life situations asked of theology.

The second dimension of a contextual approach to theological education moves beyond a general acknowledgment of context to the advocacy of a particular social context, which is of the poor, oppressed, and marginalised. It is here that the influence of liberation theology is found in both Black Theology and Contextual Theology. While Black Theology emphasised the socio-cultural and socio-political aspects of African reality, and Contextual Theology emphasised the socio-political and socio-economic aspects of African reality, they both advocated the epistemological privilege of the poor, oppressed, and marginalised in African contexts. God had a preferential option for the poor, oppressed, and marginalised, these African theologies proclaimed. Prophetic theology was not a neutral theology; it was a theology that took sides, just as God took sides with the oppressed against the oppressors. The systemic analysis of prophetic theology made it clear that there was a structural relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, between the oppressor and the poor. Because of this relationship it was not possible for theology to be neutral. Theology must take sides, doing its work from the perspective of the poor, oppressed, and marginalised.

A key resource for doing theology in this way is the See-Judge-Act methodology, which emerged in the worker-priest movement in Belgium and was taken up in Latin America and South Africa. This methodology begins with social analysis (See), moves into theological reflection (Judge), and then advocates specific forms of action (Act). Social analysis (See) determines the reality of African contexts, specifically the realities of the poor, oppressed, and marginalised in African contexts. Taking this social reality as its starting point, the methodology moves into its second phase, in which the biblical and theological tradition are called upon to speak to this social reality, asking, ‘What is God’s perspective on this reality?’ The biblical and theological tradition are asked ‘to judge’ reality. Does reality conform to the Good News of the gospel? If it does not, the methodology then moves into its third phase (Act). Particular actions are planned that will bring about a change in context, so that the context comes into conformity with God’s project of transformation.

The See-Judge-Act cycle of praxis became central to the theological education programme of the SPRC. Social analysis became a way of life for our work, our curriculum, and an integral part of each and every module. Students were taught to do social analysis, both inside the classroom and outside the classroom among communities of the poor, oppressed, and marginalised. A bursary fund was established to ensure
that the SPRC offered access to African students from poor communities, bringing their realities into the classroom. And a series of structures were established within the SPRC to ensure that all theological students would do some of their theological work within communities of the poor, oppressed, and marginalised. Among the structures that were established to enable this were the formation of pedagogical programmes (such as the ‘Contextualisation of Theological Education’ programme) and community development centres (such as the Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research).7

As the South African changed so too did the contextual nature of our work. Shaped by the struggle against apartheid, the contextual features that were most dominant in the 1980s were race and class. But to these culture and gender were soon added.8 Remaining faithful to a commitment to the contextualisation of theological education, the SRPC now includes a focus on other features of our African contexts, including HIV, disability, masculinity, and sexuality.

In the case of each of these contextual elements of our African realities the SRPC has adopted both a ‘mainstreaming’ approach, as well as a dedicated focus. For example, in the early 1990s the School made ‘Africanisation’ a key focus, requiring every module at every level of our theological programme to engage with aspects of Africanisation. In order to mainstream African issues, questions, and conceptual frameworks we raised funds and employed a person to facilitate this. Workshops were held to help staff work through what this would mean for their particular disciplines. A similar procedure has been undertaken with respect to ‘development’ (which led to our Theology and Development programme),9 ‘gender’ (which led to our Gender and Religion programme),10 and ‘HIV’ (which led to the formation of our Collaborative for HIV and AIDS in Religion and Theology (Chart)).11 Throughout the ‘praxis’ that formed this pedagogy, academic reflection on our pedagogy was an essential component, enabling the next generation of colleagues and others outside of our context to engage with our practice. Our contextual pedagogy included, therefore, community wisdom, theological reflection, and pedagogical innovation.12

Ecumenical

Integral to our commitment to a contextual theological programme was a commitment to ecumenism, in both its traditional sense as well as a broader perspective that included other religions.

Apartheid in South Africa had been ‘successful’ in that even our churches had, scandalously, allowed themselves to be socially engineered by this sinful system. This was reflected in various aspects of the life of the church, including theological education. There was a tendency among the ‘mainline’, settler-initiated, churches to send their white ministerial candidates to (predominantly white) universities to do degrees and their black ministerial candidates to (predominantly black) seminaries to do diplomas. Among the most significant of the black seminaries was the Federal Theological Seminary.13 Established in 1963,

12 James R. Cochrane, Circles of Dignity: Community Wisdom and Theological Reflection (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).
Fedsem (as it was known) brought together Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Anglicans. After a long, painful, and contested sojourn in various places, continually harassed by the apartheid state, Fedsem eventually located itself in Pietermaritzburg in 1980. With the emergence of a theological programme at the (then) University of Natal in the mid-1980s, and a common commitment to contextual theological education, plans were put in motion to enable diploma level students at Fedsem to follow a seamless path into the Bachelor of Theology degree programme at the university.  

At the same time as these negotiations were underway, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a related ecumenical project was also gaining momentum. The contextual nature of ecumenical theology at this time, embodied in institutions like the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the Council for World Mission, provided a platform for interaction and collaboration among a range of denominations. The institutional precursors of what is now the School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics (namely, the Department of Theological Studies, the School of Theology, and the School of Religion and Theology) believed in the importance of ecumenical theological education. The struggle against apartheid had required collaboration across traditional denominational boundaries, and the theological programme at the university wanted to retain and entrench this rich theological experience. Other theological programmes in Pietermaritzburg shared vision, and so a Cluster of Theological Institutions was formed in early 1990, bringing together the Federal Theological Seminary, the theological programme of the (then) School of Theology at the university, St Joseph’s Theological Institute (Catholic), and the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa. Our libraries were electronically connected, staff and students were encouraged to learn and teach across the Cluster, and a range of other formal activities, such as worship and sport, were instituted.

Central to these ecumenical initiatives was the recognition that theological education must transcend denominational boundaries, forging a new hybrid that was contextual, ecumenical, and confessional. Unfortunately, the demise of Fedsem, which began in the early 1990s and was concluded in late 1993, left the Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Institutions (the Cluster) without one of its core constituents. But the Cluster persisted, and the School of Theology was one of its champions, calling on the churches to ‘come to Pietermaritzburg’ and join the Cluster. The Lutherans, who were a part of the Cluster from the beginning (as an integral part of the School of Theology), have now taken up a clear identity as the Lutheran Theological Institute, and they have been joined by an Anglican House of Studies, a Congregational House of Formation, and most recently by the Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary, expanding and enriching the Cluster.

While the international ecumenical project has ‘lost its way’ to some extent, settling for church representation rather than contextual relevance as its core, ecumenical (in the traditional sense) theological education remains at the core of the School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics. Staff in the theological programme are appointed because of their expertise in their disciplines, and not because of their denominations. Similarly, students are accepted into our theological programmes on the basis of their academic potential and not their denominational affiliation. The pedagogical model we have endeavoured to encourage draws on the extensive resources of contextual ecumenical theology, embodies an ecumenical ambiance in our classrooms (and across the Cluster), and continues to push the boundaries of what it means to be ‘ecumenical’. Through the Ujamaa Centre and the Centre for Constructive Theology, the ecumenical dimensions of the School are extended into work with African Independent Churches, and through this work opportunities are created for some members of these churches to come into the degree programme at

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*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
the university.\textsuperscript{16} And through the Collaborative in HIV and AIDS in Religion and Theology (Chart), ‘ecumenical’ has been extended to ‘inter-faith’.\textsuperscript{17}

Faith communities of many diverse kinds live side-by-side in the African landscape. And the contextual issues that confront ordinary Africans do not discriminate between religious affiliation. So an ecumenical and inter-faith perspective is vital for doing theology in Africa.

\section*{Interfaith}

Left to themselves, unfortunately, faith communities tend to become introverted. But contextual forces dictate a different strategy, requiring ecumenical and interfaith collaboration. The struggle against apartheid in South Africa saw people of different faiths marching together and jailed comrades of different faiths praying together. The School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics was forged in this cauldron, and we have come to treasure this legacy, even though there has been a tendency after liberation for faith communities to retreat into their respective ‘holy huddles’, focussing on the consolidation of their own faith tradition rather than contextually driven prophetic interfaith collaboration.\textsuperscript{18} Even the ecumenical commitment of the Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Institutions has come under pressure as its partner institutions have felt the effect of denominational priorities.

In the evolution of the School of Theology into a School of Religion and Theology there were a number of decisive factors. Institutionally, the merger between the University of Durban-Westville (an historically ‘Indian’ university) and the University of Natal (an historically ‘white’ university) provided a powerful impetus to merge, respectively, a religious studies programme and a theological programme. Theoretically, there were good grounds for an inter-religious university programme, as this has been the norm in most parts of Africa (and elsewhere) at the state university level. Theologically, there was the potential to engage in “a contextual interfaith praxis”.\textsuperscript{19}

It is the last of these, the theological factor that has the potential to produce a truly interreligious contextual African theological project. A contextual interfaith praxis, as the term suggests, places considerable emphasis on contextual realities. It is context that ‘calls’ forth from the different faith traditions a relevant theological praxis. What it means to be ‘Christian’ or ‘Muslim’ in Africa is shaped by how one’s faith tradition engages with a particular contextual challenge. Religion does not ‘exist’ in the abstract; it exists/lives in its embodied contextual incarnations. Indeed, it could be argued that African Christianity and African Islam are precisely this, contextually forged forms of faith, with African religion and African culture playing a significant role in the formation of these hybrid religions.\textsuperscript{20} Our School provides opportunities for exploring such theological options with students from different faith traditions, as well as research projects around common contextual issues. A good example of the latter has been the “Cartography of HIV and AIDS” project of the Collaborative in HIV and AIDS in Religion and Theology.


(Chart). This project brought together academics, activists, and people living with HIV in an interfaith and interreligious collaborative research project.\(^{21}\)

**Interdisciplinary**

Taking context seriously has required of theology some engagement with the social (and bio-medical, in the case of HIV) sciences. And while some in our School have worried about the extent to which the social sciences have taken up theological space,\(^ {22}\) there are others who insist on an even greater degree of interdisciplinary engagement.\(^ {23}\) We have recently persuaded the University of KwaZulu-Natal to establish a post in the sociology of religion, as a way of securing a rigorous interface between theology and the social sciences. And while most of us would argue that working critically from within a faith community is crucial to the African theological project within the African academy, there must be a place for the social sciences in this project. Religion is too important in Africa not to use all the interdisciplinary tools we have at our disposal to understand its significance.

Religion is integral to African realities, being deeply woven into the fabric of our cultural, social, political, and economic lives. The students who come to us from more than twenty African countries to do postgraduate studies in theology understand this, recognising that they need to become proficient in both theology and the social sciences, as adept at analysing the socio-historical dimensions of their particular contexts as they are at analysing the socio-historical dimensions of the Bible.\(^ {24}\) Whether our focus is economic development, political change, gender justice, HIV care and prevention, or the many other contextual issues facing us on our continent, religion is a key component. Similarly, when we look at how, for example, new forms of African Christianity are rising up around our continent and taking their place in the public realm alongside more familiar forms of African Christianity,\(^ {25}\) we immediately recognise how embedded they are in the cultural, social, political, and economic dimensions of our communities. As Desmond Tutu has often reminded us, religion and politics (and culture, and economics, etc.) always mix! Indeed, as he would then go on to say, “I am puzzled about which Bible people are reading when they suggest that religion and politics [and culture and economics] don’t mix”.

Because of this commitment to as full a critical reflection on our African contexts as we can muster, the most recent restructuring within the University of KwaZulu-Natal did not catch us unprepared. As our university sought to restructure existing schools into larger semi-autonomous schools, we began to caucus with our cognate disciplines in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, leading to the formation of our current School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics. Though no longer in the name, the theological project is as strong as ever, perhaps even stronger, given the capacity within our new configuration for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Theology must have a place in the African state university, for religion is just too pervasive and too important to our well-being for the theological project to be left to religious institutions with narrow confessional agendas. And while the theological programmes within African state universities should collaborate and form clusters with more confessional programmes, they should also contribute their own

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\(^{21}\) Haddad (ed), *Religion and HIV and AIDS: Charting the Terrain*.


distinctive qualities, which include an emphasis on the contextual, ecumenical, interfaith, and interdisciplinary dimensions of the theological project in Africa.

Bibliography


Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa


The birth of Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary (SMMS) and the belief that something new may be emerging out of this model arises from a long history. Since the first efforts at Healdtown in 1867, the saga of Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) theological education and clergy formation has faced a number of perennial questions – not necessarily unique to the MCSA – that have played into the shaping of SMMS:

The first is about sustainability. The journey involving Healdtown and Lesseyton, then Bollihope in Cape Town, and then the long engagement with Rhodes University and what became Federal Theological Seminary at Alice and Imbali, and the brief sojourn at John Wesley College, Kilnerton, always faced limitations in financial resources. This in turn fuelled an ongoing and sometimes losing battle to marry efficacy and economics.

A second has been the debate between the in-service supervised apprenticeship model buttressed by a distance-learning component, which has at various times formed all or part of the Methodist preparation for ordination, and the residential scholastic model, traditionally linked with a university faculty or department of Divinity.

A related question has been the struggle to balance the academic component required to develop a “learned” ministry, and the imparting and development of practical pastoral skills.

A fourth perennial question was whether theological disciplines could/should be taught in a “disinterested” way as to satisfy the criteria of secular academic institutions, or whether they could only be taught authentically in the context of a faith community demanding the spiritual disciplines and practices required for ordination. At its extremes this question explores the difference between a lofty, removed academy on one hand and a clergy “bootcamp” on the other.

A fifth tension was between denominational and ecumenical theological training. The two brave ecumenical adventures at Rhodes University and Fort Hare/Federal Theological Seminary (FTS), to which the MCSA and other denominations entrusted the future of their ministry and their financial resources for a combined total of 120 years, bears witness to a proven ecumenical commitment, but the complete demise of both of them in less than a decade also demonstrates the challenges and risks of training beyond denominational and institutional borders. 1

SMMS is both a result of, and an attempt to respond to the above concerns, but as will be seen, being faithful to some has meant compromising others. The “birthing” of a new seminary has, however, also given opportunity to think beyond past habits and assumptions into something new.

A Time for Newness

After the closure of FTS and the Rhodes Divinity Faculty, the MCSA located the rump of its residential training temporarily in the remnants of Kilnerton Training Institution outside Pretoria. This was to be the second in a three-phase programme of preparation for ordination: ‘Phase One’ located probationer

1 Federal Theological Seminary closed after many vicissitudes by decision of its Council in 1993 (see Philippe Denis & Graham Duncan, The Native School that Caused all the Trouble – A History of Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa (Cluster Publications, Pietermaritzburg, 2011). The Divinity faculty at Rhodes University was closed by university authorities after the participating churches were unable to guarantee the number of students they demanded in order to ensure viability from the University’s standpoint (Letter to the author from Rev James Massey, Methodist representative present at the meeting where this decision was announced).
ministers in Circuits in Gauteng and they travelled every week into Soweto for a two-day contextual, praxis-reflection form of training. For those two days they would receive lectures, engage in some forms of ministry, render account for their local ministry experience of the previous week and reflect together theologically. Later this programme added centres in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Pinetown. “Phase Two” was a stint of residential, mainly academic study at Kilnerton. Unfortunately not all probationer ministers were sent there and those who went stayed for only one year. After the year at Kilnerton, the rest of their probation was spent back in Circuits until they were judged ready for ordination. As always, each aspect of the training had its proponents and its nay-sayers, and none were funded well enough to break out of a hand-to-mouth existence.

In 2004, MCSA Presiding Bishop Ivan Abrahams, concerned by what he saw to as deterioration in the standards of the ministry, set up a commission to review theological education and ministerial training, chaired by Rev Dr Donald Cragg. The route the Commission chose was to first profile the kind of clergy required for 21st Century Southern Africa. This was done by engaging the question, “What would an ‘effective minister for a church in mission’ look like?” and having developed their desired profile, they followed it with the question, “What kind or training and formation would best produce such a minister?” They engaged with the current MCSA theological training community, conducted surveys of clergy and laity, toured campuses, examined what other denominations were doing, and then distilled their findings in a report presented to the MCSA Conference of 2005. The “effective minister” profile was as follows:

Effective ministers will be persons...

• Whose spiritual life has been formed and continues to be nourished by the Gospel and by the rich traditions of Christian Spirituality and the Wesleyan heritage;
• Whose personal conduct and way of life are above reproach and an example to others;
• Who have a passion to call people to Christian discipleship, to instruct them in the Faith and to build up the Church of Christ;
• Who have been trained to think theologically, to interpret and expound Scripture faithfully and to preach effectively;
• Who have been equipped to serve in any part of the diverse Southern African community and are willing to do so;
• Who work for reconciliation and the unity of the People of God;
• Who care pastorally for the needs of God’s People;
• Who can give guidance on ethical issues and are equipped to critique the policies of Government and the practices of civil society in the light of Christian teaching;
• Who respect the dignity of all people, resisting injustice and seeking to empower all people, especially the poor and marginalized, to develop to their full potential as children of God.

The central finding of the commission was that such outcomes would be better achieved by an immediate return to a full three-year, residential, “in community” training regime. It was also determined to place as much emphasis on the inculcation of the Christian disciplines of piety, worship, compassion and justice – personal and social holiness – as on academic study. Essentially, while dispersed “in-service” probationers might study successfully for graduation, the Commission believed that only in a disciplined community could they be formed for Ordination.

As to location, it chose Pietermaritzburg for various interlocking reasons: first, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) School of Religion and Theology (SoRaT) was judged to be the most aligned
with the MCSA’s theological and missional positions, second because the Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Institutions, incorporating Catholic, Evangelical, Lutheran, Congregational and Anglican training ventures of different kinds and sizes, made Pietermaritzburg, in the eyes of the Commission, the focal point of ecumenical theological inquiry in Southern Africa – certainly for the churches that had stood together during the apartheid years. Third, belonging to the Cluster would partly ameliorate the decision not to enter another ecumenical arrangement similar to FTS or Rhodes. With the scars of both closures still fresh, the MCSA was disinclined to enter any arrangement that could once more place the future of its theological training in the hands of other denominations, or of any secular institution, but its ecumenical commitment would still find some expression through the Cluster. A further reason was because a piece of land close to SoRaT was available for purchase from Epworth School.

While the 2005 Conference overwhelmingly approved the proposals of the Commission subject to the availability of funds, it was two years before there was enough clarity to begin serious work on SMMS. In September, 2007 Prof Peter Storey, a retired MCSA bishop, recently returned from nine years teaching in seminaries in the USA, was asked to head up the project. He established five “birthing teams:” Academics, Community Life, Funding, Land & Buildings and Governance & Administration, all responsible to the Planning Executive that he chaired, and they set themselves the task of designing, funding and building a new seminary within three years. This was achieved: the pioneer seminarians actually entered SMMS in January, 2009 and the new R64m campus was opened in September, 2010. One unique element in this enterprise is that SMMS is probably the only such institution anywhere in Africa built entirely with Southern African resources.

A Different Ethos

The appointment of Rev Dr Ross Olivier as first President of SMMS was a single most important signal that SMMS planned to be different from past models: he was not a product of the academy. Olivier had a fine theological mind and excellent teaching skills but he was foremost an outstanding practitioner of parish ministry and a person with a passion for the mission of the church and a clear vision about the shaping of authentic ministry. Experience as the top administrative officer in the MCSA and exceptional leadership gifts were added bonuses. It was judged that he was best qualified to advance the different concept of seminary that had emerged in the thinking of the planners, who had moved some distance from their original ideas by the time he came on board in late 2008. Instead of a denominational college linked with a secular university, (i.e. a non-ecumenical variation of the Rhodes model) SMMS was to be different: the choice of the word “seminary” indicated a shift in thinking expressed in this description of the ethos of SMMS in a report to the final Planning Executive and first Governing Council in early 2009:

It is most important to recognise that SMMS is in the business of forming Methodist ministers, for whom academic excellence and advancement form only one part. Our Governance document is clear that our primary goal is to ‘form transforming leaders for church and nation by providing the spiritual formation, academic and practical training required to develop skilled Methodist ministers of integrity, faithfulness and excellence.’ Many months of discussion have distilled a new and different emphasis symbolised by the transition from being a ‘theological college’ with the primary emphasis on academic progress, to a Seminary, with a declared emphasis on forming fully-rounded, effective and Godly ministers who are made ready not only for graduation, but most importantly, for Ordination. This does not in any way imply less academic rigour, but it does imply that academic success does not automatically qualify anyone for ordination. The most interesting and challenging

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5 SoRaT has since become part of the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics.
6 Ross Olivier died tragically at his home on 2 May, 2012 after three years as President of SMMS, just as he was about to begin a further five-year contract in this position.
test for SMMS will be how we develop all the criteria for Ordination – both ‘a love of learning and a desire for God.’ This is why the criteria for faculty in paragraph 9 of the Governance Document are different than one might expect in a purely academic institution.

The criteria referred to state that while academic qualifications and experience are “primary considerations” in appointing faculty persons, the primary consideration would be “their commitment to, and their skills and gifting for, the task outlined in the Seminary vision statement.” Thus scholarship alone was not enough; the entire faculty would need to be committed to, and engaged in spiritual formation. SMMS had decided that its undergraduates would be taught the theological disciplines, not as a “disinterested” academic exercise, but as part of the process of being formed in their commitment to the faith, the church and its mission. This meant that lectures almost inevitably needed to end by asking the question – “How does what we’ve learned assist us in becoming transforming ministers of the Gospel of Jesus?”

This leaning toward “seminary” rather than “college” impacted the way in which SMMS would relate to SoRaT, whose Head of School had earlier made it clear to church representatives that its role as institution had to be an academic one only – spiritual growth, student behaviour and morals were not matters for the School, but were seen to be the churches’ concerns. This was an appropriate position for a public university, but it also confirmed for the SMMS planners that for their purposes academic study needed to belong within – and not distinct from – the work of spiritual formation, and that therefore the bulk of the teaching would need to be undertaken by the seminary itself.

**Academic Integrity**

By the same token however, the SMMS planners were aware that without academic integrity their other efforts would be pointless. One of the reasons for the Commission set up by Bishop Abrahams was a concern for academic standards since the heyday of Rhodes and FTS and while there were significant exceptions, theological discourse in the denomination was at a low level. Ministers seemed more concerned with latest church growth techniques than with theological clarity. There was a lurch toward theological and cultural conservatism among clergy, with less evidence of the Wesleyan balance of personal and social holiness. It was crucial that SMMS that teach to an adequate level and any certification it might offer be properly recognised, and it is against this background that Olivier and his outstanding Registrar, Rowanne Marie, worked to ensure that SMMS achieved recognition from state education authorities in record time as a Private Institution of Higher Learning with authority to offer an accredited Bachelor of Theology Degree and a Diploma in Practical Ministry. The first 17 degrees and 14 diplomas were conferred in May, 2012.

The relationship with the School of Religion at UKZN finds its expression primarily at the postgraduate level with the University giving opportunity to such seminarians to enrol there while at the same time residing at the SMMS and participating in its devotional life.

The above attempts to integrate academic disciplines with the wider task of spiritual formation are symbolised by the fact that in addition to the degree or diploma they receive at Graduation, in order to take their next steps toward ordination, seminarians are required to earn a “Certificate of Completion” endorsing

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7 A phrase often used to describe the ethos of Duke University Divinity School, Durham, North Carolina, with which SMMS has a partnership covenant and where the author taught.


9 Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary Governance Document, variously revised, Paras. 9 to 9.2.
their successful completion of both the academic and spiritual formational components of their time at the seminary.

A Covenant Community

The conviction that living in community was an essential element of formation is expressed in the requirement that seminarians and staff at SMMS enter into a “Conduct Covenant” to “hold ourselves and each other to … standards of Christian conduct, and to embody truth, integrity and mutual respect in every aspect of our life together.” The Covenant’s scope covers all areas of behaviour one might expect in residential academic institutions of this nature, but differs in that adherence to its precepts is elevated to the level of a community spiritual discipline, owed not only to the institution, but to Christ: “In joyful obedience to Christ, we gratefully involve our bodies, minds and spirits in this community of discipline and love, recognising that we are at all times accountable to God, to each other and to our better selves.”

Because the majority of seminarians at SMMS are probationer ministers under the discipline of one denomination it has been relatively easy to bind seminarians to the Conduct Covenant, but it has also been embraced by the small number of United Congregational (UCCSA) trainee clergy who have joined SMMS, as well as the first private enrollees who arrived in 2011. Thus far, it has been the most helpful tool in encouraging and disciplining the 110-strong seminarian community as well as shaping faculty and staff conduct along expressly Christian lines.

Covenant Discipleship Groups

SMMS requires its 110 seminarians to worship each morning in the Chapel of Christ the Servant as part of their Covenant and each seminarian is also attached to a local congregation for Sunday worship and occasional preaching duties. The entire community, including their families, celebrates the Eucharist each Tuesday evening.

An additional spiritual resource for SMMS seminarians is that they are all required to participate in a weekly group experience based on the updated version of the Wesleyan “Class Meetings” that formed the spiritual backbone of early Methodism, known as Covenant Discipleship Groups (CDGs). Allocated according to age-groups, the CDGs are led by senior seminarians under the guidance of the seminary Chaplain. They are designed to create a “safe space” where seminarians hold each other accountable to share and find support in the areas of personal spiritual struggle and growth. The groups are also opportunities to build “holy friendships” that can endure beyond seminary, helping to overcome the insecurities, loneliness and competitiveness that are some of the unconfessed ills of ordained ministry.

SMMS Chaplain Rev Pete Grassow observes that he is constantly impressed by the seriousness and passion with which seminarians approach these groups.

Measuring Spiritual Growth

Having indicated that academic performance would be only one of a number of criteria for the progress of its seminarians, SMMS had to set about designing a way to measure growth in other key areas, making up what Ross Olivier called a “holistic, integrated, innovative and principled commitment to forming people in the mould and image of Christ:”

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10 SMMS Conduct Covenant, www.smms.ac.za. [12th June 2012].
11 Building on the Rock, Address by Rev Dr Ross Olivier at the opening and dedication of Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary, 4 September, 2010

Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa
... the only appropriate outcome for our seminarians far exceeds academic completion and a graduation certificate. Our outcomes are measured by quality of character, preparedness for service and ministry, spiritual maturity, leadership qualities, personal morality, professional integrity, social aptitude, vocational skills, and educational development... Therefore we have pioneered and implemented a collaborative, grace-filled yet wholly objective evaluation system and set of descriptors that enable us to measure not only the size of a person’s brain but also the depth of love and integrity within a person’s heart.\(^\text{12}\)

That is obviously a tall order. When Olivier made these claims, the evaluation system of which he spoke had undergone only a couple of trial years and they may be questioned as premature. Yet SMMS is at the least pioneering some new ways of measuring progress in those elusive elements that make up spiritual maturity and good character. In practice, each faculty member dealing with the seminarians is required to evaluate their growth in the seven areas of spiritual development, vocational readiness, academic progress and potential, overall maturity and attitude, interpersonal and social skills, discipline and responsibility and personal bearing and conduct. They do this by means of a “Seminarian Assessment Scale” kept on a running basis through a semester. The faculty hand these in independently of each other and then meet twice each year to share their evaluations. In most cases there is a remarkable level of agreement about the scores they have awarded to particular seminarians but where there is a significant divergence they seek to find consensus. Then, any seminarian whose agreed score falls below six out of a possible ten, is interviewed by an Assessment Committee to discuss how they can be assisted in the areas that need growth. While the emphasis is on constructive help, seminarians know that they must take their assessments seriously, because however good their academic work, lack of progress in these “character” fields could delay or prevent their advancement to ordination.

This measurement system is of course a work in progress and is being regularly revised and refined. While the process can never be “wholly objective,” everyone involved strives to make it as “grace-filled and collaborative” as Olivier hoped it would be and one of its rewarding aspects is for both faculty and seminarians to compare assessments made in a seminarian’s first year with those scored three years later.

**Engaging God’s World**

Part of the planning for SMMS was that the best of the “Phase One” praxis-reflection model would be preserved, therefore SMMS places strong emphasis on “Field Education & Ministry” (FEM) – a credit bearing work-integrated learning module that includes a fortnightly placement for every seminarian in a church, a hospital, hospice or clinic setting, a school placement, engagement with community projects, such HIV/AIDS education and poverty eradication, prison/rehabilitative ministry and ministry to victims of violence. The two-person FEM team has built relationships of trust with at least fifteen different agencies representing the different “worlds” listed above and over their three years at SMMS, seminarians have opportunity to engage those worlds which impact their future congregants. Every fortnight each has to hand in two reflections, one describing insights about the experience and the other offering a Scriptural reflection on the experience. The agencies also evaluate the standard of their involvement.

Above the enormous value of this exposure, FEM helps seminarians who may have been socialised to regard ordained ministry as conferring a privileged position on them, to face their distaste for menial work and to come to terms with the theology of servant ministry. There are unfortunately those who need a good dose of humble service to remind them what Jesus was about. FEM is also designed to inspire seminarians to ensure in their future ministries that the congregations they serve become centres of community empowerment, healing and transformation.

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\(^{12}\) Olivier, Building on the Rock
The Money Question

Although SMMS’s new teaching campus and its residences are up and virtually paid for, there is no doubt that sustainability will continue to be a major challenge. Part of the plan has been to design the campus in a “conference-friendly” way to encourage an income stream from external conferencing events at times when the campus would otherwise lie idle. SMMS also plans to attract more private enrolments where fee-paying seminarians can swell income and to some extent subsidise the church-sent component. It goes without saying that an effective Institutional Development Office responsible for identifying, building and nurturing a widening community of donors – both large and small – is a crucial part of the plan.

However, in the end it is the credibility of the ministers who emerge from SMMS that must be the best argument for support. Members of MCSA will need to be thoroughly persuaded that the training and formation of “skilled Methodist ministers of integrity, faithfulness and excellence” is of such transformative value in church and society that their investment is more than worthwhile. The central key to sustainability will be the end product. SMMS can only claim to be a new model of a seminary if it provides the church and world with a new calibre of minister and ministry.

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Hette Domburg and Isaias Titoce

The present article aims at describing the reality of theological education at the United Seminary of Ricatla and the Seminary’s vision for theological education in the coming years. The article starts with an historical introduction of the Seminary and continues by presenting the current relation to the national system of education in Mozambique. Then it describes the vision for theological education as it is developing in Ricatla, and finally illustrates this vision by paying attention to various recent developments in the curriculum of the seminary and the international connections that support these developments.

1. Historical Introduction

In 1958, under the influence of the growing ecumenical movement worldwide, four Mozambican protestant churches decided to join their efforts for theological education and founded the United Seminary of Ricatla.1 The name of the United Seminary refers to its geographical location, the locality of Ricatla in the Marracuene district, about 24 kilometers north of the city center of Maputo. Ricatla had been home to a mission-post of the Presbyterian Church of Mozambique since the early twentieth century, where Swiss missionaries had helped establish a school and a hospital, as well as a chapel.

Portuguese colonial rule was at its height and continued until 1975, putting a lot of pressure on any Protestant church wanting to develop its activities in Mozambique. One of the things the Protestant churches were actively involved in was primary and secondary education, and the Portuguese were reluctant to let foreign missionaries establish schools that might eventually contribute to the development of critical consciousness among the African population. Despite the adverse policies of the colonial rulers, over the years Ricatla delivered many pastors who got involved in education in many schools across the country, not to speak of their contributions to education through the youth groups of their congregations. And the Portuguese fear might have been well-founded, judging by the number of Protestant youth joining the ranks of the liberation movement in the ’60s and ’70s.

For many years, foreign missionaries played an important role in the Seminary. They were often sent by one of the foreign churches that had helped establish one of the Mozambican member-churches of the United Seminary. Over the years, Swiss, American, Canadian, South-African, Scottish, and finally Dutch missionaries worked at the seminary. From 1989, however, the Seminary has consistently been governed by a Mozambican principal, and at present all staff members are Mozambican, though financial support from foreign churches is still indispensable for the Seminary’s functioning. Today, nine denominations and the Mozambican Bible Society are members of the Seminary.

Those who became pastors in a local congregation, after their formal training at Ricatla’s seminary, often lived under poor conditions, and do so until the present days. Therefore, from early on the Seminary offered training in agriculture as a way of preparing the students for their life in rural communities, where they would need to produce their own food. Other non-theological topics that have been introduced over the years (though some of them also disappeared again after a few years) include conflict-management, a much-needed set of skills in post-conflict society after the ending of the 16-year civil war. In the first decade of the 21st century, special courses on HIV and AIDS were introduced, focusing not only on the theological, but also on the medical and socio-cultural aspects of the disease. And African theology became

1 http://www.ricatla.org.mz/Sobre%20ricatla1.html
an integral part of the curriculum, introducing students to both the study of African Traditional Religion
and the theologies developed by various Christian authors across the continent. Thus, the Seminary has a
long-standing tradition of responding to contextual challenges by introducing extra topics into the
curriculum. But in many ways, the main composition of the curriculum remained strongly informed by the
classic academic standards of Western faculties.

2. State Recognition and Curriculum-Reform

Until 2007 the Seminary offered a 4-year ‘bachelor’ in theology (including a short dissertation), a 4-year
‘diploma in theology’ (without a dissertation) and a ‘diploma in household-economy and Christian
education’ the duration of which depended on the time the wife of the future pastor spent in the seminary.
In response to new developments in the national system of higher education, the Seminary then reformed
the curriculum, compressing the same amount of class hours into a 3-year curriculum leading to a diploma
in theology, and offering an extra fourth year to the most promising students, leading to a BTh degree. This
three-plus-one year BTh is in accordance with the new regulations of the Ministry of Education and is in
the process of being officially recognized by the Ministry. Given the increasing level of education among
the younger generations, it is of vital importance for the Seminary to be able to offer officially recognized
documents, reflecting the real level of education it offers in comparison to state universities in the country.
The older four-year curriculum was not recognized as a Bachelor’s degree, but only as a ‘technical’
diploma, limiting job-opportunities for graduates in for example the government’s system of primary and
secondary education.

3. A Vision for Theological Education

So far we have mentioned two important factors at work influencing present-day policies at the Seminary.
On the one hand, the continuing need to respond to contextual challenges confronting Mozambican society
at large, and more specifically Mozambican churches and Mozambican pastors. On the other hand, the
need to guarantee compliance with (national) academic standards and improve the academic quality of the
courses offered. In response to this need, the Seminary has sought to establish partnerships with academic
theological institutions abroad, which may help improve academic standards and increase the academic
degrees of the staff.

Reflections on the role pastors have to play in their communities have led to a growing concern with the
contextual relevance of the education offered. As said before, over the years several contextual topics have
been introduced into the curriculum, but ever so often have vanished from the curriculum once the special
funding sustaining these courses dried up. So, instead of building ‘contextual extensions’ onto the classic
building of theological education, the adaptation of the whole curriculum to the needs of present-day
pastors is needed.

Mozambican society is under enormous pressures for change from economic, social, political and
cultural factors. Many developments affect local communities that have little or no influence on those same
developments. Multinational companies, the national government, multilateral institutions and foreign
NGOs all implement policies that affect the lives of local communities, and often are limited in their
capacity to mobilize the creativity and agency of those very communities to give shape to those policies.
What is the role of these communities and what should be the contribution of the pastors?

From ancient times on, religious leaders within the Christian tradition have played a role in supporting
and leading their communities through times of change, deploying their skills in order to improve the
quality of live of those they served. In some countries, they played a role in developing agriculture and thus
improving the food supply for their neighbors. Today, we might say that our pastors and church leaders

Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa
should, at the same time, be agents for community development. Our education should prepare our pastors not only for their roles as exegetes of Biblical texts, as preachers of personal ethics, messengers of good news, or as intermediaries between the people and their God, but also for a role as facilitator of human development within the community their congregation is a part of.

Thus, our education should not only be aimed at the formation of people who have knowledge of Church history, Christian theology, the Bible, and pastoral psychology, and have hermeneutical, exegetical, homiletic and pastoral skills. It should also give this knowledge a place within a practical orientation and a set of practical skills that enable the pastor to be a facilitator of local processes of human development, where he or she helps individuals and the community to become (again) the agents of their own responses to the challenges of the day.

4. Contextual Theology and Contextual Bible Study

One way to obtain this goal has been the incorporation of Contextual Bible Study in the curriculum. In 2006 contacts were established with the Brazilian Centro de Estudos Bíblicos (Centre for Bible Study) and the South African Ujamama Centre. These contacts have developed into a yearly training of students, and of pastors from the Maputo area, in Contextual Bible Study. Both the Ujamama Centre and CEBI stand within the traditions of liberation theology, and search for ways in which Biblical texts can support the struggle for fullness of life of the oppressed in God’s creation. Both centers have been working with groups of people at the margins of society for many years, helping them to gain access to the biblical texts from their own experiences of poverty, exclusion, discrimination, illness, political oppression, violence, and other situations that contradict the biblical vision of the Kingdom of God. In their studies, the biblical text has helped the participants to get a clearer understanding of their own reality, and to find practical ways to work towards a transformation of those aspects of reality that are threatening and diminishing their lives.

Contextual Bible Study (CBS) as a method of working with a group of people on the interpretation, appropriation and application of biblical texts in relation to their own lived reality, helps students develop some essential skills and attitudes that prepare him or her for a role as facilitator of communitarian processes. CBS, when well organized, offers a space where democracy can be practiced on a fundamental level: the definition of profound meaning, respect for different views, recognition of the value of each person’s contribution, the planning of concrete actions. These elements in themselves signify a revolution in some practices of theological training, where meaning (or ‘truth’) has been presented authoritatively ‘from above’ (or ‘from the past’), and where ‘relevance’ had little to do with the personal and communitarian experiences of the ‘hearers’ or ‘receivers’ of this theological tradition. CBS may, however, also be seen as a revival of some currents in reformation theology, where the importance of ‘translating the message in the people’s tongue’ was emphasized. Now in this case, the ‘tongue’ of the people not only refers to the language they understand when spoken to, but first of all the language they themselves speak and the things they say when asked to speak about their lives.

Incorporating CBS in the curriculum of the Seminary means more than just adding another subject. Instead, it means that many classic subjects have to be revisited. It has an impact on the way subjects such as Biblical Theology, Exegesis, Hermeneutics, Biblical History and even Systematic Theology are taught. First of all it means that theological ‘meaning’ and ‘truth’ are not an ‘absolute’, handed down to us from a closed past. Meaning and truth have to be found again each generation, and tradition gives us many rich examples of how former generations looked for and found meaning in their particular circumstances. To do theology, to ‘speak about God’, in a sensible and sound way, requires much more from us than simply repeat what others have said before. So in our teaching, we must try to uncover the conversations of the past, where people of flesh and blood struggled to understand God’s voice in their concrete circumstances. We can find those conversations in the Bible and also in other sources from the Christian tradition. The

_Handbook of Theological Education in Africa_
challenge for our education is to give students access to those sources in ways that enable them to begin to discern how our present-day communities might engage in these conversations on God and His will for our times.

Biblical and theological concepts such as ‘justice’, ‘grace’, ‘reconciliation’ and ‘salvation’ must first be understood against their historical background. Then they must also be confronted with the reality of people today. In other words, teaching theology must not be limited to ‘original’ or ‘traditional’ meanings, but should open the sources of our tradition to a conversation with our times. For us to engage meaningfully in this conversation, the question should be addressed what existential problems the people of our times are facing, to which today’s theology should try and find answers.

A consequence of this approach is the revaluation of the social sciences, being important tools for the analysis of social, political, cultural and economic dimensions of reality. Not only the analysis of the reality of our times is at stake here, but also the reality of the ancient times in which our biblical sources were produced and transmitted.

Finally, CBS has underlined the value and importance of ecumenical collaboration. Many people from Pentecostal, African Independent and Roman-Catholic communities have joined our courses on CBS and have formed new interdenominational Bible study groups throughout the country.

5. Theology and Development

As indicated above, the Seminary wishes to deliver pastors who are capable of being facilitators of local processes of human development. Alongside the integration of CBS in the curriculum, plans have been made to incorporate several courses on ‘theology and development’. Various professors from the School of Religion at the University of Kwa Zulu Natal have come to teach on the relation between theology and development, as well as the practice of community-development. The Seminary hopes to prepare its own qualified staff in this field of study.

At the same time, in order to give students a practical and very concrete example of development, a project has been started on water and sanitation. In collaboration with an NGO and various churches, the Seminary offers training on the production and use of several ‘smart’ water-technologies (locally producible, repairable, and economically sustainable) and on sanitation and hygiene, issues strongly related to health and poverty reduction. The aim of the technical part of the project is to create sufficient technical capacity to guarantee the independent, self-sustaining continuation of the production and implementation of the ‘smart’ technologies involved.

6. Theological Education by Extension

By now it should be clear that the Seminary wants to contribute to more than just the training of its internal students. A few years ago the Seminary started to offer Theological Education by Extension, a program aiming at the theological preparation of lay-leaders of local congregations throughout the country. The curriculum of this course was designed by the renowned South-African TEE College and slightly adapted to the Mozambican reality.

7. Learning with Friends Abroad

The move towards contextual Bible study (or ‘popular reading of the Bible’) and ‘theology and development’ has been possible only with the support of others. Some of our staff have studied at the School of Religion at the University of Kwa Zulu Natal and over the past few years the Seminary has
intensified its formal relations with the School. At UKZN we find expertise in the field of theology and development, African theology, as well as contextual Bible study.

Of great importance has also been the connection with CEBI in Brazil with its expertise in the popular reading of the Bible and the approach to biblical studies involved.

Being situated in a Portuguese speaking country in Africa, the Seminary offers an opportunity for the South African and Brasilian theologians to engage in conversations. With financial support from WCC / ETE, and Kerk in Actie (Protestant Church in the Netherlands), yearly exchanges of students and staff have been possible and the preparation of new Mozambican staff is under way.
(92) THE AKROFI-CHRISTALLER INSTITUTE, GHANA, AS AN INNOVATIVE MODEL IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Gillian Mary Bediako

Introduction
The stated vision of the Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture, a graduate research institute located in Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana (ACI), is “to be a pacesetting academic and pastoral institution, training Christian workers and leaders for effective mission in the African context.” Its mission has a two-fold focus: to “develop academic programmes which provide adequate tools for serious and creative research into African Christianity, and the African contribution to world Christianity, as well as to offer new opportunities for meaningful and relevant theological research and publication,” and to “serve the wider Christian community in Ghana, Africa and worldwide, by focusing its research and training on issues of Christian mission in the African context, in order to help the Christian community in Africa to better understand its task and to witness more effectively to the Kingdom of God in Africa and in the wider world.”

In order to understand this vision and mission and their ramifications, it is necessary to know something of ACI’s history, its genesis and growth, and in particular its journey towards national and international accreditation.

Pre-History
While ACI celebrated its Silver Jubilee, beginning in November 2011, twenty-five years after its launching on 1 November 1986, it has a significant pre-history dating back a further twelve years to the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization. For it was at that gathering that Kwame Bediako, one of the co-founders, first director and subsequently rector of the Institute, came into contact and developed longstanding friendships with “radical” Christians of evangelical persuasion from the “Two-Thirds World”, which was “our own preferred self-designation as Africans, Asians and Latin Americans”. While the bonds of friendship would issue in new networks of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Mission Theologians (INFEMIT) and partner networks within it, such as the African Theological Fellowship (ATF), for the purposes of this article, it was “the idea of initiating study centres for enhancing the mission and witness of the church in the various Two-Thirds World contexts”, “an important item in the conversations at Lausanne”, that sparked off in Bediako “the idea of a Centre for Mission Research in Ghana”. This was in fact the title of a file that he opened on the subject subsequently, which he worked on for nine years before sharing it more widely.

1 Contact details for ACI: Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture, P.O. Box 76, Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana. Tel: +233-3420-91490/1. Email: Registry@acighana.org. Website: www.acighana.org.
3 Kwame and Mary Bediako, ‘Ebenezer, This is how far the Lord has helped us (1 Sam. 7:12)’, Reflections on the Institutional Itinerary of Akrofi-Christaller Memorial Centre for Mission Research and Applied Theology (1974-2005) (Akropong: ACMC in-house publication, 2005), 5. While this document was a joint effort, there is much in it that records Kwame Bediako’s remembrance and understanding of ACI’s history and growth, and is, as far as possible, a factual and faithful record.
4 Bediako, Ebenezer, 5.
A further contributory factor to the shaping of the vision for ACI was Kwame Bediako’s first encounter with Professor Andrew Walls (then of the University of Aberdeen), whose keynote address at a Missions Conference at London Bible College (now London School of Theology) in 1975 on the modern shift in the centre of gravity of Christianity and the significance of Africa’s place in Christian history as an emergent heartland of vital Christian life and thought, ‘made a profound impression’. It helped to crystallise his understanding that ‘our vocation in theological education and Christian scholarship was not to be the pursuit of an academic career in an ivory tower, isolated from the life and struggles of the church,’ but that ‘the character of that vocation was to be the enabling of the church in the widest possible sense.’ This perception has governed in large measure the trajectory of ACI as it unfolded and remains a mainstay of its vision and mission.

Yet a third major factor in the emergence of the Institute was another encounter of persons, this time with a senior minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG), Rev S.K. Aboa, who as Inter-Church and Ecumenical Relations Secretary visited the church’s PhD students in Europe in 1983. Sharing his vision for a centre for the first time, Kwame Bediako found in Rev Aboa a kindred spirit, who had for a number of years conceived the idea of a ‘Ghana language resource library’, believing that the significant legacy of the Basel Mission and early indigenous pioneers of Gospel witness in the Gold Coast in translating the Scriptures into indigenous languages and developing a sizeable body of literature for church nurture and general education, needed to be rescued from virtual oblivion and to be built upon. The foregrounding of indigenous languages in training for mission and ministry in the church would become a significant feature of ACI programmes. Rev Aboa contributed his collection of these indigenous materials to the library to support this focus of study.

Other enabling factors in the emergence of the Centre were the initial welcome that the idea received within the PCG for a vision and initiative that were already clearly ecumenical in range; the choice of location (again through Rev Aboa), the 19th century Basel Mission buildings in Akropong, the home of the first sustainable Christian community in the 19th century and also a traditional royal town, where Gospel and culture continue to interact on a daily basis; and international encouragement for the initiative from the PCG partners in Europe and North America, who readily caught the vision and desired to support it.

Launching and Inauguration

By the time of the launching of the Centre in November 1986, the founding Board of Trustees was in place, ‘ecumenical, representing a broad range of church traditions in the country…who would serve in their own personal capacity and out of their commitment to the vision of the Centre’. In February 1987, prior to the inauguration in Akropong in April 1987, the legal personality of the Centre as a ‘company limited by guarantee with the status of a charity’ was also formalised.

Thus, solid foundations were laid, securing the vision and autonomy of the Institute in the public sphere, while also rooting it firmly in accountability to fulfil the legally binding objectives that were agreed upon with the PCG, at present its ‘sole legal subscriber’ under the Companies Code. The ecumenical range and personal commitment of Board members, together with the legal personality of the Institute, have proved their worth in guaranteeing the survival and sustainability of the Institute through the vicissitudes of succeeding years, and may be considered as fundamental contributory factors to making ACI an innovative model in theological education that has maintained its distinctive character through its first twenty-five years and is poised to develop further.

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5 Bediako, Ebenezer, 5.
6 Bediako, Ebenezer, 6.
7 Bediako, Ebenezer, 10.
Ten Years of Church-Related and Ecumenical Programmes

While ACI from the outset was dedicated to ‘mission research and applied theology’, as its former name implies, it did not, in fact, set out to offer academic programmes, but began by addressing mission and ministry needs within the PCG. The first initiative in 1988 was a ‘Mission Fields Conference’, designed for PCG agents in the church’s designated ‘mission fields’, parts of Ghana that were pioneer areas for the church. Pastors were being sent there without any additional training to prepare them for what amounted to cross-cultural mission, and the conference, which became an annual event, was designed to address this need. As Kwame Bediako remarked, ‘It was the first time ever that the PCG mission fields had been taken seriously as distinctive and significant entities in the life of the church and therefore as requiring a unique vision and formation, as well as particular skills for ministry.’

Other annual programmes for the PCG would follow, all with the aim of spiritual renewal and equipping for ministry (including lay ministry, ministry to children and youth) in the Ghanaian context, taking into account, and engaging with, the issues and the questions of religion and culture that are part of daily life, but so often left untouched by the church. These programmes also began to draw on insights from the mother-tongue scriptures. For example, weekly Bible studies in Twi were organised, which any interested person in Akropong could attend. Insights emerging from the group, combined with Kwame Bediako’s preparation, working from Hebrew and Greek directly into the mother tongue, found an outlet in academic publications in later years, an indication as to how authentic African theology may emerge from the grassroots.

As the Centre’s infrastructure was developed – the old buildings renovated and new ones added, the range of programmes increased, with new ones targeting the wider Christian community: marriage seminars for leaders of Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship, workshops on Expository Preaching, Christian Witness in the Public Sphere, Gospel and Culture interaction, all featured in these years, as a way of serving within and beyond the PCG.

It was in these years also that the Centre had the opportunity to extend its church-related programmes beyond Ghana through collaboration with the Hendrik Kraemer Institute, then in Oegstgeest, Netherlands, on a programme that brought together participants from Presbyterian/Reformed churches in Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroun, to consider issues of ‘Church and Society in Africa’. Seminars were held in Ghana and then the Netherlands, in which staff of both institutions participated. This proved to be the forerunner of similar international collaborative ventures in later years.

The lessons of those years may be captured in the words of Zechariah 4:10: “Who despises the day of small things?” As we stated in Ebenezer:

It is easy to forget the struggles of those years, the small beginnings and the time it took for developments to take place. Until 1992, when renovations to Basel House were completed, the Centre was unable to set the library in place; it also had very limited meeting room and office space. It was only in 1996 that the Hostel was completed… It was only in 1998 that the Centre had its own functioning cafeteria…

‘The day of small things’ applied to library development – for out of the nucleus of rare 19th and early 20th century books collected by Rev Aboa, the holdings would grow sufficiently in ten years to sustain graduate level programmes. It applied to finances also, for the Centre received minimal support from the PCG and lived by faith, trusting God for the provision of what was needed through the good will and generosity of those who shared the vision, as well as through the sacrificial service of staff. Indeed, it was the observation of outsiders at the time, specifically the Dutch and German partners of the PCG that it was

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'extraordinary how the Centre was able to serve so widely with so little!' Paradoxically, it was the willingness to do what one could with what was in hand, that made the Centre attractive and worth supporting.11

Probably the most important lesson of all was the realisation that at the heart of Centre operations had to be ‘a deepening spirituality in the exercise of the spiritual disciplines of the Christian life and of participation in the Scriptures as the living Word of God and in particular the discovery of the power of the Scriptures in the mother tongue’.12 This was to be the hallmark of programme content, and of community relations, both internally and in engagement with other bodies.

Towards Academic Programmes and Accreditation

During the above mentioned ten years, other lessons were being learnt that were drawing the Centre towards the addition of academic activities. With hindsight, several strands are discernible. The first was the discovery that the ‘life, concerns and struggles of the church at the grassroots were providing the essential resource and raw materials for the reflection, writing and action emerging from the Centre’.13 The second was the realisation that ‘it was possible to maintain a link between active participation in the life and ministry of the church and the production of scholarship’, and that it was possible for the Centre to embody a form of Christian scholarship in which ‘a serious religious orientation…focused on a vital communion with Jesus Christ, could contribute to the shaping of intellectual culture and to the renewal of academic excellence’.14 From the idea that ‘the Centre could serve the church through research and Christian scholarship as its unique focus,’ it was only a short step to seeing its ‘implications for a wider service to community and society at large’ in the form of academic programmes.15

At the same time, wider academic collaborative projects were emerging. In the 1990s the African Christianity Project sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts in the USA, brought the Centre together with several African universities in a series of conferences and project meetings, supported Kwame Bediako’s annual African Theology lectureship in the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World (CSCNWW) in the University of Edinburgh, as well as an African Christianity bibliography project headed up by the CSCNWW librarian, that documented and scanned holdings in the participating libraries for mutual sharing on CD ROM. In addition, the Pew-sponsored African Theological Initiative in 1997 identified the Centre as one of several ‘Pace- setting Institutions’ across Africa, opening the way for some significant capacity-building assistance that was crucial to the Centre’s development into an accredited academic institution.16

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11 Bediako, Ebenezer, 15.
12 Bediako, Ebenezer, 16.
13 Bediako, Ebenezer, 16.
14 Bediako, Ebenezer, 17.
15 Bediako, Ebenezer, 17.
16 The criteria constituting a benchmark of excellence that the Centre met in order to be designated as pace-setting were as follows: ‘To be driven by a distinctively Christian mission or purpose and to demonstrate adherence to that mission or purpose; to strive for an identifiable, positive, strategic and enduring impact on the church and society in Africa through its graduates, research, publications and/or continuing education and outreach activities; maintain a multi-year strategic plan; show steady development as an educational institution, through student enrolment and number of faculty, innovation of needed programmes, enhancement of educational facilities and resources, and growth in operating budget combined with self-reliance for operating costs; to take an active role in the African theological community with a view towards establishing enduring African capacities for equipping Christian leaders and scholars at the highest levels; to encourage its faculty members to engage in research relevant to curriculum development and to indigenise governance and personnel, especially senior leadership and faculty; to demonstrate quality and integrity of leadership. Management practices and financial policies and controls; to serve the needs of more than a single
The Centre was also linked with the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS), UK, through the INFEMIT network. It became the facilitating link institution for the growing African Theological Fellowship, serving the continental network and organising study projects and conferences that helped the ATF network develop an academic focus. This gained momentum through the idea to develop a Masters in Theology (MTh) programme that would focus specifically on African Christianity, that is, would intentionally set the issues thrown up by the engagement of Christianity with the African context at the heart of the curriculum of study. While OCMS was one possibility as a ‘home’ for this programme, a visit to the South African ATF link institution, the Evangelical Theological House of Studies (ETHOS), in Pietermaritzburg, in 1995, opened up an opportunity to collaborate with the School of Theology (SOT), University of Natal (as it then was), to which ETHOS was affiliated.\textsuperscript{17} The School of Theology welcomed the collaboration as contributing the African focus required in the new post-apartheid era, but which the SOT was at that time ill-equipped to provide.\textsuperscript{18} For the Centre, the link with the SOT, in turn, met the Ghana National Accreditation Board (NAB) requirement of initial collaboration with a recognised university.

Thus, when the time came to present the Centre for accreditation by the National Accreditation Board of the Ghana Ministry of Education, under the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), there was ‘momentum within the Centre which enabled it to rise to the challenge that the accreditation entailed.’\textsuperscript{19} The Centre was already functioning in many respects as a university graduate school in its field. The full accreditation granted to the Centre in 1998, was a recognition that it was set to make ‘a significant contribution to postgraduate theological education in Ghana.’

After several years of successful collaboration with the School of Theology on the MTh and PhD programmes, beginning in 1998 and 1999 respectively, the Centre applied to the NAB in 2005 for Charter status, which came into effect in 2006, enabling the Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture (as it now became) to award degrees in its own right.

**Incarnating a Vision of African Christian Scholarship – An Ongoing Task**

Since 2006 Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture has been awarding its own degrees and expanding its offerings. It continues to require that MTh and PhD students provide an abstract of their thesis in their mother tongue. Since 2007, a new MTh track – Bible Translation and Interpretation – takes further this mother tongue emphasis by seeking to equip students to do exegesis and interpretation of the Scriptures in the original languages and African mother tongues. In 2011, a new African Christianity elective was started on Theology, Human Need and the Environment, a recent research interest of a faculty member, and aims to lay a foundation for theological and practical responses to crises, human suffering and the renewing of creation.

Since 2006 also, an entirely new programme – MA (Theology and Mission) – has been offered. The MA is a one-year modular programme, designed for graduates in other fields who are mostly in secular denomination, as indicated by its faculty and student body and the posts occupied by its graduates; to influence and contribute to the development of other theological institutions and related activities in its region or in Africa as a whole; show demonstrable awareness of, and capacity to engage in, international intellectual discourse as an African participant.’ African Theological Initiative Criteria for Pace-setting Institutions (developed and implemented 1995–98).\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{17} More details on the development of this collaborative venture are given in the article on the African Theological Fellowship.

\textsuperscript{18} This was the observation made in the Special Review of the School of Theology, Faculty of Humanities, University of Natal, June 1996, item 14.1.3, on the programme, which stated that the ATF programme was going to provide ‘an emphasis which the present [School of Theology] staff could not easily teach.’

\textsuperscript{19} Bediako, Ebenezer, 21.
employment but desire basic theological training to equip them to be more effective in Christian witness and church ministry in the African context. However, because the approach to theology is different from Western-style theological education, persons with first degrees in Theology who take the programme find that there is much that is new. Since 2010, a variant of the MA has been in operation – the Pentecostal Studies Option – in which course offerings are modified to include a study of the Pentecostal/Charismatic phenomenon in Africa and selected Biblical texts dealing with pneumatology, healing, deliverance and exorcism. It is a reflection of the trust that ACI has won among Pentecostal and Charismatic churches that this option was initiated at the request of the Church of Pentecost, the largest of these denominations in Ghana.

ACI has also begun to provide validation services to two other theological institutions in Ghana, at their request, as permitted under the award of the Charter.

Students at all levels still come from the ATF network and PCG partner churches in Africa, as well as from Ghana. ACI also draws each year several students from Western countries, who are either interested in mission or are attracted by a theological formation that views study as a spiritual discipline, or both.

In the course of the 13 years of running academic programmes, ACI has successfully trained up three junior faculty through MTh to PhD, and is at present training two more, one at MTh level and one at PhD. Three other ACI academic staff members have completed the MA programme, with a view to enhancing their understanding of the vision and ethos of ACI and their effectiveness in service to the Institute. Some administrative staff also audit courses of the MA from time to time for the same reason. This complements other forms of in-service training provided for all levels of staff, as needed, with a view to raising overall competencies of the Institute community. The underlying rationale is that each member of the Institute has a distinct and important role to play, following the biblical imagery of the parts of the body within the whole. This is symbolised in a concrete way in the ACI uniform, which all staff wear, irrespective of rank.

Research projects continue. 2010 saw the completion of a four-year project in collaboration with the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, USA, on ‘Primal Religion as the Substructure of Christianity’, which drew together scholars from many of the primal regions of the world (i.e. Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Pacific, and ‘tribal’ parts of Asia), and out of which several publications are in the pipeline. Earlier in 201, a project on Bible Commentary writing completed its first manuscript on the Gospel of John in Kasem, a language of northern Ghana. It is hoped that this initiative to encourage grassroots theological reflection in indigenous languages will continue in other Ghanaian languages. The fruit of the scholarly researches of ACI faculty, PhD candidates and African scholars of the ATF network finds a regular outlet in the Institute journal, Journal of African Christian Thought, now in its fourteenth year, with subscribers on all continents. JACT, together with publications under the Regnum Africa imprint, provide a source of published material that supports the MTh and PhD coursework.

Continuing education programmes have also been sustained alongside the academic programmes. The longstanding Ministerial Probationary Course (commenced in 1990), whereby all newly commissioned ministers of the PCG spend time at ACI over two years continues the original aim of equipping PCG ministers with tools for ministry in the African context. A more recent initiative, the Jubilee Forum for ministers of the Ga Presbytery, provides opportunity for ministers to discuss topical issues affecting their ministry. ACI has also developed a programme of orientation for new elders of PCG congregations and is about to initiate a pilot scheme of Ministers’ Sabbaticals, where PCG ministers may take time out to do some research of their own on issues of ministry, guided by ACI faculty.

For the past two years, ACI has been offering an ‘Encountering African Christianity’ Seminar for Christian visitors to Ghana, providing a 2 to 3 day orientation into Christian life, cultural engagement and interfaith dialogue in Africa that can be tailored to the needs of each group. The seminar draws from the perspectives and insights gained from academic research that are taught at a higher level, and distils them.
into an accessible format for outside groups engaged in mission work alongside African churches. This has proved to be a very fruitful way of being of service to PCG partner church groups, although it is envisaged that the seminar could be helpful to other groups also.

**An Institute for Our Time**

In all these ways, ACI is continuing to incarnate the vision of African Christian scholarship that launched it in the beginning. Telling the story of ACI is to document the providential convergences peculiar to a new *kairos* moment in Christian history. The genesis and growth of the Institute and the transformation it has undergone through its own internal dynamic coincided with, and indeed drew inspiration from, developments in the wider field of Christian scholarship deriving from the fact, now irrefutable, that we are living in a new era of Christian history. As the European/Western value-setting for Christian faith declines and a world Christianity emerges, African, Asian and Latin American experiences and expressions of Christianity are becoming the standard measure of Christian faith in the world. Thus, world Christianity is decreasingly shaped by the cultural or social values or the intellectual processes that are dominant in Western society.

Kwame Bediako saw clearly the implications for the theological academy:

In this new situation, it has become evident that not only is the Western theological academy unable to commend the Christian faith to its own Western context, but also it has increasing difficulty in understanding the world Christianity beyond the West. The Western theological academy, on the whole, has been unprepared for this new shape of the Christian world. Consequently, it lacks the intellectual tools for integrating its impact into Western theology… The Western intellectual framework shaped by the Enlightenment, which seriously minimises the claims and experiences of transcendence, is unable to understand adequately the religious character of the world Christianity beyond the West…

Such a fundamental split or dichotomy is fatal for the pursuance…of Christian scholarship in the academy. In the African setting, where both “religion” and, or “living religiously” are massive and evident realities that cannot be ignored, such splits or dichotomies cannot be sustained.20

For Bediako, this meant that the African theological academy had an urgent calling to develop a ‘new integral intellectual framework for an adequate academic study and spiritual understanding of the new Christian reality in the world.’ He felt that ACI had a vocation to provide one such scholarly setting for this to be worked out. He was well aware of the challenges:

Given the present realities in geopolitical relationships in the world, it may not be readily apparent that the vocation of Christian institutions in Africa, Asia and Latin America could now include the rescue of the Christian academy! And yet, this may well be an unvarnished truth that will require exceptional courage and confidence, as well as a special grace of humility, to act upon.21

He was also clear in his conviction that with respect to the part Africa has to play in the rescuing of the Christian academy, Africa has indigenous religious and cultural resources to hand for the task, and it was the vocation of ACI to tap into those resources through its research and disseminate them through its training and publications:

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The [Institute] is concerned to research the intellectual roots of Ghanaian and African traditions, in a cultural matrix that recognises the centrality of the transcendent in the whole of life. By pitching its programmes at the research level exclusively, the [Institute] seeks to connect the indigenous insights that are summed up in the proverbial saying, *Nsem nyinaa ne Nyame* (God is the foundation of all things), with the resources of Christian scholarship. Therefore, in the African cultural context that continues to recognise that ‘what is primarily real is spiritual’, the way is open for doing Christian theology again as ‘faith seeking understanding’, as was done in the early Christian centuries.

ACI went through a period of unexpected transition following the death of Kwame Bediako in June 2008, but has emerged successfully under the leadership of his successor, Ben Quarshie, the stronger, perhaps, for the fact that the vision and trail-blazing work of the founding pioneers are being built upon by a new generation of persons committed to the consolidation and sustainability of the institution. Yet all the ingredients that have gone into the making of ACI in this new era of world Christianity – the exercise of faith, the willingness for self-sacrifice, the providential conjunction of vision, persons, networks, collaborations and generous and timely support – will continue to be needed in order to provide the right environment for the Christian scholarship to which ACI is committed, and to maintain its unique character in the service of the Kingdom of God.

An observation made by Kwame Bediako in 2005 might well serve as an ongoing motto for ACI in the years to come: ‘To serve the church and the academy, we pursue the integration of our faith and our learning.’ Hopefully, ACI may serve as a model from which other theological institutions in Africa may draw inspiration for their own vision and ministry in this new era of world Christianity and of Africa’s present responsibility in witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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24 Rev Dr Benhardt Y. Quarshie is a senior minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, holds a PhD in New Testament Studies from Princeton Theological Seminary and taught in the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon, for over twenty years, before joining ACI in a full-time capacity. He was, however, associated with the Institute for many years prior to that, serving on the ACI Council, teaching part-time, and being actively involved in the ATF network. A major focus of his biblical research and teaching is expounding the Scriptures using insights from African languages.

The African Theological Fellowship (ATF), as a network of African Christian theologians, mission practitioners and Christian intellectuals of evangelical persuasion, is committed to serving the Churches in Africa and the nations of which they are a part, through excellence in Christian scholarship and research, through rigorous intellectual engagement with the socio-political, cultural and religious realities of the African context, and through concerted effort to apply the fruits of Christian learning in the life of the Christian community and beyond, for the benefit of all.2

The opening paragraph of the ATF Mission Statement defines the African Theological Fellowship (ATF) as a network designed to foster spiritual encouragement, theological reflection, Christian social action and service, and engagement with the religious and cultural forces shaping African societies. The Mission Statement, to which all who have joined the fellowship have subscribed, further defines the network as a network of Africans committed to Africa, as an academic network seeking to address the religious and cultural issues of Africa through Christian scholarship, a network of scholars of evangelical conviction across the denominational range, persons who are committed to serving the church in the African context through high standards of excellence in Christian scholarship, for the purpose of furthering the mission of the Kingdom of God.3

1 Contact details for the ATF General Secretary and Administrator: Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture, P.O. Box 76, Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana. Tel: +233-3240-91490/1. Email addresses: General Secretary: byquarshie@yahoo.com; Administrator: kofiasiedu@hotmail.com. Website: http://atf.acighana.org


3 The full text is as follows:

The African Theological Fellowship (ATF), as a network of African Christian theologians, mission practitioners and Christian intellectuals of evangelical persuasion, is committed to serving the Churches in Africa and the nations of which they are a part, through excellence in Christian scholarship and research, through rigorous intellectual engagement with the socio-political, cultural and religious realities of the African context, and through concerted effort to apply the fruits of Christian learning in the life of the Christian community and beyond, for the benefit of all.

The ATF, as a network of Africans, is committed to Africa by encouraging its members to live and work in the African context, and to develop the intellectual and spiritual tools to engage with African realities.

The ATF, as an academic network, is committed to interacting with African religious, intellectual and socio-cultural currents of thought, in order to strengthen the capacity of the Christian community to address these with the Christian Gospel.

The ATF, as a network of Christian scholars, seeks to serve the African Christian community by addressing, through biblical, historical and other theological disciplines, a broad range of concerns. It seeks to equip Christian leaders, both lay and ordained, for more effective ministry in the wider social context of Africa.

The ATF, as a network of evangelical scholars, seeks to take seriously the evangelical tradition, both in its concern for Scripture as the Word of God, and its emphasis on personal encounter with the living Christ through the Holy Spirit. It seeks to be rigorous in its search for truth, in the humble awareness that our knowledge of truth is always partial, but in the confident assurance that we are called to know the truth as revealed in Jesus Christ.

The ATF, as a partner network of a wider international network, The International Fellowship of Evangelical Mission Theologians (INFEMIT), seeks to enhance African participation in global Christian witness, by equipping member...
The ATF has also sought to connect with likeminded Africans of the Diaspora, and has been an active partner within the International Fellowship of Evangelical Mission Theologians (INFEMIT), the worldwide network linking Two-thirds World fellowships, which promotes a similar contextual theological reflection and action. Unlike many organisations and networks operating in Africa, the ATF has always been an authentically African initiative.

History
In order to understand the theological education programmes that have emerged within the ATF, it is necessary to know something of its history, as the programmes have developed as a natural outflow of its concerns and its projects. Though the ATF was formed in June 1984 in Tlayacapan, Mexico, at the second international conference of the INFEMIT, its history may be said to go back as far as the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation of 1974, in that the friendships forged and visions shared there among Two-Thirds World participants formed the basis for the INFEMIT network, as well as the other regional networks (Latin American Theological Fraternity and Partnership-In-Mission Asia) that came together to form it.

Since 1984, the ATF has operated at regional (continental) and sub-regional levels. The first regional consultation was held in June 1985 at Kabare, Kenya, hosted by ATF Chairman, David Gitari, who was then Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) Bishop of the Embu Diocese. Papers read were published as Witnessing to the Living God in Contemporary Africa.  

At the sub-regional level, ATF activities were concentrated initially in Ghana and Kenya, and later in South Africa. A West Africa ATF consultation was held in Ghana in July 1987, and an East Africa conference in Kampala, Uganda, 1989. South Africa joined the ATF in April 1991 during the 4th INFEMIT conference at Osijek, in the then Yugoslavia.

From the beginning it was felt that the ATF needed to have institutional roots in each sub-region, and not be merely a network of individuals. Key institutions in the three sub-regional locations with existing ATF connections were identified at a joint meeting of the ATF and INFEMIT Executive Committees in Nairobi, Kenya, in April 1992: the St. Andrew’s Institute, now College, for Theology and Development, Kabare, Kenya, which had hosted the first ATF regional conference in 1986 and the second INFEMIT consultation in 1987; the Evangelical Theological House of Studies (ETHOS), Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, and Akrofi-Christaller Memorial Centre for Mission Research and Applied Theology, now Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture (ACI), Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana. All these were identified as having credibility in context and as sharing a common vision and areas of concern, ranging from evangelism and renewal, development and transformation, to the promotion of Christian scholarship and theological awareness. By being part of the ATF network, they were being encouraged to develop distinctive emphases relating to the issues in their particular contexts, which could be of benefit to those in other contexts. ACI became the facilitating link institution from which the network administration was carried forward.

In 1995, the ATF, through ACI, received assistance from the Pew Charitable Trusts, USA, to develop as a sustainable network linking present locations and drawing in others. A Francophone Africa sub-region, l’ATF Réseau Francophone, was formally added in 1995, with its own Co-ordinator tasked to expand the network in Francophone countries. The Centre International (later Universitaire) de Missiologie, Kinshasa,

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theologians and theological students with the requisite intellectual and spiritual tools by which to enter into, and participate in, the heritage of the 20 centuries of Christian witness in the world, and to understand Africa’s place in that history, both for the present and the future.


Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
DRC, became the fourth ATF link institution. L’ATF Réseau Francophone developed a membership in the four zones identified within the sub-region (West, Central, East and Islands), and identified institutions – FATEAC\(^5\) in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, and the Faculté de Théologie FJKM, in Madagascar, in the West and Islands zones respectively. In 2004, the Lusophone (Portuguese-speaking) region joined at a conference held in Maputo, Mozambique, and ways of expanding into Arabic-speaking Africa from Eastern Africa were being explored.

**Sub-Regional Study Processes, Conferences and Workshops**

From 1995 to 2004 the ATF was able to organise a significant number of conferences, study processes and workshops, build up a network and database of nearly 400 members spanning Sub-Saharan Africa, and commence the postgraduate degree programmes that continue to this day.

The sub-regional conferences, built around study projects, were held in Ghana, West Africa, drawing participants from Cameroun, Nigeria, Togo, Côte d’Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Liberia, as well as Ghana; in DRC, Republique du Congo and Madagascar for Francophone Africa; South Africa and Zimbabwe for Southern Africa. They focused on several specific themes that were considered of great moment in the sub-regions as well as on the continent as a whole: “Institutional Development of Theological Education in Africa”, “The Church in the African State towards the twenty-first Century”, “Christian Faith and the African Renaissance”\(^6\). During this period also some of the sub-regions were expanded, taking conferences into new areas as a way of launching the network there.\(^7\)

From 1998 to 2000 the ATF was also active in taking workshops around the regions. Workshops were held at theological institutions in Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa, focusing on two themes: ‘Institutional Development for African Theological Institutions’, and ‘Curriculum Development in the African context’, thus disseminating the learning gained through earlier conferences and through the development of the postgraduate degree programme that had just taken off.

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\(^5\) Faculté de Théologie Evangélique de l’Alliance Chrétienne.

\(^6\) In December 1995, a conference was held in Ghana on the theme of ‘Institutional development for theological education in West Africa, In pursuit of spiritual, intellectual and organisational excellence for mission and ministry today’. In September 1996, two conferences were held: “The Church in the African State towards the 21st century” was a preparation for the regional consultation to be held in Ghana in September 1997 on the same theme. This was immediately followed by a consultation on “Curriculum development for theological education in West Africa”. In December 1996, the Francophone sub-region held a consultation in Kinshasa, Zaire, on ‘The Church and Ethnicism’. A further Francophone consultation was held in Douala, Cameroun, in July 2002, on ‘Church, society and African theology’. In May 1997, the East Africa sub-region held a consultation in Kabare, Kenya, on ‘The Church in the African State towards the 21st century’, as preparation for the regional consultation to be held later that year. The Southern Africa sub-region held a consultation on ‘The Church and Democracy’ in Harare, Zimbabwe, in September 1997, in which ATF members from other sub-regions participated. In January 2003, a Southern Africa consultation was held in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, on ‘The contribution of theological education in Zimbabwe to the shaping of the African Renaissance’. In September 2003, a West Africa consultation was held in Ghana, on ‘Contemporary challenges for Christian theological formation in Africa’.

\(^7\) In March 1997, the central zone of the Francophone sub-region was launched at a conference of pastors held in Pointe Noire, Republique du Congo. In September 1998, the Islands zone of the Francophone sub-region was launched during a visit to Madagascar by the ExCo. A small conference was held, which brought together Christian institutions and agencies that did not usually meet. In June 2004, a conference was held in Maputo, Mozambique, to launch the Lusophone sub-region. The theme was ‘The development of Christian scholarship in Lusophone Africa: Historical problems and contemporary challenges’.

*Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa*
Regional Conferences (i.e. Pan-African)

Many of the sub-regional conferences were preparatory for, or spin-offs from, continental gatherings of the network, of which there have been two since 1995: in September 1997, at ACI, on the theme: ‘Church and State in Africa’; and in September 2001 at Grand Bassam, Côte d’Ivoire, on the theme: ‘The Christian Faith and the African Renaissance’. This conference had also two Diaspora participants, including Prof Peter Paris from Princeton Theological Seminary, USA, who presented a paper. The Diaspora sub-region was launched at this time, but has not been followed through since.

ATF South-South Initiative within INFEMIT (2003)

One outcome of the ATF activity within INFEMIT was the realisation that there needed to be some South-South exchange on the ground, rather than merely interacting at international gatherings. The beginning of an exchange relationship of ACI with CEMAA, Lima, Peru, began with the visit of the late General Secretary, Kwame Bediako, to give a week of lectures at CEMAA in May 2003. A return visit by Dr Tito Paredes, Director of CEMAA, to ACI was envisaged but has not yet taken place (although he subsequently visited ACI in another capacity).

Study Project through the National Research Foundation of South Africa (2004-2006)

The significant profile of the ATF within South Africa, particularly through its academic programmes at the University of KwaZulu Natal, bore fruit in the award of a grant by the National Research Foundation of South Africa to the General Secretary, Kwame Bediako, for a two-year study project (2004-6) on the Theme: ‘Capacity-building in the integration of indigenous knowledge systems in theological education in Africa’. This included support for postgraduate studies in that area in the MTh African Christianity programme and concluded with a conference held in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, in April 2006, at which research findings from across the continent were shared.

Constituency, Distinctive Features, Structure and Networking

The gradual expansion of the network has been an outworking of the vision to transcend the imported hard-line categories of so-called “evangelicals” and so-called “ecumenicals”, in order to reflect more accurately the actual experience of the majority of African Christians, which is evangelical, and these days often also charismatic, no matter what their denomination. The ATF has several Roman Catholic members, for example, as well as many members in the mainline denominations that were, for some Western missions operating in Africa, by definition “liberal”. The network has also succeeded in breaking through the Anglophone/Francophone/Lusophone divide by virtue of its vision, the bilingual capabilities of members and a deliberate policy of trans-lingual interaction.

Much of this activity was made possible through networking by the ATF Secretariat based at ACI, in liaison with the sub-regional coordinators. The Secretariat consisted of the General Secretary, Administrator, Documentation Officer and a secretary. The Secretariat was responsible for writing proposals for the raising of funds to support the network and for the administration and accounting of those funds. It was responsible for building and maintaining the database of members and for producing and dispatching the ATF Bulletin to all members. It also serviced the Executive Committee. The ATF

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8 CEMAA stands for Centro Evangélico de Misología Andino-Amazonica, and has as its focus of training equipping for mission and ministry among the Quechua-speaking peoples living in the Andean mountains and Amazon jungles of Peru and Bolivia.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Executive Committee, comprising Chairman, General Secretary, Administrator, Documentation Officer and Sub-Regional Coordinators, would meet once or twice a year during a regional or sub-regional conference or workshop, for the purpose of reviewing and planning activities towards the enhancement of theological reflection and action and the expansion of membership. For example, the ExCo visited Madagascar in September 1998, in order to launch a new zone within the Francophone sub-region.

The late General Secretary, Kwame Bediako, was regularly at INFEMIT Board meetings, for a considerable period serving as Chairman and later as Vice-Chairman, and would present an Annual Report from the ATF, thus maintaining an active link with the worldwide fellowship. ATF members would also participate in INFEMIT consultations and projects. The current General Secretary, Ben Quarshie, continues this tradition by serving actively on the INFEMIT networking team.

**ATF Bulletin and Publications**

The ATF achieved more than a series of conferences and workshops, significant though these were. There was substantial publishing activity also. From 1995 to 2004 the ATF produced twice a year the *ATF Bulletin*, which was sent out to all members of the network to document activities and keep members abreast of activities and developments elsewhere on the continent. Each issue would also have a short piece of theological reflection from different sub-regions. Four issues of the Bulletin, 1995-1997, were also translated into French, but unfortunately, this bilingual activity could not be sustained. A couple of bibliographies of material held in the ACI library were also issued with the Bulletin, as an aid to more contextual studies and curriculum redesign. The *Journal of African Christian Thought* (issued by ACI from 1998 to date) continued the bibliographical listings, and has devoted no fewer than five issues to the papers generated through the study processes and conferences, and had also made room for ATF members to regularly publish their own articles on specific themes. *JACT* continues to be sent out free of charge to ATF members who express an interest.

The ATF also developed a publishing arm, Regnum Africa, with the editorial office at ACI, which has produced a number of books of original African reflection to serve as textbooks for theological education, as well as to disseminate the findings within Christian communities and churches at local level. This is one way in which the curriculum development focus of the ATF has been worked through in a concrete manner.

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9 Rev Dr Benhardt Y. Quarshie, is currently also Rector of ACI. He holds a PhD in New Testament Studies from Princeton Theological Seminary, USA, and taught at the University of Ghana for over twenty years before joining ACI full-time as Rector. He has been a longstanding ATF member, active in the West Africa sub-regional programmes, as well as the continental gatherings. His major teaching role is New Testament Exegesis and Interpretation in Greek and African mother tongues on the MTh (Bible Translation and Interpretation) programme, as well as on the MA programme.

Postgraduate Degree Programmes (1998 to date)

While all these constitute significant achievements, the most enduring contribution of the ATF to theological development on the continent so far has been in the area of postgraduate degree programmes, which have also ensured a continuation of continental fellowship and interaction up to today.

From the beginning, a major concern of the ATF was to enhance the intellectual and spiritual preparation for ministry in Africa of promising African Christian leaders through both financial assistance and academic mentoring in postgraduate studies.

This concern led to the development of an *ATF MTh African Christianity*, offered as from 1998, by ACI, initially in conjunction with the School of Theology, University of Natal, now School Of Religion And Theology, at University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, which awarded the degree. The programme expanded in 1999 to include a *PhD programme*, The rationale for the MTh African Christianity programme was given as follows:

The curriculum for the MTh in African Christianity has as its focus the study of the forms and traditions of African Christian life and thought emerging as a distinctive strand of Non-Western Christianity with the potential of contributing to world Christianity. The importance of Christianity in Africa as a “massive unignorable fact and factor” (Baeta) at the end of the twentieth century cannot be doubted. What is needed is for scholarly reflection and interpretative depth to inform and enlighten the Church in its task of Christian witness and nurture and social transformation.

This particular programme seeks to give expression to this sense of “kairos” in African Christianity and aims also to enable graduates from African countries to undertake advanced study of Christianity directly related to their own setting by exposing them to the breadth and diversity of African Christianity through the use of two locations—one semester in South Africa, one semester in Ghana—and by involving ATF scholars from across the continent in teaching and thesis supervision.

The programme provides opportunity for graduate Christian workers, lay or ordained, committed to ministry in cross-cultural situations, to examine the historical, religious and cultural context in which they operate, and to reflect theologically on their experience. It also provides opportunity for prospective candidates for theological research involving cross-cultural or inter-religious study who do not have specialised training in these fields, to bridge the gap between previous academic study and the new material.

For the first-year coursework, core subjects are: The Roots of African Theology in the Twentieth Century; Christian Faith and Primal Religions of the World, with special reference to Africa; World Christian History as Mission History; Issues of Gospel and Culture Engagement. Electives, of which two are to be taken, are: The Bible in African Christianity; Aspects of the Christian History of Africa; African Instituted and Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches; Christian Faith and Islam in the African Context; and Theology, Human Need and the Environment. A course on Research Methods equips with practical tools for the types of research involved. A 30,000-word dissertation (MTh) or 100,000-word thesis (PhD), together with an abstract in both English and the candidate’s mother tongue, complete the academic requirements.

As from 2006, both the MTh and PhD continue at ACI, with the degrees awarded by ACI as a fully accredited postgraduate institution. A second track of the MTh, *Bible Translation and Interpretation*, is now running at ACI, in which candidates take three of the four core courses and develop their biblical linguistic and exegetical skills in the original languages and African mother tongues. See the article on ACI for the other programmes also on offer. Although these programmes are now run at ACI, the catchment area, so to speak, continues to be the African continent as a whole, and many students come by way of

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11 See the article on ACI for more details of its genesis, history, programmes, vision and accomplishments.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
ATF connections. Several ATF members serve as adjunct lecturers. So this is one way in which the ATF vision and interaction lives on, through these postgraduate programmes.

As at the ACI Graduation in December 2010, that is, 12 years since the inception of these programmes, seven people had graduated at PhD level and 25 at MTh level. The newer MA programme has so far yielded 86 graduates. There are 12 people at various stages in the PhD programme, 20 at MTh level, and 52 currently on the one-year MA programme. All three programmes will have candidates graduating in December 2011.

As indicated in the rationale, the distinctive features of these programmes are: the focus on the African context – its religions, cultures and indigenous languages – in the shaping of the curriculum; the intentional retention of theology as the foundational discipline; the desire to restore spirituality to the heart of the theological task; the aim of doing Christian scholarship with a view to enhancing Christian mission and witness and the life of African churches. This may well still be a unique mix. At the very least, the ATF academic programmes have been the pioneer and pacesetter for other efforts, and may thus qualify as an innovative model for theological education in Africa.

An Ongoing Vision
With the passing away of the General Secretary, Kwame Bediako, in 2008, the ATF has also undergone a transition. An initial lull in networking and activities came to an end in March 2010, when a meeting of the ATF Executive was held at ACI in response to the desire of members in Southern Africa, Lusophone Africa and Francophone Africa, independently expressed, to revive the fellowship. As a result the Executive Committee was able to organise a conference in Nairobi, Kenya in March 2011, at which all the sub-regions were represented and which coincided with a summit of the INFEMIT in the same location, also to revive the INFEMIT network. Since then, Skype meetings of the Executive have been held with a view to reviving the sub-regional networking and activities and generating some local funding, while ACI has been actively raising funds to support the continental networking. It is hoped that there will be a further continental gathering early in 2012.

The ATF network continues to have great potential. The explosion of the Christian faith on the African continent in the 20th century was one of the most remarkable events in the entire history of Christianity. It continues to pose tremendous challenges for African Christians and African Christian institutions in the 21st century. For in this changed Christian world, with the heartlands of the Christian faith now clearly in the Southern continents, African Christians are called upon to shoulder a significant burden of Christian witness in the world. That witness needs to be strengthened with the appropriate Christian scholarship in the interest of the church’s universal task. As Andrew Walls observed many years ago, before anyone else

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12 For instance, the initiators of the MTh in African Theology at Daystar University, Nairobi, Kenya, several years ago, Dr Diane Stinton and Dr James Kombo, were explicit about the inspiration they drew from the ATF programme, and invited Kwame Bediako to both advise and teach on the programme.

13 A new Executive Committee was constituted: General Secretary: Rev Dr Ben Y. Quarshie, Rector, ACI; Administrator: Mr Ben Asiedu, Deputy Registrar, Finance & Development, ACI; Documentation Officer: Prof Gillian Mary Bediako; second Africa Representative on INFEMIT networking team: Bishop Joshua Banda; Sub-regional Coordinators: Rev Prof Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana (West Africa); Rev Dr Albert Kabiro wa Gatumu, St Paul’s Theological Seminary, Limuru, Kenya (East Africa); Prof Anthony Balcomb, recently retired from SORAT, UKZN, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa (Southern Africa); Dr Solomon Andria, FATEAC, Côte d’Ivoire (Francophone Africa) and Rev Dr André Chitlango, Mozambique (Lusophone Africa).

14 ATF Commitments arising out of this meeting, which were shared with the INFEMIT summit, were: Sub-regional workshops and a continent-wide consultation around the following issues: Youth, Identity and Christianity in Africa; Power, Leadership and Africa’s changing religious and political landscapes; and Christianity and popular culture in Africa.

Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa
saw what was happening in the world Christian scene, and as Kwame Bediako affirmed more recently, what happens to world Christianity in the 21st century may well depend on how effectively African Christians rise to these challenges and how faithfully they reflect on, live out, and proclaim, the Gospel message entrusted to them.15

The ATF network exists, therefore, to enhance interaction on a continent-wide basis for the purpose of providing a forum for strengthening the African Christian scholarship needed to sustain Christian life and witness in Africa. Though it remains a network of persons, the idea is that the ATF also serves the institutions represented by its members, through its networking impact upon the members directly and through its activities.

To meet the challenge the ATF aims to engage with the whole range of realities that make up the African context, not merely with the ‘saving of souls’ narrowly defined. Christian witness necessitates holistic transformation, ‘bringing every thought captive to obey Christ.’ In time past the burning contemporary issues were ‘the Church in the African State’, and ‘The Christian faith and the African Renaissance’. As we came to realise at the March 2011 meeting, more recent emerging issues to engage with are ‘the Church and youth’ and questions of cultural and Christian identity.16 In other words, the ATF seeks to be alive to the social, political, cultural and religious currents that pose a challenge for the Church and need to be addressed with the Gospel. These issues may vary importance or may play out differently in the various sub-regions, but the point is to share across the sub-regions and learn from the respective findings and factor them into the academic curriculum, just as the earlier research has become integral to the academic programmes.

A further major ongoing concern of the ATF, through its networking and its academic programmes, is to encourage African Christian scholars to stay and work on the continent, to be sacrificially committed to making a difference in Africa, to choose to decline the lure of ‘greener pastures’ in the West. The ATF’s humble contribution is to promote a vision of African Christian scholarship and generate excitement for it, through the MTh and PhD programmes in particular. It seeks also to help alleviate scholarly frustrations by providing space for creative research through study projects, meaningful training and outlets for publications.

The common threads running through are the conviction that the African Church needs to develop its scholarly capacity, just in the earlier ages of the Church, and develop its own indigenous scholarly resources, and the firm belief that Africa does have unique indigenous resources to bring to bear on Africa’s issues. Scholarship, here, is understood as an activity of the Church, and not exclusively of the academy. Thus, the ATF academic programmes encourage thoughtful African Christians to engage in research and scholarly reflection, and to unearth grassroots theology for reflection, interpretation and wider dissemination, drawing on indigenous cultural and spiritual resources.

Yet the African church faces certain impediments in this task, in that Christian theology and scholarship have for so long been shaped by the church in the West. Currently, Western Christian scholarship is also under siege from the secular academy and is increasingly succumbing to a secular agenda. In addition, as the Western theological academy shrinks and its theological and missiological focus diminishes, it offers less and less space for African students and scholars to explore the crucial theological and missiological issues that concern the African church. The whole range of ATF academic activities, whether study projects, conferences, graduate study programmes at ACI, or publication activities in Regnum Africa and

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16 These were some of the issues identified at the conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, in March 2011, with a view to reviving the vision and charting a new course for the ATF in the coming years.
the *Journal of African Christian Thought*, are designed to provide space for African Christians at all levels to develop appropriate tools for research and to pursue the issues and concerns facing the African church, issues that are not at the forefront of any Western or Western Christian agenda, but which are vital for mission and witness in Africa and need to be shared with the world church.

**Conclusion**

In the 27 years of its existence, the ATF has aimed to play a part in deepening this understanding of the worldwide significance of African Christianity and the importance of sacrificial commitment to the task, and has sought to equip African Christian leaders and theological institutions to meet these challenges more effectively. The ATF has sought consciously and explicitly to strengthen and resource sub-regional centres of the ATF to function effectively within their contexts, as well as to engage in substantial continental interaction and co-operation. It has worked to develop an enabling environment for creative Christian scholarship in Africa, with a view to helping to reverse the brain drain of African expertise from African churches and theological institutions. It has made a distinctive contribution to the postgraduate training of African theological scholars through unique study and research programmes in the field of African Christianity. ¹⁷ While the postgraduate programmes continue on a firm footing at ACI, it is to be hoped that the revival of other activities of the ATF will mean the continuation and extension of these aims and objectives for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God.

**Bibliography**


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¹⁷ Culled from the objectives listed in an ATF Publicity Flyer, September 2003.

*Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa*
DOING POPULAR THEOLOGY THROUGH THE
INSTITUTE OF WOMEN IN RELIGION AND CULTURE

Mercy Oduyoye

The Institute of Women in Religion and Culture was inaugurated at Trinity Theological College (now Seminary TTS) at Legon, Ghana, in 1999. The start-up grant was made by Ford Foundation from the US. The aim was to advocate the establishment of Women’s Studies in Religion in theological institutions in Africa, beginning with Ghana and with TTS. This was a vision that the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians had developed. We knew that if it was to materialize, each one of us will have to unveil it in the institutions we are related to and in the countries we belong to. IWRC Ghana was the response to this Africa-wide agenda.

The Institute has accordingly concentrated on women-centered studies in religion and culture. It reaches out to students and faculty of departments of Religion, theological and Bible schools, organizations of women of faith and the young people related to them. The programmes are open to all faith communities and the general public. The objective is to promote gender sensitivity and gender justice especially in religion and culture. Envisioned as a human development project, it is being processed towards becoming a formal institution if the need for such is manifested in the response to its programmes.

Research into public issues related to religion and culture such as HIV and AIDS, witchcraft, people trafficking, religio-cultural enslavement, and domestic violence are promoted. We advise and mentor students, women and men, working on ecclesiological and missiological issues in relation to women. Researchers come to us because we have established a reading room of theological works on and by women. We have literature and journals of WCC and EATWOT and several other sources that enable researchers to sharpen their proposals.

As an institute promoting non-certificated theological education, both the curriculum and the participants are flexible. In fact the subjects under study usually follow the questions the participants bring. Since the aim is to stimulate action for transformation of attitudes and practices, we always provide opportunity for sessions in “faith communities” to deliberate on the most appropriate follow up events and actions.

In the twelve years of its existence, it has made available the muted voices of persons whose lives have to be on the agenda of theologians, faith communities, and governments. The programme has tabled for research and debate issues of women in religion and gender in church and society. It has been enabling participants to examine religious practices and to distill African cultures for their enduring humanizing principles and practices. Working with women in traditional leadership, IWRC has highlighted the authority of women in traditional society as a means of enhancing women’s voices and presence.

Looking into the Future

The project phase came to an end in 2007 but ad hoc events have been held to identify collaborators and foci that will promote the aims. The need for continuing the work of the institute has been clearly expressed in the interest shown in the event of the past five years. The need for this way of engaging life-issues theologically will be responded to in the future programmes.

The institute owns a conference centre (still a work in progress) named Talitha Qumi Centre (TQC). TQC is expected to generate income to support the future programmes. Reading and appropriating religious and cultural texts will be the centre of the Institute while we encourage research on the issues that will be identified by participants.
So far resource persons have been non-stipendiary. We have operated with a core staff of Director, Manager of the centre and a caretaker. The resource persons for the educational input and technical staff are co-opted and mostly volunteers.

Whatever forms the future tasks, the components of women religion and culture will be maintained and therefore the theological education ethos will be maintained.
The task of the seminary (Theological College) is to work alongside churches to assist in giving them resources for their manifold ministries in diverse missionary situations in a rapidly changing world. While establishing a symbiotic relationship, each must also maintain its distinctive contribution to the training process, providing a challenge to the other. The church calls for relevance, while the seminary (Theological College) emphasizes the need for theological integrity and critical evaluation. When they covenant to work closely together, they are able to sharpen one another and hold each other accountable.\(^1\)

The aim of this brief paper is to introduce readers to the Theological Education by Extension College (TEEC) based in Johannesburg, South Africa, and to update those who have watched this College grow and develop over the past 36 years.

**A Brief History of TEEC**

Apartheid South Africa was not an easy context for bringing men and women together for purposes of theological education. Draconian laws separated people on the basis of race; controlled their movements and where they might stay; imposed curfews and limited who might meet with whom – which made studying and living together in a residential context difficult. The inequalities of the country's educational systems and the disparate access to wealth and resources, particularly between urban and rural, exploded dramatically on the world stage with the violent suppression of the protests of 16 June 1976. These issues together with the gender biases in church leadership at that time left little common ground on which to build an ecumenical enterprise for theological education. The sin of Apartheid not only permeated South African society but also frustrated any meaningful attempt to engage theological education in a way that did not perpetuate or accommodate these divisions.

The Federal Theological Seminary (FEDSEM), at first based in Alice in the Eastern Cape, and then at Pietermaritzburg in Kwa-Zulu Natal, brought three residential colleges together into a combined ecumenical environment while maintaining denominational distinctiveness in each of the colleges. FEDSEM closed for a variety of reasons beyond the scope of this discussion and there has been no major attempt to recreate a similar institution.

Member churches of the South African Council of Churches considered various models of theological education being used in other parts of the world. In the early 70s Desmond Tutu was African director of the Theological Education Fund of the WCC, later to take up chairmanship of the South African Council of Churches. His extensive knowledge and experience of theological education across the African continent, together with a presentation by Ross Kinsler (who had pioneered a new form of distance-education by extension in South America), provided the impetus for the establishment of this College in order to circumvent the many and varied obstacles confronting the Southern Africa church. This created a new and unique opportunity for developing new church leadership for ministry in Southern Africa.

Agreeing to the formation of the College on 23 March 1976, several of the mainline churches of Southern Africa, including Roman Catholic and Protestant, established TEEC as an ecumenical college for

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\(^1\) Gibbs, E and Coffey, I., *Church Next. Quantum changes in Christian Ministry* (Leicester: IVP, 2001), 94. Bracketed text added by the authors of this article.
theological education in Southern Africa. Mandated to provide affordable, ecumenical and contextual theological education to students in Southern Africa regardless of location, background or access to resources, TEEC initially developed two short course programmes: the Award in Theology and the Certificate in Theology. These programmes catered to students of varied academic and language ability. The Award in Theology is currently being offered in five languages. The aim of these programmes was to form an educational bridge which allowed students to enter into various ministry capacities within their respective churches without the barrier of an incomplete formal secondary education.

In responding to the need for theological education at a tertiary level, several mainline churches together with TEEC and SACTE (the South African Council for Theological Education) established the “Joint Board for the Diploma in Theology”. The Joint Board was a community of colleges which worked from a common framework for the Diploma in Theology and issued the Diploma in the name of the Joint Board. While the programme design was held in common, the course content and formative assessments were conducted independently by each college. The summative assessments for each course, whether an assignment or examination, were set and approved by the Joint Board for all the participating colleges. The common assessment and moderation process meant that the member colleges had mutual oversight of their peers. This peer review mechanism provided the validation for churches to accept the Joint Board Diploma in Theology as an appropriate theological qualification for ministry.

The changes brought about by the collapse of Apartheid and the coming to power of the unbanned ANC as the first democratically elected government of South Africa saw the chronic need for open access to education placed at centre stage. While public schooling and state owned universities struggled under the weight of this vastly increased demand, many entrepreneurial people saw an opportunity to establish a plethora of private schools and higher education institutions. It was soon apparent that this new industry required stringent regulation as students fell prey to unscrupulous colleges issuing worthless qualifications. Educational legislation was radically revised.

Under this new legislation, the Joint Board was forced to disband and each participating college was required to register individually with the Department of Higher Education. The “Joint Board Diploma in Theology” could not be owned or administered jointly. Each college was required to offer its own qualifications to be accredited by the Council for Higher Education, and if successful, to then be registered with the South African Qualifications Authority. Complications and technicalities, as well as limited resources, frustrated many of the Joint Board colleges in negotiating this change. TEEC was the first Joint Board College to successfully make this transition.

**Education by Extension**

The model of theological education by extension is based on the important and reciprocal relationship between the College and the Church. This is expressed practically in two distinct ways.

First is the local support base that the church provides to students within the distance-learning context. While students participate in formal study programmes through the College they are motivated, supported and tutored locally through the formal and informal structures of the various supporting churches. The spiritual formation of students and their exposure to the theological, spiritual and liturgical distinctives of their denomination also takes place within the local context. Ecumenical tutorial groups are a wonderfully interactive, stimulating and supportive environment for TEEC students. In some instances students travel up to 250 kilometres to attend a tutorial.

The second practical expression of the extension relationship is that the College does not concentrate theological expertise within the institution, but rather recognises and accesses the theological and ministerial expertise that residing in the clergy, laity, and those ministering within the religious life of supporting churches. Markers, tutors, course advisors, examiners, course writers and mentors et al. are not
College staff, but are already working within the church, industry or education and are then contracted for specific services to the College and students.

This means that the on-site academic staff complement is extremely small when compared to the academic staff of most seminaries or other theological education facilities. The College-based staff largely coordinates this diverse group of contracted experts and provide the framework and administration which draws these skills together in a manner that strengthens the programmes and is compliant with education legislation. This also serves to uphold the College’s mandate to provide programmes that meet the current and contextual training needs of the Church as the College produces its own course content through contracting current practitioners of relevant disciplines. Often these same people also have a responsibility for and an involvement in the discernment and authorising processes for ministerial candidacy and formation in their own denominations, and are therefore able to write appropriately.

Many TEEC students study for personal growth rather than towards ordination. The College does not require students to be sanctioned by their church before enrolment, but students may enrol and study independently. However, due to the practical nature of tasks and assignments, students are still required to work closely with their local ministers and church officers. Students who are recognised by their denomination as preparing for formal recognition of ministry also participate in the additional formational and training structures of their own churches.

The dissolution of the Joint Board and the phase-out of its Diploma required TEEC to register its own Diploma – the Diploma in Theology and Ministry. The changed legislation allowed Colleges such as TEEC the opportunity to offer undergraduate degrees (previously the sole preserve of the public universities). Therefore, a Bachelor of Theology was developed alongside the Diploma in Theology and Ministry – both being offered for the first time in 2005. The new programmes followed the model of outcomes-based education, which is described by a former TEEC Director, Dr Tony Moodie. Although the South African educational environment has now moved away from outcomes-based education, the College’s programmes continue to work with its basic methodology as it is ideally suited to a context of education for practical ministerial application.

The first significant revision to the new educational legislation saw the framework for Diplomas being altered to the extent that our Diploma in Theology and Ministry no longer fits the legal framework, and our new three-year Diploma in Theology was developed to replace it. At the same time the College developed and registered another tertiary programme, the one-year Higher Certificate in Theology.

More Recently

Year after year, even in a depressed economy, TEEC has continued to experience a growth in enrolment and the number of courses taken. In 2012 a total of 3 420 students registered for 8 481 courses in six academic programmes. Students represent 28 denominations and range in age from 18 to 91 (average of 46). The majority of students reside in South Africa and represent all provinces. All neighbouring countries, and even a few further afield, are represented in the student body. This makes TEEC the largest provider of theological education in the African continent.

Given the problems of South African secondary schooling, both past and current, the new Higher Certificate in Theology was designed as a stepping-stone programme, particularly for mature students who have been out of formal education for some time. This gives them the opportunity to flex their academic muscles on a shorter, achievable programme that has significant progression options so that the study time on this programme is not “wasted” if they then move on to a Diploma or Degree. An unexpected development is that some institutions are viewing our Higher Certificate as an opportunity to test a

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student’s academic ability in a supported distance-learning environment before accepting them into full-time residential (and expensive) programmes at their own institutions.

The College sees two types of students – those who register to complete a programme in order to achieve a particular qualification, and those who register only for certain courses of interest or who select courses that meet a particular requirement for ministry in their denomination. These students produce a high throughput but do not produce graduates. With a track record spanning three decades TEEC has been able to develop staff and fee structures that serve these non-standard uses of its programmes within our context while keeping courses and qualifications affordable for ordinary people.

Our lower programmes also attract donor sponsorship as these courses are used by the most marginalised and poorest people. As a non-profit organisation our operating expenses are kept fairly tight, yet the work of the College is certainly blessed. In 2013 student fees will remain at 2012 levels in spite of increased general consumer costs. A recent survey found that students can complete a three-year Bachelor of Theology Degree through the College for the same price as one year’s tuition at a middle class, Johannesburg suburban high school. Another theological institution, in the same city, offers their Bachelor of Theology at three times the price.

Unlike full-time students most TEEC students take two or three courses per year as they continue in their employment, serve in local congregations and care for their families. This means a three-year programme is completed over a longer period – usually taking five to seven years. These studies are very often paid for by the student, without much sponsorship from their church.

As highlighted in a recent presentation by Bishop Peter Lee\textsuperscript{3}, Chairman of the Board of TEEC, there are three advantages to denominations partnering with TEEC to educate their students for the ministry. The first is that it is an affordable model which allows churches to educate a greater number of leaders on their training budgets. The second reason is a theological one, in that the extension model moves theological education out of the domain of the elite and makes it accessible to students from a much broader socio-economic base. As members of Christ’s body, training is provided for all Christians to fulfil their ministry with greater excellence, even if they are not pursuing ordination. The third reason is that those who were previously excluded from ministry due to their commitments to their family or local congregation, are now given the opportunity to live out God’s call to be responsible members of their communities and at the same time fulfil God’s call to ministry. This has also positively impacted the number of women who are able to engage with theological studies, and the college has a male/female ratio of 54:46 in the student body.

\textbf{Legislative Changes}

South Africa has seen a number of significant legislative changes in the past few years. The Qualifications Act has been revised (2008), the Higher Education sub-framework of the National Qualifications Framework has undergone major changes (2011), and the Companies Act (including the international issue of corporate governance) is now in effect (2011), together with the changes to the country’s Financial Acts.

In earlier years government largely left the independent colleges unregulated. The Education Act (1997) required the College to be registered as a Section 21 Company (Not for Profit) as it moved to independence from the Joint Board. The College retained its Council comprised of representatives from the College’s member churches as an expression and mechanism of the Extension relationship. The business of the College was carried out by its Directors.

The new Companies Act redefined the responsibilities and liabilities of Directors and required that companies be governed by a Board of Directors. The College Council agreed at the 2012 AGM to

\footnote{TEECA 2011 Annual Report, 3.}

\textit{Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa}
implement the required changes with representatives of the member churches signing the incorporating documents for the ‘new’ legal entity, now a Non-Profit Company replacing the Section 21 Company. Regulatory and Statutory compliance, together with fiduciary accountability, is quite onerous for an institution as small as TEEC. While some of the new hurdles have been difficult to overcome, the change has provided an opportunity to substantially review the governance of the College even though the day-to-day business has remained largely unaffected.

The out-going Council expressed concern that the College, the last major ecumenical institution of its kind in Southern Africa, might now simply be viewed as another independent enterprise. Although the governance of the College has changed significantly the new Board specifically committed itself to the founding principles and mandate of the College established in 1976, and the Directors are exploring a greater range of levels of contact between the College and its supporting churches now that there are no longer representatives sitting together in Council. Memoranda of Understanding are but one mechanism being established.

**Models of Training**

Worldwide, and especially during the global economic downturn, the model of theological education for clergy training is constantly under review by the churches. On the one hand there are leaders within every denomination who were trained within residential seminaries and deem that model to be best for training the next generation of ministers. There are some definite advantages to full time residential education. The first advantage is that students have less demand on their time and can spend greater amounts of time to focus on study and participate in the formational life of the seminary. The second advantage is that students live in close proximity to leaders who oversee their spiritual formation, which helps impart the theological, spiritual and liturgical specificities of their denomination or theological tradition outside the confines of a classroom. Students will also build a peer-network which will serve them in future years. There are also a number of disadvantages to this model. They are expensive to establish and maintain. These seminaries largely use a face-to-face model for student interaction. This requires a large number of fairly skilled and talented academic personnel to be on staff. The double disadvantage is that this often takes some of the denominations finest ministers out of congregational ministry, and at the same time encumbers the denomination with a large draw down on their budget. In addition, many of these denominations give their students a small stipend while studying.

The other school of thought advocates that students remain within a local congregation, usually retaining a secular job or take on a minor job within the congregation, and study part-time. This approach too has definite advantages. Students remain grounded in congregational life, and as they are learning and applying their knowledge simultaneously these students gain wisdom rather than just knowledge. The second advantage is that these students work side-by-side with leaders involved in ministry, not only learning from their words, but learning from their actions and attitudes too. There are many fine ministers serving in congregations all over the world who can take an “apprentice” under their wing. Students not only support themselves and their families during this training period but they largely cover the costs of their own training, at times supplemented by the local congregation they serve. Disadvantages include the isolation that students experience, together with a lack of opportunity for wider interaction unless also involved in the regional support and training programmes of the church. Students are located by virtue of where they live or work and the local church leader may not be an ideal trainer of new ministers (unlike the hand-picked seminary staff). The locality might have meagre access to supporting study resources. Employment may prohibit options for moving a candidate minister into other ministry situations and therefore wider exposure to the church in the training period might be limited. Part-time students progress more slowly through their formal studies and some denominations find this problematic.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
The extremes of these two approaches highlight a variety of issues: students either becoming estranged from their home or sending community, or their world becoming largely limited to that context only; students either delve into a rich and stimulating theoretical academic study, or their theological reflection is largely in terms of “what’s practical and how to do that”; communities either lose their ‘shinning stars’ to the distant seminary and wait in expectation for the return of the ‘expert’, or they must learn to live with the ‘youngster’ who is still imperfectly finding his or her feet in their midst.

This ongoing debate within mainline churches in Southern Africa has not found any easy answers to date. With the demise of the Joint Board and the peer-review mechanism for mutual support and accountability for church seminaries, many denominations are now investing significant amounts of money in establishing, upgrading or further developing independently registered residential institutions for theological education largely in isolation from one another. Even these moves have generated controversy and debate in the respective denominations.

The Southern African churches are still exploring the balance between using their own training facilities and curricula (usually residential) alongside the programmes offered by TEEC (through distance-learning by extension). Where churches are in conversation with the College, which is already producing wonderfully synergistic diverse and cost-effective scenarios, better training and learning experiences for students ensue.

### Concerns in Delivering Theological Education

Regardless of the final model or combination of methods chosen, there are significant dynamics and concerns that affect the delivery of theological education in southern Africa.

It is difficult to uproot families, or conversely to split families, for the student to attend extended residential training. Additionally, particularly in rural areas, the students have been identified for training because they have already engaged leadership and ministerial roles in their community. If all of TEEC’s 3420 students were moved into residence for just one year, not only would the costs be astronomical, but the local church in several places would stagnate or collapse. Those who have shown ability and now emerge as potential theological students usually play a significant role within the support and care network of their own extended family. To remove them, even just through distance, can compromise that social structure.

Residential training often has limited space and ‘excess’ students need to be refused. This runs counter to the advantage provided by ‘economies of scale’ and can lock a smaller institution into tighter financial constraints. This will usually have the knock-on effect of trying to balance a smaller administrative and academic staff complement to meet the seminary’s educational goal while maintaining its standards and meeting the required statutory obligations. Balancing skill sets and competencies together with relevant fields of knowledge in the midst of the competing demands within a denominational pool of expertise can be quite challenging and draining.

Almost a decade after the dissolution of the Joint Board most seminaries are still somewhere on the path towards full registration and accreditation. Until that is finalised their students’ work and final qualification will remain unrecognised outside the denomination or within the wider education sector in South Africa. While this study path meets denomination requirements for licensing or ordination, it frustrates future attempts at post-graduate study.

Most public universities have closed their theological faculties, or have amalgamated them into schools of Religion or the Classics. Where theological study is offered at university-level, even in the distance-learning environment, this is either generalised or secularised, and often has no direct relationship to the local church or denomination.


**TEEC as a Tool for the Local Church**

While some denominations are investing significantly in establishing their own facilities, other smaller church seminaries are entering into training partnerships with TEEC. This College is registered in its own right and is not an accrediting body, therefore students from other smaller seminaries complete TEEC programmes while living and working in the context of their own church training environment. Those seminary staff members act in a tutoring capacity for the TEEC coursework which they supplement with lessons specific to their denominational or theological traditions, or from their own knowledge and ministerial experience.

Denominations that are also preparing second-career students for ministry also make use of TEEC programmes so that their students benefit from the distance-learning by extension model without the need to relocate. Denominations that lack financial resources or have limited residential space also make use of TEEC programmes for their students.

Some denominational training committees have adopted a two-stage approach whereby new students beginning their studies are enrolled with TEEC and remain in their home environment. These students will complete a prescribed course load after which they are required to transfer to the denomination’s seminary. In these instances students will finally complete their studies through TEEC and graduate with a TEEC qualification. Students who study this way have access to post-graduate studies elsewhere.

Aside from the mainline denominations, relationships are developing between the College and many smaller church groups from the Pentecostal, Charismatic or African Independent Church traditions. These church groups have historically undertaken the training of their ministers within small Bible schools, usually operating out of a local congregation. With a desire to experience the theological breadth and depth of mainline Christianity, and in order to establish externally maintained criteria for training prior to ordination, these groupings have registered students with TEEC. Some of these students study on their own, while others still attend training and evening tutorials at their local church.

**Theological Education for Laity**

While TEEC provides theological education for those preparing for ordination, the greater number of students are lay people who are studying for personal growth or in order to be better equipped for involvement in congregational ministry. In an academic climate where most colleges and universities are seeking to shift their focus to post-graduate qualifications, TEEC has chosen to head in the opposite direction and develop resources for laity. In anticipation of rapidly changing ministerial roles within congregations, TEEC is seeking to equip people to function within a team ministry model, rather than the traditional Southern African model of “one full-time minister per congregation”.

Many ministers in Southern Africa have oversight of at least one congregation, sometimes as many as thirty. Due to the challenges of ministry in the third world most ministers also have interim oversight of additional congregations which are vacant charges (not under the oversight of their own minister). In these instances the ministers rely heavily on the local leaders and the laity licensed for ministry for conducting worship services, funerals, and counselling. The goal of TEEC is not only to equip those preparing for ministry, but to also equip the local leadership team to minister more effectively within their own communities.

**Challenges**

These issues faced by this College are not unique to Southern Africa but would apply in many parts of Africa. TEEC as an institution has departed from the traditional model of Theological Education by Extension as first established in South America and still practiced in many parts of the world. Learning
from that worldwide experience and then finding solutions through the application of a unique model that is relevant to our history and context has enabled this College to grow and develop successfully into the institution it has become. Recognising that this College was built on the example and inspiration of others, so in turn TEEC has assisted with the development of TEE programmes in other parts of Africa (e.g. Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique). While the application of the principles and philosophy of TEE may vary across contexts it remains a vital model that can be used to equip a rapidly growing church.

Harnessing resources to serve the training needs of the Church is a continuing challenge for the College. Having achieved financial self-sufficiency for operational expenses, and blessed with donors who actively support the development plans of the College, all that remains is to find men and women who wish to add their theological and educational expertise to the developmental and oversight work of the College’s study programmes. For several years TEEC has been blessed by the services of a mission enabler from Global Ministries. It is these types of secondments and employment opportunities that create capacity within TEEC so that we can engage the work of “Equipping anyone, anywhere for ministry”.

**Bibliography**


Introduction

Theological education on the African continent has always been associated with men in the areas of training and literature production. This understanding of theological education was inherited from missionaries from the global North who brought Christianity to Africa at various historical periods. The approach to theological education began to be challenged in the early 1960s when the African countries began to gain political independence from colonial governments and when mission churches were also being handed over to African leadership. During this time, there was a growing need for trained African leaders for the African community. It was at this time that Mercy Amba Oduyoye, the mother of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (hereafter the Circle), took a decision to train in the field of Theology at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. This paper examines the contribution of the Circle to theological education in Africa. In our exploration of the Circle’s contribution to theology in Africa, first, we discuss the history of the Circle. Second, we delineate the various activities carried out by the Circle in its endeavour to contribute to theological education. Third, we examine the challenges that the Circle has faced and the prospects for continuing to be authentic and contextual in the research and publications contributed by its members.

The Birth of the Circle as a New Wave in Theological Education in Africa

By the end of the 1980s the Circle emerged as one of the theological associations on the continent that challenged the missionary approach to doing theology in Africa. The founder Mercy Amba Oduyoye had this to say about the Circle:

For me the Circle appeared when I found myself sitting at a table with ten male colleagues at a departmental meeting and I was asked to go and bring tea for all. We had the tea – but it was not I who brought it! I went home and mulled over this experience asking myself how many African women were in this predicament of being the sole woman among men theologians… I decided I had to find these women. I combed theological colleges, seminaries and departments of Religion in Africa.3

Oduyoye found the women through various networking systems such as: the conference of women seminarians organised by Brigalia Bam in 1976; the All Africa Conference of Churches women’s desk with the help of Isabel Johnson; and the Christian Council of Nigeria through the conference that was organised by Daisy Obi. After nine years of silence, Oduyoye found herself once more in a solitary place at The Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) conference where she continued to lobby for women to form an association. The climax of these meetings began in 1987 when Oduyoye was Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. In addition to Brigalia Bam and Musimbi

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Kanyoro, who worked with Oduyoye to form the Circle, Oduyoye singles out the contribution of John Pobee, who was then the Executive Secretary for the Programme in Theological Education\(^3\) of the World Council of Churches, as having been very influential in the formation of the Circle. Pobee adopted the vision of the Circle as his own project, helped to raise funds and provided administrative services for the first Pan-African conference of 1989.\(^4\) Pobee’s involvement in the inception of the Circle confirms three very important points: first, the Circle was born out of the need for theological education that addressed the gender question in Africa. Second, the African women theologians’ partnership with African male theologians has always been part of the Circle’s agenda. Last, the Circle emerged as a part of a general wave in Africa to strengthen Theological Education which was relevant to the African context.

### Circle Pan African Conferences and Circle Leadership

The Circle was officially inaugurated in September in 1989 at Trinity Theological College in Legon, Ghana, under the vibrant and able leadership of Mercy Amba Oduyoye. The road to Ghana was nurtured by the International planning committee which was composed mainly of women from Africa who were also members of EATWOT.\(^5\) These women defined their purpose for wanting to form the Circle as a commitment to address the lack of theological literature from women of Africa that would enrich theological studies in African theological institutions. Musimbi Kanyoro observes that women were also aware of the limited number of women enrolled in seminaries since seminary education was linked to ordination and many churches had not yet started ordaining women. During this period, most universities on the continent had not yet opened up faculties of theology.\(^6\) Despite this fact, there were members who came from secular universities and were familiar with the departments of Religious Studies as places where theology was being offered. The Circle created space for more women to research and publish in the field of theology. It became a safe space for women to do communal theology as they told and wrote their stories.

The first Pan African Conference of the Circle encouraged the African women to stand up for themselves. Thus its theme was “The Will to Arise”. It should also be noted that the first group of leadership who gave birth to the Circle were not elected, but volunteered themselves to provide leadership of the Circle. The spirit of volunteering has continued in the zones where the Circle chapters have been formed.

In 1996, the second Pan African Conference took place in Nairobi, Kenya with the theme “Transforming Power, Women in the Household of God”. The first election of Circle leadership took place

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\(^3\) The Programme on Theological Education was later renamed Ecumenical Theological Education.


at the Nairobi conference in 1996, where Musimbi Kanyoro became the first elected General Coordinator of the Circle. The third Pan African Conference took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in August 2002 with the theme “Sex, Stigma and HIV and AIDS: African Women Challenging Religion, Culture and Social Practices”. Isabel Apaawo Phiri was the second elected General Coordinator of the Circle at the Addis Ababa conference. The fourth Pan African Conference of the Circle was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, under the theme: “The Girl Child, Women, Religion and HIV and AIDS in Africa: A Gendered Perspective”. Fulata Mbano Moyo became the third General Coordinator of the Circle elected at the Yaoundé conference in 2007. The Circle is currently planning for the fifth Pan African conference of the Circle to be held in Mozambique.

Besides the Pan African conferences, there are also regional conferences which take place every two years. The universities and seminaries where there are Circle members present develop into chapters of the Circle for networking. Although publishing is a requirement, all women are welcome to join the Circle since the Circle is also a forum for mentorship of the emerging scholars for research and publication. Wherever Circle members gather, besides the presentation of conference papers, it also becomes a forum where new PhDs, publications and promotion are celebrated. The Circle members who have died are also acknowledged.

Research and Publication

The main mission of the Circle is to undertake research, writing and publishing on African issues from women’s perspectives. Therefore, its vision is to empower African women to contribute their critical thinking and analysis to advance whatever has been identified as current knowledge. The Circle bibliography, compiled by Lilian Siwila, contains all the Circle publications and is the main resource where all Circle publications are recorded. In addition to Circle books, it has now become the ‘in thing’ for many theologians to include the voice of the Circle members when they are editing books on theology and religion in Africa. It is no wonder then that Maluleke, one of the prominent male African Theologians, has argued that fresh theology in Africa is coming from the Circle, especially as they grapple with issues of human sexuality and HIV and AIDS.

In order to equip Circle members with skills to do research, to theologically reflect on the information and to write, it became a necessity for the Circle members to promote the theological education of African women; the inclusion of gender issues in the theological curriculum; and the establishment of centres for the study of African Women in Religion and Culture in the different theological institutions in Africa. We now turn to the three points as follows:

Promoting the Theological Education of African Women

The Circle encourages women to study theology. It connects African women with donors who are interested in promoting the theological education of African women. The African women theologians who are lecturers in theological institutions also promote the recruitment of African women to study

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8 The Circle annotated bibliography contains published books, edited books, book chapters, journal articles and other forms of publication from the Circle women. Unfortunately the annotated bibliography has not been updated since 2007. We are aware that there have been a number of books and articles published by Circle members that need to be entered into the bibliography. This document can be found on the Circle website at www.thecirclecawt.org.


10 The Ecumenical Theological Education of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, The Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland (EMW in Germany), The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the Yale Divinity School in the USA have been some of the Circle partners in the theological education of African women.
theology. They work with women in the churches and in their community to conscientise women about gender issues in the religious institutions and in the society.

**Engendering Theological Education in Africa**

One of the major contributions of the Circle to theological education in Africa has been in the area of advocacy for gender issues in the theological and religious studies curriculum. In order to unify the contribution of the Circle in this area, the Circle initiated a curriculum writing project in 2004 under the sponsorship of the Ecumenical Theological Education of The World Council of Churches. A writing workshop was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, which was attended by sixteen Circle scholars from different academic institutions, to design a theological curriculum that was gender-sensitive for different levels of training. The engendered theological curriculum was to be ecumenical and inter-religious, relevant for all academic institutions offering theology and/or religious studies in Africa. The areas that needed to be addressed included: Systematic Theology, Ethics, African Theology, Missiology, Practical Theology, Pastoral Care and Counselling, Christian Education, Biblical Studies, History of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and African Religions. Each module provided a detailed bibliography to assist all the lecturers who wanted to include gender issues in their discipline, or those who wanted to offer a complete programme in Gender and Theology/Religion could do so with guidance. Unfortunately the project was not completed because we realised that it was a big order to fill. There were serious gaps in the information we had collected which could have rendered the project inadequate if we were to circulate it in its current form. This is a project that can be carried out in the near future.

**The Establishment of Centres for the Study of African Women in Religion and Culture**

When the Circle was established, it became clear that it was launching an academic field of study, not just a method of doing theology. Three institutions chose to carry out the project of the establishment of centres for the study of African Women in Religion and Culture. These were: the School of Theology at the then University of Natal in South Africa,11 St Paul’s University in Kenya, and the Institute for Religion and Culture in Ghana. What all these institutions have in common is the existence of Circle members who provided leadership for the establishment of centres for the study of Gender and Religion. In the case of KwaZulu-Natal, the institution hosted the administration of the Circle from 2002 to 2012. The school established a post in Gender and Religion. With the partnership of Isabel Phiri and Sarojini Nadar, this institution attracted postgraduate students from all over the continent who graduated with BTh honours, Masters and PhDs in Gender and Religion. Ecumenical Theological Education also funded a significant number of PhD students from the Gender and Religion programme, of whom five graduated in 2011. Esther Mombo provided leadership of the Circle centre at St Paul’s University. Funding from the Ecumenical Theological Education programme of the World Council of Churches made it possible for St Paul’s University to offer scholarships to women to study theology, to equip the library with Circle books, and constructed programmes in Gender and Religion. The Institute of Religion and Culture in conjunction with the department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Ghana became another Centre for the study of African Women Theologies. The presence of Mercy Oduyoye and Elizabeth Amoah in those institutions strengthened the visibility of the Circle’s concerns. The identification of the three centres runs the risk of sidelining the great work done by others, including Miranda Pillay at University of Western Cape in South Africa, Rachel Nyagongwe Fiedler at Mzuzu University in Malawi, Musa Dube at

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11 When the University of Natal merged with the University of Durban Westville in 2005, a new University of KwaZulu-Natal was created, as well as the School of Religion and Theology (SORAT). In 2012 there was a further reorganisation which led to the formation of The School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics which comprises of the following five focus areas: Religion, Theology, Philosophy, Ethics, and Classics.
Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in the Theological Curriculum in Africa

One of the outstanding contributions of the Circle to theological education is through its call to mainstream HIV and AIDS in the theological curriculum. This was based on the acknowledgement that HIV and AIDS is gendered. Worldwide and continentally, the Circle has been commended for its response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic through literature its production. Most of the literature on HIV and AIDS generated by the Circle members is being used as resource material in theological institutions. Although Dube’s review on the Circle’s work showed that there are few responses from Circle members on how they have mainstreamed HIV and AIDS in their classes, departments and policies, the situation on the ground gives a different picture. As shown in the article by Nadar and Phiri in this publication, the Circle collaborated with EHAIA of the World Council of Churches in the development of the HIV and AIDS curriculum that is being used in most of the theological Institutes and universities. Furthermore, the Circle worked with EHAIA at St. Paul’s University to introduce Diploma, Degree, and Masters Programmes on HIV and AIDS counselling at the university.

The Circle also partnered with Yale Divinity School in collaboration with Yale School of Epidemiology and Public Health on a programme called Gender, Faith and Responses to HIV and AIDS in Africa from 2002 to 2007. This programme is also well articulated in the article by Nadar and Phiri. The Circle is also aware of the warning from Nzegwu who uses the theory of gender imperialism in the academia to demonstrate how hierarchal relationships of dominance and subordination work between elite racially privileged women and elite racially disadvantaged women of third world countries. She questions the institutionalised authority and privileges that create power relations in a professional environment. Nzegwu examines the extent to which these power relations influence authorial production of knowledge in the academia. In response to Nzegwu, we do agree that gender imperialism, principles of difference, power relations and cultural diversity is prevalent in knowledge production. We are also aware of the impact of colonialism and missionaries to African scholarship and thus keep asking ourselves these crucial questions: How do we relate to our sisters in the west in view of these factors? What kind of post-colonial tools can we use to critique such kind of oppression? In attempting to respond to these challenges African women have first of all identified the point of different while holding on to the spirit of sisterhood with the sisters from the west. The Circle is an all-inclusive place comprising of members from different racial, cultural and religious diversity. It is this kind of ‘unity in diversity’ that makes the Circle a unique association from the rest of the theological associations on the African continent. This uniqueness has also facilitated the production of knowledge as the Circle invites professionals from different regional and religious backgrounds both in Africa and in the Diaspora. Therefore African women theologians have learnt to celebrate difference as part of their identity. In as much as we do agree with the arguments above it is also imperative to state that African women theologians have invited women of American, Asiatic and European origin to participate in all its activities. This however does not mean that we are not aware of the author’s argument that imperialism is implicit in the structures of western academia and encoded in its process in the production of knowledge.

13 For further details see the work of Phiri and Nadar in this publication.
14 For more details see Dube, “In the Circle of Life.”

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Circle Communication

Circle Directory, the Newsletter and Website

One of the ways in which the Circle has marketed itself is through networking. From 1989 to 2007 the Circle introduced a directory which contained names and addresses of all the Circle members. The directory was distributed to all Circle members and donors. The directory served as a form of networking among the Circle members and was updated yearly.\(^{16}\) The Circle also introduced newsletters\(^{17}\) which were published twice a year and sent to all Circle members, partners and donors. The aim of the newsletters was to update Circle members on what is happening in the life of the Circle as drawn from the Circle chapters and from the coordinator’s desk. Some of the information found on the newsletters included announcements of new Circle chapters, upcoming conferences, scholarships for women’s studies, newly published books, and calls for articles and announcements of Circle members who have been promoted or have graduated. The newsletters proved to be one of the most effective forms of networking among all members. Other forms of networking that are currently used are emails and the Circle website. In future, the Circle should make good use of social media to embrace forms of communication which are very familiar to the emerging scholars. Having discussed the Circle’s contribution to theological education, it is also imperative to state that the Circle has faced challenges in its endeavour to contribute to theological education. Below are some of the challenges faced by the Circle

Challenges of Circle Contribution to Theological Education

The first challenge is a limited number of Circle members who are actually researching and publishing. Although the Circle directory shows that there are more than 600 Circle members from Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone, those who are active in writing and publishing are few, as indicated by the bibliography of the Circle, and they are predominantly from Anglophone Africa. The second challenge is identifying gaps in the topics that the Circle women are writing about. Musa Dube’s 2009 articles\(^{18}\) in Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV is an example of the Circle critiquing its own work and identifying where the gaps are in its publications. Unfortunately there has not been a strategic plan on how to systematically fill the gaps in research.

The third challenge is acceptance of the Circle work by church leaders. Despite the fact that there has been a positive response to theological education for women in seminaries and universities across the continent, most of the churches still struggle to recognise women trained in theology. Even the churches that have accepted the ordination of women have not been able to utilize the full potential of women’s theological education. As a result of these factors, most theological institutes still find it difficult to offer courses related to women in ministry or gender studies.

The fourth challenge is the non-availability of Circle literature online in order to increase accessibility by theological institutions. Although the Circle has a website, the information that is currently on the website is not a sufficient resource for theological education. The Circle needs to post articles, eBooks and other relevant educational information like courses offered in various theological institutions. Lastly, the Circle needs to continue working towards introducing new ways of doing theology in the respective institutions. While embracing their core value, which is the response to issues affecting women, the Circle needs to take further steps and deal with other pressing issues affecting girls, boys and men in Africa.

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\(^{16}\) During the leadership of Isabel Phiri 2002-2007, the Circle directory was compiled and updated by Beverly Haddad. The updates assisted in keeping up with the membership as well as identifying the movements of members.

\(^{17}\) See samples on Circle website: www.thecirclecawt.org.

\(^{18}\) For more information see Dube, “In the Circle of Life.”

Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa
Prospects for Improvement of Circle Contribution to Theological Education

We have identified five areas on which the Circle can work in order to ensure it remains relevant to theological education. First, the Circle needs to remain focused on its initial vision of research and publication for theological education in Africa. This is a niche which no other faith-based women’s organisation is filling. The Circle is the leader in this vision. Second, the Circle needs to take advantage of improved methods of communication by putting its publications and courses on the internet in order to increase its visibility and accessibility of its publications. Third, the Circle should not lose momentum in networking among its members. Again it is about building on the good practice that was already started. The loose leadership structure allows new chapters to mushroom wherever Circle members are found. Every Circle member is an ambassador for the Circle vision. Fourth, during the leadership of Musimbi Kanyoro, the idea of having a Circle press was mooted. This vision should be maintained and be linked with e-publishing of Circle work for maximum circulation and impact. Lastly, there is a need for the Circle to be self-reliant by working against donor dependence. In 2007, the idea of conference participants contributing towards their own expenses was initiated. Some Circle members were able to pay for their own expenses just as they do when they attend South African joint conferences in the field of Religion and Theology.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has examined the role of the Circle in shaping theological education in Africa. The work and life of the Circle from its inception to the present has been discussed with special focus on some of the activities that the Circle has been involved in, in the promotion of theological education in Africa. Following what has been discussed in this article, we can conclude that the Circle has made a significant contribution to theological education in Africa through its main objective of researching and publishing, with gender as a tool of analysis. However there is also a need for the Circle to develop systems that will make its literature more accessible to the public while aiming at developing an authentic discipline of African Women’s Theologies which continues to be inter-disciplinary and multi-sectoral. Use of social media was identified as one of the means of communication that the Circle should be using to attract and reach out to emerging scholars, and increase communication among Circle scholars.

Bibliography


1. Presentation

Le CEPROFORE est un outil de l’Eglise au service de sa mission prophétique de Togo. L’Ecole Biblique, aujourd’hui CEPROFORE (Centre Protestant de Formation et de Rencontre) et UPAO (Université Protestante d’Afrique de l’Ouest, Campus Togo) est aujourd’hui géographiquement située à Atakpamé à 165 km de distance de Lomé la capitale Togolaise. Cette ville (Atakpamé) Chef lieu de région est au carrefour de plusieurs routes menant vers toutes les grandes villes du pays et vers les pays limitrophes: le Ghana, le Bénin, le Burkina Faso. C’est une ville commerciale et administrative et elle rassemble au niveau de l’EEPT, 17 districts avec 143 paroisses, 19 pasteurs, 144 catéchistes dont 107 volontaires.

Le CEPROFORE reste le lieu de formation des ouvriers de l’Eglise. Il a vu le jour sous l’appellation Séminaire en 1864 à Ho (Ghana) sous la direction des missionnaires Allemands HAUSSER et ZUNTER.

Pour des raisons de guerres successives, tant sur le plan national que international, le séminaire fut transféré à Agou en 1921 pour la partie Togolaise. Aujourd’hui le Ghana a son séminaire à Peki.

En 1928 le Togo transfert de nouveau son séminaire à GOBE (aujourd’hui OKOU). La raison évoquée est la suivante: « éloigner les élèves le plus loin possible du monde ». GOBE était en pleine brousse et difficile d’accès.

En 1938 pourtant le séminaire fut de nouveau transféré à Atakpamé son lieu actuel. Il y a également une raison pour cela: Atakpamé est un carrefour d’une part et la colline qui abrite le séminaire est plantée d’arbres fleuris fruitiers et ressemble fort bien à un jardin célèbre (Eden ?).

Le souci pour l’Eglise a toujours été et demeure la formation de ses cadres. Pour la petite histoire tous les Modérateurs de l’Eglise depuis des décennies ont tous été élèves du séminaire. L’actuel Modérateur ne déroge pas à la règle.

Depuis toujours l’Eglise Evangélique Presbytérienne du Togo (EEPT) a travaillé en collaboration avec l’Eglise Protestante Méthodiste du Bénin (EPMB) pour la formation de leurs ouvriers au séminaire.

Aujourd’hui pour encadrer la formation, le CEPROFORE dispose de:

1. Au plan du personnel

- deux pasteurs dont un (docteur en théologie,) est le Directeur du Centre. L’autre est doctorant. Ils sont appuyés par les pasteurs docteurs et le titulaires d’un DEA (masters,) de l’Eglises. Des appuis en ressources humaines viennent également du Campus de Porto-Novo ;
- d’un professeur de langue nationale et en même temps bibliothécaire ;
- d’une secrétaire sténographe ;
- d’un comptable ;
- de deux agents d’entretien ;
- d’un catéchiste qui s’occupe en même temps du programme agro-pastoral ;

2. Au plan de l’infrastructure

Il ya cinq grandes villas, cinq studios, un réfectoire de 120 places et quatre dortoirs d’une capacité de 48 places en raison de deux personnes par chambre. Il y a aussi
une chapelle et une bibliothèque d’environ 3.000 ouvrages. Installé sur une superficie de 15 ha, le CEPROFORE a d’énormes capacités de développement.

2. Déclaration D’objectifs

Depuis sa création en 1864, le CEPROFORE a des objectifs affichés.

1864: Former des ouvriers pour la jeune Eglise. Une formation à la fois générale, biblique et théologique.


1928: Favoriser la « culture du couvent ». Gobe situé sur un plateau à deux heures de marche de la route la plus proche. Les élèves étaient ainsi à l’écart du monde.

1938: Promouvoir l’Évangélisation en pays Akposso et se « rapprocher » du monde.

1993: La Formation Permanente est créée pour la consolidation des acquis des ouvriers de l’Eglise.

1998: Le CEPROFORE. Le Séminaire n’est plus seulement un lieu de formation mais en plus un lieu de rencontre et d’accueil.

1998 – 2000: Restructuration pour mettre en œuvre les objectifs du CEPROFORE.

2000 à nos jours: Formations diverses et accueil de plusieurs rencontres tant sur le plan national qu’international.

Depuis le 18 Novembre 2006, le CEPROFORE est devenu l’un des campus de l’UPAO (Université Protestante de l’Afrique Occidentale). Cependant le Centre reste et demeure le lieu de formation des ouvriers des Eglises de la sous région.

Le Jeudi 18 Novembre 2010 au Bloc Synodal (Administration Centrale de l’EEPT) à Lomé, s’est déroulée une rencontre regroupant les Chefs d’Eglises membres fondateurs de l’UPAO. Que faisons-nous de notre Université ? C’était le seul point à l’ordre du jour: l’avenir de l’UPAO.


Le CEPROFORE est maintenu comme structure de l’EEPT pour la formation permanente.

3. Effets Recherches

Dans ses déclarations d’objectifs le CEPROFORE a dès 1996 bénéficié de l’appui financier de EMW et de la Mission de Brême pour sa restructuration.

L’implantation de ces nouvelles structures a favorisé davantage l’organisation et l’accueil des formations et des rencontres. De fait, le centre privilégie les deux types de prestation à savoir: la prestation à la carte et la prestation intégrale. Les prestations dont nous allons parler ici sont celles réalisées depuis la fin de la restructuration. Nous le ferons en trois volets.

a) Les prestations

Il convient de distinguer les prestations à la carte et les prestations intégrées. A ce sujet le CEPROFORE a préparé, organisé, conçu, animé et mis en œuvre plusieurs formations. A titre d’exemple nous mentionnons ici les formations de la Redynamisation. Il s’agit d’une série de huit (8) formations qui ont couvert la période de juillet 2002 à octobre 2003. Ces formations regroupées en ateliers ont porté sur des sujets divers avaient pour objectif global d’outiller les hommes et les femmes de l’église pour la réalisation efficace et efficiente de sa restructuration.

Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa
Premier atelier: du 22 au 25 juillet 2002
Thème: Appui à la mise en route des activités de la pastorale sociale
Objectif: Préparer les participants à jouer leur rôle de moteur du processus de la redynamisation.

Deuxième atelier: du 25 au 27 juillet 2002
Thème: L’Eglise dans la restauration de la société
Objectifs:
• performir les connaissances en matière de l’Evangile,
• maîtriser les principes généraux relatifs aux droits de l’Homme, à la Justice et à la Paix,
• appréhender les espaces d’application de ces valeurs fondamentales

Troisième atelier: du 05 au 09 septembre 2002
Thème: Communiquer aujourd’hui
Objectif: S’exercer à l’écriture et à la parole

Un autre groupe cible a bénéficié d’une série de formation toujours dans le cadre de la redynamisation.

Premier atelier: du 27 au 29 juillet 2002
Thème: Initiation au processus des programmes régionaux de l’EEPT pour un développement durable
Objectif: Mettre les équipes régionales en situation réelle du processus de leurs actions.

Deuxième atelier : du 30 juillet au 03 août 2002
Thème: Techniques d’animation de groupes
Objectif: Maîtriser les techniques et méthodes d’animation et de communication

Troisième atelier : du 13 au 18 octobre 2002
Thème: Gestion des ressources humaines, matérielles et financières
Objectifs:
• conduire une équipe et une institution,
• acquérir la capacité à donner des mandats
• développer l’aptitude au leadership

Quatrième atelier : du 30 mars au 05 avril 2003
Thème: Planification, élaboration et gestion d’un projet
Objectif: Gérer un projet

Un dernier atelier a réuni tous les acteurs de la redynamisation du 25 au 23 octobre 2003 autour des objectifs suivants:
• capitaliser les acquis
• évaluer la maîtrise des outils reçus
• planifier le travail à venir.

En dehors de ces formations à caractère exceptionnel, le CEPROFORE a poursuivi la formation classique des différents ouvriers de l’Église: Pasteurs, Catéchistes, Laïcs. Il a également hébergé d’autres tant sur le plan interne et externe que national et international.

Pour conclure cette partie, il convient de dire ce qui suit:
Depuis 2000, le CEPROFORE accueille de droit, en raison de sa grande capacité d’accueil ainsi que de la qualité de cet accueil, les grandes rencontres de l’Église.
• Le Synode (deux fois)
• La Retraite Pastorale (trois fois)
• Le Comité Synodal (tous les trois mois).

Les invités de marque de passage font obligatoirement escale au CEPROFORE et y sont logés dans des conditions acceptables. Nous avons à cet effet hébergé régulièrement la délégation de la Mission de Brême en visite de travail, l’Evêque d’Oldenburg, la Présidente de l’Eglise Evangélique de Brême…

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
b) Le CEPFORE aujourd’hui

A l’heure actuelle le CEPFORE poursuit sa vocation de formation professionnelle et de formation permanente. En octobre 2003 l’EEPT a décidé la formation en série de catéchistes et de pasteurs. Qu’est ce à dire ? L’Eglise a engagé un vaste programme sur plusieurs années pour des catéchistes sélectionnés sur concours, dans le cadre d’une formation qui va les préparer à être des pasteurs. La même chose va se faire pour les volontaires et les auxiliaires en vue de leurs titularisations comme catéchistes.

Aussi depuis avril 2004 et ce jusqu’en avril 2005, treize catéchistes, dont deux femmes, ont été formés au CEPFORE. Ils sont encadrés par des pasteurs et des laïcs de l’EEPT. Les encadreurs interviennent chacun selon son domaine de compétence.

De 2006 en 2011, 17 licenciés en théologie sont formés. Actuellement 4 étudiants, dont une femme, sont en troisième année de Licence, 5 leur emboîteront le pas dès cette rentrée académique.

D’autres projets se dessinent à l’horizon pour améliorer la qualité de formation et d’accueil du centre. Nous les mentionnons en termes d’objectifs et d’options.

c) Perspectives d’avenir

Avec la crise actuelle au niveau du pays et de l’Eglise, le CEPFORE doit se tourner vers une autosuffisance. C’est d’ailleurs ce qui explique, aussi, le début de la restructuration du centre avec la construction de nouveaux bâtiments. Cette restructuration en infrastructure a besoin d’être achevée puisque:
- au plan institutionnel Atakpamé est en passe de devenir un des pôles de l’Université Protestante de l’Afrique Occidentale avec Porto-Novo (Bénin) et Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire). Le CEPFORE abriterait des écoles et facultés ;
- depuis décembre 2001 les chefs des Eglises de la sous-région ont fait du CEPFORE leur lieu de formation permanente (recyclage) de leurs ouvriers. Un plan d’action est entrait d’être élaboré à cet effet pour assurer la régularité de cette formation ;
- le CEPFORE veut désormais s’ouvrir au marché des séminaires et conférences organisés par les sociétés et organisations profanes.

Au plan interne, nous affichons des objectifs à atteindre à long, moyen et court termes.

1. LA RÉFORME DANS LA FORMATION

- Elaborer un programme spécifique et adapté pour les auxiliaires, les catéchistes, les pasteurs en vue de renforcer leurs compétences. Cet objectif est en train d’exécution.
- Élargir les formations permanentes à tous les types et catégories d’ouvriers: médecins, comptables, secrétaires, chauffeurs… Nous y travaillons et le CEPFORE a déjà organisé et animé des sessions pour chauffeurs et comptables.

2. LA TRIBUNE LIBRE

L’occasion pour exposer des sujets divers (Atakpamé ne produit pas d’activités dans ce domaine. Le CEPFORE peut y remédier).
- Les thèmes d’actualité ;
- les travaux des étudiants revenus de formation ;
- débats d’idée (Café débat) ;
- revue de livres (programme littéraire lié à la Bibliothèque Pastorale)
- appui scolaire (organisation de cours du soir).

Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa
3. VIE SPIRITUELLE

Elle a pour but de donner l’occasion, au centre, de rendre témoignage de la vie du CEPROFORE et de l’Eglise en matière de vie cultuelle et spirituelle.

- D’abord, faire du CEPROFORE un lieu de retraite spirituelle pour des particuliers et des groupes. A l’instar de la Retraite Spirituelle des Pasteurs.
- Enfin, les commentaires du CEPROFORE: il s’agit d’élaborer un recueil de commentaires de textes bibliques à l’usage de tout public.
- Le tout dans un cadre on ne peut plus calme. Le temps de se laisser se ressourcer.

4. RESOURCES ET VISIONS

Au plan de l’infrastructure nous avons déjà présenté le Centre avec sa capacité d’accueil. Celle-ci doit être augmentée pour atteindre les objectifs affichés par le centre.

Au plan humain également avec les ouvriers sur place et les ouvriers toutes catégories confondues qui sont tous au service de l’Eglise. Ils sont tous d’une manière ou d’une autre impliqués dans la formation au CEPROFORE.

L’Eglise a nommé un nouveau Directeur en mai 2004. Pasteur et titulaire d’un doctorat en théologie, il est également Chef Division Formations et Bourses de l’Eglise. L’objectif de l’Eglise est donc de renforcer le rôle du CEPROFORE dans la mise en œuvre de son éducation chrétienne qui est sa marque de qualité au sein de la société togolaise et au sein des Eglises de la sous-région. L’Eglise vise alors:

- une Eglise plus forte;
- un centre encore plus vivant et compétitif en matière de formation et d’accueil;
- un centre autosuffisant et générateur de revenus.

Nous poursuivons notre marche et nous nous engageons à toujours améliorer nos compétences.

- Poursuivre la promotion du centre auprès des partenaires, des fidèles, des clients potentiels
- Réaliser des dépliants
- Rentabiliser le programme agro-pastoral.

Conclusion

Le Centre Protestant de Formation et de Rencontre est aujourd’hui en mesure de répondre à sa vocation: formation du peuple de Dieu, un lieu de rencontre, de culture, de débats, un outil de l’Eglise au service de sa mission prophétique. Le doter d’une plus grande bibliothèque et d’une salle de conférence ferait accroître considérablement ses capacités.
THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH TO THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: THE CASE OF ST PAUL’S THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE, GRAHAMSTOWN

Henry Mbaya

Introduction

In this article I explore the contribution of the Anglican Church in South Africa towards theological education with reference to St. Paul’s College in Grahamstown in the years between 1980s and 1990s. I propose to address three fundamental questions: how did theological education shape the life of St. Paul’s Theological College? In turn what role did St. Paul’s Theological College play in the local community of Grahamstown? Finally, what contribution did St. Paul’s Theological College make to the wider society? This study is not about statistics as to how many people St. Paul’s Theological College trained. Neither can I pretend to ascertain the effectiveness of the former St. Paul’s students who are presently working in the parishes of the Anglican Church. Such a task is almost impossible.

Based on a questionnaire, this article is essentially a record of the experiences of nine students and two members of staff regarding the role that St. Paul’s Theological College played in the local and wider context of South Africa. To a degree, it reflects the views of a cross-section of the students at St. Paul’s Theological College, including black, coloured, a few Indian and white students. However, in a study of this nature it is almost impossible to include all those students who trained at St. Paul’s Theological College. It is also necessary to define the scope of theological education. In this study, theological education is considered as multi-dimensional in character, inter alia involving preaching/teaching, worship/sacraments, and pastoral ministry, exercised in the faith community as these are made to bear on socio-economic and political issues in the society.

Global Scope of Theological Education

Just as the impact of the socio-economic and political upheaval on the continent raised theological debate during the 1960s,1 once again today the impact of globalisation on Africa has provoked discussion. The current debate centres on the question: What constitutes the function of theological education in this context?

Various scholars associated with the World Council of Churches, including James N. Amanze, Dietrich Werner, and John de Gruchy, have recently argued that theological education must transcend its traditional frontiers to embrace issues that globalisation has brought to the fore.2 In this debate, there is an assumption that pluralism is good for theological education. Is this assumption necessarily true? Even though this study seeks to contribute to the current debate, the fundamental objective is to outline the contribution of St. Paul’s Theological College to the community and beyond Grahamstown.

In his paper, “Globalisation of Theological Education and the Future of the Church in Africa: Some Critical Reflections towards Edinburgh 2010 and its Aftermath,” James Amanze asserted that “though the church can do without formal academic education… it could do so at its own peril”.3 Amanze’s assertion

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highlighted the pivotal role that theological education plays with regard to the ministry of the church. Consequently, ‘doing’ theology in whatever form is almost inseparable from the ministry of the church. In other words, the ministry of the church is anchored in the continuing ‘exercise’ of theology either in the form of teaching, preaching (prophetic ministry) or administration of the sacraments or worship.

Amanze rightly argued that theological education must transcend the immediate borders of a particular faith community. He argued for a globalised theological education that takes into account all issues that affect humanity on the globe, inter alia, culture, tradition, science, gender, politics and religion. He called for theological education and ministry that opens up to the world. Amanze argued against parochialism or ‘insularity’ or ‘domestication’ of theological education, the kind of theological education that refuses to enter into dialogue with global context; theological education designed merely to protect or serve the narrow interests of the particular denomination.

However, if theological education embraces pluralism will it not lose its ‘taste’ and therefore be worthy to be trampled upon? The question that scholars must address is to what extent must theological education be extended to embrace global culture while at the same time it tries to maintain its texture? Or how can the church be true to multiculturalism while at the same time it tries to remain faithful to its exclusive calling as a people of God distinct from the world? I am not suggesting that there will be an easy answer to this question but that it must be acknowledged that there will always be tension between doing theology and praxis.

In this study, I will illustrate that in the 1980s and 1990s, theological education at St. Paul’s Theological College was going through transformation largely due to the socio-economic and political changes that were taking place in society.

The Transforming History 1902-1990s

St. Paul’s Theological College was founded in Grahamstown in 1902 by Charles Cornish, bishop of Grahamstown. Michael Weeder, a former student of the college, described it as “a comfortable white enclave on the hill above Rhodes University...well integrated into the social fabric of the town...formed part of the power of private schools, the university and to some extent, the governing local authorities and even less so, the farming community”. Weeder’s description certainly suggests the privilege and the power that the college held in the then ‘white residential section’ of Grahamstown community.

Despite the fact that St. Paul’s Theological College was established long before the Group Areas Act of 1955 came into being, an Apartheid legislation which demarcated residence on a racial basis, the college was designed to train clergy for white Anglicans just as St. Bede’s Theological College in Mthatha was established to train black students for black (Coloured/Indian) Anglicans. In 1993, the old St. Paul’s Theological College amalgamated with St. Bede’s Theological College based in Mthatha, and gave birth to the College of the Transfiguration on the old St. Paul’s College premises.

In the context of racist policies, St. Paul’s Theological College, like other institutions of that nature, was designed to serve the kind of theological premise which Amanze and others have argued against. It was founded specifically to train white clergy for the white section of the Anglican Church, just as St. Bede’s Theological College in Mthatha and the Ecumenical Federal Seminary at Alice were founded and

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7 St. Paul’s Theological College, Historical Notes, AB 2568, Historical Papers, Cullen Library, Wits University.
6 St. Paul’s Theological College, Historical Notes, AB 2568, Historical Papers, Cullen Library, Wits University.
5 Michael Weeder, response to a Questionnaire, 30/09/11.
1 18.09.11).
trained Black clergy for ‘Black (and coloured) Anglicans and black clergy of the Ecumenical churches.’

St. Paul’s Theological College was Anglo-Catholic and all male. In this respect, the college was a replica of the English theological colleges which served the Church of England. In light of the arguments advanced by Amanze and others, the college served the narrow interests of the Anglican Church in South Africa.

St. Paul’s College Opens up During Late 1970s

In 1970, “St. Paul’s Theological College opened its doors to all races and also expanded to accommodate the wives and children of married students.” According to the former Warden (Principal) of St. Paul’s College (1977-1985), Duncan Buchanan (former bishop of Johannesburg), largely responding to the socio-political changes blowing in the society around 1980s, they started bringing black students into a college which hitherto had been predominantly white. However, it would seem that the 1976 Soweto Uprising began to shape its life. Buchanan recalled that in the aftermath of the uprising, “St. Paul’s acted for several weeks as a sort of staging house for the young men (mainly men) to gather themselves before moving on”. It is possible that it was experiences like this that began to transform the character of the college.

Buchanan compared St. Paul’s Theological College to the Ecumenical Federal Theological Seminary. He recalled that while the Federal Theological Seminary had white and black members of staff and no black students, St. Paul’s Theological College was the first college in the country to admit blacks in an apartheid-imposed whites-only college. From 1977 when it received two black students, the numbers increased over the years until “we had families living illegally”. Likewise change involved coloured lecturers, and then finally a black lecturer, Bikitsha Njumbuxa, joining the staff in 1985. The college’s readiness to break the law by embracing black and coloured students came from a theological conviction that education must transcend racial barriers.

Living in Kairos Time: 1984-1987

Training black students opened the college to Black political influences, and subsequently started to foster in its students some critical attitudes toward the apartheid government and its policies, experiences that gradually started to affect the majority of white students. As it is well-known today, the publication of the Kairos Document in 1985 turned out to be a landmark in the theological debate in South Africa. The Document identified ‘non-political’ theology that supported the status quo, state theology that legitimised the status quo and prophetic theology that was highly critical of the status quo. In many respects, nationwide debate generated by this document also affected St. Paul’s College. David Williams asserted that the Kairos Document was a theological response to apartheid which itself was justified on selected portions of Scripture.

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11 See http://www.oikoumene.filedmin/files
12 Doulos, St. Paul’s College, Newsletter, AB 2568 A, Historical Papers, Cullen Library, Wits University.
13 Duncan Buchanan, response to a Questionnaire, 12.06.11.
14 Duncan Buchanan, response to a Questionnaire, 12.06.11.
15 Duncan Buchanan, response to a questionnaire, 12.06.11; Hendricks, F. Questionnaire, 05.10.2011.
16 Duncan Buchanan, response to a questionnaire, 12.06.11.
17 Patrick Ntsikelelo Nqathu, response to a questionnaire, 30.09.11.
19 Williams, “Theological Education in South Africa.”

Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa
Williams noted the significance of the race issue that became priority number one on the agenda of the church. He stated, “in the 1980s the race problems dominated everything [in South Africa] including, of course, the practice of theology. The issue of the relationship between church and state was high on the theological agenda, issuing in a variety of distinct attitudes.”20 In other words, more than any other matter, apartheid became an issue that dominated the life of the society to which the church sought to respond. It was in this context that community life at St. Paul’s Theological College began to change. Andrew Hunter, a former student, described the context of St. Paul’s College of the 1980s as,

A place of intense debate, interaction, conflict, and to some extent reconciliation between white and black ordinands, at a time when the country was deeply divided by apartheid policies and experiences. All theological training and formation took place in that context. The college was a meeting point of theological diversity – Anglo-Catholic, Evangelical and to some extent Charismatic. All debates were all encompassing and dominated our lives.21

Hunter described St. Paul’s Theological College as a community that sharply contrasted with the racially divided society, a society that sought to achieve reconciliation. More importantly, Hunter noted that theological education took place in that open environment. Theological debates centred on socio-economic and political issues that affected more immediately the student body, or the local community of Grahamstown. Among the issues, this included conscientious objection, or the end conscription campaign or curfew, police harassment and brutality in the township.22 Austen Jackson, a former student, put it succinctly saying that “the theological issues came from the students, it came out of their homes and out of the streets in their communities”. These debates took place during Common Room meetings, chaired by a member of staff or the senior student. At times, discussions continued over a cup of tea or coffee during break time or lunch or supper, and were offered in prayer in college chapel.24 For instance, in his Warden’s Report to the College Council in 1983, Duncan Buchanan, writing in connection with the whites voting for the new constitution which would allow the Coloureds and Indians to participate in the Tri-cameral Parliament reported that, “During the year we had to deal with some thorny issues. The Referendum and new Constitution featured heavy on our consciences, and the loving support and prayers given by the black members of the College of entrusted us with the vote, was a model of Christian living. We were in a new way aware of the burden we were carrying for others.”25

However, on these occasions, tensions flared up across racial lines. A feeling of a sense of insecurity on the part of some white students emerged as some black students brutally pointed out directly or insinuated that they ‘benefitted’ from the apartheid government at the expense of the black majority.26 As a result of this, sometimes emotions ran high, leading others to shed tears, or evoking feelings of anger and acrimony to the point that unity and fellowship seemed to be on the verge of breaking.27 It is in this respect that Buchanan remarked, “as time went on it became even more difficult, as the students felt able to express their feelings and hurts. But at that time we were a very rich and vibrant community.”28

Duncan Buchanan recalled that the debate at that time was at three levels: how to integrate blacks and whites in a warped and dysfunctional society; how to make the learning and content relevant to the needs

21 Andrew Hunter, response to a questionnaire, 19.07.11.
22 Personal reminiscences.
23 Austen Jackson, response to a questionnaire, 15.09.11.
24 Austen Jackson, response to a questionnaire, 15.09.11; Personal Reminiscences.
26 Personal reminiscences.
27 Personal reminiscences.
28 Duncan Buchanan, response to a questionnaire, 12.06.11.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
of the people in our society, and; how to integrate the Charismatic and the traditional students, without one or the other group going into a “ghetto”.29 According to Fred Hendricks, a former lecturer, the debates exposed “students to points of view they would not have encountered in their previously segregated living enclaves”.30 Buchanan concluded that it started to break the entrenched attitudes of racialism.31

To others, it was too much as they felt that the college was becoming too political – anti-government or ‘unchristian’, that it had lost its vision. In the process others broke down. For instance, on the eve of the commemoration of the Soweto Uprising on June 16 in 1976, after a heated debate in the Common Room how to mark the day, finally it was resolved that as a matter of ‘solidarity’ with the youth who died in 1976, members of staff and students would dress in their cassocks and march to St. Matthew’s Anglican Church in Joza township.33 Half way through, the march was stopped by the police.34 In the view of the college, travelling through the Reglan road carrying a cross on the way to the township was an act of witness.35 Jackson believed that “these inter contextual encounters over the sustained period that it happened had an inescapable deeply formational influence on the theological understanding and articulation of each student that went through the St. Paul’s experience”.36

To a degree, the preceding episodes must be viewed in light of the curriculum of the college. In its curriculum, St. Paul’s College covered Biblical Studies (Old and New Testament), Pastoral Studies (Healing and counselling), Ethics, Church History, Christian Doctrine, Missiology, and Urban/Industrial Mission (at one time).37 On occasion during classes, some of the aspects of these disciplines were made to bear on the socio-political situation as it was unfolding in the country.38

However, by far the most important factor was the initiative that the staff took to create space for regular debate in the Common Room on the issues that affected the country, such as the State of Emergency of 1985 or the conscientious objection to the compulsory conscription of white males to the military service.39 On the other hand, ‘missions’ undertaken by the students to parishes, such as Richmond or the Free State (All Saints Parish in Ficksburg) or Harare in 1986, were part of the outreach programmes of the college. In these missions, there were occasions when theology was brought to bear on the political life in the country.40

Austen Jackson asserted that the college’s curriculum, in a very visceral way, tried to foster racial integration by getting white and black/coloured students to learn, worship, eat (common dining room), and play sport together, and have discussions together in the Common Room for three years.41 He noted that this was a powerful witness to the community of Grahamstown and beyond.42 He also noted that students who came from the Western Cape, and after three years went back to their communities, continued working in their parishes with the activist spirit that was nurtured or reinforced at St. Paul’s College. They were prominent in organising marches of protest for various political causes.43 It is also recalled today that

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29 Duncan Buchanan, response to a questionnaire, 12.06.11.
30 Fred Hendricks, response to a questionnaire, 05.09.11; also Jackson, 15.09.11.
31 Duncan Buchanan, response to a questionnaire, 12.06.11.
32 Telephone interview with Stembile Thomas Rini, 30.09.11.
33 Personal reminiscences; telephone interview with Stembile Thomas Rini 30.09.11.
34 Personal reminiscences; telephone interview with Stembile Thomas Rini 30.09.11.
35 Personal reminiscences.
36 Jackson, response to a questionnaire, 15.09.11.
37 Personal Reminiscences.
38 Jackson, interview, Stellenbosch, 19.07.12; Personal Reminiscences.
39 Jackson, interview, Stellenbosch, 19.07.12; Personal Reminiscences.
40 Jackson, interview, Stellenbosch, 19.07.11.
41 Jackson, interview, Stellenbosch, 19.07.11.
42 Jackson, interview, Stellenbosch, 19.07.11.
43 Jackson, interview, Stellenbosch, 19.07.11.
after training at St. Paul’s Theological College, a former white student joined the African National Congress. At school, his children, albeit to the horror of others, would openly tell their mates about their father’s new political stance.44

Jackson also pointed out that the election of Michael Weeder, a coloured student, as the President of the nation-wide Anglican Students Federation (UDF-aligned) in July 1983 in Pietermaritzburg, showed the influence of St. Paul’s College in the life of the nation.45 Jackson further recalled that in mid-1983, following an intense debate in the college, St Paul’s College student body resolved that they would not allow the Dutch Reformed Students (who would be staying overnight) to share in the Holy Communion since their Church had not declared apartheid as a heresy following the stand taken by the South African Council of Churches and others. This, according to Jackson, was one way through which the college witnessed for the gospel.46

Witnessing/Outreach in the Community

Enunciating the function of theology vis-à-vis church and society, Dietrich Werner stated that it entailed stimulating “the interaction between church and society where many issues demand for a sharpened stand and position of Christianity”.47 On the other hand, he defined the role of theological education as “deepening biblical knowledge and the capacity to distinguish and to assess the different spirits and ideologies in order to discern God’s working in the world”.48 Thus for Werner, theology plays a critical role in facilitating the interface between church and society on the issues that affect both.

At St. Paul’s Theological College, reaching out to the community entailed two dimensions: some invited individuals coming in to share in its life and some students going out to work in the community.49 Worship was the centre of college life, with the rhythm of daily Eucharist, the offices and meditation/personal prayer. One prominent feature of this was the attempt to open the Eucharistic worship and the college communal meal on Fridays to the wider community within Grahamstown and beyond.50 Buchanan stated that perhaps “the best contribution to the Grahamstown community and in some cases more widely afield, was our worship”.51 Buchanan described the impact of the college on the Grahamstown community as follows: “[the members of staff] were often told that that event alone made our influence larger than the size of the College.”52 Robert Penrith, a former student stated that, “I believe that our Friday night Eucharist showed that there was an enormous support for the role of the college within the community”.53

Besides, some prominent Anglican clergy such as Professor John Suggit of Rhodes University, Dean Roy Barker of the Cathedral of St. Michael and George, some members of the Church Unity Commission, such as the Reverend Donald Craig would come to celebrate and preach.54 Not only did the shared worship and meal enrich others, but also St. Paul’s community as they began to appreciate the diversity of culture and religious traditions.55

44 Jackson, interview, Stellenbosch, 19.07.11.
45 Jackson, interview, Stellenbosch, 19.07.11.
46 Jackson, interview, Stellenbosch, 19.07.11.
48 Werner, “Globalisation of Theological Education in African Perspective,” 5.
49 Jackson, Julia Denny-Dimitriou, Penrith, responses to a questionnaire, 05.08.11.
50 Hendricks, response to a questionnaire, 05.09.2011.
51 Buchanan, response to a questionnaire, 12.06.11.
52 Buchanan, response to a questionnaire, 12.06.11.
53 Rob Penrith, response to a questionnaire, 08.08.11; Jackson, responses to questionnaire, 15.09.11.
54 Personal reminiscences.
55 Personal reminiscences.
Amanze and others argued that theological education must transcend monoculture – embracing multiculturalism. In spite of the racial cultural diversity of St. Paul’s Theological College, on occasions there was a tendency on the part of some white students to resist some aspects of black culture or language introduced in the liturgy. For instance in 1986, Stembile Thomas Rini tried to introduce IsiXhosa choruses during the celebration of the liturgy. He noted that until he explained to them the meaning of these, there was a tendency on the part of some white students to resist. However, Rini and Jackson noted that in this and other cases, resistance gradually gave way to general acceptance.

Besides drawing people into its communal life, St. Paul’s Theological College sent out students into the community. Engagement with the local community entailed the students’ involvement in pastoral work in churches, social welfare centres and hospitals, the Geriatric Hospital, Gadra or Cathedral soup kitchen, the Diocesan School for Girls, St. Andrew’s College or working at the advice office. On the other hand, second and third year students went on ‘missions’ to parishes beyond Grahamstown, such as Richmond in Natal, Ficksburg in the Free State or Harare in Zimbabwe. These missions would take a year to organise, and despite the fact that first year students never participated, through prayer they felt part of it.

The larger influence of the college was possible precisely because of the ‘family’ character and ethos that was fostered in the college. Much care was taken to prepare for worship, including music. Together with fairly stimulating homilies, delivered on occasion by guest preachers, and the communal meals shared, this appeared to enrich the guests and also the college community. Thus Hendricks concluded by asserting that this was “an attempt to be missional…that communities of faith needs to be nurtured to become signs of and instruments of the kingdom of God.”

The United Democratic Front (UDF), the internal wing of the African National Congress was formed at the height of political oppression in 1983. Inviting the UDF chairman, Terror Mosiuoa Lekota in 1984 to address the college on the political struggle became too much for some white students as they tended to feel the college was dicing with the ‘devil’ (communist ANC). There was time when St. Paul’s students were invited to hear a visiting radical German Roman Catholic priest, political activist and liberation theologian Theo Kniefel, at Rhodes where he lectured on the ‘Kairos Document’ theology. The activities of the more activist-oriented students, such as Michael Weeder appeared to transform the character of the college which on occasion sheltered some young men preparing to cross the South African border into Lesotho to join the ANC further afield in exile. This was the second occasion that the college had acted as a safe haven for political refugees following the episode narrated by Duncan Buchanan above. According to Buchanan, such hospitality was a powerful witness in society. He stated that only a year ago he had met a young man who had told him that he had been one who had been given shelter and “saved their lives”.

Nonetheless, the impact of the debates on some students appears to have been positive. For instance, Robert Penrith said, “the college gave [him] an invaluable opportunity to be exposed to struggle for liberation, grapple with it, the real theological issues surrounding a nation in crisis and Kairos”. Or as Russell Thokoza Mngomezulu noted, “My experience at the college made me realise that I was equal with
the whites, but then leaving the college the reality was different".\(^{68}\) Similarly, Hunter noted that “it sent ordinands out with an experience of diversity and reconciliation, into a nation that was afraid of these things”.\(^{69}\) On the other hand, Buchanan recalled that the process became more difficult with time.\(^{70}\)

Amanze asserted that doing theology must seek to bring about reconciliation. Here was an attempt to reconcile black and white students. Penrith asserted. Amidst all this he saw his “role as one of a ‘bridge-builder’ crossing deep divides to form relationships”.\(^{71}\) Bridges had to be built since for years they had been broken by colonialism and apartheid. Duncan Buchanan said “We started to break the entrenched attitudes of racism,” but then he also admitted, as mentioned above, that “as time went on the process became more difficult”.\(^{72}\)

However, the more positive views of others need to be tempered by the not so positive view of Julia Denny-Dimitriou, the wife of a student. She recalled that St. Paul’s College “did not have a very high profile in the wider church as much more than a training facility for clergy”.\(^{73}\) She went further to note that apart from students’ engagement in working in schools, churches, the Cathedral soup kitchen, and the advice office, the college was insular, and made little contribution to society.\(^{74}\) On the other hand, Abe Jacobs, another former student, was even more critical saying the college did not make any meaningful contribution to community life in Grahamstown.

Though embracing multiculturalism, Rini noted that there was a gap between what some lecturers taught in lecture rooms, racial equality and practice. In his view, some white students refused to live with blacks as equals.\(^{76}\) Weeder went further to say that “the white sections (with notable exceptions) of the student body vehemently resisted”.\(^{77}\) White resistance on the part of some to enter into dialogue with black and coloured students reflected the success of the supremacist white racial ideology and its effects on the white community.

According to Hunter, one weakness of theological education at St. Paul’s Theological College was possibly ‘a lack of theological tools’, which in his view stifled theological training. He attributed this to the staff’s “scepticism about traditional theology, theological study,” and possibly an “anti-intellectual” hang-over from the charismatic movement, and “suspicion of liberal thinking?”.\(^{78}\) This suggests that there existed an imbalance between worship in the form of charismatic experience and theological studies to the disadvantage of the latter.

The degree of stress laid on the charismatic experience suggests that rigorous academic scholarship was unimportant. Similarly Jackson noted that the weakness of St. Paul’s Theological College lay in the fact that it “was not part of a trajectory that linked it with the University system…with the result that the experience at St. Paul’s could only in a limited way be part of the requisite debates in academic scholarship.”\(^{79}\) Similarly, Weeder decried a rather shallow hermeneutics of Scripture and that the students could have been “exposed to a more scholarly approach to academia”.\(^{80}\) Buchanan mentioned the inadequacy of the sixty-minute lecture, a shortfall which the college staff tried to review but somehow did
not get right. However, Buchanan asserted that the college exposed the students to the current theological debates such as “God is dead’, biblical criticism, liturgical reform”. In short, it promoted free thinking.

However, criticisms raised by Jackson and Weeder seem to be misplaced. As a college designed specifically to nurture or foster vocation and ministry, St. Paul’s Theological College had its own limitations; it would be unrealistic to expect the college to provide rigorous intellectual tools that properly belong to university academy. Its structures, ethos, practices and traditions were not designed to stimulate or foster intellectualism but rather to enhance vocation within reasonable scholarship. Theological education as provided at St. Paul’s Theological College was a stepping stone to further studies at the university.

**Grappling with International Theological Issues**

Finally, the college was not confined to engagement with purely ‘political issues’; occasionally, internationally recognised theologians were invited to the college and engaged the community in global theological issues. One of them was Tom Smail who, in 1984, came from England and gave an engrossing theological lecture on the *Filioque Clause* in the Nicene Creed. Tom Smail focussed on the need to reconcile the West and Eastern Churches.

**Beyond the Borders of Grahamstown: Implications for the Wider World**

The question regarding the influence of theological education in the ministry of the students and their role in the wider society is not easy to answer, precisely because apartheid South Africa was a complex society. Apartheid structures were not only visible but also in a subtle way invisible; thus they were physical as well as spiritual/emotional. Thus, they entailed negative actions but also manifested in spiritual dimensions involving attitudes.

In this respect, some students leaving the college found it much harder to put into practice their St. Paul’s theological experience in a society ripped apart by Apartheid segregationist policies. For instance, Mngomezulu recalled that “when we left the college we discovered that it was going to be difficult to implement some of the things that we learnt at College in some dioceses and communities…the parishes were racially segregated … senior clergy told us not to meddle in politics. We had to concentrate on our priestly duties…some of us who worked in parishes where political conflict was rife found ourselves silenced.”

Mngomezulu’s experience raises issues about the relationship as it prevailed between theological college(s) and the church in the society. In other words, in his experience, St. Paul’s College theological training was rendered ineffective by the entrenched structures of Apartheid reflected even in the attitude of some senior clergy. Certainly Mngomezulu’s experience would have been the experience of others in their ministry. For instance, Jackson noted that “when students returned to their home dioceses at the end of their studies they took this grounded understanding of theology and liturgy into the church” but also “many became activists in their communities to work for an end to apartheid. Others have become archdeacons, canons and bishops… including the archbishop of Cape Town”. According to Jackson when they “returned to their home dioceses at the end of their studies they took this grounded understanding of

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81 Duncan Buchanan, response to a questionnaire, 12.06.11.
82 Duncan Buchanan, response to a questionnaire, 12.06.11.
83 Personal reminiscences.
84 Personal reminiscences.
85 Mngomezulu, response to a questionnaire, 17.09.11.
86 Austen Jackson, response to a questionnaire, 15.09.11.
theology and liturgy into the church.” 87 Likewise, Hunter stated: “It sent ordinands out with an experience of diversity and reconciliation, into a nation that was afraid of these things.” 88 On the other hand, Hendricks concluded that “it also formed men and women who had been given a vision and an experience, however inadequately, of a community in which they experienced unity in diversity, something of the ‘rainbow people of God’ – which they could foster in the communities they were to animate”.89

### Conclusion

Though not exhaustive, the above findings fairly represent a pattern of the experiences of some of the former members of staff and students of the now defunct St. Paul’s Theological College in Grahamstown. The contribution of St. Paul’s Theological College to theological education occurred on three levels. First, this contribution lay in academic lectures, despite the fact that the college staff did not provide a radical critical approach to the studies. This would have been unnecessary, as this expertise properly belonged to the university academy. St. Paul’s Theological College provided basic intellectual tools which equipped ordinands for their ministry. Operating within some constraints however, the lecturers tried to relate theology to the realities in the then Apartheid society.

Second, another contribution of St. Paul’s Theological College lay in its structures: the chapel – the centre of prayer life, the dining room, where college guests shared in the college meals, and the Common Room which provided space for robust debate on the issues of the day. Political guest speakers such as Terror Lekota and Helen Joseph as well as theological guest speakers such as Tom Smail and Michael Green enriched the life of the college and undermined its insular character.

Finally, the students experienced pastoral involvement in community life, such as at the advice office, in churches including the Cathedral, St. Bartholomew’s, and St. Matthew’s, in some hospitals in town such as Settlers’ and Geriatric, or in the rural churches as far as Zwelitsha or Peddie. To a degree, a number of St. Paul’s Theological students brought in something of the vision of a new society free of Apartheid.

Through such formation and experience, St. Paul’s Theological College nurtured and fostered prospective clergy, who subsequently supplied remarkable leadership within the Church. As they went out, they carried with them the vision of a non-racial society that they had experienced at St. Paul’s Theological College, and which they now projected to the society. As Buchanan said, “the Anglican Church of Southern Africa is very dependent on those generations of students for its leadership today”.

In the post-apartheid era, there is a great need to realise the fruits of the struggles in the 1980s. Church leadership could do more in enabling church structures on parochial and provincial levels to create some space where the issues of injustice in all its forms can be confronted and addressed. More specifically, debate in parish church councils, or deaneries, councils and Synods could serve this purpose.

A possible curriculum that seeks to address similar challenges could include issues relating to human dignity from the biblical perspective, focusing on patriarchy and oppression of women, as well as child abuse.

### Bibliography


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87 Austen Jackson, response to a questionnaire, 15.09.11.
88 Andrew Hunter, response to a questionnaire, 03.06.11.
89 Fred Hendricks, response to questionnaire, 05.09.11.


Why Global Service Learning?

When the motive behind the mass exodus of the privileged middle class is questioned – usually white students risking cholera after their parents pay what the average student will never afford – more questions than answers emerge. Why leave the homeless poor living with AIDS in San Francisco to study in Zambia just for one month? This is the current debate even in my own circles at Jesuit University of San Francisco (USF). What do the stakeholders who promote this pedagogy secretly harbour and why? This remains not only challenging but also rhetorical. John W. Eby notes with suspicion, “Service-learning brings together six set of primary stakeholders; students, faculty, educational institutions, service recipients, community agencies, and communities. Each of these stakeholders has its own agenda and interests. Unfortunately very few discussions of service learning give voice to all of these stakeholders”. He argues that this is indeed why service learning (S-L) is bad. Frustrated with what he understood as a modern day ‘re-colonization strategy’ in its extreme academic form, Evan Illich’s provocative and angry lash out, “To Hell With Good Intentions!” has provided sobering debates about global service learning which seemed to benefit only the privileged students from the North.

For me personally, service learning offers the capacity to broaden my teaching space and pedagogy. More still, global service learning in Zambia reconnects me with my own African community, my community of accountability. It reinforces my sense of vocation and duty as an international theology educator living abroad and working at an American university. Most importantly, the program offers fresh lessons from the African child and community to my newly found Diaspora community and students. Service learning creates huge opportunities for my students, stretching their aspirations beyond the textbook and four walls of our classroom. It satiates their curiosity to engage the ‘other’ in foreign communities in a structured manner.

Now, was I risking something core about S-L by sharing the selfish motives I hold, behind the excitement and euphoria, about the service-learning movement? The challenge to be different in giving ownership of my program to the local Zambian communities and taking seriously their needs and agency was of paramount importance for someone who had read the article by Eby on “Why Service-Learning is Bad”.

Eby outlines the evil that S-L institutions and advocates do consciously or unconsciously by excluding community leaders and residents from meaningful involvement and dialogue in favour of keeping ‘volunteerism’ and ‘academics’ on separate platforms. These strong arguments guided me to create a synergy project through dialogue with all the stakeholders in this matrix.

Since it is clear that there are some risky factors in global service learning, it is imperative to continue to have constant conversations about the motives, procedures and benefits with all the parties involved. Thus

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1 University of San Francisco is a Jesuit Catholic University in San Francisco, California.
4 Eby, “Why Service-Learning Is Bad,” 2
every student who takes my service learning class, Zambia Today INTD331, answers the question, ‘why international service learning?’ before and after the program. This helps me to frame a rationale for the program’s continued existence. A similar survey is carried out with the other stakeholders too, for the same purposes, and the findings are incorporated in the upcoming summer program.

Thus the three-tiered components of S-L pedagogy remain the most appropriate pedagogy for my Diaspora teaching crisis. Global S-L balances out the academic content, service experience and guided reflection. This however needs careful planning, shared responsibility and sensitive dialogue reflected in the brief outline of responsibilities shared by all stakeholders in this synergetic project.

**Program Requirements and Responsibilities**

The initiative to employ global S-L pedagogy typifies the Jesuit University of San Francisco mission, vision and values. USF ranks highly in national surveys for community engagement and social justice emphasis. This creates a social justice driven support base for a program determined to ‘change the world from here’. A brief outline of decisive facilitators for the Zambia Today S-L Program is provided in no order of priority:

**Sending Institutions**

- USF’s Jesuit spirituality-driven mission, which emphasizes educating the whole person and finding God in everything, in everyone and everywhere, creates strong institutional support through USF Center for Global Studies. This creates institutional commitment for viable S-L programs.
- Institutional support to equip the service-learning enthusiasts with full S-L professional development through sponsored training for total efficacy in the S-L pedagogy is necessary. USF provides a semester-long service-learning seminar with a $500.00 reward on completion of the course. Such incentives are positive pro-S-L statements.
- Institutional support that extends beyond the borders to the professor and students the entire duration of the study abroad program in case of critical eventualities is not only a liability measure but a sign of commitment and investment in the S-L program.

**Leading Professors**

- The personal competencies and commitment should be evaluated thoroughly before entrusting them with a group of students whose comfort zones are constantly challenged by the nature of international study abroad programs.
- Where possible, institutions should recruit program designers/leaders who can effectively bridge the two worlds through prior experiences of living and/or working in Africa.
- Better still, African scholars living in the Diaspora bring a passion that creates a natural fit. They are usually excited about giving back and being invigorated by the familiar African communities. A personal sense of belonging and accountability to the communities targeted by my program should not be underestimated.

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5 http://www.usfca.edu/USF_Named_to_Service_Honor_Roll/;
http://www.usfca.edu/Newsroom/Passion_for_Justice/USF_Ranks_as_Top_50_University/;
http://www.usfca.edu/Newsroom/Passion_for_Justice/USF_President_Leads_Community_and_Service-
Learning_Coalition/ (accessed 23.07.11).

• Whether in the classroom, on the streets, village or at the AIDS clinic in Zambia, I looked forward to mutual benefits through dialogue, service and learning for the two communities represented.
• While anybody could achieve the great S-L experience for all parties involved with adequate training, it remains my contention that an Africanist does a better job in dealing with the intricacies of such programs in Africa.

Community Service Partners
• An effort to sustain relationships with community partners is critical for prolonged relationship-building needed for successful S-L.
• In Zambia, Fountain of Hope in Lusaka, Friends of the Street Children, Kitwe and St. Joseph Mission Hospital, Corridor of Hope and Kwenkuha Women’s Association in Livingstone are our invaluable community partners and facilitators of the USF S-L program.
• These organizations are already changing the face of HIV and AIDS in Zambia, addressing the plight of the most vulnerable children who live on the streets, ‘Street Children’, and challenging the vicious cycle of gender injustice that spurs women and propels them into prostitution, so they have assets.
• The incoming professor and students therefore should acknowledge these assets when they are privileged with the opportunity to apprentice themselves to serve and learn.

Theological Institutions in Zambia
• Three theological institutions are of paramount significance to the USF service-learning program in Zambia. The Jesuit Center for Theological Reflection (JCTR), FENZA and Caritas in Lusaka as well as the Zambia Catholic University in Kalulushi are simply irreplaceable institutions for the USF program in Zambia.
• JCTR’s focus on “The joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the women and men of our time, especially of those who are poor or affiliated in any way, are the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the followers of Christ” is not inconsistent with USF’s own mission statement. This defines their meeting point in the Zambia S-L program in this chapter.
• The role played by the local Jesuits and foreign Jesuits who have lived, studied and served in Zambia for up to 50 years as founders of promoters of these theological institutions is critical in the guiding/mentoring role for both the USF professors and students of S-L in Zambia.
• Thus, these institutions bridge the gap between the international groups and the local communities through their deep knowledge of both worlds and their ability to form networks of partnership for the respective S-L stakeholders.

For the case study on USF in Zambia today INTD 331 S-L program syllabus, required Text are:
Michael J. Kelly, S.J., Education: For an Africa without AIDS (Paulines Publications: Nairobi, 2008);

8 University of San Francisco Catalogue, Study Abroad Programs http://www.usfca.edu/artsci/african/studyabroad/ (accessed 23.07.11).

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Program Description

This is a 4 credit USF study abroad summer program, 17 May – 18 June. The program creates integrated learning and service opportunities in communities battling HIV and AIDS, opportunities for interaction and reflection, for personal and interpersonal development, for serving and learning, and for praxis-based learning processes. The program offers an understanding of HIV and AIDS that transcends biomedical and epidemiological research by introducing socio-economic factors, gender, cultural, war, migration and political factors to the complex study of HIV and AIDS in Zambia and sub-Saharan Africa. The program encourages students to interpret their experience of contemporary Zambia through interaction and service with communities infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. Through lectures and service learning at AIDS centers in the Bay Area and at different AIDS projects in Zambia, the program offers comparative study of the different faces of HIV and AIDS. The local orientation to the global pandemic encourages students to serve their own communities upon return and prepares students for the ‘heat of the battle’ with AIDS in Zambia. While in Zambia, students will live in university dormitories where they will freely mix with Zambian students, experience Zambian ‘day-home-stay’ in the village where they will spend two days, and in lodges, all which promote informal education and diverse cultural exchange. Though the program is designed for Zambia, most factors easily apply to the rest of Africa south of the Sahara, a region with the highest HIV prevalence in the world. Desmond Tutu argues that the best theologies ensue from hammering out on the anvil of adversity and from the heat of battle or soon thereafter, which resonates with the experiences of a USF senior Architecture and Community Design student who spent the summer in Zambia building a library for AIDS orphans with her 2006 class. She says, “working on the library was one of the most eye-opening experiences of my life”.

Program Goals/Outcomes

Students should be able to understand the enormity of the HIV and AIDS crisis, through formal lectures, literature and from their compassionate service in the local and global communities.

Students should be able to critically analyze the different ‘faces of AIDS’ in San Francisco and Zambia through experiential service-study of the standard of medical care, availability and administration of a nutritional diet, and quality of care and support services for the infected and affected communities, in the Bay Area and in different parts of Zambia they serve and learn from.

While they read and play with orphans and street children in Lusaka, discuss, share ideas and work with sex workers in the tourist border town of Livingstone, mix and mingle with extremely poor people in the Copperbelt towns of Kitwe and Kalulushi, and observe and participate in religious and cultural rituals in a Zambian village, USF students should be able to critically witness the economic, political, cultural, religious and gender factors as causes and solutions of Africa’s problems. This implies that students should be able to develop collaboration skills, community organizing and event planning skills needed to promote social justice, through the service experience gained from working in HIV and AIDS intervention programs of the Church, NGOs, local communities and victim projects. In addition, they should be able to design a strategic development plan for communities they serve from an analysis of daily journal/diary reflections of their pre-travel assumptions and misconceptions of sexuality, HIV and AIDS stigma, poverty, and gender, against their post-travel awakenings from service learning.

The whole community service learning experience from informal learning through hostel living with Zambian students at Zambia Catholic University, village home stay, participation in religious ceremonies

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and rituals, and tours and lectures should promote personal analysis of beliefs, values, identity, and facilitate student growth.

**Learning Methods**

The following learning format will be adopted throughout this program: Lectures: listen and learn; Immersion Experience: observe and learn; and; Community Service: serve and learn.

1. **Lectures**

While there is no prerequisite class, formal lectures will be given in the areas of AIDS and ‘Education and AIDS’ and ‘Feminization of AIDS’ by one of the world’s leading scholars and activists in the area of HIV and AIDS, Professor Michael Kelly, S.J. He is a recipient of several awards and two Honorary Degrees for his work on HIV and AIDS from the University College of Dublin in 2006, and the University of West Indies in 2004. At the Jesuit Center for Theological Reflection in Lusaka, students will take classes on ‘Economic Social Justice’ from the founding member and outgoing Director of JCTR, Fr. Pete Henriot. At Zambia Catholic University, development studies lecturer, Sr. Petronella Lubanga and Development Studies staff will give lectures to the students on a variety of developmental issues such as gender, environment and extreme poverty. A typical day in the program will start with an African language class in Bemba, followed by class sessions. The afternoon is reserved for field trips for immersion experience, tours and community service. The community will be the teachers, as lessons drawn from people living with HIV and AIDS, the children, the community leaders and host families dispense their knowledge through non-conventional classroom methods such as community rituals, songs, dance and drama.

2. **Class Etiquette**

Contrary to popular student perception, the classroom is a professional environment even in Africa! Students are therefore expected to act professionally and respectfully to community members to whom they are equally accountable as co-educators in the following manner: there is to be no eating or drinking at any time while class is in session. Snacks during break-time are fine. Laptops are permitted for the sole purposes of note taking. Students found to be engaged in computer activities (including email and Facebook) not related to class will be prohibited altogether from using laptops in class. Cell phones and iPods are neither to be seen nor heard except during personal time. There is to be absolutely no text messaging during class time.

3. **Immersion Experience**

The program creates great immersion experience opportunities for students, which promote cultural exchange, entertainment and relaxation. Through immersion, students learn about the culture and daily life of the people of Zambia, which helps them to better understand and bear witness to community members’ lived experiences. The aesthetical images in art and craft, ritual, song and dance, in natural rhythms and geo-natural beauty in abundant game and the terrain that creates the Victoria Falls, as well as the flora and fauna are captivating learning opportunities. They all create an appreciation of cosmological views not written in books, explained in lectures or apparent in AIDS clinics but found through personal reflection, community interaction, and immersion. These opportunities are created in Lusaka, the Copperbelt and Livingstone where student will visit during the trip.

4. **Community Service**

This course reflects the strength of a community pulling together, ubuntu, and of victim involvement to understand the different faces of HIV and AIDS through service learning. Robert Sigmon describes service
learning as a typology that balances learning goals and service outcomes in order to ensure reciprocal learning and mutual benefit between the learner and the service community.\textsuperscript{10} The social engagement is not only a crucial learning component of this course, but a distinctive mark of the University of San Francisco’s Mission Statement aimed at humanizing individuals and society through education. Service learning is, therefore, not optional but a course requirement. Fifteen hours of guided and structured service at the local service community partners and thirty-five hours of service in Zambia away from home will form the primary learning mechanism about the interconnectedness between politics, gender, poverty, religion, cultures and HIV and AIDS by providing vital service experience and insights for informed reflections, discussions, critical reading and writing.

The local service learning in San Francisco will prepare students for the required service component in Zambia where they will work and learn from communities infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. The service that students will provide to both the local and Zambian partners consist of pragmatic physical, emotional, social, educational and medical support to people with AIDS in the identified centers and their communities. Through service learning, students will understand how the ‘face’ of HIV and AIDS, even in poor Black communities in the Bay Area, is far different from that shaped by situations of extreme poverty in Zambia. When extreme poverty is coupled with political, cultural, religious, and gender struggles in Zambia, people living with HIV and AIDS face multiple challenges like ‘mountains beyond mountains’. Students on the program hope to learn about HIV and AIDS, experience of \textit{ubuntu}, the human touch that comes from proximity, and service with people living with HIV and AIDS.

\textbf{Service Contract}

Professional code of conduct is an important aspect of the service learning culture that must be adhered to in order to ensure mutual benefit. Failure to adhere to the stipulated professional behaviour may result in termination of the service learning contract, and subsequent course failure. However, while a healthy service learning environment is the ideal situation for which this course is designed, it should be impressed upon students that they have no obligation to continue offering service under life threatening circumstances that endanger their personal, physical, or emotional welfare. Any other concerns about the viability of the service experience should be immediately communicated to the instructor to ensure uninterrupted service and learning progress. Please note that community partners will be able to communicate concerns about student performance and conduct. Failure to perform appropriately will affect the overall course grade.

\textbf{Program Schedule}

Lusaka Program Schedule reflects only the first quarter segment of the month-long service learning program in Zambia. In this city of entry, students are introduced to a portion of life in Zambia as they take key lectures from local experts in their different fields of expertise spelt out in the schedule. There is a deliberate attempt to strike a balance between the service and academic pieces, and the relevance of field trips is also acknowledged.

Upon arrival in Lusaka, the program introduces USF students to three theological institutions, Jesuit Center for Theological Research (JCTR), Faith Encounter Center (FENZA) and the Caritas Center, and a government office.

These form the core partners in Lusaka and an integral part of USF networks of partnerships pivotal to the service learning pedagogy. Thus, the program develops dialogical relationships with these theological

institutions that are unique in orientation and complementarity. John Kretzmann and John P. McKnight rightly argue that, “Individuals, associations and institutions are the major categories that contain within them much of the asset base of every community”. The pivotal role of these theological institutions is clearly evident in the detailed schedule tabulated below. They shape the service learning rhythm in an interactive and effective manner through cultural immersion, research, and advocacy. They facilitate learning in a real world.

**Jesuit Center for Theological Research (JCTR)**

Although USF S-L program in Zambia’s interaction with JCTR happens in Lusaka where they are physically located, lessons from JCTR occupy center-stage in the entire program. It shapes the students’ understanding of Christian faith and social justice through practical means. JCTR focuses on research on social issues, education and advocacy to promote study and action or service learning. Founded in 1988, JCTR’s pursuit of faith-inspired understanding of current issues is guided by the Church’s Social Teachings captured in the quote from Church in the Modern World, 1965 on the JCTR 2012 Calendar: “The joys and hopes, the sorrows and the anxieties of the women and men of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the followers of Jesus Christ.” The faith message of this encyclical comes alive through JCTR’s continuous commitment to social justice, development, research, peace and integrity of creation reflected in the twelve-themed commitments to community engagement for every month of the year 2012. These civic themes are supported by Scripture to establish the correlation between the Bible and social justice in theological reflection.

In this way, JCTR uniquely champions social justice and distinguishes itself as an innovative theological institution whose theology is well-grounded in praxis. In designing the USF program, and seeking to understand how local communities and institutions survive HIV and AIDS in the challenging social, economic, political and cultural context of Zambia, through service learning, JCTR stood out as a towering theological institution that offered firm guidance for our service-learning program. Guided by the social teaching of the Church, JCTR constantly engages the government, NGOs and faith-based organizations to empower local communities in the work of justice and peace. Thus a preoccupation with HIV and AIDS that does not address the social issues discussed throughout the year by JCTR does not only misunderstand HIV and AIDS in Zambia, but will struggle to find sustainable solutions to it.

The USF in Zambia Today Program is only a month long, and that is a limitation for the scope of service learning. For practical purposes, USF students receive superb lectures from internationally respected scholars and theologians. They are introduced to the theoretical framework for reflection on Zambian economy, politics, sexuality and HIV and AIDS and community engagement. This is complemented by practical community engagement through research – the famous ‘Basic Needs Basket’ – where students participate in the research on the cost of living in Lusaka evaluated against basic family necessities and general household income. Thus, students participate in a process of civic transformation through the Church’s social teachings about equal participation for social justice. This holistic approach to Zambia’s social problems sharpens their understanding of the social justice perspective on HIV and AIDS.

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Faith Encounter Center (FENZA)

FENZA's ability to transform faith into action through vocational training for underprivileged people is one of their main assets. However, from the perspective of the USF global S-L program, FENZA’s most significant asset is their ability to make the Christian experience more African through inculturation, demonstrated by their local language and cultural orientation programs. This offers a corrective response to the emerging assumption of the ‘service movement’ that African communities have no assets and are in dire need of ‘help’ from foreign college and university students studying abroad. Thus, USF partnership with FENZA clearly demonstrates how the asset-based dialogical approach achieves equilibrium and efficacy in service learning as discussed by Kretzmann and McKnight. This distinguishes FENZA as an innovative theological institution for global service learning and establishes that the asset-based approach to community engagement draws from community residents and theological institutions as well.

FENZA facilitates cross-cultural learning informed by the theology of inculturation that empowers students for community service. Thus, neither Mrs Mumba nor Mr Kaunda, both FENZA cultural-language instructors, teach female students to wrap their *chitenge* and help foreign students understand the Zambian cultural ‘dos’ and ‘don’ts’ and exchange simple greetings like ‘*mulishani*’ to get by within a week. They teach from their rich cultural knowledge and teach language skills that foreign students require for successful Global S-L programs. These teachings are no less important than those given by their professors back at USF, because they prove a much needed asset for effective learning and service in a foreign environment.

Thus, FENZA introduces foreign students to the local community, fully equipped with assets to educate them. It dissuades the foreign student’s focus from “what is absent, or with what is problematic, or with what the community needs”. This debunks the ‘helper’ illusions nurtured by unprepared students who eventually learn to strike a balance between service and learning needed for meaningful theological reflection. FENZA, therefore, emerges as a theological institution equipped to respond effectively to the ever-burgeoning surge of foreign students ‘helping’ in African cities and villages at a critical time when over 50% of colleges and universities in the United States alone are sending their students abroad every semester.

Conclusion

This synergetic project therefore, emerges as an excellent example of theological relevance in the modern world. It illustrates the viable and balanced approach to experiential education because it is ‘internally focused and relationship driven’ (drawing from the agenda-building and problem-solving capacity of local residents which comes through research and relationships). It introduces the foreign students to Africa and its assets, and they return home with more education in their hearts and minds, ready to change their own worlds in synch with USF slogan, “change the world from here!” It offers a social justice approach to HIV and AIDS through participatory research and innovation.

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14 Kretzmann and McKnight, “Assets-Based Community Development,” 23.
15 Traditional wrap for dignifying women that nearly every Zambian woman wears.
16 Bemba for ‘hello’.
17 Kretzmann and McKnight, “Assets-Based Community Development,” 27.
18 Eby, “Why Service Learning is Bad,” 1.
19 Kretzmann and McKnight, “Assets-Based Community Development,” 27.

Part V: Selected Innovative Models and Case Studies of Theological Education in Africa
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PART VI

NETWORKS AND RESOURCES FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA
1. Introduction

Africa needs reliable leadership. Nobody will argue this! The one success story in Africa, especially after the colonial period, is the growth of the Christian Church. In South Africa and in the rest of Africa, churches have, by far, the highest level of public trust. As such, the church and theological education are the most strategically based institutions that can contribute towards Africa’s moral regeneration and towards the development of African leadership. The NetACT story tells how some seminaries have accepted this challenge.

This presentation begins by critically outlining and illustrating the growth of the church in Africa. It then illustrates some of the discrepancies of the growth of the church in Africa, and especially the dire need for reliable leadership, by examining two case studies: one from the Presbyterian Church in Nigeria (PCN) and the other from the Anglican Church in Kenya. Projected against this scenario, the NetACT story will be told to illustrate an attempt to address these issues.

2. The Growth of the Church in Africa

The Christian world’s centre of gravity is shifting southwards to Africa, Asia and Latin America. The *World Christian Encyclopaedia* as well as many other authorities, make this clear. In Table One, the “South” represents Africa, South America and Oceania while “North” includes North America, Europe and Asia.

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Table 1. Southern Shift in Christianity (the numbers are in millions)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1900 Popul</th>
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<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>73</td>
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<td>954</td>
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<td>449</td>
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<td>522</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>3454</td>
<td>2085</td>
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Table 2. Growth of the Christian Church in Africa

Lamin Sanneh points out that the growth of Christianity in Africa has accelerated after the departure of the missionaries (data from Sanneh and World Christian Database).

Independence came to Africa; missionaries started to leave
1962: 60m Christians and 145m Muslims
2005: 411m Christians and 355m Muslims
1970-1985 Christianity grew by 16,500 conversions a day—mostly in poor areas
During the same time, 4,300 people were leaving the church weekly in the West

Table 3. The post 1962 growth of the Church in Africa

Sanneh discusses the reasons for this significant growth in African Christianity.

1 The rapid expansion of Christianity took place after the colonial period and actually started during the period of national awakening (post 1962). In many ways colonialism was a stumbling block for the growth of Christianity. Once Africans were in a position to allow the Gospel to address their religions and cultures, they realized that God was present in Africa even long before the missionaries had arrived. Now they were in a position to rectify their cultural heritage in the light of the Gospel. In the words of Sanneh: “Christianity helped Africans to become renewed Africans, not remade Europeans.”

2 The translation of the Bible in African languages played a major role in the growth of an African Christianity according to Sanneh. He calls it a “delayed effect,” since many of the translations were done before 1962. His basic argument is that, in the same way in which Greek became the major language of the New Testament church and entered into dialogue with the Hellenistic culture, the use of the vernacular makes the Gospel accessible to African culture. The problem with many missionaries and mission agencies was that they preferred not to take the Acts 15 decision, disparaged African culture as being inferior to that of the West, and made proselytes. As soon as Africa became unshackled from this Western bondage,

Sanneh, “Whose religion?”, 55, 82.
Sanneh, “Whose religion?”, 18, 55, 73, 85, 95-130
the same phenomenon occurred as experienced in the first three centuries when a growth rate of approximately 40% per decade was maintained. 12

3 African leadership and the role of women freed the church from the disadvantages of foreign compromise and Western denominationalism. Bediako’s work13 on African Christian identity is crucial for an understanding of the growth of Christianity in Africa. African leadership understands the African worldview,14 which, in general, missionaries could not do; only exceptional individuals who crossed the cultural boundaries and actually listened to Africans succeeded in doing so.

African indigenous leadership is a key for understanding the phenomenon of the African Independent Churches (AICs), the growth of which accelerated after the independence phase. 15 The realities of the AICs have much in common with the church of the first centuries when there were no academically trained clerics and no church buildings. 16 See Table 4b below.

4 Christian expansion is virtually directly linked to those societies whose people preserved the indigenous name of God. Sanneh17 explains that few people noticed that, behind the statistical growth indicators, a theological factor played a major role. Africans responded best to Christianity where the indigenous religions were strongest and the indigenous name of God was used. In the same way that Jesus was called kurios in New Testament Greek, God’s name in African languages related the Gospel to every facet of the structure of a traditional society – from its agriculture to its religion. This highlights the importance of contextualization 18

Tables 4a and 4b are from another source, the South African Christian Handbook 2005-200619 which discusses the religious scenario and trends in South Africa, based on the 1911-2001 census data. Tables 4a and 4b overlap; 4a depicts the mainline denominations that are all declining, while 4b depicts the AICs and Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches comprising approximately 70% black Christians. The denominations in 4b are all growing and expanding their market share. In 1911, only 25% of black South Africans were Christians. This percentage rose steadily to nearly 80% in 2001 – typifying the mission–evangelization process that was taking place across Africa. A more detailed analysis reveals that there is a movement away from the mainline denominations towards the AICs, as well as towards the Pentecostal/Charismatic and new independent type of Christian Churches. The latter movement is visible in all population (racial) groups.

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16 Stark, “Rise of Christianity.”

Part VI: Networks and Resources for Theological Education in Africa
Table 4a: Christian Market share Mainline Denomination 1911-

Table 4b: Christian Market Share: AIC’s, Pentecostal and Other Christian: 1911-2001

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
These tables illustrate the growth of the church in Africa and the discussion points to some of the reasons for this growth. However, questions do arise. For instance: if the church has grown so spectacularly, and if the church is a “stock of social capital for promoting social development,“20 which we believe to be true, why is Africa in such a deplorable state when one examines issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, corruption, etcetera? Two case studies may help in this regard.

3. Ethnicity within the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (PCN)

In his doctoral dissertation, Uma Onwunta,21 a two-term Principal Clerk of the PCN (1996-2002), addressed *Ethnicity and missional strategies within the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria*. This dissertation is a case study on the influence of ethnicity and tribalism on the church in Africa. It carefully describes the inception and history of the PCN.22 Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, having anything between 120 to 160 million inhabitants, about 400 languages and up to 240 ethnic groups living in 36 politically demarcated states. Onwunta summarises:23

In the final analysis, there are only three ethnic groups which have attained majority status in their respective regions: the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Ibo in the south-east and the Yoruba in the south-west. These three groups comprise only fifty-seven percent of the population of Nigeria. The remainder of the people are of the ethnic minority groups ....

Muslims dominate the North, while Christians dominate the South, economically the stronger region. In Nigeria, one of the many disputes concerns which group is numerically the strongest. Interreligious differences have also remained a major divisive factor. Nigeria became independent in 1960. The first military coup took place in 1966 and soon led to a bloody ethnic conflict, the Biafra War that had a strong political and religious (Muslim-Christian) dimension. Onwunta notes24 that the emergence of the Christian Pentecostal Movement in Nigeria coincided with the period when Muslim-Christian confrontation became fierce. Pentecostal fundamentalism conflicted with the Muslims' fundamentalism. Ethnic violence and war, causing millions and millions of casualties, have been endemic to Africa.

However, the main thrust of Onwunta’s dissertation25 painstakingly points out how ethnocentrism has seriously eroded the mission of the PCN. He juxtaposes this by outlining to what extent the Gospel and dialogue can curtail this misfortune. The missionaries introduced the germ of ethnicity to the PCN. But, indigenous leaders have pampered and kept it alive until today. The two dominant vying ethnic groups monopolize over 98% of the human resources of the Church.26 Presbyterianism is substantially present in only six of the 36 states. Kalu27 declares that the overall growth of the PCN has not been encouraging at all, and puts the figure at approximately 150,000 after 150 years of enterprise in Nigeria.28 This figure may be too low, but Onwunta is of the following opinion:29

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28 The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria was founded by Scottish missionaries in 1846, Onwunta, “Ethnicity Nigeria,”
… I wish to strongly submit that the real problem of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria is not because the leadership is in the hands of indigenes; rather, the problem lies in the fact that leadership is being monopolized by the two rival ethnic groups in the Church. This is what I have called the ethno-localization of ecclesiastical leadership which allows no diversification of ideas from the different ethnic groups of Nigeria. Other groups have not been contributing to the leadership processes in the PCN because they are yet to be deliberately mainstreamed into the leadership structures of the Church… Until we fight ethnocentrism to its end and until we get the cohort of leaders whose sole mission is to serve the kingdom of God and cater for the welfare of the people, PCN will continue to be a platform for ethnic politics and individuals driven by egos.

It is no overstatement to say that, with many variations on the theme, the Nigerian scenario can be proven in every African country. Compare the Mainline Denominations’ pattern of decline in Table 4a and juxtapose it with the growth patterns of the AICs and the other new (mainly Pentecostal-Charismatic) churches’ growth in Table 4b. The Dutch Reformed Family of Churches, especially the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, is experiencing a serious loss of members because of internal conflict. It must be emphasized that, both in Nigeria and in South Africa, churches with a mainline or European origin that have access to Western intellectual resources, are not succeeding to grow in numbers or to take their share of responsibility to address the endemic problems that Africa faces. Are those that are growing numerically doing better? In fact, the Anglican Church in Kenya is growing!

4. Leadership in the Anglican Church in Kenya

In 2008, Rev Dickson N Kagema completed his research on Leadership training for mission in the Anglican Church of Kenya at UNISA. His research question was (2008:2): “How best should the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) train leaders for its self-growing Church and leaders who can effectively meet the demands of the rapidly growing Kenyan society?” He used the well-known four-self mission strategy, advocated by the ACK’s own 2004 strategic plan, to evaluate leadership training in Kenya. The strategy is that the Church and its leadership training should be self-sustaining, self-propagating, self-governing and self-theologising.

The research provides a general overview of the ACK, the above-mentioned mission strategy, its history and the growth of this Church. In 2007, it comprised 3.7 million members constituting 10.6% of the total Kenyan population of 35 million people, 3.4% more than its 1980 market share. Its 4996 congregations (1352 parishes) were served by 1555 ordained clergy. This translates roughly to 2400 members to one clergy person. 83% of the clergy had diplomas, certificates and less than 3 years’ training. Only 17% have degrees. A thorough empirical analysis was made of the theological colleges and their curricula. The views of Anglican leaders (bishops, clergy, lecturers at the colleges, lay and youth leaders) pertaining to the colleges’ leadership training and curricula triangulated the data. A pretty uniform picture emerged (144-235). Kagema’s conclusions confirm the emerging picture of the church in Africa:

The ACK lacks enough shepherds and the possibility is that most of its flock is spiritually unfed. It is practically impossible for one pastor to effectively satisfy the needs of such a big group. The challenges of the 21st century

15.
34 Kagema, “Leadership training,” 70.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
are immense and call for a pastor who is quite near to his/her sheep so that he/she can understand them and their challenges fully and as such he/she is in a position of meeting their spiritual needs.

In attempting to solve the problem of enough clergy, dioceses grouped together and started their own colleges. The process, however, was saturated with tribalism and the search of power.35

... some of the theological colleges were started out of the desire by some of the church leaders to have their own colleges where they would have direct influence and control. ... this self-interest coupled with ‘tribalism’ has continued to affect the training of church leaders in the ACK up to date, greatly affecting the provincialization process....

When the four-self requirements were put to the test at these colleges, all failed. Even church leaders acknowledge this. The curricula are not contextualized and relevant. The seminaries are understaffed and depend on foreign donors to survive. The qualifications of the lecturers are substandard, while half of the principals are expatriates.36

Regarding curriculum issues Kagema is outspoken:37

The curriculum of any learning institution is very important as it determines the kind of products produced by that institution. If the curriculum is haphazardly done, the people produced by it are also haphazard and their work is haphazard.... The clergy produced by these colleges are ‘half baked’.... And as such cannot stand the challenges of the 21st century.... This has rendered the ACK not to be a self-theologizing Church, a mission principle which is very instrumental for any growing church.... the curricula used in the ACK Provincial Colleges are uncontextualised and irrelevant. These curricula look more Western than African and as such fail to address the main issues affecting the Kenyan society today.

As with the PCN in Nigeria, Kagema bewails the tribalism and points out that the chaos that befell the country after the December 2007 elections was due to pent-up ethnic anger that simply erupted as the different factions within the ACK supported their kin.38

Throughout this dissertation, the vicious and self-destructing cycle is evident: through lack of strong leadership, church unity decisions to better theological training are not implemented and the perpetual financial problems continue. The candidates, drawn to study as clergy, are mostly low-level candidates unable to find work or study opportunities elsewhere. This is self-defeating; people no longer respect their fellow African clergy, catechists and evangelists. Good lecturers are scarce, underpaid, and more often than not tempted to leave the country, which exacerbates the brain drain of Africans leaving for lucrative work and salaries abroad.39 Theological training at all the colleges are still in English.40 Theology remains foreign if not taught in the mother tongue. Kagema’s dissertation is an emphatic call for African Christian intellectual leadership.41

Conclusions

The growth of the church in Africa cannot be denied. Some reasons for this growth have been explained. Mainline denominations do not always share in the growth, as can be seen from the Nigerian (PCN) and

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South African (Dutch Reformed Church [DRC]) examples, but occasionally, it does grow (Kenya’s Anglican Church [ACK]). Although this phenomenon needs more research, it is clear that the Christian Church is growing, despite the obvious absence of good theological leadership. Elsewhere, the author discusses this phenomenon in greater detail.42

This growth can be directly linked to the growth in world-wide Pentecostalism. Harvey Cox’s work43 explains this phenomenon. Table 4a, compared to 4b, illustrates its evidence in South Africa. In churches, such as the ACK, this growth takes place in the absence of well-trained clergy – may one say “because of the absence of well-trained clergy?”

The author’s experience of travelling and teaching in Africa, of attending theological conferences, or simply visiting post-graduate students where they live and work, has been inundated with stories about “rogue pastors.” It seems that one of the fastest growing entrepreneurial businesses in Africa is the building of one’s own church in line with the popular American charismatic “health-and-wealth” examples that dominate religious television shows. People, such as the popular Palestinian-born American televangelist Bennie Hinn,44 are known all over Africa for their evangelism campaigns that draw literally thousands and thousands of spectators, eager to be blessed, healed, saved and satisfied. The American prosperity cult-and-consumerism oriented variations of being church have thousands of replicas, large and small, throughout Africa. In most cases, this form of being church is a social reality but, theologically speaking, it is a disaster! However, they do provide a spirit of community in a sea of poverty. There are laudable exceptions, but the true Gospel is known by its fruit, and the realities of Africa with its Rwandan-like genocides,45 with the “Lord’s Resistance Army” in Uganda,46 speak of sorrow and shame.

Africa needs theological leaders, people who, like the prophets of every age and continent, read the Bible and discern God’s missio Dei. One can say that we need servant leaders like Nehemiah. We need disciples who follow Jesus Christ’s example. Kagema reiterates the well-known conclusion that, in Africa, Christianity is a kilometre wide but a centimetre deep.47

This scenario is now contrasted by the NetACT story.

5. NetACT: its Inception, Members, Mission and Goals

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the Network for African Congregational Theology, NetACT,48 is a network of twelve theological institutions in the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition49 with the following mission:

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43 Cox, “Fire from heaven.”
44 His official website: http://www.bennyhinn.org/default.cfm helps one to grasp the trend of his campaigns. Also check the very informative article in Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benny_Hinn.
46 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord’s_Resistance_Army
49 At present, NetACT is constituted by 15 institutions. The Board members are: Dr Rangarirai Rutoro (Murray Theological College, Zimbabwe, Chair); Mrs Maggie Madimbo (African Bible College, Malawi. Vice Chair); Dr Edwin Zulu (Justo Mwale Theological University College, Lusaka, Zambia, Secretary); Rev Leonard Katundu (Zomba Theological College, Malawi); Prof Jurgens Hendriks (Executive Director); Dr Ron Hartgerink, USA (representing donors); Prof Dr Nico Koopman (Stellenbosch University); Rev Arnold Nthara (Josopah Mwale Theological Institution, Malawi); Rev Miguel Nobre (Hefsiba, Mozambique); Rev Thomas Togom (Reformed Institute for Theological Training, Kenya); Rev Simon Gilham (NETS, Namibia); Rev Rafael Avelino (ISTEL, Angola); Rev Kitu Simão (ISEU, Angola); Rev Jan Oberholzer, (Deaf Christian Ministry Africa); Dr. Jonathan Iorkighir (Reformed...
NetACT is a network of theological institutions in Sub Saharan Africa, created and directed by these institutions, to assist them in preparing leaders for missional congregations.

Its major goals are to:
1. Upgrade curriculum standards at our member institutions.
2. Develop an effective system of communication, consultation and networking among all member institutions.
3. Provide scholarships to advance the theological training of our institutions’ lecturers.
4. Create an affordable and welcoming living environment for lecturers who are receiving advanced training.
5. Organize lecturer exchanges among our institutions to provide needed expertise, and to create space and time for lecturers to further their studies.
6. Maintain an adequately staffed coordinating office.
7. Publish theological handbooks relevant to the African context.
8. Ensure that an HIV/AIDS course is developed and maintained as a routine part of the normal curriculum at each NetACT institution.

NetACT’s cradle was a consultation held by the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA) in collaboration with Overseas Council and Nairobi Evangelical School of Theology in February 2000. This consultation dealt with the relationship of seminaries, as theological institutions of higher education, and the church, and had as its theme, “Serving the church: Partnership in Africa.” 350 delegates debated the challenges, shortcomings and tensions in theological education in Africa.

In this atmosphere, the representatives of four institutions met and decided to form NetACT. Other institutions indicated that they wanted to be part of the network and were present at its first formal meeting.

The eight-day (18-25 April 2001) meeting in Lusaka, with 22 delegates attending, was most formative. The mission, goals and constitution were formulated and a strategic plan was set in motion. The subsequent Annual General Meetings took place in different countries. The minutes of these meetings describe NetACT’s development, struggles and achievements and, together with crucial reports, appear on the mentioned website.

6. Towards Sustainable Seminaries and Reliable Leadership

6.1. Congregational emphasis

The plight of this continent motivated the formation of NetACT. An explanation of the emphasis on congregations in the mission statement is necessary. The first mission statement explains what is meant by “congregational theology”:
Congregational Theology is theology as practised in the Christian Congregation as the body of Christ, discerning the will of God in the process of interpreting the Scriptures and its own specific context, empowering the Congregation to address its multiple problems, challenges power, corruption and economic injustice (among others).

The emphasis on congregations professes the belief that the church should produce the social capital that keeps society intact, peaceful and just. Only a people’s movement can attain this. The best way of reaching and communicating values to Africa’s people is via their churches. The infrastructure for this already exists, is sustainable and proven. The problem, however, is the quality of its clergy, its theological leadership. The basic assumption of this statement rests on the belief that Christian Gospel values have the potential to lead to a just, prosperous and peaceful society. The key for reaching this goal is the development of seminaries on the continent and ensuring that reliable servant leaders are trained or discipled at these institutions.

6.2. The first stage: 2000-2006: What made it happen?
The first stage was from 2000 to 2006 when the Annual General Meeting was held in Windhoek and where the mission and goals were slightly altered and the energy of the networked refocused.

In retrospect, the following key factors enabled the formation of the network:

1. Leadership. The founding members from the various institutions and countries had the prophetic ability to understand the problem and to visualize an alternative future. They had the faith to form a network against humanly insurmountable odds, which included finances, lack of infrastructure, various forms of prejudice and the constraints of an overload of work and responsibilities.

2. Financial support. How NetACT met with Dr. Ron Hartgerink, CEO of a chemical pharmaceutical company and then Chair of the Board of Western Theological Seminary (MI, USA), was a divine intervention. He directed the Elmar Hartgerink Trust, which funded most of the Network’s activities during the first stage. He came on board at the Lusaka meeting in 2001 and his strategic planning skills proved to be invaluable.

3. Infrastructure. The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) Family in the Western Cape and Stellenbosch University (SU) played a major role in supplying the infrastructure needed for the work. The existing DRC-Reformed-Presbyterian denominational network provided expertise, accommodation for students and scholarships. SU provided office space for NetACT and administered its finances.

4. Trust. The scars of our colonial past and apartheid were realities in our midst. From the very beginning, all parties trusted bridge-builders, such as Prof Martin Pauw, a Zambian-born ChiChewa-speaking professor in Missiology at SU. His intimate knowledge of Africa and its people and his personal relationship with most of us, helped us through many difficult times and situations. The development of personal relationships cemented the trust-building process in which the 2002 workshop on HIV/AIDS (that World Vision’s Christo Greyling and his wife presented) played a major role in helping us to communicate and discuss the “elephants in the room.”

6.3. Achievements of the first stage
The main activities and achievements of the 2000-2006 stage were the following:

1. A communication network. Our first goal was to supply all institutions with computers in order to have e-mail communications. It was a tough and prolonged “struggle” and learning process. Keeping our seminaries effectively linked up with the latest IT developments stays a priority.

2. **An HIV/AIDS curriculum at all the seminaries.** In 2000, no institution lectured on AIDS. The staff, students and local church leadership of all seminaries were introduced to the first basic AIDS curriculum at local three-day conferences. Seminary staff received additional training as trainers. However they were soon “bought” by NGOs or government agencies. We lost all of our first team of trained lecturers! This aspect of our work needs continuous attention.

3. **Our first joint publication. Studying congregations in Africa**\(^{54}\) took three full years of preparation. We received invaluable international academic support and produced a contextualized, basic and affordable handbook for all our seminaries.

4. **Training staff:** The academic qualifications of the staff at NetACT seminaries have improved considerably.\(^{55}\) Scholarships from the Reformed-Presbyterian denominations in Africa, Europe and North America as well as institutions, such as the Mustard Seed Foundation, made this possible.\(^{56}\)

5. **The NetACT office and infrastructure** played a key role in networking resources, e.g. scholarships, money for seminaries’ capital-intensive projects, and linking seminaries internationally to people and institutions to build capacity. The office also plays a key role in lecturer exchange, which takes place between NetACT institutions, and by inviting international highly qualified academics to teach at NetACT seminaries – free of charge. As such, local lecturers are able to pursue their studies, the overburdened staff receives respite, invaluable academic input is achieved, and personal and academic networks extended.

6. **The NetACT house at SU.** The DRC and the Elmar Hartgerink Trust supplied the capital to buy and furnish affordable accommodation for students from African countries to lodge for shorter or longer periods of study about two kilometres from the seminary in a house next to the railway station. The NetACT office provides the hands-on administration of the house while SU attends to the maintenance and finances. The house, containing 24 beds / fourteen rooms, plays an invaluable role as it provides not only physical accommodation but also spiritual and social-academic support for people who are often under pressure, far from home, and total strangers when commencing their studies. At this mini United Nations gathering, the interaction is remarkable. It is quite an experience to attend their daily devotions, which open windows and doors to many realities of our life and calling in Africa.\(^{57}\)

6.4. **The second stage and its challenges**

Key to the success of the first stage was the financial contribution of the Elmar Hartgerink Trust. This, however, was putting the network at risk.\(^{58}\) Sustainable seminaries and a sustainable network should not depend on a single donor. In 2006, funding from the Trust basically stopped. At the 2006 sixth consecutive Annual General Meeting in Namibia, the NetACT Board were compelled to do some serious thinking and planning. The Venn-Anderson-Heibert) mission strategy’s\(^{59}\) goal was self-sustaining, self-propagating, self-governing and self-theologising churches / seminaries. How were we to deal with this?

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\(^{56}\) Between 2000 and 2008, an annual average of 36 postgraduate students from other African countries studied at SU, most of whom are from NetACT countries. Between 1994 and 2008 over 100 students from these countries received their postgraduate degrees from SU. The numbers are rising annually.

\(^{57}\) http://academic.sun.ac.za/theology/weidenhof.html


Three concerns were clear: we had to strengthen the stewardship responsibilities of our seminaries / supporting local churches and we had to work towards an internationally accepted standard of accreditation that was to be driven by the individual seminaries and their constituent churches. We were also increasingly anxious about the AIDS pandemic and the impact it had on our students and the local churches that were supporting our seminaries. AIDS was impoverishing every aspect of society and, as such, also our seminaries.

The result was that the 2007 Lusaka AGM’s structure differed from prior AGMs. 66 people attended: 26 from NetACT associated institutions, 21 from Pittsburg Theological Seminary and Pittsburg University, 12 ministers and church leaders from the PCUSA and 7 other international scholars.

The two-day conference on: “The effects of the Aids pandemic and poverty on church life in Sub-Saharan Africa: stewardship implications” was held prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of NetACT, and a conference on “The prophetic witness of the Church in networking with government, business and other NGOs to address contextual issues” took place after the AGM. Our guests financed these meetings! Basic realities regarding the four-self strategy gained in clarity. As regards seminaries in Africa, local stewardship and external funding must find a compromise\(^{60}\) that will not affect the principle of self-theologising.

The minutes of the 2007 AGM clearly indicate to what extent curriculum and accreditation issues took centre stage. The institutions all pledged to work towards local accreditation with their national Education Departments, but also towards ACTEA accreditation\(^{61}\). The NetACT minutes state:\(^{62}\)

ACTEA is accepted by NetACT as the ideal general accrediting body for theological education in Africa, and is recommended as such to the (South African) CHE (Council for Higher Education). ACTEA is a regional body of ICETE (International Council for Excellence in Theological Education). It also associates with ICAA (International Council of Accrediting Agencies).

At present (2012), JMTUC has both national and ACTEA accreditation for its BTh degree but all the institutions are in a process of working towards national and ACTEA accreditation. Several attained national accreditation. Having accreditation from one’s national Education Department is excellent but, quite often, local politics make it very difficult to attain and, furthermore, does not guarantee international academic acceptance. ACTEA accreditation covers areas, especially with regard to a seminary’s relationship with the church and aspects of the spiritual formation of its students, the state of its facilities and administration that accreditation from the local government does not cover. Excellence requires both accreditations.

ACTEA accreditation has a number of advantages over and above that of national accreditation. Acquiring ACTEA accreditation is a process driven by the institution and its supporting churches. It deals with all aspects needed for quality theological leadership development. They are:

1. Administration (governance, mission, institutional stability, finances).
2. Teaching staff (qualifications, Africanization, welfare).
3. Facilities (e.g. effective buildings, library, IT).
4. Educational program (contextual relevance, admission standards, content, length and weight – credits – of program).
5. Students (community life, spiritual formation, mentoring, discipline, fees).

\(^{60}\) The financial reality that seminaries must face can be understood only against the global picture and overall financial position of African countries, Castells, M., *End of Millennium. The information age: Economy, society and culture* Vol. 3. (2nd ed; Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 68-168.

\(^{61}\) http://www.theoledafrica.org/ACTEA/

Jurgens Hendriks

NetACT assists individual seminaries in this endeavour. Rev Kruger du Preez, of Hefsiba in Mozambique, received a scholarship to do his doctoral research on the state of the curricula of the NetACT institutions. It is close to completion (2012)!

What resources NetACT has, have subsequently been used to attain the accreditation goal. It was decided that curriculum development workshops should take centre stage. The minutes of the 2007 discussion on HIV/AIDS explain why the AIDS curricula were first on the workshop’s agenda:63

• How does NetACT ensure that its positive resolutions on this matter really touch and influence local situations?
• NetACT is not to check that members do an AIDS course. Its role is to coordinate, empower and network so that members can have access to good information for their syllabi.
• Member institutions need to deliver to the churches pastors who are well-trained and able to function relevantly in their communities.
• The Board notes that local developments at the respective institutions have surpassed the (original) AIDS course and knowledge.
• It may be useful to share our respective experiences and insights and come up with a collective, current understanding.
• It is agreed that, due to the urgency of the matter, December 2007 until March 2008 will be the time for such a workshop.

In July 2008, all institutions attended the HIV/AIDS curriculum workshop. They worked day and night in dealing with the various aspects of curriculum. Their first book on the issue is titled: *Our church has AIDS: Preaching in a context of HIV&AIDS in Africa*.64 NetACT managed to obtain external funding from various institutions towards to hold these workshops and publish the book.

In 2009, during the 150th anniversary of theological training at Stellenbosch, a workshop on the curricula of the Biblical subjects was held. A general introduction to the theory and art of curriculum development was presented in liaison with the Faculty of Education, Stellenbosch University (Bloom 1992; Carl 2002; & Ford 1991),65 ACTEA and South African accreditation authorities. More seminaries than just those of NetACT were present. Opinion was unanimous that this was the best or most informative and necessary workshop NetACT ever had. Principals and delegates left full of vigour to address the curriculum issue at their institutions. However, to the disappointment of the NetACT Executive and the Old and New Testament curriculum coordinators, the follow-up and report back promises turned out to be dismal.

Why? It took us about eight months to realize some of the reasons. However, two seminaries gave us important clues. MThC in Zimbabwe and NETS in Namibia returned home after the 2009 meeting and addressed the curriculum issue by getting all their staff and board members together and sharing the info. Both seminaries rewrote their curricula and set new goals for their institutions. A new energy is visible and results are surfacing. NETS became the first tertiary institution in Namibia to attain accreditation from their newly formed National Accreditation Agency.

We subsequently changed our tactic and organized regional meetings where the same content is shared with the staff and board members of the NetACT seminaries.66 While organising a regional meeting in

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64 Mash, Rachel, Cilliers, Johan, Griffiths, Keith, Chemorion, Edith & Katani, Archwells (eds), *Our church has AIDS: Preaching about HIV & AIDS in Africa* today (Stellenbosch: NetACT, 2009).
66 The programs and most presentations given at these workshops are on the web:
 Angola, their association for theological education and the Angolan ecumenical bodies requested that the workshop be open to all 15 theological schools of Angola. In January 2011 eleven attended, paying their own expenses. A follow-up is planned for Jan 2013. One of the many fringe benefits of this development is that we request all staff and board members to be involved. It is subsequently much easier for a principal or deal of studies to motivate staff to work on curriculum issues because they are familiar with most of the work. Working towards creating contextual theological education and a more holistic approach towards doing theology in an African way is now one of our priorities.67

6.4. The Third Stage and its Challenges

NetACT’s third stage of development ensued when it started addressing gender inequality in church and academy as well as the pressing problem of the expansion of the network.

Since addressing the HIV&AIDS pandemic was one of our first objectives and since we needed an evaluation of the effectiveness of what we did, we brainstormed the problem. After at least five curriculum workshops the brainstorming led to a conviction. If we do not address patriarchy and gender issues, as difficult as they may be, we will not be honestly dealing with the HIV&AIDS challenge.

Thus we embarked on a new leg of our journey at the August 2011 workshop and AGM. We decided to do empirical research and ask three questions to all our institutions.68

1. We wanted to know whether or not the seminaries implemented the HIV&AIDS programmes that their project team developed.
2. We wanted to know about the influence and place of these programmes in their curricula.
3. We wanted to get some understanding of the gender equity situation and attitudes to gender equality at our seminaries.

We developed a hypothesis that motivated these research questions. Our line of reasoning went like this:

We wrote HIV&AIDS programmes, but then realised that even though the programmes or modules dealing with HIV&AIDS were taught by someone who was trained to do so, they were often “outsiders” in a course that does not integrate the content with the rest of the theological programme. It was pretty much an “add-on” about something shrouded in silence and stigma. In other words: there was little coherence with the rest of the curriculum of the institution.

In order to effectively and faithfully address the contextual reality of this terrible pandemic, everybody teaching in an institution should deal with it purposefully in every sub-discipline of theology with the type of input unique to that sub-disciple. To achieve this, the students, staff and board of theological institutions should be familiar with the basic principles of constructing and teaching a contextualised curriculum. The basic elements of curriculum development should be known and applied. This was certainly not the case in the NetACT schools. We then started with curriculum development workshops.

It was during this process that we realised that our goal to address the HIV&AIDS pandemic would never be successful without addressing the cultural bias that existed in a patriarchal system, in other words, the gender issue. Thus the central hypothesis of the research questions that we are now discussing is that the reality of the HIV&AIDS pandemic will not be eradicated without addressing the gender issue in our cultures and thus in our theological curricula.

The logic of this hypothesis and the importance of explaining it also had to be made clear to those churches and NGOs that had supported our work and research over the past ten years; we had to explain


67 The person who really helped us in this regard was a professor from SU’s Faculty of Education. His book is worth mentioning: Carl, A.E., Teacher empowerment


Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
why we moved from simply writing HIV&AIDS programmes to engaging with issues of curriculum development and then gender equality work. The original goal is still being pursued, but we are addressing it on a more fundamental level.

The result of our research and the 2011 workshop is published as: Men in the pulpit, women in the pew? Addressing gender inequality in Africa. A second more practical work on how to implement the principles in church and seminaries is now on the charts with as working title Living with dignity. The gender project is really doing something to all of us, especially the women from each of the institutions that are involved in it.

The second challenge of the third stage is how to enlarge the network with so many institutions wanting to join. This is now pretty much the number one issue on our agenda. We need wisdom and discernment on how to share what we have received.

### 7. In Conclusion: Major Challenges

This presentation tried to address the type of infrastructure necessary that will produce leaders that can live up to the challenges we face in Africa. Metaphorically speaking, Africa is in socio-economic and political exile. Nonetheless, in faith we are working toward rebuilding our societies’ broken walls.

We are in Nehemiah’s position – we must approach those with power and resources to support us in this endeavour. We must develop the networks and encourage each other to be strong, work hard, and build for the sake of our descendants and the honour of the Lord whom we are serving.

Ultimately, the challenges we face are very real: all our seminaries need, for instance, good facilities for computer training. All need scholarships for their future leaders. All need income-generating projects that can help them to have sustainable seminaries. Most important: we need relevant, contextualized curricula and dedicated leadership that can work across gender, ethnic and geographical boundaries. We need to network to address these challenges effectively and faithfully.

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**Key words**: leadership-Africa, sustainable seminaries, theological training, networking, accreditation, HIV & AIDS, curriculum, stewardship, NetACT.
(101) ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA:
THE CASE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS
IN SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA (ATISCA)

James Amanze

Introduction
This paper examines the role played by the Association of Theological Institutions in Southern and Central
Africa (ATISCA) in ecumenical theological education within the framework of the World Council of
Churches (WCC) through the activities of ETE, the programme on Ecumenical Theological Education. The
paper first gives an account of the international context in which ATISCA was born and then proceeds
to discuss the formation of the Association in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1986. After that, it examines the
various activities in which ATISCA has been engaged since its inception to the present day. Issues
covered include, curriculum development, networking with other ecumenical organisations, development
of contextual theology, research and publications, and ATISCA’s engagement with contemporary social
issues that affect the life of the African people today. The paper concludes by noting that ATISCA plays a
very important role in the ecumenical movement and has become a religious power to reckon with.

The Importance of Theological Education in World Christianity
The first volume of the Newsletter of the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions
(WOCATI), which was published in February 1993, stresses the importance of theological education in
world Christianity in the following words: “Theological education is a worldwide enterprise fundamental
to the mission of the church. In its most immediate and concrete forms theological education is shaped by
the religious, educational, social, political and historical traditions within which it exists. Theological
education is carried out in a world which is increasingly being made aware of its inter-dependence and
religious pluralism. Its context is both local and global and therefore, it can function more effectively
within a worldwide framework”.2

The same sentiments regarding the importance of theological education were expressed by the late
Bishop Prince E. S. Thompson who is reported to have once said: “theological education is our nerve
centre and......our willingness to shoulder it is an indication of our maturity”.3 What this means is that
theological education is the bedrock of the mission of the Church for a church without a mission is dead.
This view has led to the establishment of seminaries, theological colleges, Bible schools and university
departments of theology and religious studies in many parts of the world generally and Africa in particular.
Although, initially, theological education was done primarily along denominational lines, as a result of
doctrinal differences based on the different churches’ historical traditions, the 1950s and 1960s saw the
emergence of interdenominational theological colleges especially in Africa. After independence, and as a
result of the WCC’s impact on the new churches in Africa, a number of theological institutions formed
theological associations in order to enhance the teaching and learning of theology and religious studies in

1 ETE means Ecumenical Theological Education and is a wing of the WCC whose task is to promote theological
education worldwide.
3 See “All Africa consultation on viability of ministerial formation today” a document for study by the Associations of
Theological institutions (n. d.)
the region. One of these is the Association of Theological Institutions in Southern and Central Africa (ATISCA) which is the subject matter of this paper.

It should be noted from the outset that the formation of (ATISCA) was part of the worldwide quest to enhance theological education in the Third World countries. It is a move that can be traced back to the ecumenical activities of the International Missionary Council (IMC), which was formed in 1921 as a result of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference and which, eventually, became an integral part of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1961. The establishment of the IMC should be hailed as one of the most significant landmarks in theological education in Africa because its main aim was to achieve high standards in theological education in the Third World.

The IMC was formed at the time when the wind of change for political emancipation was blowing very strongly across Africa. The movement for independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s culminated in most African countries becoming independent. Between 1964 and 1980 the majority of countries in Southern and Central Africa received their autonomous status. One of the most progressive forces of this period was the emergence of the spirit of nationalism with great emphasis on nationhood rather than on separate tribal entities. At the political level, this meant that many people in the region began to have a broad picture of humanity which went beyond tribal boundaries and thus enabled the formation of new nations based on shared values within national geographical boundaries. But what was more significant still, was the emerging spirit of Pan-Africanism, which began to shape the dream and vision of many African leaders in the region.

The implication of this new “spirit” is that people in Africa began to redefine themselves not only in terms of their national boundaries but also in terms of the fact that they are all Africans who shared the same colonial history and experience. They came to realise that they are one people created in the image and likeness of God. Their common colonial experiences made it easier for them to relate to one another. They became aware that their future and well-being depended on their cooperation and inter-dependence not only at the political level but also at the ecclesiastical level. This awareness was shared by a number of churches and theological institutions in the region. It eventually became the seedbed for church unity and the creation of theological associations in Africa something that made ecumenical theological education possible. The need to create theological associations for ecumenical theological education did not take place in the vacuum. As a matter of fact, it was essentially driven and promoted by the WCC as a continuation of the work began by the IMC which held its conference in Ghana in 1957/58 which led to the establishment of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) for the advancement of theological education in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Interestingly enough, the IMC’s concern in theological education is traced back to the Tambaram Conference in 1938 during which it was noted that the weakest element in the entire enterprise of Christian missions was theological education.

Lesslie Newbigin has indicated that the establishment of the TEF with a dedicated staff signalled the beginning of a new chapter in theological education in the Third World for its purpose was to assist theological institutions to raise their standards to conform to those of the best theological faculties of Europe and North America and initiate a massive programme to improve libraries and stimulate the production of theological text books in the major languages of the Third World. However, changing circumstances and a new set of ideas and needs in theological education led to the metamorphosis of the FTE and the formation in July 1977 of the Programme for Theological Education (PTE) as a sub-unit of the World Council of Churches. Its task was to carry out and broaden theological education in the six

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Part VI: Networks and Resources for Theological Education in Africa
continents of the globe and to take a fresh step forward in supporting the churches.\textsuperscript{7} According to Newbigin, the central concern was ministerial formation. The focus on ministerial formation was based on the understanding that within the churches, theological institutions are effective in equipping church leaders, ordained and un-ordained, both men and women with the skills necessary for discipleship and witness. In other words, theological institutions enable the enablers.\textsuperscript{8}

Samuel Amirtham has ushered us into what was the core mandate of PTE. “Its mandate”, he writes, “included promoting consultations to discuss realities, problems, and potentialities of theological education in each region and to devise programmes for action within and among regions”.\textsuperscript{9} According to Amirtham, such consultations centred around the concerns of a particular region within an ecumenical context with the understanding that theological education must ultimately be evaluated in terms of its service to all those for whom Christ died in which case it goes beyond the borders of the Church. Amirtham has further noted that the goal of ministerial formation, which was central to the work of the PTE, was to provide a spiritual community of motivated and equipped people for a life of service.\textsuperscript{10}

The transformation of the PTE into the present Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) in 1992 marked a fundamental change in the way in which the ecumenical community perceived the nature of ministerial formation in the mission of the Church. According to John S. Pobee, while the TEF was set up to assist the churches of the Third World in the reform and renewal of theological education and ministerial formation practices, the role of the Ecumenical Theological Education was not to do programmes for the churches but to travel with the principal actors, the churches of the Third World with a focus on the “viability of ecumenical theological education”.\textsuperscript{11} One of the ways in which the ETE did this was through the formation of associations of theological institutions. In the context of Africa, many of them were initiated by the ETE programme and received financial support from it. The ETE promotes contextual ecumenical theological education and ministerial formation and encourages theological institutions, ecumenical institutes and associations to participate in the ecumenical movement locally and globally.\textsuperscript{12} According to Dietrich Werner, the WCC’s concern for theological education is embedded in its constitution according to which one of the primary purposes and functions of the WCC is to “nurture the growth of an ecumenical consciousness through processes of education and a vision of life in community rooted in each particular cultural context”.\textsuperscript{13}

**The Birth of ATISCA Opens New Dimensions in Theological Education**

The birth of the Association of Theological Institutions in Southern and Central Africa (ATISCA) was a result of the initiative of and encouragement from the ETE program of the WCC as was the case with many other associations of theological education in Africa. In the Southern and Central African region, a group of theologians and church leaders met in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1986 and took the daring step of forming ATISCA. The motive behind this move was to enable theological institutions outside South Africa to hold their own conferences without the interference of the South African apartheid regime. Immediately after its formation a constitution was drafted, circulated and adopted. With the constitution in place, ATISCA became

\textsuperscript{7} Newbigin, “Theological education...”, 25.

\textsuperscript{8} Newbigin, “Theological education...”, 26.

\textsuperscript{9} Samuel Amirtham, “Learning from PTE’s consultations” in *Ministerial Formation*, 110 (April 2008), 34.

\textsuperscript{10} Amirtham, “Learning...”, 34-36.


\textsuperscript{13} See Dietrich Werner, “‘Magna Charta on Ecumenical Formation in Theological Education in the 21st century-10 key convictions”, in *Ministerial Formation*, 110 (April 2008), 82.

*Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*
very active. According to Ambrose Moyo, at the time of its inception, most of ATISCA’s original members were also members of other associations in the region. For example, Swaziland and Lesotho became members of both ATISCA and the Association of South African Theological Institutions (ASATI). A number of Zambian theological institutions also became members of ATISCA but eventually gave up their membership because they were affiliated to the Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa (ATIEA). Though the Association started relatively small, by the end of 1989 it had a total membership of 18 institutions drawn from Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. Today ATISCA boasts of a membership of 25 member institutions and is still growing. The Association offers full membership to (a) all theological institutions engaged in training for the Christian ministry and (b) university departments in which a course leading to a degree or diploma in theology and/or religious studies is available. Besides, the Association offers associate membership to individual members of faculty in the theological institutions or university departments and church related institutions and other organisations and individuals interested in theological education and religious studies.

What is significant about ATISCA is its membership. It is composed of member institutions drawn from a wide range of Christian denominations. These include Roman Catholics, Protestants and Pentecostals. Through ATISCA, churches in the region have removed certain religious animosities inherited from their past histories. For sometime a few church leaders were reluctant to allow their theological institutions to participate actively in the activities of ATISCA because of suspicion and mistrust. However, once they saw the aims and objectives of the Association, they changed their mind and allowed their institutions to participate fully into this ecumenical venture. It appears to me that failure to achieve this unity of purpose would have undermined the very existence of ATISCA. I concur fully with Dietrich Werner when he says:

if the ecumenical movement as a whole is about strengthening common witness and promoting new forms of the visible unity between churches of different denominational and confessional traditions then the scandal of churches remaining in disunity and using distorting images of sister churches in one’s own educational materials and publications needs to be overcome....The strengthening and pursuit of church unity in theological education is a Gospel imperative for any church joining in the affirmation of the church as being one, holy, catholic and apostolic in its essence.

On the basis of the above text, it is plausible to argue that through its ecumenical stance, ATISCA has managed to promote interfaith dialogue among the churches for, as Werner has indicated, ecumenical formation in theological education should be guided by a vision of sharing and mutual discoveries in many church contexts and reaching even beyond the realm of Christianity to the human community in the whole inhabited earth.

It should be noted here that though ATISCA’s aims and objectives are, to a certain extent, similar to those found in other associations in Africa, it appears that it differs fundamentally from them in one crucial aspect. Unlike other sub-regional associations, which are concerned with matters of accreditation, ATISCA’s emphasis is somewhere else. This is because ATISCA does not seek to run academic programmes such as diplomas and degrees in theology. Member institutions are working for diplomas and degrees of a university under a scheme of special relationship. For example, there is a special relationship between the University of Zimbabwe on the one hand and the Roman Catholic Regional Seminary at

14 See Minutes of the ATISCA Executive Committee meeting, Harare, 25.8.1995, 2.
16 Information based on documents preserved in the archives of ATISCA, Gaborone, Department of Theology and Religious, University of Botswana.
17 See Secretary’s report to ATISCA, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1990, 1.
18 Werner, “Magna Charta ...”, 82.
19 Werner, “Magna Charta...”, 84.
Chishawasha and the United Theological College on the other. Another example is Zomba Theological College which runs a Diploma in Theology and a Bachelor of Divinity which are accredited by the University of Malawi. This trend of affairs seems to continue to the present day.

ATISCA has a number of aims and objectives which guide its life and work namely:

(a) To promote fellowship, understanding and co-operation between the various theological institutions engaged in the training for the Christian ministries and University Departments engaged in theological and religious education.

(b) To foster the study of theology, religion and related subjects, and to encourage the development of theologies that is relevant to African context and situation.

(c) To co-ordinate theological education and religious studies programmes in the region and identify areas of cooperation and means of co-ordinating action whenever this is deemed desirable within the scope of the Association.

(d) To explore means and ways of upgrading theological and religious studies in the region.

(e) To stimulate research and publication, provide a forum for discussions and study of current theological issues and other matters of common interest, and to organise an annual Institute for teaching staff.

(f) To encourage and support graduate and post graduate studies and joint research projects in theology and religious studies.

(g) To act in an advisory capacity to the member institutions and the churches they serve, and, where desired, assist in the planning of those concerned with theological and religious education.

It should be noted that ATISCA has, since its inception, endeavoured to achieve these objectives by means on networking with other organisations and church related institutions through conferences, Staff Institute, collaborative research, and staff exchange. Below are some of the activities and projects of ATISCA in the past twenty six years of its life and work.

(a) ATISCA and its role in curriculum development in theological education

A quick look at the aims and objectives of ATISCA, as set out in the constitution, reveals that the core business of ATISCA is curriculum development. There is a great deal of emphasis on the need to promote the teaching and learning of theology and religious studies. As a result ATISCA has been engaged in a number of projects designed to meet this desired goal. This fits well with the WCC’s philosophy that “theological education and ministerial formation educate church and community leaders, theologians and theological educators, and influence the directions in which churches move or do not move, in mission, evangelism, diakonia, koinonia, ministry and ecumenism”. In the pursuit of this goal, ATISCA has been involved in developing certain aspects of the curriculum in order to be relevant with current realities in independent Africa in the context of religious pluralism.

In the first instance, ATISCA has been engaged in the task of developing new ways of learning and teaching of Church History in Africa. To this end, in 1990 ATISCA began to organise a curriculum study on the subject of Church History with special emphasis on African Church History. According to Fr. Vincent Bailey, of St. Augustine’s Major Seminary in Maputo, Mozambique, who was asked to coordinate the project, the idea to embark on the Church History project was agreed upon during the annual meeting of ATISCA which was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1990. Fr. John J. Moore has observed

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20 See Minutes of the Conference of African Theological Institutions General Meeting held in Harare, September 19-21, 1989 where this was discussed.
21 Constitution, 1
23 See Fr. Vincent Bailey’s correspondence, “ATISCA Curriculum Project: Church History”, Maputo, St. Augustine Major Seminary, 1 (no date).

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
that the project culminated in the General Meeting held in Lesotho in 1992 with the theme: Teaching of Church History and Ministerial Formation in Africa. The discussions at the meeting stimulated the ATISCA project of producing a sourcebook for Central African Church History containing material from Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. According to Fr. Bailey, the aims of the project were: (a) to develop a curriculum for the study of Church History with a special emphasis on African Church History, general and local; (b) to help those already teaching to improve the quality of their teaching; (c) to investigate methods of teaching the subject; (d) to share material and resources; (e) to define objectives in teaching Church History; (f) to determine perspectives in the teaching of Church History and (g) to discover how to teach Church History ecumenically. The project looked into a number of issues pertaining to the teaching of Church History in Africa. These included, among other things, the content, methodology, resource material for teaching general and local church history, the content of teaching Church history ecumenically and perspectives and objectives for teaching such a history. The results of this project were published in the ATISCA Bulletin No.2 (1993). Member institutions were asked to consider the possibility of revising their curriculum on Church History in light of the results.

Apart from the above project, in 1994 ATISCA embarked on another project as part of its curriculum development. This time the focus was on the teaching of Biblical Studies within the African context. The idea was to see how Biblical Studies, which normally involve some attempt to immerse oneself into an alien culture (that of Palestine and the Middle East in biblical times), can, from a methodological perspective, be translated into the African context in order to make the Bible easily understood by the people. Fr. John Moore of St. Peter’s Major Seminary, Zomba, Malawi, was asked to coordinate this project assisted by national coordinators in Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Swaziland and Zambia. Things to be explored under this theme included, among other things, (a) values shared between the peoples of biblical times and people of our local cultures; (b) experience of innovative teaching methods; (c) misuse of the Bible for ideological purposes; and (d) the place of “the hermeneutics” of suspicion in the teaching of biblical studies. Unfortunately, this project did not come to its logical conclusion because of financial constraints.

One of the concerns in the area of curriculum development has been the need to develop a theology which is relevant to the people in post-independent Africa. The quest to develop contextual theology which is suitable to the African situation goes back to the time of the creation of TEF in 1958. The third mandate of the programme of the Theological Fund emphasised on renewal and reform in theological education with a focus on contextualisation which is essentially the capacity to respond meaningfully to the Gospel within the framework of one’s own situation. Contextualisation advocates that the Gospel must respond not only to the traditional cultures in which it is being incarnated but must take into account seriously the process of secularity, technology and the struggle for human justice, which characterise the historical moment of nations in the Third World. Werner has observed that the need to relate theological education to the realities of particular social and cultural contexts as well as liberating theological education from any captivity of certain social milieus, cultural one-sidedness and spiritual blindness to religious values existing in certain indigenous traditions, has been emphasised by the WCC since the 1960s. It has become almost a global agenda. Werner puts it succinctly thus:

25 Bailey, “ATISCA Curriculum…” (no date).
26 Bailey, “ATISCA curriculum…”, 2.
27 See correspondence from the ATISCA Secretariat to all members dated 8.1.1994.
29 Newbigin, “Relevance…”, 15.
30 Newbigin, “Relevance…”, 15.
31 Werner, “Magna Charta…”, 83.
The demand for contextualisation of theological education in terms of opening its agenda to the realities and challenges of different church contexts, cultural identities and living situations both in the global South as well as in churches in the West facing consequences of globalisation and pluralisation of life-styles and religious orientations in their own midst remains an ongoing task for theological education worldwide.\footnote{Werner, “Magna Charta...”, 83.}

The need to contextualise theology in Africa has been one of the hallmarks of ATISCA’s activities in curriculum development in order to redress the pitfalls of what Werner has called “cultural one-sidedness” and “spiritual blindness” to religious values existing in other cultures especially during the colonial situation. That there is an urgent need to contextualise theology in Africa was clearly expressed by John S. Pobee and Ambrose Moyo in their paper titled “Funding of theological education in Africa” in which they documented as follows:

As a result of colonial history, theological curricula have been carbon copies of those in “mother” countries. Now, there is a new reality of independence which necessitates a new curriculum that makes for authentic theology and theologians. Towards that goal workshops would need to be held for developing specific tools.\footnote{Ambrose Moyo & John S. Pobee, “Funding of theological education in Africa” (no date), 31.}

In response to this initiative, ATISCA organised a conference in 1996 in Mbabane, Swaziland on the theme “Theology Cooked in an African Pot.” Papers presented at the conference emphasised the need to speed up the process of contextualisation in Africa. The issues regarding method and content were debated at length. The success of the conference can be measured by the fact that the conference papers were published in a book form in 1998 under the title \textit{Theology cooked in an African pot}.\footnote{Theology cooked in an African pot (Zomba, Chancellor College, University of Botswana, 1998).} The Swaziland Conference recommended that in order to strengthen this project, there should be a follow up conference in Maputo, Mozambique, under the theme “Vernacular theology” whose aim was to encourage member institutions to develop theology in the vernacular that can articulate biblical truths in the mother tongue of the people to whom the good news of salvation is preached. The advantage of this approach in doing theology was clearly explicated in WOCATI’s inaugural press release according to which “contextualization roots theology within the lives and communities of the people in their societies. As it takes serious account of the particular cultural, economic and political realities experienced by the people within their specific histories and societies, contextualization brings forth a wide diversity of theological expressions”.\footnote{Press Release, World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (no date), 1-2.}

It is worth noting that in its attempt to contextualise theology in Southern and Central Africa, ATISCA has paid particular attention to the plight of women living in predominantly patriarchal societies. In this context, ATISCA has taken feminist or women’s theologies seriously and works very closely with the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians some of whom continue to provide leadership in this very important organisation. ATISCA has provided a forum in which the concerns of African women theologians have been debated and streamlined into the curriculum. African Women Theologians have been instrumental in making ATISCA a vital force to reckon with by turning it into an agent of transformation in theological education. In agreement with Werner, ATISCA’s guiding philosophy is based on the understanding that “Feminist and womanist theological networks, the deepening of feminist hermeneutics as well as promotion of women in leadership positions of theological teaching and research is an indispensable part of ecumenical formation in theological education today”.\footnote{Werner, “Magna Charta...”, 84.} In order to strengthen this wing of ecumenical theological education, ATISCA organized two conferences in 1997 and 1998 in Harare, Zimbabwe, at Chishawasha Regional Seminary and Wadzanai Catholic Centre respectively, which

\textit{Handbook of Theological Education in Africa}
were solely devoted to the study of women’s theologies. The main aim was to find ways and means of integrating women’s theologies in the theological curriculum in seminaries, theological colleges, Bible schools and university departments of theology and religious studies.37

(b) Research and publications
At the time of its inception, one of the aims of ATISCA was to strengthen the research and publications base of faculty staff for capacity building. This was in line with Pobee’s philosophy that developing good staff is essential for the viability of theological programmes.38 It is a well known fact that research and publications is one of the most recommended tools for the development of good staff in an institution. With this in mind, during ATISCA conferences members of staff are encouraged to present academic papers that show their academic development by contributing new knowledge to the academic world. Some of such research findings have been published as papers in refereed journals, others as chapters in books and still others in the form of entire books focusing on a particular theme of a particular interest both in the community and theological circles. In 1992 ATISCA launched the **ATISCA Bulletin** which was designed to disseminate information from research findings as well as share news about the Association with member institutions and the wider community. At present, ATISCA has an Editorial Board whose task is to oversee the publication of papers presented during conferences in conjunction with the All Africa Conference of Churches in Nairobi. It is hoped that such publications will strengthen the academic base of ATISCA in the international community.

(c) ATISCA’s engagement with the ecumenical world
In order to boost its work in theological education, ATISCA does not work in isolation. It works in conjunction with other ecumenical bodies. This cooperation with other associations has enriched the work of ATISCA by widening its field of operation. In the first instance, ATISCA has been working hand in hand with the Conference of African Theological Institutions (CATI). This ecumenical association came into being as a result of the activities of the Programme on Theological Education which took over some of the activities of the TEF at its dissolution. African theologians’ desire to maintain the momentum of renewing and strengthening the theological activities that begum with the TEF, met in Mbabane, Swaziland, in March 1980. At that meeting they decided to form CATI. This ecumenical body was established in order “to foster the mission of the Church and to be of service to the theological associations, institutions and churches in Africa”.39 ATISCA has been able to work in tandem with CATI because their aims and objectives are compatible. In order to widen its ecumenical base, immediately after its creation in 1986, ATISCA became a full member of CATI and participated fully in its programmes, conferences and consultations. Since CATI was made up primarily of regional associations and other related bodies, its work was mainly that of serving as a channel of communication, mutual challenges and coordination between them, their member institutions, and church bodies in Africa and beyond.40

Apart from working hand in hand with CATI, ATISCA also works in tandem with the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI). This ecumenical organisation was formed at a consultation which was held at Kaliurang, Yogyakarta, Indonesia from 16-19th June 1989. Present at the consultation, which was sponsored by the Programme for Theological Education (PTE) of

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37 The participation of members from the Circle of Concerned Women Theologians such as Prof. Isabel Phiri, and Elizabeth Amoa enriched the discussions greatly and led to the inclusion of women studies in the syllabi of many theological institutions in the region.
38 Pobee, “Some forty years…”, 74.
39 See brochure of the Conference of African Theological Institutions (CATI), University of Zimbabwe, Harare, (no date)
40 Conference of Association of Theological institutions.
the World Council of Churches, were representatives from over twenty associations of theological schools, institutions and centres from all regions of the world.\textsuperscript{41} WOCATI is concerned with the best practices and philosophies in ecumenical theological education worldwide with a focus on standardisation of academic programmes. It is important, therefore, to note that ATISCA’s participation in WOCATI has widened its ecumenical scope internationally and it has played a very important role in the growth and development of WOCATI. Though in the initial stages there was some reluctance to join WOCATI for fear that ATISCA would be swallowed up, eventually the leadership of ATISCA became aware that they had nothing to lose, and that joining WOCATI was in line with the aims and objectives of ATISCA. This is because the main goal of WOCATI from the time of its inception has been to serve the needs and aspirations of its member associations and their institutions, schools and centres. ATISCA’s participation in WOCATI as a global conference, has increased its ability for networking with other associations throughout the globe. By getting involved at the international level, ATISCA has been able to increase its awareness for the need to assist its member institutions to engage themselves seriously on matters relating to faculty development, women’s concerns, issues pertaining to globalisation, contextualisation of theology, curriculum development, resource sharing, and research and publications.\textsuperscript{42}

\textit{(d) ATISCA and contemporary social issues}

As an association, ATISCA has, from time to time, been engaged in contemporary social, economic, political, cultural, religious and health issues affecting the life of people in Southern and Central Africa requiring critical theological reflection. ATISCA has been concerned with issues of good governance, democratisation, development, reconstruction, empowerment of youth and the need to develop relevant theology. Of the many social issues which ATISCA has been grappling with four issues stand out namely, religion and development, viability of ministerial and theological formation, the Gospel and culture and the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

First, in order to address the first issue, that is, the role of religion in development, ATISCA joined hands with the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World (CSCNWW), in 1993 and organised a conference under the theme “Development, peace and reconstruction”. The conference was held at St. Peter’s Major Seminary, Zomba, Malawi from 16\textsuperscript{th} to 21\textsuperscript{st} December 1993. It was attended by man delegates from many parts of Africa and beyond. The conference was a great success and the papers that were presented at the conference were later published into a book titled \textit{The role of Christianity in development, peace and reconstruction}.\textsuperscript{43}

Second, in concert with other associations, ATISCA has been engaged in theological reflection pertaining to issues regarding the “Viability of Ministerial and Theological Formation Today” which was initiated by the programme on Ecumenical Theological Education. The aim of the study was “to explore how in our times and in regard to the vocation of theology, the process of formation can be alive, relevant and life-giving”.\textsuperscript{44} Thus during the 1994 ATISCA Conference and Staff Institute in Gaborone, Botswana, the Association spent a good part of its time studying the above theme in order to find answers on how this can be achieved. Recommendations were subsequently made which were published in the \textit{ATISCA Bulletin} in 1995.

Third, as a result of its emphasis on contextual theology, ATISCA held a conference at the University of Zimbabwe from 21-24 June 1994 on the theme, “The interaction between Christian Religion and African Traditional Religions: Focus on Rites of Passage”. The conference proved to be a great success.\textsuperscript{45} It

\textsuperscript{41} Press Release (WOCATI) June 1989, 1.
\textsuperscript{42} Press Release (WOCATI) June 1989, 1.
\textsuperscript{43} Participant observer as a member of ATISCA Executive Committee.
\textsuperscript{44} Correspondence between John Pobee and ATISCA Secretariat, dated 1/4/1994.
enabled participants to look anew at the cultural issues in Africa which were vilified as the work of the devil during the missionary period and became a source of conflict in the missionary field between the missionaries on the one hand and the indigenous people on the other.46

Finally, one of the dominating issues that have occupied a great part of ATISCA’s activities has been the issue of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. The impact of this pandemic has been felt more in Southern and Central Africa than anywhere else in the world. A number of countries in the region such as Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Malawi have, at one time or another, being identified as having high prevalence rates of HIV and AIDS cases. Since the epidemic does not have a cure, there has been a need to educate people concerning the nature of HIV, how it spreads from one person to another, how to prevent from being infected, how to combat stigma and anything that leads to the discrimination of those who have been infected and affected by the epidemic. ATISCA member institutions have been in the forefront of the fight against the epidemic. To this end, several conferences have been organised by ATISCA with a focus on HIV and AIDS and how to integrate HIV and AIDS issues in the curriculum. The latest of these conferences was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, which looked into the issues of land and HIV and AIDS and the role of culture in the fight against the scourge.

Decline and Revival: ATISCA Moves to New Heights

ATISCA, like any other ecumenical organisation in Africa, has had its ups and downs both in its organisation and operational activities over years. The years between 2001 and 2008 were particularly trying to ATISCA because of a number of challenges facing both the region and the international community. Such challenges caused ATISCA to go into decline and almost came to a standstill. As a consequence of this malaise, ATISCA was unable to organise any staff institutes and conferences where staff and students could meet to plan and share their knowledge on recent developments affecting theological education in the region. This had a negative impact on the member institutions.

It appears to me that there were a number of factors that led to this situation. In the first instance, the global economic situation left much to be desired. The credit crunch, which affected many countries worldwide, meant that financial assistance to ecumenical organisations was hard to come by. Consequently, during these trying times, ATISCA was unable to get assistance from ecumenical bodies outside of Africa, which could have enabled it to operate normally.

Secondly, ATISCA member institutions took a back seat by failing to activate themselves internally and keep the torch of ATISCA burning within the countries in which ATISCA holds sway. One of the weaknesses of the member institutions has been their failure to meet their obligations to pay their membership dues and to come up with strategies on how to raise funds for day to day activities of ATISCA. It seems to me that if ATISCA is to survive the current financial situation, it has to double its efforts to generate funds within the region that can enable it to be self-sufficient and self-regenerating.

Thirdly, there appears to have been a spirit of apathy among member institutions which might have led to the spirit of pessimism. The global, regional and national financial situations, which nearly brought down a number of countries to their knees, meant that many institutions were not able to finance their staff members to attend conferences and enhance their research base and publications. As a consequence, inactivity became the game of the day and ATISCA became one of the victims of this situation.

Having said this, however, ATISCA was not bound to disappear altogether. As luck would have it, people of good will came to its rescue. The opportunity to have ATISCA revived came in the wake of the WOCATI International Congress which was held in Thessaloniki, Greece, in May-June 2008 which the

46 See James N. Amanze, African Christianity in Botswana (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1998), where religious conflict between missionaries and Batswana has been discussed in detail in connection with rites of passage and other rituals.

Part VI: Networks and Resources for Theological Education in Africa
author attended with the financial assistance of the Ecumenical Theological Education under the leadership of Dr. Dietrich Werner. At the end of the Congress in Volos, Prof. James N. Amanze was elected to represent Associations of Theological Institutions in Africa. He was given a specific mandate that upon return home he should try to revive ATISCA and that the office of the ETE/WCC would financially support this venture. In all this, credit goes to Rev. Dr. Werner who, as a result of his vision, passion, commitment and personal interest to give new life to Associations of Theological Institutions in Africa, worked so hard to ensure that this dream would be realised.

The first attempt to revive ATISCA with the ETE/WCC financial assistance took place at a conference, which was held in Manzini, Swaziland, in 2009 under the theme “Theology of creation”. That the theme focused on God’s creation in its various aspects was very significant indeed. It symbolised a rebirth or a new beginning for ATISCA after many years of inertia. Representatives to this meeting came from the University of Botswana, University of Malawi, Zomba Theological College (Malawi), University of Zimbabwe, National University of Lesotho, University of Swaziland, Ricatla United Seminary (Mozambique), St. Pio X Catholic Seminary (Mozambique) and Theological Education by Extension in Zambia (TEEZ). The representatives agreed to work hard to revive ATISCA and give it a new lease of life. At the conference the need to form national cells, as a strategy to revive and strengthen ATISCA, was initiated.

As a follow up to this conference, ATISCA called a consultation in Gaborone in 2010 through the initiative of Rev. Dr. Dietrich Werner (ETE/WCC), Rev. Dr. Andre Karamaga General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), Rev. Dr. Dossou the Director of the Theological Desk of the AACC, Nairobi, Kenya and Prof. Isabel Phiri of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg Campus) all of whom were present at the consultation. The conference was attended by representatives from the University of Malawi, TEEZ (Zambia) University of Botswana, University of Zimbabwe, National University of Lesotho, University of Swaziland, University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg Campus) Seth Mokitini Seminary (Pietermaritzburg-South Africa), University of Mzuzu (Malawi), and University of Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa. This consultation recommended the revision of the ATISCA Constitution in order to enlarge the membership of ATISCA to cover all the countries in Southern Africa including South Africa which had been excluded during the formation of ATISCA because of its apartheid policies. The consultation also emphasised the need to establish cells in various countries in Southern and Central Africa in order to inject new life in the organisation and the formation of All Africa Academy of Theology and Religious Studies.

The Gaborone consultation was followed by a full-fledged staff institute/conference which was held at Lakeview Airport Lodge, Johannesburg, South Africa, which reflected the aspirations of the new spirit of the enlargement of ATISCA in the region. The conference endorsed the idea of ATISCA’s participation at a joint conference which was being organised by a number of theological societies in South Africa to take place in 2012 at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg. At the Johannesburg conference, scholarly papers on theological responses to the HIV and AIDS pandemic ravaging Africa generally and the southern African region in particular were presented with the understanding that the papers would be published in a book form as one of the academic achievements of ATISCA. The occasion was graced by the presence of Rev. Dr. Werner (ETE) and Rev. Dr. Simon Dossou (AACC).

To crown it all, the Johannesburg conference was followed in 2012 by ATISCA’s participation in the Joint Conference on Religion and Theology which was held at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg Campus) from 18th to 22nd June. The ETE/WCC was represented by Rev. Dr. Werner, who has walked with ATISCA side by side since its revival in 2009 to the present and Prof. Edison Kalengyo who represented the AACC as well as the Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa (ATIEA). ATISCA representatives presented scholarly papers on a variety of issues pertaining to religion and theology. This was the first time that ATISCA, as an ecumenical body concerned with
theological education, ever participated at a forum like this. One of the advantages of ATISCA’s participation at the joint conference was that it became visible to many people who did not know it before. It is hoped that this exposure will open new avenues for ATISCA in the region and beyond. The conference was a huge success and ATISCA members learned a great deal from other societies while other societies learned a great deal from ATISCA. This, no doubt, will promote and enhance theological education in the region. Of special interest at this conference, was the direct involvement of the Church in the affairs of ATISCA namely the Presbyterian Church under the leadership of Prof. Isabel Phiri which provided ATISCA with the essential services of hospitality in preparing food and rendering moral support. It seems to me that if ATISCA is to succeed in future, it must work in conjunction with the churches in the region especially during conferences.

There were a number of important issues that were dealt with at the Kwazulu-Natal Conference. In the first instance, at the conference the revised ATISCA Constitution, as recommended at the 2010 Gaborone Consultation, was discussed, approved and adopted. The revised constitution, among other things, made provision for inclusive membership into the organisation of all countries in the Southern African region including South Africa. Secondly, the constitution enabled ATISCA representatives to put in place a new leadership structure by electing a new Executive Committee consisting of Prof. Maake Masango of the University of Pretoria as Chairperson, Dr. Maaraidzo Mutambara of the Africa University as Vice-Chairperson, Prof. James N. Amanze of the University of Botswana as Secretary/Treasurer, Prof. Lovemore Togarasei of the University of Botswana as Deputy Secretary and three additional members namely; Rev. Dr. Francis Nsengiyumva of the University of Malawi, Dr. Hebron Ndlovu of the University of Swaziland and Mrs. J. K. Kroesbergen of Justo Mwale University, Zambia. Those present at the conference included members from the University of Malawi, University of Great Zimbabwe, University of Pretoria (South Africa), University of Stellenbosch (South Africa), University of Kwazulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg Campus-South Africa), University of Botswana, Justo Mwale University (Zambia), Zomba Theological College (Malawi), Africa University (Zimbabwe), University of Swaziland, Baptist University College (Malawi), and University of Free State (South Africa). Thirdly, the conference designated Botswana as a permanent home for ATISCA where the Secretary would be based until further notice in accordance with further constitutional changes if necessary. This meant that ATISCA would be registered in Botswana which would enable it to operate legally like any other None-Governmental Organisation. This would give ATISCA security and permanence.

It appears to me that the Pietermaritzburg Conference marked a new beginning in the life of ATISCA. It was essentially a paradigm shift in ATISCA’s *modus vivendi* and *modus operandi*. It became *de facto* and *de jure* a truly regional organisation. It was noted above that prior to this point the spirit of the ATISCA Constitution was rather exclusive in that it left out other countries in Southern Africa such as South Africa, Namibia and Angola. By adopting the new constitution, ATISCA is now empowered to extend invitations for membership to theological institutions in all Southern African countries without exception thereby enlarging the constituency of this very important organisation. This will bring in a new lease of life into the activities of ATISCA. By bringing new expertises into the organisation it will promote academic excellence in teaching, research and publications, curriculum development, leadership development for churches and academic institutions, ecumenical relations and networking for God’s mission in the world generally and Southern and Central Africa in particular.

It is noteworthy that what made the Pietermaritzburg joint conference quite interesting is the fact that for the first time ATISCA comiled with members of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians commonly known as the Circle in large numbers. Such interaction needs to be encouraged further. On the basis of the above it appears that ATISCA has a bright future and that by moving in this direction it will be
able to reach new heights both in terms of membership and active engagement in theological education in the region with a wider ecumenical participation.\footnote{47}

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has examined the life and work of ATISCA from the time of its inception to the present day. It has been noted that ATISCA should be considered as the brainchild of the WCC whose concern for ecumenical theological education goes back to the activities of the IMC which set up a Theological Education Fund in 1958 during its international conference in Ghana. The different aims and objectives of the TEF, PTE and ETE have been discussed focusing on their primary concern for ecumenical theological education for ministerial formation. Their role towards the formation of associations of theological institutions in Africa has been discussed culminating in the formation of the ATISCA in 1986. The paper has also discussed in detail the various activities of ATISCA in curriculum development, networking with other ecumenical organisations with similar goals and aspirations and ATISCA’s involvement in critical theological reflection pertaining to contemporary social, economic, political, religious and social issues impacting on the African people today. On the basis of what has been discussed in the paper, I am confident to conclude that ATISCA is playing a vital role in ecumenical theological education and it is a power to reckon with as an extension of the ETE/WCC programmes in Africa.

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\footnote{47 All the information in section is based on personal experience as one of the chief contributors towards the revival of ATISCA since 2008.}

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History, Activities and Challenges (1973-2011)

Thomas Oduro

Introduction

The 1960-1969 decade was a significant milestone in the history of many African countries. It was the decade in which many African countries broke the shackles of colonial rule and, thus, became politically independent. It became expedient for many African countries to manage their own affairs and institutions bequeathed to them by their former colonial masters in their new self-rule status. Many African Christian scholars realized the need to pool together the resources of theological institutions and departments for the study of religions but the wherewithal was a big challenge.

Prior to this realization, the World Council of Churches (WCC), in a prophetic manner, had foreseen the need and challenge and had, therefore, set up an education fund known as, Theological Education Fund (TEF) in 1957 with the initial objective of promoting ecumenical education by funding some ecumenical theological institutions in South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana. The TEF metamorphosed into the Programme on Theological Education (PTE) and later Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE), with some variations to the mission and vision. The education fund of the WCC, in the words of John Pobee,

…was midwife to the emergence of other [ecumenical theological] formations: Association of Theological Institutions of Eastern Africa (ATIEA), Association of Theological Schools in Southern and Central Africa (ATISCA), West African Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI), Association of Theological Institutions in Central Africa (ASTHEOL Central), Association of Theological Institutions in Western African (ASTHEOL OEST), Circle of African Women in Theology and the continent-wide Conference of African Theological Institutions (CATI).1

The ATIEA was founded in 1960 whilst the ASTHEOL – Central/West were founded in 1966. The Association of Theological Teachers in Madagascar (ATTIM), not mentioned in Pobee’s list, was founded in 1963. The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and ATISCA were founded in 1986 and 1989, respectively. CATI, an umbrella body for the theological institutions, was founded in 1980.2

Prior to the founding of the theological associations the few theological institutions that existed at the time had limited human and infrastructural resources. There were also denominational affections that served as barriers between the existing theological institutions, which constituted a challenge for bringing theological institutions together to discuss issues affecting the societies they served. The associations were, therefore, founded to promote mutual support and address regional issues from a theological perspective. It is in this vein that John Pobee regards the founding of the theological associations as “the ecumenical imperative.”3 The associations, in their ecumenicity, cut across denominational barriers. We would now concentrate on the history, projects, achievement and challenges of WAATI, one of the ecumenical imperatives.

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1 John S. Pobee, “Stretch Forth Thy Wings and Fly: Theological Education in the African Context” in Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, and Joshva Raja (eds), Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity: Theological Perspectives, Regional Surveys, Ecumenical Trends (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2010), 342.
2 James Amanze, “History and Major Goals of Regional Associations of Theological Schools in Africa” in Handbook of Theological Education, 346-356.
Nature and Membership of WAATI

WAATI is an institution-based association which was founded in 1973 through the instrumentality of the Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) of the WCC. The prime mover was Archbishop Desmond Tutu. WAATI is made up of Bible Colleges, Theological Seminaries, Theological Colleges, and Departments/Faculties for the Study of Religions in Government and Private Universities. Membership of the Association cuts across denominational and creedal barriers. Member institutions represent various denominations, including Roman Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Pentecostals/Charismatics, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Seventh-Day Adventists, Evangelicals and African Independent Churches. The Association provides a forum for Protestants and Catholics to meet to dialogue dispassionately on prevailing theological issues in West Africa, primarily, and Africa, generally. The Association is open to Anglophone West African countries – Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Each member association constitutes a zone.

The Association was founded on a seven-fold objective:

1. To promote Christian Fellowship, understanding, and co-operation among the various theological institutions engaged in theological education in West Africa;
2. To foster the study of theology and related subjects;
3. To improve the standards and methods of Theological Education in West Africa;
4. To provide a forum for discussion and exchange of information and ideas of common interest and a means for coordinated action whenever this is deemed to be desirable within the scope of the Association;
5. To promote cooperation within other theological associations in Africa and elsewhere and to form a link with donor agencies so that the priorities for theological education in the region can be determined and presented as commonly agreed plans;
6. To promote research in Theological Education and Religious Studies and to disseminate the results;
7. To act in an advisory capacity to the member-institutions and churches which they serve.

Affiliation and International membership

WAATI is a member of the following international associations: Council of African Theological Institutions (CATI), World Council of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI), and the All African Conference of Churches (AACC).

Administration

WAATI is administered by a Regional Executive Committee which is made up of the Chairman, General Secretary, Chapter Secretaries, a Treasurer, Principal or Heads of Department of each member-institution or his/her nominee. Members of the Regional Executive Committee are elected biennially. The Executive Committee is responsible for managing the Association regionally and liaises with other theological associations in Africa and beyond Africa.

Member institutions in each country elect the members to their executive committee known as Zonal Executive Committee. Each zone is autonomous of the Regional Executive Committee; it operates independently of the Regional Executive Committee though the Regional Executive Committee, once in a while, advises the Zonal Executive Committees on certain critical issues.

The Association has been blessed with the distinguished leadership of many West African theological scholars. Among the scholars are: Harry Sawyerr, Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Joshua Kudadjie, Emmanuel Martey, Andrew S. Oyalana, Samuel Abogunrin, Daniel Brewer, Samuel Osabutey, Sam Kolawole, Mary Gerald Nwagwu, Isaac Deji Ayegboyin, Adekunle Alalade, Protus Kemdirim, and Eric Asare.
Activities

Biennial regional conferences

The major activity of WAATI since its inception has been the organizing of biennial regional conferences. The Regional Executive Committee meets to decide on the venue and date of the conference. The venue of the biennial conferences alternates between the zones. The biennial conferences bring together scholars from member-institutions. In fact the only period that scholars from member countries meet in great numbers to fraternize and rub brains is at WAATI biennial conferences. There are no limits to the number of scholars that are invited. Attendance encompasses any form of theological workshops and seminars that bring scholars in the sub-region together. For instance, over sixty scholars attended the biennial conference in Ghana in 2010. One would, therefore, not be far from the truth to describe these conferences as “theological festivals”. They give scholars the opportunity to a tour of theological institutions’ campuses, thereby learning something about the facilities and also potentials for renovation and making them more beautiful.

Apart from the conglomeration of scholars from different institutions with different theological backgrounds, books and other published works of scholars are usually displayed and sold during the conference. This challenges scholars who claim not to have the flair of writing to reconsider their claim. Participants at the biennial conferences congratulate scholars who have been promoted, elevated or have received their penultimate degrees. Announcements are made about scholars who have been called to eternal rest and those who have moved on from the fraternity to other areas in Christianity. Member institutions that have received accreditation from accrediting bodies are congratulated by the conference.

A General meeting is held during each biennial conference. Each zone gives a report of their activities since the last biennial conference. The reports are discussed by the conference. The activities of the zones illuminate and challenge other zonal members. Acceptance of new member institutions by the zones is validated by the conference. Regional Executive Committee members are elected at the conference; however, before the election the outgoing Regional Executive Committee gives detailed accounts of their stewardship and other activities that need to be tackled. Participants suggest various themes for the next conference from which a broad theme is selected which is usually a theological response to societal, religious, economic, and spiritual phenomenon in the West African region. It is, thereafter, subdivided and shared between the zones. Some distinguished scholars are commissioned to present papers – usually about an aspect of the selected theme.

Presentation of academic papers has been the apex of WAATI conferences since 2000. Prior to every biennial conference, the Regional Executive Committee meets to sample the themes suggested at the previous conference. Samuel Ango, the current Chairman of the Nigerian Zone, stated emphatically the reason and purpose of presenting papers on some key societal issues:

As trainers of pastors, teachers, evangelists and missionaries, we must display a good grasp of the issues at stake and show that we know how God might use us to make a relevant difference in the lives of our trainees. Our presentations and subsequent publication must therefore meet the highest standards, if the world is to respect and accept what we have to say.4

The themes and venues of conferences for the past decade were:


• 2002 – Spirituality and Theological Education in West Africa – Valley View University College, Accra, Ghana.
• 2004 – Globalization, Information Technology and Theological Education – Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru, Jos.
• 2008 – Religion and the Quest for Peace in West Africa – ECWA Theological Seminary, Igbaja, Kwara State, Nigeria.
• 2010 – Leadership in Africa: Challenges for Theological Education – Evangelical Presbyterian Church University College, Peki, Ghana.

Scholars of member institutions are informed of the broad theme and details of the Conference and are encouraged to present a paper on an aspect of the theme. The papers are critiqued by their peer scholars at the conference. The paper presenters rework their presentations, based on the critiques at the conference before publication. The presentation of papers at biennial conferences, apart from addressing issues pertinent to the West African region, serves as a test for new and young scholars whilst the more experienced scholars, in a way, demonstrate to the new and younger scholars the various dynamics of writing academic papers. The presentation of academic papers, therefore, serves as an informal training of writing and presenting quality papers at an academic forum.

Zonal Activities

The zones use the years in-between the biennial conferences to do certain activities that are deemed important. Nigeria Zone, for instance, meets at conferences, present papers and publishes the presentations. One such publication from Nigerian zone is: Samuel Ango et. al. (eds.) Theological Education and Economic Recession. Ilorin: Modern Impressions, 2011. The Ghana Zone has also been meeting and presenting academic work on issues affecting Ghanaian society, although the Zone is yet to publish their presentations. Despite the civil war that nearly tore Liberia into shreds, the Liberian Zone, also known as Liberian Association of Theological Institutions (LATI) has been able to rise above intense difficulties to reorganize themselves. The situation in Sierra Leone is not different from that of Liberia. Anglophone Cameroon has been dormant for some time.

Publications

WAAT I used to publish Conference proceedings after every biennial conference up to 1994. The conference proceedings included the keynote address, other addresses and the minutes. At the 1994 conference WAATI decided to publish the papers presented at WAATI conferences. The following are WAATI’s publications:

• 1998 – Protus Kemdirim & Mercy Amba Oduyoye (eds). Women, Culture and Theological Education.

5 The Nigerian Zone has twenty-three members.
6 Twenty-four theological institutions are members of the Ghana Zone.
7 Fifteen theological institutions constitute the Liberian Association of Theological Institutions.
8 Sierra Leone has five-member institutions.
9 Anglophone Cameroon has shown some signs of reactivating herself from dormancy. For the first time in many years, Cameroon Zone was represented at a WAATI-EDAN-AACC Conference at Ogbomosho, Nigeria in 2011.

Part VI: Networks and Resources for Theological Education in Africa
Projects

WAATI has over the years envisioned many academic projects. All of them, however, have been put on hold due to financial constraints. The only project that has seen the light of the day, though not through the efforts of WAATI, is the *African Bible Commentary*. The idea of constituting a group of African scholars to write a Bible commentary which is relevant to the context of Africa was mooted at a WAATI Regional Executive Committee meeting in 1976. The Conference of African Theological Institutions took over the project due to some administrative and financial problems.

In 1999 WAATI decided to embark on writing books on (a) History of West African Church, (b) Contextualization (c) Counseling, (d) Christian Ministry, and Theological Education by Extension (TEE). In 2001 the Regional Executive Committee decided to compile an Annotated Bibliography of African Writers. All these projects have been stalled because of financial challenges.

A New Dimension

The ecumenical imperative of WAATI has taken a new dimension since 2010. Many religious educationists and non-governmental organizations have seen WAATI as a conduit for stressing the importance of teaching some courses which, though important, have been relegated to the educational limbo due to certain reasons not actually known to theological scholars.

It was to this end that the Executive Committee of WAATI at the behest of Michael Glerup, the Executive Director of the Center for Early African Christianity, invited him to address the biennial conference of WAATI that was held at the Evangelical Presbyterian Theological University College at Peki, in Ghana in 2010. The goal of the Center for Early African Christianity, according to Thomas Oden, the Director, is “…to develop a team of international scholars, analogous to the team that produced the African Christian Commentary on Scripture, whose primary interest is in the texts and teachings of early African Christianity.” As a result of Michael Glerup’s presence and presentation, scholars at the Conference saw the exigency of teaching Early African Christianity as a separate course in seminaries and University Colleges – instead of including it when teaching Early Church History. Consequently, some member-Institutions of WAATI have begun teaching a course on Early African Christianity.

In July 2011 the AACC, a continental ecumenical council based in Nairobi, Kenya, requested and facilitated a WAATI Conference on *Christian-Muslim Relationship in Africa* at the Nigeria Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Oyo State in Nigeria. More than sixty WAATI scholars from member institutions in Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone (including Muslims) presented papers on many important aspects on the theme.

The Ecumenical Disability Advocacy Network (EDAN), a subsidiary non-governmental organization of the WCC, after having acknowledged the influence that WAATI has on Christian educators in West Africa, also brought together more than 40 scholars skilled in curriculum development from member institutions in Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone to stress the need to develop a curriculum on

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disability studies that would be suitable to the West African context. Executive members of EDAN challenged the scholars at the workshop to consider writing the curriculum and teaching it in their institutions. They accepted the challenge, an encouraging sign that would soon lead to offering courses on disability at post-graduate levels in West Africa. Both the AACC/WAATI conference and the EDAN/WAATI workshop were held in one week at the same venue.

The significance of this new development is that ecumenical bodies outside the domains of WAATI could now call on the Association to fast-track some educational policies that would benefit the West African sub-region.

Challenges
In spite of the achievements of WAATI, the association has been plagued by many challenges some of which are highlighted below.

Finance
Though member institutions pay dues, the financial resources of the Association are meager. It has been difficult to raise funds to publish WAATI books. Organizing international conferences has been a challenge due to high air fares and lack of sponsors. Due to the financial recession of the Association, scholars from Cameroon, the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia have not been able to participate in the biennial conferences. The venues of the conferences in the past decade have, as a result, alternated between Nigeria and Ghana. Due to the close proximity and numerous air and land transportation possibilities between Ghana and Nigeria, scholars find it easy to attend meetings and conferences held in either Ghana or Nigeria.

Dormant Zones
The civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia have affected the smooth running of member institutions in those countries. Consequently, for more than a decade, there were no meaningful interactions between scholars living in the war zones and those living in the more relative peaceful countries. With peace gradually becoming the norm in the former war-torn countries, WAATI is taking measures to activate member-institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The heavy Islamic influence in the Gambia has overshadowed the few theological institutions. There is need to organize them into vibrant institutions.

Establishment of a Secretariat
The Association does not have an office or even a desk in any of the campuses of her member institutions. The personal study room of chairpersons and general secretaries become the office of the Association. The lack of a Secretariat hinders a comprehensive networking and keeping of documents. Many valuable documents have either been misplaced or lost consequently.

Accreditation/Affiliation
Some member institutions have been complaining about demands made on them by chartered institutions, universities and accreditation agencies. Such demands tend to impose certain courses/programmes, a situation that could potentially lead to the diversion of the institutions’ mission statements. In as much as WAATI cherishes quality education at all levels, it is wary of certain demands and policies that tend to compel some of her member institutions, particularly, the theological institutions, to sidetrack them from or abandon their cherished goals and ideals.
Research and Publication

The importance of research in educational institutions cannot be overemphasized. Whilst scholars are expected to do research and publish the findings of their work, little attention is paid to raising funds or setting research foundations for such projects. Only a few scholars, consequently, are able to do research and get their works published. WAATI, if well equipped, could administer research funds to her member-institutions. The Church and society would eventually be the benefactors.

Conclusion

The establishment of the WAATI by the WCC in 1973 was similar to the planting of the biblical mustard seed. Though it began on a low key note, the Association has grown to give guidance and training of many scholars in West Africa. It provides an academic forum where scholars from all traditions and beliefs meet biennially to sharpen one another. With help from ecumenical bodies, churches and individuals, the Association could become much more useful to West African society than one could imagine.

Bibliography


A Historical Profile

The Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa (ATIEA) is the oldest ecumenical theological association in Africa and probably one of the oldest in the world. It was born out of the growing ecumenical initiatives of the late nineteen fifties and early nineteen sixties after the establishment of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) by the World Council of Churches (WCC) which has since evolved into Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE). The need for Church leadership development in the new areas of the growing Christian communities in Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Latin America prompted the older mission churches through the WCC to see the need to assist churches in these regions work together in developing theological education programmes ecumenically. One of the early initiatives of Theological Education Fund in the East Africa region was the commissioning of a study on the training needs for ministry in Eastern Africa by Rev. Paul Miller whose findings published as *Equipping for Ministry in East Africa* became one of the significant guiding lights in the development of ecumenical theological education in the East African region. Preliminary meetings were held in 1960 and 1961 culminating in bringing together six theological colleges from Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya who in 1962 constituted themselves into what they called Association of Theological Colleges in East Africa. The founder member institutions of the Association were as follows:

1. Bishop Tucker Memorial College, Mukono, Uganda
2. Buwalasi College, Uganda
3. Lutheran Theological College, Makumira, Tanzania
4. St. Philips College, Kongwa, Tanzania
5. St. Cyprian’s College, Ngala, Tanzania

By 1965, membership of the Association had grown to more than a dozen institutions and later, with the joining of institutions in Sudan, Ethiopia and Zambia, and with the inclusion of the emerging Departments of Religious Studies, particularly at Makerere University, the association changed its name to the *Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa (ATIES)* whose purpose is:

1. To promote true Christian fellowship, understanding and co-operation between the various theological institutions engaged in training Christian ministers in Eastern Africa;
2. To foster the study of theology and related subjects;
3. To improve the standards and methods of education for Christian ministry in Eastern Africa;
4. To provide a forum for discussion and exchange of information of common interest and a means for co-ordinated action whenever this is deemed desirable within the scope of the Association.

The Association fulfills its responsibilities through:

1. Arranging regular Staff Institutes for the staff members and representatives of the governing authorities of the institutions belonging to the Association.
2. Undertaking the planning and supervision of the association’s work through Business Meetings.
3. Acting in an advisory capacity to the member institutions and the churches they serve, and, where desired, assist in the planning of national meetings of those concerned with theological education.

It is to be observed that at this early period, theological education was largely in the hands of missionaries and while acknowledging their marvelous vision, we must admit that indigenous African
Christians had very little role in these early initiatives. The leadership of the mission churches was still predominantly expatriate. It must be acknowledged also that African Christians were experiencing a very lively ecumenical spirit stimulated by the rise of the East African Revival Movement then sweeping the region and breaking denominational barriers between believers. Serious talks were also being mooted to establish a United Church of East Africa which sadly did not achieve much. It can rightly be observed that ATIEA became the first structural theological ecumenical body in this region and probably largely remains so. When young men and women meet under the auspices of ATIEA, their meetings become significant avenues for enhancing the need to know and serve Christ as Christians first and only secondarily as members of the various Christian denominations.

With the growing need for recognized Certificates and Diplomas of theology in the early seventies, the Departments of Religious Studies particularly at Makerere and later the University of Nairobi inaugurated own programmes or in conjunction with several ATIEA member institutions. By the early seventies, ATIEA successes were already recognized and several Catholic Institutions became joined to ATIEA thus completing the ecumenical embrace of all Christians in the region. The high point in the history of ATIEA was the inauguration of Diploma and Degree programmes by the Association in the late seventies. A very thorough Bachelor of Divinity programme (BD) was established and wholly managed by ATIEA through which several students participated and earned the ATIEA Bachelor of Divinity Degree which qualified many to seek advanced degrees overseas. Apparently the ATIEA Bachelor of Divinity Degree was so academically competent that many who received that degree had no problem excelling in advanced studies in such prestigious institutions as Princeton, Yale and Uppsala to mention but a few. Many of these ATIEA BD holders are now playing leading roles in theological education and related ministries in Eastern Africa and beyond. This very successful programme went on until mid nineties following the change of policy by the Kenya Government in early nineties when the government required special approval for all post secondary education programmes. Apparently there is no provision within the Kenya Government law for regional programmes not tied to a particular institution. The last batch of ATIEA BD students graduated at Bishop Tucker Theological College, Mukono, and now Uganda Christian University in 1995.

With the phasing of the ATIEA academic programmes, there was genuine fear as to the future role of ATIEA without the academic role. While the Association has continued to flourish as a fellowship of theological educators and students since then, the need for ATIEA to redefine its role has not diminished.

Current Perspectives of ATIEA

As observed above, most of the achievements of ATIEA are linked with its academic role in the award of Diplomas and Degrees in Theology. Some of the papers presented at past staff and student institutes have been published and are being used in the institutions of the ATIEA family and beyond. Additionally, ATIEA has seen the growth and promotion of member institutions that are now running as universities. ATIEA is still registered as a legal entity by the government of Kenya. It remains the only ecumenical theological association with a functional structure (Office, General Secretary and Committee) that brings theological institutions together. The existence of member institutions coupled with their renewed interest in ATIEA makes it (ATIEA) a solid and resourceful Association.

It is the shared understanding of member institutions that our unity and cooperation is rooted in our faith in Jesus Christ and commitment to the expansion of God’s Kingdom particularly the mission of God to transform our people from hopelessness and indignities that diminish their humanity daily. Member institutions hold the view that it is better and easier when we articulate and confront these challenges together than in our individual constituencies. We must be one in confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and in our service to the least of His brethren if those who look to us for guidance will take us seriously.
Some of member institutions of ATIEA have since developed and grown into full fledged universities. The ATIEA office is being housed at Tangaza College in Kenya. The current membership of ATIEA is as follows:

1. Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology, Uganda Christian University, Uganda.
2. Bishop Burton University College, Uganda (through the Theology Department)
4. Makerere University, Uganda (through the department of Religious Studies).
5. St. Paul’s University, Limuru, Kenya (through the Faculty of Theology).
7. Kenyatta University, Kenya (through Religious Studies Department)
10. Moi University, Kenya (through Religious Studies Department).
11. Makumira University, Tanzania (through the Faculty of Theology).
13. St Cyprian’s College, Tanzania.
15. Mekane Yesus Seminary (MYS), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Rwanda and Burundi joined the East Africa Regional block; plans are under way to encourage theological institutions in both countries to join the ATIEA family. The serving executive committee members of ATIEA are:

1. Rev Professor Edison Muhindo Kalengyo – Chairman
2. Rev Dr Godfrey Ngumi – General Secretary
3. Professor Mary Getui – Treasurer
4. Ms Beatrice Churu – member

Working closely with the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), ATIEA is on a journey to redefine itself to meet the needs of theological education in general and the theological needs of member institutions in particular. There has been a re-thinking of areas of cooperation that are of benefit to the member institutions. The following are among the key areas of focus for ATIEA at the moment:

**Faculty Development (Capacity Building):** Working hand in hand with member institutions, ATIEA will organize workshops and seminars in identified areas of need. The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) is partnering with ATIEA and other theological associations on the African continent to provide scholarships to help develop and upgrade academic staff. The Scholarship programme will also facilitate Faculty Exchange – to enable senior academic staff to mentor young staff; encourage taking sabbatical leave in young institutions to build capacity of young institutions. This will require institutions to be open and allow for critique – balanced and objective assessment. Our task as theological educators is to respond to the needs of our people. There is great need to share the little resources we have in order for us to be effective. We must learn to share not only our ideas as we do at our staff and student institutes but also our institutions and their resources. Member institutions are being encouraged to share resources between them and give assistance as required.

**Research and Publications:** ATIEA comprises the best theological brains in the region. ATIEA is committed to the production of reading materials for our students and Christian community in our region. ATIEA is encouraging members with existing manuscripts to update them and forward them to ATIEA through the General Secretary of ATIEA. This way ATIEA becomes the avenue for publication – linking with AACC to speak to possible publishers. ATIEA has resolved to support member institutions with existing journals e.g. Africa Theological Journal at Makumira. ATIEA will support and encourage this journal through: contributing articles and encouraging member institutions and individuals to subscribe to
the journal. An E-journal is planned to be put in place once the ATIEA website is up and running. Together with this will be the establishment of an electronic quarterly newsletter – with information and news articles from member institutions. ATIEA is exploring the idea of collaborative research and publication.

National and Local Chapters: National and local ATIEA chapters are being established in the countries where the member institutions are. This is easing mobilization of members of ATIEA through the country meetings e.g. Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda as centres. This has been followed up by the formation of country committees made up of representatives of member institutions in each country. There will be national and local meetings between bi-annual meetings of ATIEA to sustain contacts and mutual support and fellowship. These regional meetings between several institutions within a given area will find ways of assisting each other and sharing resources in a more manageable manner. Besides, these meetings are cheaper to fund as institutions will ordinarily use their own buildings instead of renting space. Papers presented at these forums could be refined for the staff/ student institutes.

Standards in Theological Education / Curriculum: ATIEA is working towards a standard of theological education with: a standard library, a standard curriculum, qualified and competent staff. Issues of human rights, law and those with disabilities are to be included in the curriculum. There is also going to be an emphasis on women representation – hearing the voice of women in the church.

Ownership and obligatory responsibilities: There is a renewed sense of belonging and ownership of ATIEA among member institutions. This will continue to be demonstrated through:

- Payment of membership and subscription fees by member institutions
- Participation in staff institutes
- Contributing significantly to the travel costs of ATIEA member delegates for the biannual ATIEA Staff Institutes / Conferences
- Participation in the scheduled activities of the national bodies
- Payment of registration fee for individual faculty members
- Meeting minimum standards of curriculum, faculty and library once these standards have been put in place.

In conclusion, ATIEA through its member institutions remains committed to quality and relevant theological education that is accessible to all in the region.
(104) THE ASSOCIATION OF THEOLOGY INSTITUTIONS IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA
(L’ASTHEOL) IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1966 AND 2011

Priscille Djomhoue

1. De La Naissance Jusqu’à La Crise

Dans l’un des numéros de Flambeau de l’année 1973¹, nous avons été informés au sujet d’une rencontre qui allait avoir lieu du 12 au 13 mars 1973 à la faculté de Théologie de Yaoundé, une pré-consultation dont l’objectif était de réfléchir sur la formation théologique. Les groupes suivants étaient présents à cette rencontre: ce sont les onze anciens et étudiants des Ecoles de théologie et de la Faculté, des représentants de diverses Ecoles de Théologie ou pastorale (porto-Nov, Nyaso et Ndoungue), des professeurs de la Faculté de Yaoundé, le secrétaire général de l’Association des Ecoles de Théologie de l’Afrique Occidentale et Centrale (ASTHEOL) et Msg. Desmond Tutu, directeur du Fonds d’Education Théologique (TEF) pour l’Afrique. Ce numéro de Flambeau permet de voir que l’ASTHEOL qui était représenté par son secrétaire général existait déjà avant cette date là. La difficulté que nous avons rencontrée est celle de n’avoir pas en notre disposition, des écrits qui nous informeraient de manière précise sur la date exacte de sa création.

Mais les documents comptables auxquels nous avons eu accès montrent que déjà en 1966, il existait un système de contribution financière dont le bilan concernait un certain nombre d’institutions. Nous comprenons donc que toutes les écoles protestantes de théologie de l’Afrique francophone y comprises les facultés de théologie de Yaoundé au Cameroun et de Kisangani en République Démocratique du Congo s’étaient déjà depuis 1966,² constituées en une association dénommée ASTHEOL.

En effet, sous l’instigation du Fond d’Education Théologique (TEF), puis de la CETA, l’ASTHEOL s’intégrait dans un ensemble devant regrouper l’ensemble des associations régionales de formation théologique en Afrique, à savoir CATI.

Si nous situons la date de la naissance de l’ASTHEOL en 1966, il faut bien remarquer que l’association était encore en gestation, et la première rencontre ou assemblée mentionnée avec clarté a eu lieu en 1970.

L’association des Ecoles de Théologie de l’Afrique Occidentale et Centrale s’était réunie pour la première et la dernière fois dans son ensemble en décembre 1970 à Kinshasa. Rencontre qui avait eu lieu dans l’enthousiasme qui avait donné l’espoir de garder des liens continus et d’organiser une telle rencontre tous les trois ans.³

Objectif de l’ASTHEOL dès 1966

L’objectif de l’ASTHEOL au début est tout simple: unifier le niveau des écoles de théologie et œuvrer pour l’acceptation d’un programme commun.⁴

2. La Crise

Depuis la rencontre de 1970, l’enthousiasme du départ n’a pas duré longtemps. En effet, le rendez-vous planifié de trois ans n’a pas pu avoir lieu à cause de multiples raisons:

L’enthousiasme est vite retombé et le secrétaire général élu à Kinshasa a quitté définitivement l’Afrique en 1974 sans avoir pu organiser une nouvelle rencontre, surtout par manque de moyens. Il est tout de même difficile de réunir des délégués venant d’une part du Dahomey et d’autre part du Rwanda et de Lubumbashi.


L’Assemblée Générale décida alors de se pencher sur cette situation afin d’envisager un avenir beaucoup plus promoteur pour l’ASTHEOL. Il ressort des discussions que le manque d’argent n’est pas la seule difficulté de l’association ; trois autres causes sont mentionnées:

1. Le premier objectif que l’Association s’est donnée depuis 1966 était atteint, et il n’y avait plus de nouvelles motivations qui puissent convaincre les églises auxquelles appartenaient les écoles de théologie de s’engager davantage. En effet, il était question d’unifier le niveau des écoles de formation et de faire accepter un programme commun: cet objectif fut atteint dès 1970.
3. Une certaine clientèle s’était formée autour des deux facultés de théologie, celle de Kinshasa pour le Zaïre et celle de Yaoundé pour l’Afrique occidentale. Étant donné qu’il y avait désormais possibilité de passer du statut d’école de théologie à celui de faculté, toute les écoles étaient directement liées à l’une ou l’autre des deux facultés avec qui elles créaient de liens particuliers. La justification de cette situation se fait voir à travers l’organisation d’une pré-consultation et d’une consultation sur la réforme de l’enseignement théologique par la Faculté de Théologie de Yaoundé en 1974 sans que l’association y soit directement impliquée.

Au-delà de ces raisons qui sont clairement indiquées dans l’article de la revue ci-dessous, nous mentionnons aussi des difficultés d’entrer en contact avec le Zaïre. En effet, une lettre de Jacques Ngally, Doyen de la Faculté de Théologie de Yaoundé adressée aux écoles de formation membres de l’ASTHEOL-Ouest en date du 20 mars 1979 (pour une rencontre du 13 au 14 août) mentionne qu’il y avait des difficultés d’entrer en communication avec le Zaïre. Pour raison les participants de ce pays ne pouvaient pas répondre à l’invitation de la rencontre du Programme d’Education Théologique (PTE) qui avait déjà été reportées et qui devrait avoir lieu du 15 au 16 août 1976.

5 Les informations sur la crise ainsi que son dénouement nous viennent de la revue Flambeau, le no 47 d’aout 1975 consacré aussi au rapport de l’assemblée générale de la même année.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Après avoir examiné la situation, les délégués ont observé qu’il est toutefois plus facile de réunir d’une part les écoles de théologie de l’Afrique occidentale autour de Yaoundé, et d’autre part celles de l’Afrique centrale autour de Kinshasa.

La conclusion qui a suivi ce débat était suffisamment claire: Il faut garder l’unité de toutes les écoles de formation théologique de langue française tout en tenant compte des idées qui sont sorties des discussions: organiser l’association en deux régions, lesquelles recoupent exactement les clientèles des facultés de Théologie.

3. Réorganisation et Fonctionnement de L’ASTHEOL Après 1975

- C’est donc de cette manière que naîtront deux pôles de l’association avec deux secrétariats. La première région se compose donc du Zaïre, du Rwanda, du Burundi, de la RCA, de l’Angola ; la deuxième regroupe le Cameroun, le Togo, le Congo, le Dahomey, et autres pays francophones d’Afrique occidentale.
- Deux comités d’animation provisoire sont créés: En Afrique centrale il comprend les pasteurs Masamba ma Mpolo, Bonkafo et Twagirayesu Michel ; en Afrique occidentale, les pasteurs Ndongo et Zoé Obianga.

Désormais, il était prévu:
- qu’une assemblée régionale ait lieu tous les deux ans, assemblées pendant lesquelles devraient assister obligatoirement les deux secrétaires régionaux
- Une assemblée de toute l’association devrait avoir lieu tous les quatre ans.
- Dans le cadre des régions, les consultations sur des sujets théologiques ou pratiques devraient être organisées en dehors des assemblées mêmes.
- L’un des deux secrétaires régionaux ferait fonction de secrétaire général pour toute l’association.

Finances

Les ressources de l’association lui viennent
1. Des cotisations des institutions membres dont le taux est fixé par l’assemblée générale.
2. Les subventions versées par toute institution publique ou privée
3. Des dons.

4. Apres La Rencontre de L’assemblee Generale de Kinshasa de 1975


Les activités consistaient à examiner les problèmes de l’association et des institutions ; à participer aux rencontres inter-associationnelles ; à publier à travers la revue Flambeau. Il est important de noter qu’après Kinshasa 1975, il n’y a pas eu la tenue d’une assemblée générale des deux pôles. Au 20ème siècle finissant, les relations entre les deux pôles de l’ASTHEOL se sont refroidies et la publication de la revue


Part VI: Networks and Resources for Theological Education in Africa

5. L’ASTHEOL Depuis Février 2010

Sous l’inspiration des rapports détaillés des deux consultations ci-dessus citées, nous présentons ici une synthèse qui nous permet d’entrevoir une nouvelle réorganisation de l’ASTHEOL: ont participé à ces rencontres, les institutions ci-après:

**A Yaoundé:**
- Université Protestante d’Afrique Centrale (UPAC) Yaoundé
- Université Lumière du Bujumbura Burundi
- Faculté de Théologie de Butare Rwanda
- Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Brazzaville Congo
- Institut de Théologie de l’Eglise Anglicane de la Province E. de l’Océan Indien
- Institut Supérieur de Théologie d’Abidjan en Côte d’Ivoire
- Institut Protestant des Arts et Sciences Sociales de Butare Rwanda
- Institut Supérieur de Théologie de Ndoungué Cameroun
- Institut Supérieur de Théologie Dager de Bibia, Lolodorf Cameroun
- Institut Supérieur Presbytérien Camille Chazaud Sangmelima
- Institut Luthérien de Théologie de Meiganga
- Institut Baptiste de Formation Théologique de Ndiki
- Ecole de Théologie de Kaélé Cameroun
- Editions Clé Cameroun
- Cevaa, Communauté d’Eglises en mission
- CETA, Conférence des Eglises de Toute l’Afrique

**A Kinshasa**
- Université Protestante au Congo (UPC) ;
- Faculté de Théologie Evangélique de BOMA (FACTEB) ;
- Université Presbytérienne Sheppard et Lapsley du Congo (UPRECO/Kananga-Ndesha) ;
- Université Protestant de l’Ubangui (U.P.U.) à Gemena ;
- Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs (ULPGL/Goma) ;
- Université Simon Kimbangu ;
- Université Shalom de Bunia ;
- Université Chrétienne de Kinshasa (UCKIN) ;
- Université Protestante de l’Equateur ;
- Université Evangélique en Afrique (UEA) ;
- Université Méthodiste au Katanga ;
- Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Brazzaville
- Institut Supérieur Théologique et de Développement de Yakusu ;
- Institut Supérieur Théologique d’Idiofa ;
- Institut Supérieur Théologique Booth (I.S.T.B.) à Kinshasa Salongo
- Institut Supérieur Théologique Anglican (I.S.Th.A) à Bunia ;
- CETA, Conférence des Eglises de Toute l’Afrique
- Les deux points focaux du Great Lake Ecumenical Forum (GLEF) de la RDC
• Un membre du Comité Exécutif de la CETA
La question de l’avenir de l’ASTHEOL en Afrique francophone est restée fondamentale pour les participants à la consultation de Kinshasa à l’instar de ceux de Yaoundé. C’est ainsi que les réflexions qui ont été menées à Yaoundé sur cette question ont intéressé Kinshasa, qui y a néanmoins ajouté un élément en plus.
• Le problème d’intégration du continent et de sa position dans les relations internationales
Concernant l’intégration de l’Afrique et sa position dans les relations internationales, il a été recommandé à Yaoundé que les institutions de formation théologique continuent d’être un creuset où se forme l’unité des églises et des peuples. Les participants de Kinshasa ont, pour leur part, estimé qu’il fallait y ajouter la promotion de l’esprit de l’auto prise en charge pour la réduction de la pauvreté.
• L’émergence de nouvelles universités sur fond des facultés de théologie
Quant à la situation de l’émergence de nouvelles universités chrétiennes en Afrique francophone qui a constitué une problématique dans la consultation de Yaoundé, le problème ne se pose pas de la même manière dans le contexte des universités chrétiennes de la RDC. En effet, l’expérience montre que les universités chrétiennes ont précédé les universités officielles, et elles donnent une formation théologique de qualité quand bien même elles sont soumises au contrôle de l’État.
• Accroître la coopération entre les institutions de formation théologique et les universités chrétiennes.
Un accord de coopération devrait être conclu entre les institutions d’églises qui décernent les grades universitaires au niveau de licence et doctorat. Il s’agira d’abord de les inventiorier ; ensuite de faciliter les rencontres des personnels académiques, doyens, secrétaires académiques, enseignants en vue, premièremen t, de se connaître et d’échanger l’information sur les compétences et les spécialités, deuxièrem ment, de s’imprégner du système LMD.
• Harmonisation des programmes
L’harmonisation des programmes est une nécessité, compte tenu du système LMD. Les deux consultations recommandent:
• qu’un séminaire d’imprégnation du système LMD soit organisé à l’intention de toutes les institutions francophones de formation théologique, pour sa mise en place de façon coordonnée.
• Encourager les enseignants à publier les syllabus et des ouvrages de référence dans leurs spécialisations surtout selon Yaoundé.
• Les institutions devront organiser des rencontres d’élaboration des plans pédagogiques et autres outils de recherches.
• Création d’un Conseil Scientifique d’Accréditation et de Standardisation (CSAS)
Le point relatif à la création d’un Comité Scientifique d’Accréditation et de Standardisation a été également accepté par tous.
• Relance de l’ASTHEOL
A Yaoundé, les objectifs de l’ASTHEOL ont été rappelés. Il s’agissait
• d’être le creuset où se retrouveraient toutes les institutions francophones de formation théologique afin:
• de se connaître ;
• de travailler en synergie pour être plus efficace ;
• d’avoir un programme qui soit accessible à tous à travers la publication des supports de cours ;
• d’identifier les spécialités des professeurs en vue de permettre l’échange de chaire pour une harmonisation des niveaux.
Cependant la léthargie dans laquelle s’est installée depuis quelques années l’ASTHEOL, surtout du côté de l’Afrique de l’Ouest, a constitué un handicap qui a entravé ses activités. Pour redynamiser l’ASTHEOL, les deux consultations recommandent ce qui suit:

Part VI: Networks and Resources for Theological Education in Africa
que les institutions contribuent financièrement pour la bonne marche de l’ASTHEOL. Cette contribution devrait trouver un mécanisme de canalisation et de gestion que définira le comité de relance de l’ASTHEOL.

• Arrêter une périodicité des rencontres.
• Mise en place des outils de recherche

A Yaoundé comme à Kinshasa il a été souhaité la mise en place d’un « plan ASTHEOL » de production de littérature théologique et de diffusion du savoir théologique contextuel. Il s’agira d’enrichir la théologie chrétienne universelle par les expériences de vie et de témoignage des églises du Sud par une abondante production de littérature théologique contextuelle dans toutes les disciplines de l’enseignement. Il est souhaité que les institutions prennent l’engagement d’inscrire sur la liste des ouvrages de référence, les productions théologiques de l’ASTHEOL et que chacune d’elles commande les ouvrages proportionnellement à leur population étudiante.

• Le développement des bibliothèques

Une tentative de projet de mise en réseau des bibliothèques des institutions est le Réseau d’Information, de Documentation et de Communication (RIDOC), aujourd’hui dormant.

La grande question qui demeure à l’issue des deux consultations est celle-ci: quelle appellation retenir entre ASTHEOL Ouest ou ASTHEOL Centre ? Cette question est le sujet qui a entre autres, préoccupé les deux pôles de l’ASTHEOL pendant la rencontre générale qui a eu lieu à Brazzaville du 22 au 24 août 2011.


Dix neuf institutions de formation théologique, ont représenté les deux régions de l’ASTHEOL pendant la rencontre de Brazzaville. Il s’agit de:

1. L’Université Protestante du Congo (UPC).
2. L’Université Protestante d’Afrique Centrale (UPAC)
3. L’Université Protestante d’Afrique de l’Ouest (UPAO).
4. L’Institut de Théologie de Ndoungue, Cameroun.
5. L’Institut Protestant des Arts et des Sciences sociales (PIASS) de Butare, Rwanda
6. L’Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs (ULPGL), RDC
7. La Faculté de Théologie de l’Université Evangélique d’Afrique (UEA),
8. La Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Brazzaville à Mansimou,
9. L’Institut Supérieur de Théologie d’Idiofa (Bakongo).
10. L’Université Méthodiste au Katanga.
11. L’Institut Baptiste de Théologie de Ndiki (Cameroun).
12. L’Institut Supérieur Presbytérien Camille Chazeaud de Fulasi
13. L’Université Protestante de l’Equateur.
14. L’Institut Supérieur de Théologie Booth de Kinshasa
15. L’Université Protestante d’Ubangi,
16. La Faculté de Théologie Evangélique de Bas-Congo
17. L’Institut Supérieur de Théologie et de Développement Communautaire (ISTDC) de Yakusu,
18. L’Université Presbytérienne Sheppard et Lapsley du Congo (UPRECO)
19. L’Université Shalom de Bunia.

Outre les discussions sur l’académie des Religions, sur la création d’un fonds pour l’éducation théologique et la présentation des exposés sur le thème Eglise et Etat, les participants à cette rencontre se sont penchés sur le devenir de l’ASTHEOL. Plusieurs questions ont été soulevées. Premièrement, la nécessité de reconnaître la réalité de l’existence de deux branches, Ouest et Centre. Ensuite, les participants
ont convenu sur la nécessité d’unifier les deux branches pour plus d’efficacité. Le bon exemple des Evangéliques qui ont pu mobiliser la coopération de la SIL, CABTAL et d’autres afin d’initier des cours sur la traduction biblique a interpellé les participants. La seule voie de sortie adoptée fut la mise en place d’une coordination unifiée avec des chapitres dans chaque pays.

Le Recteur de l’UPC, Mgr prof. Ngoy Boliya, président de l’ASTHEOL Centre, a fait une proposition à la Consultation de se donner une année pour préparer les voies de l’unification pour les deux branches. La proposition a été acceptée. Et la CETA a été ainsi invitée à faciliter ce processus qui sera mené à terme lors de la prochaine Assemblée Générale de l’ASTHEOL au Rwanda, en 2012.

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Chammah J Kaunda

Introduction
Theological impotence in Pentecostal theological education in Africa cannot be overemphasized. One of the pervasive traits of African Pentecostalism in the past has been their overwhelming anti-intellectual ethos. It manifested in a deep suspicion of academic theological education, especially Protestant seminaries and university theology which were constantly perceived as capable of quenching the fire of the Holy Spirit, hence considered as ‘cemeteries’. Due to this profound distrust of academic theology, while there has been proliferation in Pentecostal Seminaries and Bible schools on the continent, nevertheless, no serious attention has been given to quality and relevance of theological education. In fact, Pentecostal theological education in Africa has been largely a transplantation from the global north, which also continues to finance and give accreditation and recognition to the majority of Pentecostal institutions in Africa. Besides, most of the Pentecostal seminaries and Bible schools for long did not give serious attention to the issues of accreditation and cooperation even among themselves. While some have tried to emulate the “precepts and standards of Evangelical and other Conservative traditions”, nevertheless, their standards and the quality of theological education have been at a staggeringly lower level. This article is an exploration of the prospects of newly formed Association for Pentecostal Theological Education in Africa (hereafter, APTEA).

I explore it in three sections. First, I expose the current situation in Pentecostal theological education in Africa. Second, I highlight the self-understanding and role of APTEA in relation to Pentecostal theological education in Africa. Third, I give critical observations and suggestions for APTEA as viable tool for the future of Pentecostal Christianity in Africa. I further argue that APTEA has a critical role to play as an instrument for ecumenical cooperation not just among African Pentecostal Christians but also amongst other African Associations of Theological Education (hereafter associations).

“Dead Intellectualism”: The Current and Historical Portrait of PTEA
The Pentecostal tradition in Africa inherited a model of ministerial formation that was based on profound suspicion and indifference towards scholarship and academic theological education. This “anti-theological and anti-academic prejudice” has had a lingering effect in the minds of some Pentecostal leaders who feel that theological education suppresses the power of the Holy Spirit. This made theological education to be...
perceived by some Pentecostals as dangerous and having the potential to detour someone from the power of the Holy Spirit. Allan Anderson affirms that African Pentecostalism’s “tenuous relationship” with theological education is based on their misunderstanding that it is “dead intellectualism that stifles the Spirit-filled life”.4 Although not all Pentecostals think this way, this tendency remains one of the biggest challenges facing the Pentecostal movement in Africa. There are many leaders who have no theological training and have established their own churches, in some cases even Bible colleges. These have a hostile attitude towards theological education.

Ogbu Kalu argues that the Pentecostal overemphasising on the leadership of the Holy Spirit has created conditions in which people can declare that the Holy Spirit has called and given them visions, and no one is able to query their authenticity.5 Yet, what most Pentecostals do not realise is the fact that too much emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit or spirituality at the expense of the scholarship is just as dangerous as overemphasising academic theology at the expense of spirituality. Dichotomising these two aspects leads to pseudo-Christianity. An unexamined Christian tradition is in danger of misleading its followers. First, this implies that critical examination of religious traditions is crucial for checks and balances and orientation of theological reflection to critical issues within the community the church serves. Second, it also implies that spirituality is crucial for ensuring that theological education is not just another secular discipline but has its orientation and focus on the mission of God through Jesus Christ and the relationship of human beings with God. Thus, the two aspects are not in opposition against each other but are like hand and glove or two sides of the same coin.

Nevertheless, the Pentecostal antagonistic perception of scholarship and spirituality has been perpetuated by different models of ministerial formation on the continent. These models range from apprenticeships, unaccredited Bible schools, short-term crash courses offered by well-meaning global partners, superficial awards of doctorates, the outright sale of certificates, and a host of other strategies as a means of obtaining some form of theological recognition.6 It is no wonder that Pentecostals have been ridiculed and despised by other Christian traditions as not having strong theological foundations. For instance, Peter Watt observed about the Assemblies of God Bible Colleges in Southern Africa as being referred to as ‘sausage machines’ which placed no value on academic excellence and quality theological education.7 In the majority of Pentecostal institutions, lecturers are not adequately trained. There are institutions where the lecturers hold the same level of degree which is being taught. This does not mean that all Pentecostals reject academia. There are a good number of African Pentecostal theologians who place no dichotomy between academic and spirituality.

Within the African Assemblies of God churches, North American Assemblies of God have contributed significantly towards the establishment of the Bible Colleges which has enabled a more rapid growth of indigenous Pentecostal churches.8 In many instances, the demographic shift of Christianity southwards has attracted an influx of Western Pentecostal missionaries and scholars who are motivated by competition for recognition or being associated with such a massive explosion of Christianity in Africa. This has attracted extreme positions of theological education from extremely liberal to extremely fundamentalist which has created tension and mutual suspicion within African Christianity. In Pentecostal circles, the models of theological education and ministerial formation that are utilised continue to perpetuate Western hegemony. This is due to the fact that the past distrust of academic theological education has resulted in a lack of

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6 Kalu, “Elijah’s Mantle,” 266.
adequately qualified personnel to run institutions in Africa.\textsuperscript{9} This current state of affairs has developed a complex relationship between African and North American Pentecostals which is based on domination and dependence not only on the theology from North America but also on personnel and resources. Allan Anderson highlights that North American Pentecostals have followed the pattern of the Western Protestant missionaries who came with a superiority complex to Africa and perceived Christianity as a religion of the civilised.\textsuperscript{10} Thus, they applied the Western model of theological education resulting in the formation of ‘pseudo-Euro-North American’ African Christians. He further argues that they took it for granted that they knew what kind of theological education and ministerial formation African people needed in order to become ministers after the model of the West.\textsuperscript{11} African Pentecostals were a vulnerable target to fundamentalist models of education that were conveyed on wholesale and uncritically transmitted through Bible colleges. Anderson laments that the USA Assemblies of God has been in the forefront in exporting Pentecostal fundamentalism to Africa.\textsuperscript{12} Affirmably, Pentecostal theological education and ministerial formation have been brought to Africa with such an intimate relationship with USA culture and epistemologies that are not relevant to the context. It is a paradox that while the USA Pentecostal missionaries have talked of promoting African cultures, they nevertheless purposefully and consciously side-lined them in designing alternative strategies for theological education. Moreover, they have contributed to contemporary African Pentecostal undermining or despising African religions and other religions on the continent. Sometimes, even other Christian denominations are considered harvest fields, especially the Roman Catholic Church. Arguably, the founding of APTEA could be perceived as crucial for formulating a strategy for an alternative and life-oriented Pentecostal theological education and ministerial formation in Africa.

A Step in the Right Direction: The Formation of APTEA

APTEA is in its infancy. It came into being on 21 February 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya. The conference brought a number of Pentecostal Church leaders and theological educators from across Africa and partners from the USA. The purpose of this conference was to establish an association that could network and set standards for PTEA. APTEA\textsuperscript{13} is an initiative of and is financed by the Assemblies of God (USA) to increase awareness of education programs in Africa with an intention to achieve efficiency in mission.\textsuperscript{14} This was done in collaboration with some African leaders in Assemblies of God Churches who also felt that it was time for the endorsement program of the Commission for Theological Education (hereafter, CTE)\textsuperscript{15}, the endorsing body of Africa Theological Training Service (hereafter, ATTS), to merge and

\textsuperscript{10} Anderson, “Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality,” 5.
\textsuperscript{11} Anderson, “Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality,” 5.
\textsuperscript{12} Anderson, “Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality,” 5.
\textsuperscript{13} “The Africa's Hope, an African Assemblies of God organization that provides resources for training leaders, work in partnership and offering practical training to leaders in Africa, has been instrumental in bringing Pentecostal churches together to formulate APTEA as well as the launch of WAPTE at the PWF meeting in Stockholm in Sweden” (see Africa’s Hope, “APTEA Launched in Nairobi,” http://africashope.org/what-we-do/updates/2011/02/21/aptea-launched-nairobi (accessed 14.3.2012).
\textsuperscript{15} The Education Commission was formed when the Pentecostal World Fellowship leadership (PWF) perceived the need for strong Pentecostal theological education to steer and shape the future generation of Spirit-filled leaders. The World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education (WAPTE) was appointed as the Educational Commission. WAPTE is a global cooperative fellowship of Pentecostal theological associations and institutions that focuses on promoting the development of theological education and leadership training.

\textit{Handbook of Theological Education in Africa}
become a full-service association. This stemmed from an understanding that an association is capable of increasing the capacity of Pentecostal theological education within the continent in order to equip leaders who can respond relevantly and effectively to the rapidly demographic growth of the Church in Africa and fulfil the Great Commission (evangelization of Africa).

The concern for excellence and quality in Pentecostal theological education and ministerial formation is deeply rooted in the history of ATTS continental conference in 1992. The participants expressed an intense need for mechanisms to ensure that theological education and ministerial formation was producing quality leaders capable of fulfilling what was termed as “aggressive goals of Assemblies of God Decade of Harvest (1990-2000)”. The philosophical underpinning of these goals was based on the Great Commission in Mathew 28:19, which was perceived as the end time harvesting of souls for the Kingdom of God. Africa, the target, was perceived as ripe for the so-called “end time evangelization within this decade”. Thus, various theological education consultations between the USA and African Assemblies of God Churches were held in order to establish standards that would enable both formal and non-formal theological education and ministerial formation delivery systems to be effective in order to realise these goals. By the end of 2010 about twenty-nine institutions were given endorsement by the CTE. Nevertheless, it was observed that the rapid growth of Pentecostalism in Africa and the mushrooming of institutions needed an association that could approve the standards and procedures for endorsement and accreditation, but also provide teacher certification, promote contextual scholarly writing, and encourage sharing of resources. Consequently, APTEA was officially established with three commissions. The first commission is on endorsement and accreditation. The second commission is on faculty enrichment and certification. The third commission is on scholarly research and writing. The mission of APTEA therefore, is “to promote the mission of God by facilitating and ensuring excellence in member institutions through recognition of academic programs, faculty development, institutional enrichment, and scholarly writing”. One can argue that this mission and the three commissions seem to hold a promise in the renewal and reformation of quality and relevance in Pentecostal theological education and ministerial formation on the continent. Yet some questions remain open: on whose agenda is APTEA established? Are there enough African Pentecostal scholars on the continent willing to take the challenges of developing contextual scholarship for Pentecostal Church in Africa? What kind of contextual scholarship is APTEA envisaging? What mechanisms are put in place to avoid dependence on external donors?

At the launching conference, the purposes and objectives of the APTEA were also cogently outlined as follows: first, to promote close working relationships and the sharing of resources among Pentecostal theological institutions throughout Africa. Second, organize consultations, networking and create awareness of current trends in theological education. Third, provide mechanisms for sharing resources and fostering collaboration on matters of mutual concern. Fourth, encourage research and scholarship that informs the development of contextual theology, leadership and ministry education within the Pentecostal tradition. Fifth, provide criteria for members to assess the effectiveness of their working relationships with other member institutions. Sixth, promote the adoption of endorsement and accreditation standards and procedures for members which include providing standards and mechanisms for endorsement and accreditation, and ensuring that accreditation status is based on the association’s standards as criteria for a school’s self-study. These standards include academic excellence, effective student spiritual life.
development, effective and practical leadership and ministry training, education and training programs that are developed to meet the needs of the students, churches, communities and contexts they serve and provide faculty enrichment resources and establish standards for teacher certification. This association is significant because it not only meant support for affirming Pentecostal values, but also encouragement for promoting them through theological education and thereby returning a distinctive Pentecostal flavour to the students.

Besides, as a member of the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education (WAPTE), which is the educational arm of the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF), an international body that sets and monitors standards for endorsement, accreditation and teacher certification for its members, APTEA is perceived as a facilitating wing for the sharing of resources at both the continent and at the global level. Thus, APTEA is an interdenominational Pentecostal association that gives oversight to member institutions within Africa. The association is interdenominational in scope in the sense that non-Pentecostal institutions are allowed to be members. It is also important to clarify that APTEA is not imposed on any Pentecostal church but a voluntary association.

**Observations and Suggestions**

Currently, there is a massive demographic explosion among the African Pentecostals. This makes the efforts to establish APTEA on the continent appropriate and commendable. It shows that there is unanimous concern among various denominations for more cooperation within denominations in order to become viable in participating in the mission of God, despite the fact that the mission of God still is understood in diverse ways. Nevertheless, the founding of APTEA seems to indicate that ecumenism must begin within various denominations before it is extended to others. The Bemba proverb says “Akachila kambushi kasengula epo kekele”, which means a community should first live in harmony within itself before asking others to join or joining them. It seems there is a new orientation in ecumenism that is based on a realisation that a denomination that is divided within itself cannot effectively cooperate and partner with others. The mission of God is constantly being perceived as a locus for ecumenical cooperation even within denominations. The creation of an association among African Pentecostals was long overdue and it is something to be welcomed heartedly as a milestone towards developing a distinctive African Pentecostal theological education.

Unfortunately, Africans are not equally represented in strategic leadership structures, not just in APTEA but in all Pentecostal world fellowship organisations. It is amazing that from the PWF Advisory Committee of sixteen members and the six WAPTE officers not one of them is an African. In the APTEA itself all strategic positions of the officers are held by outsiders with only one exception. On the one hand, it is no doubt that North Americans have been instrumental in initiating many organizations among the Pentecostals in Africa. On the other hand, they have often acted as agents to perpetuate the North American hegemony thereby continuing the North American theology on the continent. Consequently, the pace of self-development and creativity in developing African Pentecostal theology or contextual scholarship has been hampered. This is not to say that the Church in Africa should work out its required solutions in isolation. It is rather to call for African Pentecostals to develop their own distinctive theological education and not a replication of the North American.

While there must be collaboration, partnership, and co-operation between African Pentecostals and Pentecostals in other parts of world, the relationship should be based on mutual partnership and

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22 WAPTE does not offer accreditation, but is the covering organization that holds various regional Pentecostal accrediting associations to a high organizational standard.

collaboration. I think Pentecostals are yet to learn the notion of partnership in mission. It is my argument that APTEA needs African officers at all levels who are sensitive to the existential needs of the continent and who can train their own teachers for the continent. In partnership, outsiders can act as advisors through collaboration but they cannot take over the responsibilities from Africans. This is crucial in order to avoid the North America imposition of a style of leadership, theological education and ministerial formation foreign to African cultures. I believe that the most established and strong churches are those which rely on more African models of leadership and theological education.

Thus, APTEA could act as a crucial platform for collaboration and ecumenical encounter among Pentecostals in Africa and around the world. The denominational identities among Pentecostal have been so strong and exacerbated by the fear of “sheep stealing”, a notion based on suspicion that other Church leaders will cunningly convince the members of other churches into joining them. This issue has become deeply entrenched in the minds of Pentecostal Church leaders and manifests itself in overprotecting, and denying church members or congregants from participating and cooperating with other Christian denominations in ecumenical activities, thereby perpetuating denominationalism. Pentecostals are known for rejecting, and suspicion of, any form of ecumenical initiatives, especially with mainline churches. Raymond Pfister observes that ecumenism for the majority of Pentecostals is synonymous with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and “liberalism”, a term which is used to describe an attitude of compromises a propos the essentials of the Christian faith”. In contrast to these trends, APTEA should be perceived as an opportunity to foster ideals for constructive engagements and dialogues between the different denominations. It should be a critical platform for envisioning a more ecumenically oriented African Pentecostal theological education, a place for clearing the fog of many misunderstandings with regard to ecumenism and what actually is meant with the WCC and its understanding of ecumenism. With these misunderstandings, introducing a deliberate ecumenical ethos in APTEA and helping member institutions adopt this orientation may act as a corrective measure. If indeed ecumenism means to bring the whole Gospel of Christ to the whole world, then APTEA has an ecumenical responsibility toward its member institutions to help them understanding the distinctive ecumenical contribution of the African Pentecostal movements to the world Christianity. Yet this also requires mature and transformative leaders with an ecumenical vision. A few questions can be raised: first, to what extent is the leadership of APTEA ecumenically informed and willing to engage in ecumenical discussions? Second, is APTEA willing to conscientize African Pentecostal leaders about ecumenical engagement? These are some of critical aspects that seem to be lacking in the objectives of APTEA.

Nevertheless, APTEA should be perceived as an ecumenical forum for theological discussions and exchange of ideas with other African Associations that are promoting theological education from an ecumenical perspective. This is important because African Pentecostal theological education, when compared with other theological education programmes being offered on the continent, is profoundly at a very low level in terms of standards and quality. In fact, the majority of African Pentecostal scholars have obtained their post-graduate degrees from either evangelical seminaries or from university faculties. Currently, there is no Pentecostal institution offering a doctorate of philosophy degree or even a doctorate of minister on the continent. It is shocking that of the twenty-eight CTE Pentecostal institutions now endorsed by APTEA only three of them offer a master’s degree, nine of them offer a Bachelor of theology and the rest, sixteen of them, offer only a diploma. Kingsley Larbi observes that even these

25 Cape Theological Seminary, Cape Town, South Africa, West Africa Advanced School of Theology, Lomé, Togo and All Nations Theological Seminary, Lilongwe, Malawi.
institutions are still struggling with inadequate staff, substandard libraries and other logistics. Larbi further argues that the only Pentecostal institutions on the continent offering research theological degrees are the Apostolic Faith Mission Theological Seminary in South Africa and the School of Theology and Missions of Central University College, Ghana. Otherwise, there are numerous substandard and unaccredited institutions with unsubstantial theology operating on the continent to the discrediting of African theological education.

It is unfortunate that African Pentecostal leadership has not yet seen the crucial role of theological education in strengthening and renewal of the Church for missions. The Pentecostal Church in Africa is yet to move proper academic theological education to the centre stage of their agenda. It seems an ecumenical cooperation with other theological education associations on the continent is critical for APTEA, especially for mutual learning. It is significant to understand that theological education is not done in a vacuum. It is a collaborative endeavour. The Bemba proverb says, “umwana ashenda atasha nyina ukunaya” which literally means that a person who does not choose to be exposed to other ways of life and thinking through mutual encounter and interaction, is in danger of self-deception and false-contentment based on thinking or feeling that the opinions and the beliefs one holds are absolutely true. It can be a tragedy indeed to discover that what one has always taken for granted to be absolutely true can be not true at all. It is in this vein that mutual collaboration and encounter becomes critical for self-interrogation in the light of other perspectives. I believe through critical ecumenical cooperation and encounters, Pentecostal theological education will be able to pursue academic excellence that will include self-analysis and the analysis of their programs in relation to other associations. Areas of cooperation here may include sharing of resources, faculty development through faculty exchanges, library development, and joint research projects and especially in the area of publication. African Pentecostals are yet to learn the significance of publishing relevant and contextual materials for the consumption of their local audience. If APTEA is aiming at being relevant on the African continent, then it should not take a do-it-alone mentality to theological education. Quality assurance in theological education demands cooperation and exchange with other associations who are involved in similar activities within the continent.

APTEA could also act as an incubator for Africanization of theological education among African Pentecostals. The rapid change that is taking place on the continent is demanding for an urgent contextual theological education that gives scrupulous attention to the historical experiences and world-view of African people. Tinyiko Maluleke has argued that:

Africanization is not merely a change of form, it is a change of content, method, objective and vision so that theological education, religious and church praxis contributes to and facilitates the total liberation of the poorest of the poor of Africa. Therefore it is not how classical Christological doctrinal assertions can be presented in African forms but also how African Christians are shaping and can reshape theology. It is not enough to look at what the Bible has, and can do for Africa; we must also begin to look at what Africa can do to the Bible.

This means that APTEA itself must be Africanized in every sense of the word (structures, personnel etc.) and in every aspect (ethos, orientation etc.). As highlighted above, African Pentecostal theological education remains beholden to the imported models of theological education from North America which are being perpetuated through the APTEA’s teacher development and certification commission. African Pentecostals cannot afford to be a sell-out to the foreign models of theological education, especially when

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one looks at the enormous challenges affecting African people, such as poverty, HIV and AIDS, environmental crisis, leadership crisis in both secular and Church contexts, gender injustice, civil wars, human rights, reconciliation, post-conflict resolution and peace-making and so on. Africanization should be a critical issue on the agenda of APTEA and only this is a major way forward in developing a distinctively African Pentecostal theology. Here quality means being relevant to the changing circumstances of the people. To equip the new generation of Pentecostal leaders through theological education, sensitive to the contextual needs, there is a need to renew and develop Pentecostal value systems drawing from its ecumenical thrust.

Conclusion

APTEA is a viable tool for the future of Pentecostal Christianity in Africa. In this article I have argued that APTEA has critical role to play as an instrument for ecumenical cooperation not just among African Pentecostal Christians but also with other African Associations of theological education. Through ecumenical cooperation, Pentecostal theological education can be able to pursue academic excellence. The only unfortunate thing is that very few African people are found in the strategic leadership of the main organizations of the world fellowships of Pentecostal movement. Even in APTEA, only one African is included in strategic structures of implementing APTEA’s goals and objectives. This shows a crucial urgency to Africanize APTEA at every level of its work for it to become relevant to the changing circumstances on the continent. I believe it is crucial for Africans to begin taking initiatives for the future of Christianity in Africa and envision their own theological destiny apart from North America.

Bibliography


Edwina Ward

The African Network of Higher Education and Research in Theology, HIV and AIDS (ANHERTHA) is a multi-faith network of Higher Education Institutions in countries on the east coast of Africa, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and South Africa, who offer a Master’s Degree Programme in Theology, HIV and AIDS. The Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) is the primary funder for ANHERTHA. Smaller funders contribute to this network. Primarily, the network funds students to do a Master of Religion or Theology degree in the institutions that are part of the network. But the network has also set itself a number of other tasks which include the training and building capacity of students and practitioners in appreciating the effective response to HIV and AIDS from a faith-based perspective. Research is also published in accredited Journals and distributed to Universities, Non Governmental Organisations NGOs and Church Leaders.

Members of the ANHERTHA Board of Directors provide curriculum development, support and capacity-building for lecturers of the Masters Programmes offered in the affiliated institutions. In addition, the ANHERTHA network seeks to disseminate thinking and research produced by the lecturers of the Master’s modules, and student’s research within the Master’s degrees and the Doctoral level degrees that graduates have begun to work on.

Links with the Pan African Christian Aids Network (PACANet) and International Network of Religious Leaders Living with or personally affected by HIV and AIDS (INERELA+) provides ANHERTHA with an audience for the ideas generated through the Master’s degree courses and also potential sites for research.

One of the main reasons for the establishment of ANHERTHA was the need to develop an appropriate theological, academic and scientific paradigm concerning theodicy and the question of how to understand and assess the will of God in suffering. This was to develop a paradigm that understood HIV and AIDS, not from a moral standpoint, but from a point of view of human dignity and quality of life. Another reason was to encourage theological research around HIV and AIDS in the context of church communities within Africa. Ultimately the hope is that such research will help in understanding how the church as an institution deeply rooted in society can begin to reduce stigma through a deeper understanding of belief systems in relation to HIV and AIDS.

The above is premised on the idea that graduates of the programme would:
• Adopt a paradigm of Theology and HIV and AIDS that was inclusive and focussed on compassion and human dignity rather than one based on morality.
• Gain appropriate ministerial, counselling and caring skills that would equip them to work in a context of HIV and AIDS in their home countries.
• And ultimately, to be able to lead the way to undo the stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV and AIDS in the church and in society.

1 Aachen, Sternsinger, Missio, Grey’s Hospital, and private donations.
2 PACANet is a Christian, non-denominational organisation established to provide technical support and capacity-building for Christian responses to HIV and AIDS in Africa. It currently works through networks of Christian organisations involved in the HIV and AIDS sector in 11 countries in east, west and southern Africa. INERELA+ is a network with chapters of Religious Leaders in 19 countries internationally, including the east and southern regions where ANHERTHA is focussed.
Background History

It is useful to understand the history of ANHERTHA, as the present situation of this network is to change in the near future (2013), where it will be part of a larger Consortium which is to include INERELA+, Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA), Churches United Against HIV & AIDS (CUAHA), Islamic Relief Fund (IRF), and PACANet along with ANHERTHA.

During 2006 and 2007, the Church of Sweden Project (funded by Sida) funded scholarships for 36 students in four institutions for a Master of Theology and HIV and AIDS degree and post-graduate diplomas. The institutions were the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Stellenbosch University (SUN), the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST), and Makumira University of Tanzania (MUO). These institutions formed a network in 2008 – ANHERTHA. In 2009 St Paul’s Institute of Life Long Learning (SPILL) in Limuru, Kenya joined the network and in 2012 the Uganda Christian University (UCU) joined in as the last partner. All institutions offer a research-based Master of Theology in HIV and AIDS in some format. In 2011 SPILL was renamed St Paul’s University (SPU) and Makumira University is renamed Tumaini University Makumira (TUMA). The expansion of ANHERTHA to six universities means that 22 African countries are represented through the nationalities of the many students who receive ANHERTHA scholarships.

Totals of ANHERTHA Scholarships Offered up to 2012

- UKZN 43 Masters 4 Doctorate
- SUN 28 Masters 1 Doctorate
- EGST 24 Masters
- SPU 22 Masters 1 Doctorate
- TUMA 17 Masters

The Goals and Objectives of ANHERTHA

- To develop an appropriate theological, academic and scientific paradigm concerning theodicy and the question of how to understand and assess the will of God in suffering.
- To develop ministerial skills, counselling skills, and caring within the local communities of the trained participants.
- To be exposed to people living with HIV in clinical or home-based care environments under the guidance of qualified supervisors. This means targeting exposure to practical care in communities, for women and children who are singled out to suffer inequality.
- To become aware of community issues around the ethical dilemma and the norms and values as related to HIV.
- To seek for a preventative approach for the spread of HIV in the light of human sexuality, marriage, family and the increasing number of orphaned children and child-headed households.
- To understand the dynamics of terminal care and grief counselling within the context of the African scenario as well as the different communities of faith in this regard.
- To link ecclesiology to strategic planning: the challenge to different communities of faith and what it means to be church.
- To promote standards of international best practice for training and recognition of research for practitioners in the field.
- To promote and enhance the capacity, ability and skills of people in coping with HIV.

3 The website for ANHERTHA and for Scholarship applications is: www.anhertha.org.za.
• To co-operate and collaborate and network with reputable international, regional and local organisations and people operating within Africa and in the sphere of Theology and HIV.
• To identify and develop a network of reputable organizations and people within Africa in the sphere of HIV.
• To provide a forum for and share resources and expertise and knowledge across Africa.
• To facilitate the provision of services in response to invitations from local organisations to influence or participate in prevention and management of HIV.
• To promote the establishment of reputable local and regional network organisations and competent practitioners in all African countries.
• To promote sustainable research capacity.

**Present Focus and Realizations of ANHERTHA**

There is a need to move the focus to include more deeply the plight of women and children who are the top victims of HIV and AIDS, and to improve prevention strategies at all levels, including voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) use of condoms and controlled cultural and traditional practices which are the cause of high risk ongoing transmission. This would include multiple concurrent sexual partnerships (MCSP), widow cleansing, and LGBTI stigmatization. The curriculum in each institution should include:

*Action-Reflection model:* This refers to the practical theology methodology in interpretation (hermeneutics). Students should learn through an Action-Reflection experiential model and a Context – Text – Context approach.

*Be interdisciplinary:* This means that it should encourage the interplay and exchange of knowledge and methodology between the other human sciences and religion and theology and the interplay between the different theological disciplines (systematic, biblical, church history, gender studies, theology and development, religion and psychology).

*Be structured around an eco-systemic understanding:* This means it should not be structured around the traditional person-centered approach where the individual and his or her pastoral needs are the focus. Rather the curriculum should give students an experience of a systemic approach where the meaning of life is embedded within the network of relationships in the different systems that surround an individual.

**Publications**

Another important area of networking and disseminating ideas and research is through publishing academic articles. What follow are some of the articles published by students and lecturers between 2008 and 2012.

Hendriks, E. “Spirituality in Film: a Critical Enquiry into the Film Yesterday and the Question of Stigmatization within the Context of the HIV Pandemic.” *Scriptura* (2010).


Louw D. J. “Sexual Violence: From Abuse (Power) to “Sacrament” (Human Dignity) – Towards the Sanctification of the Genitals in a Pastoral Hermeneutics.” *Scriptura* 102 (2009), 416-419.


Thesnaar, C H. “Heling en heil is nie moontlik sonder waarheid nie (Healing and salvation is not possible without truth),” *NGTT* 50 nos. 1 & 2 (2009), 242-253.


Thesnaar, C H. “The Pastoral Church as a Space for Healing and Reconciliation,” *NGTT* 51 nos. 3&4 (2010), 266-273.


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4 This book was published by ANHERTHA from papers presented at the seminar held at the culmination of the Church of Sweden part of the programme in 2008. Copies are used by all of the universities in the present master’s courses. This publication was seen as an important part of the dissemination work that ANHERTHA does, but is also part of building student capacity in research.

*Part VI: Networks and Resources for Theological Education in Africa*
ACTEA AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Philippe Emedi

Introduction

This paper is about the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA) and its role in evangelical theological education in light of international standards of quality. It is divided into four main parts; first the definition of key concepts, namely “Quality Assurance” and “evangelical theological education.” Second, it introduces ACTEA: its birth, structure, leadership and administration. Third, it looks at ACTEA’s process of quality assurance through mission and objectives, steps towards accreditation, standards and guide, self-evaluation and outcomes of accreditation process. Fourth, ACTEA challenges and future prospects are cast before a concluding summary.

Definition of Key Concepts

“Quality Assurance”

The expression “quality assurance” is hard to define mostly because the term “quality” has different conceptual meanings, is “a much-debated term” and is perceived differently. For the “relativists”, for instance, quality is like beauty that lies in the eyes of the beholder. For the “objectivists,” quality is “specific attributes that can be identified.” In industry and business, quality is “exceptional” (exceeding standards); “consistency” (zero defects); “fitness for purpose” (meeting the purpose); “value for money” (worth and effectiveness); or “transformative” (qualitative change). In spite of the ambiguity, these perceptions can inform our understanding of quality and quality assurance in education.

Thus, Quality Assurance would be, to rephrase Cezar Birzea and others, a democratic approach by both the workers and “those in authority” (facilitators), who together recognize the complexity and difficulty of the task, put strategies in place in a spirit of collaboration and create conditions that allow workers to exercise their own judgment as to what needs to be done as they monitor the progress to make sure that the right things are happening.

This definition must be seen in contrast to Quality Control. Although the two expressions are used synonymously and interchangeably, they convey different meanings. Quality Control implies a policing force – people in authority, claiming to be in charge and knowing best what and how to do it – imposing control and a checking system to ensure that people are doing the right thing. Note that Quality Assurance also conveys a sense of “control,” but such authority is exercised by a certain body through mutual agreement and for the sake of accountability. Quality assurance also goes beyond “standardization” because of (1) competition, (2) customer satisfaction, (3) maintenance of standards, (4) accountability, (5) improvement of employee’s morale and motivation, (6) credibility, prestige and status; and (7) image or visibility. Most of these reasons are valid for education in general and theological education in particular.

From an educational angle, quality is achieved through process, by meeting required objectives as students acquire knowledge through learning, develop reasoning abilities and skills and gain autonomy of thought, discourse and evaluation. Quality is, therefore, a process and a culture of transformation, ranging from a standard to excellence. It is thus “rooted in individual, institutional, national practice, an assessment in terms of a set of norm-referenced standards … that are built around what is expected at the minimum and beyond.” While there are various ways of approaching quality assurance, it is generally done through: (a) self-evaluation, (b) peer-review, (c) best-practices benchmarking (even “next practices” – whatever emerges with changing environment), (d) surveys (students, graduates, employers and professional bodies), and (e) testing knowledge, skills, competences.” How does ACTEA comply with these key norms of quality assessment? Before looking at that, let us attempt to define evangelical theological education.

Evangelical Theological Education

There are many approaches to theology and theological education. Robert Banks lists four models: classical, vocational, synthetic and confessional. These are regrouped into two, namely Athens (or classical) and Berlin (or vocational), which are, according to David Kelsey, “two contrasting and irreconcilable types or models of what education at its best ought to be.” But where do evangelicals stand?

Most evangelical theological institutions are, with much discomfort, the products of either the Athens or the Berlin model. Some include aspects of spiritual and moral formation. Others put in social transformation. But Kelsey’s hint to a third approach – Jerusalem, drawing from Tertullian’s ancient question “what has Jerusalem to do with Athens?” yet “hitherto ignored by major Christian communities” – would appeal more to evangelicals because it is biblically mandated and expressive of evangelical distinctives. In fact, such an approach must be integrative, aiming at developing the student’s intellectual, spiritual and practical life. The International Council for Evangelical Theological Education’s (ICETE)

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7 The classical approach suggests recovering theologia (seen as both paedeia, intellectual formation and as Wissenschaft, publicly attested knowledge) from “its enslavement to specialties” (Farley, Edward, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989], 44).
8 The “Vocational” approach agrees largely with Farley’s analysis, but finds his “theologia too abstract and methodological.” It suggests thus: overcoming secularized academy and professionalized church by producing “practical thinkers” and “reflective practitioners” and providing a clear vocational focus and a sense of boundaries for faculty. (See Joseph C. Hough, Jr. and John B. Cobb, Jr. in their *Christian Identity and Theological Education* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985]).
9 The “Synthetic” approach attempts to combine the previous two models, but ends in disagreement.
10 The “Confessional” model is a neo-traditional approach expanded by Georg Schner and Richard Muller. It “places ... emphasis on theological information.” (Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 143).
17 Scott Cunningham “Who is a Theological Educator?” in *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 16:2, 1997, 80.
18 ICETE was established in March 1980 under the sponsorship of the Theological Commission of the World
Manifesto on the Renewal of Theological Education, states: “Our programmes of theological education must combine spiritual and practical objectives with academic ones in one holistic integrated educational approach.” But this is an ideal as the Manifesto also deplores, “We are at fault that we so often focus educational requirements narrowly on cognitive attainments, while we hope for student growth in other dimensions but leave it largely to chance.”

Robert Ferris, examining the context of renewal in evangelical theological education and exploring the impact of the ICETE Manifesto, concurs,

Renewal of theological education is occurring … in isolation, each the result of one institution’s – sometimes one individual’s – commitment to respond more biblically and more creatively to the challenge of training men and women for ministry…. In most evangelical theological schools around the world, renewal is only a dream, a thirst (often ill-defined) as yet unsatisfied.

Educating theologically with an evangelical perspective is thus a renewal effort, which aims for the acquisition of knowledge, the formation of character, the development of ministerial skills and responsiveness to context. ACTEA’s compliance with quality norms must be seen in terms of renewal, contextual relevance and excellence in theological education.

**Brief History of ACTEA**

ACTEA was established as a response to a theological or theological education need among evangelicals in Africa. This need divides the history of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) into two main periods, with the year 1973 being the “turning point in the area of theological education and strategy for evangelicalism in Africa.”

**Before 1973**

Tite Tienou argues that before 1973 evangelicals had no theological strategy per se. This was due to their attitude of “no theology but the Bible” characterized by the inability to engage theologically at the academic level and to see the importance of theological science and erudition for sound interpretation and effective evangelistic tasks. Evangelicals were (and probably still are) often absent from the theological academic scene. They appeared to “react” to pre-set agendas rather than being pro-active.

Evangelicals were also denominationally divided. In fact, the Africa Evangelical Office (AEO) was established in Nairobi, Kenya (Fall of 1962), to overcome evangelical fragmentation and individualism,
encourage cooperation and collaboration among evangelicals and develop “an African Evangelical Fellowship of Churches.”

The need for an evangelical theological strategy came also as a reaction to and concern about the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Ecumenical Movement in Africa: The perceived influence of WCC over national African churches, fears for the possibility to establish one large African church, availability of scholarships to be trained in Western liberal schools, and the ineffectiveness of the leaders trained. Thus, following the inauguration of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in Kampala, Uganda, in April 1963, evangelicals were called to unity. As a result, a continent-wide gathering known as Africa Evangelical Conference was held from January 29 to February 6, 1966 in Limuru, Kenya. It is during this conference that AEO transitioned into AEAM.

Tienou argues that “The formation of the AEAM in February 1966 [was] for the sole purpose of fellowship and cooperation in the evangelistic task of the church … (but) no mention is made of theology or theological strategy.” While this is partly true, it is worth saying that “during the 1966 Limuru Africa Evangelical Conference … (an) association was formed before AEA had officially started … to assist Bible schools of all levels in Africa.” This organization was called the Association of Evangelical Bible Institutes and Colleges of Africa and Madagascar (AEBICAM). Its purposes were:

- to help in the matter of curriculum development, standardization of requirements for several levels of schools and/or courses … to set standards of excellence that institutions can use to measure themselves by and strive towards … to promote the best possible trained leadership for the churches of Africa … (and) the exploration of the possibility to establish advanced training on a post-graduate level.

It also had prospects for accreditation, seen not as externally established and determined standards, but as “Principles that guide towards self-evaluation and fulfillment of realistic institutional objectives… The steps towards accreditation assist a school in taking a good look at itself. Accreditation is not simply quantitative arrival but very much a concern with quality.” Its aims portrayed a theological association and an accrediting agency – a forerunner of ACTEA.

27 For more details on evangelicals’ reaction to WCC, cf. Christina M. Breman, “The Association of Evangelicals in Africa,” 6-7 and 11-12, which include her conversation with David Philpot, WCC Scholarships Secretary; and quotes from both Kenneth L. Downing, Christian Heritage, 1969, 11 and Theological News of WEF 4:4, October 1972.
28 The call was done through an African tour by Rev. Kenneth L. Downing, a missionary with Africa Inland Mission (AIM), appointed as the first General Secretary of the AEO.
29 Tite Tienou, The Theological Task, 14.
31 AEBICAM started as an initiative of representatives of over thirty Bible Institutes and Colleges during the 1966 Limuru Africa Evangelical Conference. Its constitution was drafted by an ad hoc committee and presented to the Conference on February 4, 1966, two days before AEA was founded. It was initially meant to be a ministry or service department of AEA, then later on an Affiliate of AEA. See Christina M. Breman, “The Association of Evangelicals in Africa,” 114-5.
32 See Terry C. Hurbet’s letter of November 23, 1966 to Dr Enoch Dyrness of CAMEO, Wheaton, Illinois, USA; AEBICAM Bulletin, August ’72, 1; AEBICAM Constitution, articles III.A and II.D; all cited by Christina M. Breman, “The Association of Evangelicals in Africa,” 114. Dr Terry Hurbet served as AEBICAM Chairman and Executive Secretary from November 1966 to February 1969. CAMEO stands for “Committee to Assist Missionary Education Overseas” and was a cooperative committee of the IFMA and EFMA.
AEBICAM became an AEA Associate Member at the AEA General Assembly of 1969. It also failed to function properly due to lack of funding and personnel and larger regional areas. It became mostly known, especially under Frederic Holland, as a body responsible for training pastors and lay leaders at the grassroots level through Theological Education by Extension (TEE). A day before the 1973 AEA General Assembly, AEBICAM was dissolved and recommended to become AEA Theological Commission.  

After 1973

From January 25 to 31, 1973, the AEA Christian Education Strategic Conference met and recommended to the General Assembly, held in Limuru, Kenya, February 1 to 7, 1973, the establishment of the Christian Education Commission. The AEA Second General Assembly ratified the proposals and established both the Theological Commission (TC) and the Christian Education Commission (CEC). AEA’s theological strategy was outlined in a series of consultations held first at the Baptist Assembly, Limuru, Kenya from 8 to 10January 1974 and last in Nairobi, from 21 to 26 November 1975. The outcomes of these consultations lead to the birth of ACTEA, two graduate schools and other projects. In November 1989, at the fourth General Council meeting held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, the two commissions merged to form the Theological and Christian Education Commission (TCEC).

The Birth of ACTEA

The idea of an accrediting agency within AEA was proposed in November 1975. The initial name, Evangelical Accrediting Association of Africa (EAAA), was later changed into Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA), at the 1977 AEA General Assembly in Bouaké, Cote d’Ivoire. But ACTEA was officially founded in 1976 during the AEA Executive Committee held from 15 to 19 March when the first ACTEA Council was appointed and given the mandate “to initiate and administer the programme, and Dr Paul Bowers, a senior lecturer with ECWA Theological Seminary, Igbaja, Nigeria, was asked to serve as the first coordinator.” Commenting on the establishment of ACTEA, Paul Bowers writes,

Actually the founding date for ACTEA could just as reasonably be placed in 1975 rather than in 1976. I was in a meeting of the AEA Theological Commission in Limuru, Kenya, in November 1975 that the decision was taken, under the energetic leadership of Byang Kato, to found what has become ACTEA. We use the date 1976 because, following Kato’s sudden untimely death only weeks after that 1975 Limuru meeting, it was then in

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35 TCEC’s concern was “strengthening the Biblical foundation of evangelical Christianity in Africa.” Its role was to supervise its six projects. Besides ACTEA, other TCEC projects included: Bangui Evangelical School of Theology (BEST) in Central African Republic; Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST, now known as Africa International University – AIU); TEE; Christian Learning Material Centre (CLMC) and Christian Education Field Services Project (CEFSEP).
36 The name ACTEA is officially rendered in French as: “Conseil pour l’Homologation des Etablissements Théologiques en Afrique” (COHETA). We must however note that the French term “homologation” does not render the correct meaning of “accreditation.” It is generally used for “equivalence of credentials, qualifications or certificates.” Similarly, it’s inappropriate in French to say “homologation des établissements” (literally “equivalence of institutions”). In fact, accreditation emphasizes theological education programme rather than institution. An appropriate French term would be “accréditation” and ACTEA French name would: “Conseil pour l’Accréditation de l’Enseignement Théologique en Afrique” (CAETA). I’m not sure about the meaning conveyed by ACTEA in Portuguese.
March 1976 that the AEA Executive Committee formally actioned Kato’s proposal to undertake formation of what came to be known as ACTEA. 38

In August 1977 ACTEA started the process of accreditation at post-secondary level. Scott Theological College, in Machakos, Kenya, was the first institution to receive the ACTEA accreditation in 1978.

ACTEA Structure, Leadership and Administration

Initially, TCEC had the prerogative to appoint the ACTEA Council members. In 1990 ACTEA was granted membership on the AEA Theological and Christian Education Commission. Currently the majority of ACTEA Council members are representatives of accredited institutions. They conduct business through Official Council Business Letters and convene occasionally for meetings. 39 In between Council meetings ACTEA Executive Committee 40 provides the oversight of activities. ACTEA Councils have been chaired by Dr Paul Bowers (USA), Dr Tite Tienou (Burkina Faso), Dr Titus Kivunzi (Kenya), Dr Cornelius Olowola (Nigeria), and Dr Jacob Kibor (Kenya). Currently, it is chaired by Dr Douglas Carew (from Sierra Leone and Vice Chancellor of Africa International University, Kenya). Dr Katho Bungishabako (President of Université Shalom de Bunia, DR Congo) serves as Deputy Chairman.

Administratively ACTEA has worked with a limited number of personnel. Bowers was its first Coordinator. In 1979 he was appointed as ACTEA Chairman to deal with external affairs and non-accreditation services. Dr. George Foxall, a Canadian SIM missionary, served until retirement in 1993 as Coordinating Secretary, 41 handling administration and accreditation matters. He was replaced by Dr Tite Tienou who resigned in 1994. Other full-time personnel include, Dr Scott Cunningham, a SIM-Missionary from USA, who took over in 1996 and served as Administrative Secretary for Accreditation. He was replaced in 2007 by Rev. Philippe Emedi (from DR Congo, who joined ACTEA in 2005). Emedi was assisted by Dr Stephanie Black (a SIM-Missionary from USA), Accreditation Officer who worked on a part-time basis till December 2011.

Currently the ACTEA administration is led by Rev Joe Simfukwe (former Principal of the Theological College of Central Africa, Ndola, Zambia), who has been ACTEA Director since 2004. He is assisted by Dr Rich Stuebing (Deputy Director and Treasurer) and Eva Muchimba (Administrative Assistant). ACTEA benefits also from a large network of theological educators who make available their expertise in the peer-review process.

ACTEA and Quality Assurance

ACTEA achieves Quality Assurance through the internal and external evaluation or “assessment” of the institution and its programme(s). This is gradual process, which nurtures a culture of quality, can first be seen through ACTEA’s mission and objectives.

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40 The ExCo is composed of Council officials: Chair, Director, Deputy Directors and Treasurer.
41 Position referred to later as Administrator and now as Administrative Secretary for Accreditation.
Mission and Objectives

ACTEA is commonly known for accreditation although it does more than just accreditation. Its mission states that ACTEA exists “to promote quality evangelical theological education in Africa by providing supporting services, facilitating academic recognition, fostering networking.” Our understanding of this statement is that ACTEA mandate is to come alongside (encourage) theological institutions and help through the pursuit of excellence to enhance their programmes. In short, ACTEA assures quality in a combined three-fold-effort:

Providing supporting services

From its inception to date ACTEA services have included, but are not limited to: (a) Directories of theological schools and TEE in Africa; (b) ACTEA Bulletins; (c) TEE in Africa Newsletter; (d) ACTEA Librarians Fellowship Newsletter (later on ACTEA Librarians eNews); (e) ACTEA Continental Prayer Network; (f) ACTEA Tools and Studies; (g) ACTEA TEE Occasional Papers; (h) ACTEA ISNET Newsletter and Document; (i) Conferences (intercontinental, continental and regional); (j) Library services (seminars and funding nominations); (k) Staff training seminars and workshops; (l) ACTEA eNews; (m) ACTEA Forum; and (n) Distribution of resources, etc.

Fostering networking

ACTEA is globally linked to a founding member of and one of eight continental networks of ICETE. Through networks ACTEA connects both schools and theological educators across Africa and beyond. Related institutions collaborate, share resources and best practices, and reflect together on challenges facing theological education. ACTEA also partners with organizations such as the Overseas Council International (OCI), John Stott Ministries/Langham Partnership International (JSM/LPI), Scholar Leaders International (SLI), Global Associates for Transformational Education (GATE), Serving in Mission (SIM) and Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM), etc. The benefit here is good stewardship of resources.

Facilitating academic recognition

While it is termed “academic recognition,” this objective is about “accreditation,” seeking to enhance, assess and sanction every aspect of a theological programme. Initially accreditation included standard TEE and secondary level programmes. With time, as these were phased out by many institutions, ACTEA was also unable to sustain these forms of accreditation but focused on post-secondary and higher level programmes. Today the majority of ACTEA accredited and non-accredited programmes are post-secondary, post-graduate and/or doctoral programmes. Note that ACTEA does not accredit institutions but programmes.

ACTEA Council finds the term “accrediting” as limiting. It is considering the name “Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa.” (See Constitution, approved by Council in August 2006 and to be endorsed by AEA) Other people think ACTEA would do well to focus on what it is best known for, i.e. “accreditation.”

A fourth objective, “Gathering, analysing, and publishing information about theological education in Africa,” was suggested (cf. Proposed Constitution, August 2006).

See availability on http://www.TheolEdAfrica.org/ACTEA.

Other networks include: (1) Asia Theological Association (ATA); (2) Caribbean Evangelical Theological Association (CETA); (3) European Evangelical Accrediting Association (EEAA) for Western Europe; (4) Euro-Asia Accrediting Association (E-AAA) for Eastern Europe; (5) Association for Evangelical Theological Education in Latin America (AETAL); (7) Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) for North America; and (8) South Pacific Association of Bible Colleges (SPABC).

This and other reasons account for a “debilitating gap between the academic and grassroots theologies” among evangelicals in Africa and allowed the emergence of “other gospels and theologies.”

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
ACTEA Steps Towards Accreditation

ACTEA achieves quality assurance more specifically through accreditation of educational programmes. This is done in four steps, namely: (a) Correspondent Status; (b) Affiliate Status; (c) Candidate Status; and (d) Accreditation and Associate Statuses.

**Correspondent Status**

This entry point into ACTEA membership is offered to any school that (a) is functioning; (b) agrees with the evangelical statement of faith; (c) submits an application form and (d) pay contribution fees. This is a three-year renewable status providing services below the level of accreditation and familiarization with ACTEA Standards and Procedures.

**Affiliate Status**

The Affiliate Status formally starts the accreditation process. It is a four-year non-renewable status provisionally granting full academic recognition once the four core ACTEA academic standards (admissions, teaching staff, educational programme and library) have been met; the school’s governing board states in writing its intention to pursue accreditation and receives onsite verification and orientation of ACTEA’s Administrative Secretary for Accreditation or a representative thereof. The school must show potential to achieve candidacy within four years. Application fees and annual fees are required.

**Candidacy Status**

Candidacy for accreditation is granted to successful applications in the areas of: (a) governance and admin structure; (b) finance; (c) students; (d) academic programme; (e) faculty; (f) library; and (g) self-assessment in light of ACTEA Standards. The school must also show, within four years, the potential to carry out an institutional self-evaluation, produce a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and host a Visitation Team. Candidate schools pay annual fees, visitation fees and host the Visitation Team.

**Accreditation and Associate Statuses**

ACTEA accreditation is granted by the decision of the ACTEA Council (or ACTEA Executive Committee, by default) based on the SER and three external peer reviews.48 It is granted with post-accreditation notations.49 Reports of improvement on notations are submitted over the first two or three years. In addition, schools report annually. Accreditation is renewed every 8 to 10 years with a new self-evaluation and appraisal by peers. It can be suspended or lost if standards of quality are not maintained. Accredited schools pay annual fees.

“Associate Status” is a form of ACTEA accreditation recently designed for institutions holding any other credible forms of accreditation by a government or an independent accrediting agency. Assessment covers some aspects of the programme and upholds evangelical ethos.

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47 “ACTEA Steps towards Accreditation” is found in *ACTEA Standards and Guide for Self-Evaluation* (Nairobi, Kenya: ACTEA, 2011), 5. It summarizes the four stages of the accreditation process.

48 The Review Panel approves the SER as basis for visitation. The Visitation Team reports on-ground inspections. Review Panel confirms Visitation Report and recommendations.

49 “Pre-accreditation notations” (or required compliance before accreditation is granted) are rare cases.
Standards & Guide

**ACTEA Standards and Guide to Self-Evaluation**\(^{50}\) is the ACTEA quality assurance manual; it is the basis for both the internal and external valuation of an institution’s operations and programmes.\(^{51}\) It addresses three levels of educational programmes (post-secondary, post-graduate and doctoral) offered as full-time residential, semi- and non-residential or distance education. It is subdivided into five sections: Administration, Teaching Staff, Facilities, Educational Programme and Students.

“Administration” looks at institutional stability and achievement of objectives through organization, governance, operations, finances, and regular review and adjustment. “Teaching Staff” assess faculty qualification and continual development, responsibilities and commitment, compensation and welfare, staff-student ratio and African nationality (rootedness and relevance to context). “Facilities” ensures that properties and infrastructures as well as library (holdings, administration, and funding) are compatible with the programmes offered. The “Educational programme” looks at objectives connectedness (institution, programme and courses). It ensures that admission and graduation requirements are met, the programme is integrated (holistic), balanced, relevant to context and published. It ensures that research and specialization are internationally networked, demonstrate independence, originality, contribution to and engagement with scholarship. “Students” evaluates community life and services (housing and furnishings, sanitary and health facilities, food, etc) as well as counseling, discipline, fees and scholarship procedures.

Self-Evaluation\(^{52}\)

The self-evaluation is the centre of the ACTEA accreditation process. It normally starts with familiarization with ACTEA Standards and Guide during the Correspondence Status and governs the process leading to the Affiliate and to Candidacy Statuses. Self-Evaluation is more structured during Candidacy and results in a Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

This is not a one-man business, but a combined institutional effort through a steering committee and sub-committees under the guidance of the ACTEA administration. It is a measurement of operations in light of ACTEA Standards and Guide through data collection and analysis and recommendations for improvement.

Seven key concepts define the nature of the ACTEA Self-evaluation. It is a process (not a document or a single event), critical (not defensive), evaluative (not merely reflective) a self-inquiry (not externally determined), comprehensive (not limited to the Guide) and corrective (not merely descriptive).

Outcome of ACTEA Accreditation Process and Credibility

Institutions that have undergone the ACTEA self-evaluation process gain (a) both internal and external mechanisms of evaluation; (b) publicize achievement of recognized standard of excellence; (c) secure greater credibility and attract external assistance; (d) engage in institutional renewal; (e) better understand their own mission and objectives; (f) build and work as a team; (g) generate healthy dialogue within and with constituency; (h) develop specific steps for strategic planning and growth.

As of 2011 ACTEA counts fourteen accredited institutions, three candidate institutions, six affiliate institutions and nearly fifty additional correspondent members. Many institutions have used the ACTEA

\(^{50}\) In the past these were two separate booklets (ACTEA Standards and Procedures for Accreditation and the ACTEA Guides for Institutional Self-Evaluation). The 2011 revised edition combines ACTEA Standards and Guide to Self-Evaluation (ACTEA, © 2011), divided into four parts: Introduction, Standards and Guides; Self-evaluation Process; and Self-Evaluation Report.

\(^{51}\) In the past, ACTEA Visitation Teams used also the “ACTEA Rating Form.”

\(^{52}\) For more details on the self-evaluation process, see “ACTEA Standards and Guide,” 3-4 and 49-51.
**Standards and Guide** to improve their programmes without gaining membership. ACTEA has received international recognition within and beyond the ICETE network. In 1981, the Guidelines prepared by the Task Force on Evaluation of Credentials from Overseas Theological Schools (TECOTS) for the American Association of Bible Colleges, the Consortium of Christian Liberal Arts Colleges, and the Evangelical Seminary Presidents, granted B.Th. degrees from ACTEA accredited schools direct entry into graduate programme in North America.\(^{53}\) Similar recognition has been granted by some European institutions as well. In Africa, ACTEA accreditation process helped prepare Kenyan institutions (such as Scott Theological College, Kenya Highland Bible College, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, Nairobi International School of Theology, etc) for government charter. In countries where government does not accredit theological and religious programmes (e.g. Ethiopia), ACTEA accreditation is the only option. Graduates of Ethiopian institutions accredited by ACTEA have gained admission into post-graduate and doctoral programmes in the United Kingdom, North America, Asia, and many African countries. South African universities, including University of South Africa, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Stellenbosch, Northwest University, Free State University, etc accept students from ACTEA accredited programmes.

### ACTEA Challenges and Future Prospects

Over the years ACTEA has encountered many challenges. Some of these are due to limited financial resources, lack of permanent offices, short-staffing, etc. These and other reasons did not allow ACTEA to serve adequately its constituencies. Even though theological education is in a crisis, changing environments with new modes of delivery and new access to resources, ACTEA is called to promote quality, holistic, training for the head, heart and hand, rooted in the Scripture and sensitive to the context. ACTEA must re-envision itself as alternative recognition modes abound\(^ {54}\) and play a key role in setting common guidelines on quality in theological education.\(^ {55}\) It must redefine its role with emerging Christian universities in African, etc.

### Conclusion

We have attempted in this paper to present ACTEA and its role in the process of quality assurance among evangelicals in Africa. We saw that inasmuch as the concept quality is difficult to define, we have a sense of excellence within us and are willing to pursue it. We found that in education, quality assurance is a process that must be cultured. It is achievable through self-evaluation, peer-review assessment, best (and next) practices benchmarking, surveys (of students, graduates, employers and professional bodies), and testing knowledge, skills, competences of students. Looking at theological education we found that it is not easy to define, which is even more challenging due to the ambiguity of the term “evangelical”. Nevertheless, in their diverse expression, evangelicals have common distinctives and expect theological education to be integrative of intellectual, spiritual and practical formation. It is in such quest for quality and relevance that ACTEA saw the light.

Quality Assurance in evangelical theological education in Africa grew as a desire to become contextually relevant and improve the quality of training, first at the grassroots level, then at higher educational level. This became manifest through AEBICAM, AEA Theological and Christian Education Commission, and projects, including ACTEA. ACTEA mandate is to promote quality evangelical education.

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\(^{54}\) E.g. government accreditation, university affiliation, and independent accrediting bodies.

theological education in Africa. It does this through services, networking and accreditations. The ACTEA Standards and Guide meet internationally acknowledged standards of quality. The self-evaluation process followed by peer-review assessment is at the centre of ACTEA accreditation process.

Bibliography

ACTEA Standards and Guide to Self-Evaluation (ACTEA, © 2011)


Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
Introduction

Depuis que l’idée de la création des écoles de théologie est née, un système de coordination a été envisagé pour permettre aux élèves pasteurs et aux enseignants de marcher ensemble dans la mesure du possible. Les Institutions de formation théologique ont été très tôt inscrites dans ce registre de travail en réseau. Dès sa naissance, la Conférence des Eglises de toute l’Afrique (CETA) a pris ce problème très au sérieux pour accompagner le processus.

Nous essayerons de voir comment cela a traversé les générations jusqu’à ce jour. Notre fil conducteur sera le suivant:

1. D’Ibadan 1958 à Ibadan 1966
2. La CETA, Accompagnatrice de la formation théologique
4. La CETA et ses partenaires œcuméniques: Même combat?

1. D’Ibadan 1958 à Ibadan 1966

Dans la préface du livre « Pour une théologie africaine », il est écrit ceci: « L’idée d’une consultation de théologiens africains est née à Kampala pendant la Conférence des Eglises de toute l’Afrique en 1963 ». 1

Ainsi, la création de la CETA en Avril 1963 à Kampala en Ouganda avait au nombre de ses objectifs la promotion de la théologie en Afrique par des théologiens africains. On peut bien comprendre que le colloque d’Ibadan venait comme le premier fruit de la logique panafricaniste de la CETA. Mais bien avant ce colloque d’Ibadan, les africains avaient commencé à manifester leur désir de se mettre ensemble pour penser le développement commun de leur continent.

Le Congrès de Manchester


Plusieurs de ces participants étaient guidés par un idéal de justice, de liberté, et de paix, toutes choses qui entrent dans les préoccupations des églises d’Afrique depuis la fin de la 2e guerre mondiale jusqu’à ce jour. La création des facultés de Théologie de Kinshasa et de Yaoundé avant même les universités d’Etat,

participe de cet esprit du bien-être intégral de l’homme. Le congrès de Manchester et plus tard celui des écrivains et artistes noirs en 1956 ont montré combien il était vital que les noirs se mettent ensemble pour être plus fort dans tous les domaines y compris dans celui de la vie spirituelle. C’est de là qu’est née l’idée de création de la Conférence des Eglises de toute l’Afrique (CETA) ce qui est intervenu effectivement en Avril 1963 et qui a précédé d’un mois la naissance de l’Organisation de l’Unité Africaine (OUA) en Mai 1963.

Il est cependant important de souligner que le Conseil Œcuménique des Églises existait déjà depuis 1948 et qu’une seule Église africaine était présente à sa naissance ; il s’agit de l’Église Orthodoxe d’Éthiopie. Juste après les indépendances de plusieurs pays africains au début des années 60, les églises aussi ont senti la nécessité d’aller vers leur autonomie interne vis-à-vis des missions qui les ont vues naître. Mais en attendant d’y arriver, les Églises ont fait l’option de se mettre en association pour réfléchir et travailler ensemble pour le bien-être des chrétiens et des populations du continent. Une démarche a été faite étape par étape.

La Conférence des Églises de Toute l’Afrique: sa naissance

LES PREMIERS PAS VERS KAMPALA


On note que la naissance de la CETA est le fruit d’un accouchement patient, étape par étape fondée sur la réflexion théologique à l’issue de plusieurs réunions importantes.

LA NAISSANCE OFFICIELLE DE LA CETA

Après toutes les réunions préparatoires, le grand jour est arrivé pour lancer officiellement la naissance de la Conférence des Églises de Toute l’Afrique. Le rapport de la première assemblée décrit assez bien ce qui s’est passé en ces termes: « Le jour de l’inauguration de la CETA, le 20 Avril 1963, l’immense salle de la réunion du Liberal Arts Building de Makerere College, à Kampala (Ouganda), était remplie de quelques cinq cents personnes, représentant environ cent différentes églises d’Afrique. Le thème de la rencontre était: Liberté et Unité en Christ…

3 Presence Africaine: Idem
4 La Conférence de Kampala, Rapport de la première Assemblée de la CETA, Kampala 20 au 30 Avril 1963, KITWE (Zambia), 5
5 La Conférence de Kampala, Idem
6 La Conférence de Kampala, Idem

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
L’année 1963 était bien choisie pour devenir l’année de l’unité, car elle marque le 150è anniversaire de la naissance de David Livingstone… qui de son temps avait essayé de grouper les nombreuses dénominations ».

Les travaux qui ont suivi l’inauguration officielle étaient surtout l’étude en profondeur des plans de travail pour les six groupes de discussion formés à cet effet. Les préoccupations majeures de l’Église africaine en ces jours-là tournaient autour des points suivants:
1. L’autonomie de l’Église en Afrique
2. L’Église et les Églises
3. La conscience chrétienne devant les problèmes de la famille
4. Le chrétien dans la communauté
5. Développement économique et responsabilité chrétienne
6. Vers une théologie du Nationalisme

Les résultats des travaux en groupes seront donnés le 26 Avril et des commissions mises sur pied ont été chargées de réfléchir en permanence sur les points suivants.
1. La vie de l’Église
2. Responsabilité sociale, nationale et internationale de l’Église
3. Jeunesse
4. Education
5. Documentation et Communication avec les masses

Un point d’honneur a été mis sur l’éducation avec des sous-divisions sur ce qui est appelé l’éducation officielle et l’éducation chrétienne. Cette préoccupation sur l’éducation continue jusqu’à ce jour avec des fortunes diverses.

DE KAMPALA À IBADAN 2È EDITION

La naissance officielle de la CETA à Kampala le 20 Avril 1963, a donné lieu à une série de réflexions théologiques qui préparent une autre grande rencontre qui aura lieu une seconde fois à Ibadan en 1966.

Cette rencontre d’Ibadan s’est attelée à étudier en profondeur les concepts liés à la croyance africaine et qui font dire à plusieurs que les chrétiens africains sont syncrétistes. Ainsi, le plan fait à Kampala avait pour but d’étudier des questions spécifiques qui essayent de lever des équivoques préjudiciables pour la crédibilité de l’Église en Afrique.

La deuxième édition de la rencontre d’Ibadan a abordé les thèmes comme: la notion de Dieu, Dieu les esprits et le monde des esprits ; la prêtrise ; le sacrifice, le fondement théologique de la morale ; le culte, les religions traditionnelles en Ethiopie, etc.

La rencontre avait pour centre, Le Séminaire Immanuel College d’Ibadan, une institution de formation théologique de grande renommée à l’époque. Cette rencontre a été organisée sous l’égide de la CETA avec la participation de tout le Secrétariat Général dirigé par Samuel H. Amissah et ses proches collaborateurs dont le pasteur James. S. Lawson.

Cependant, les groupes de travail mis en place à Kampala en 1963 ont continué leurs activités de réflexion tout en préparant la rencontre d’Ibadan II. L’implication personnelle de la CETA dans l’organisation de toutes les réflexions théologiques à ses débuts montre bien son orientation à appuyer le développement théologique sur le continent.

7 On voit bien à travers ce plan de travail que les préoccupations de la CETA depuis sa naissance tournent autour de la paix, la justice et la dignité de l’Afrique, de l’Église et de la famille. Cf. La Conférence de Kampa la, 12
8 La table des matières du livre pour une théologie Africaine, montre bien ces éléments qui ont été étudiés dans le but de rétablir la vérité sur les croyances des chrétiens africains à cette époque là. Cf. Pour une théologie africaine; Clé, Yaoundé; 1966, 292-293.
L’organisation de cette deuxième conférence théologique à Ibadan mit définitivement la CETA en orbite et permit de dire que d’Ibadan I en 1958 à Ibadan II en 1966, l’Eglise en Afrique a prouvé son désir de se débarrasser des oripeaux d’un passé théologique lié aux missions étrangères. Mais pour que la CETA atteigne les objectifs de ses mères et pères fondateurs, elle avait le devoir d’accompagner la formation théologique depuis sa naissance. Comment s’est-elle acquittée de cette tâche jusqu’à ce jour ?

2. La CETA, accompagnatrice de la formation théologique

La formation sous toutes ses formes a été évoquée par la CETA dans la plupart de ses grandes rencontres. Nous évoquerons ici très brièvement ce qui en a été dit au cours de certaines assemblées générales de la CETA surtout en ce qui concerne la formation théologique.

1. A Kampala en 1965, il a été réaffirmé l’impérieuse nécessité pour la CETA d’être fondée sur la Parole de Dieu. Pour se faire la formation du peuple de Dieu doit se faire en plusieurs directions. La formation pastorale dans les institutions de formation théologique et la formation continue du peuple de Dieu à travers des séminaires thématiques à l’image de ce qui a été fait depuis Ibadan 1958 jusqu’à Kampala 1963 et au-delà.

2. Abidjan 1969, la deuxième Assemblée Générale a reconnu les difficultés d’une organisation naissante qui a beaucoup de peine à décoller durant ses six premières années. C’est pourtant pendant cette période que Ibadan II a eu lieu en janvier 1966 et l’équipe du Secrétariat Général a effectué des visites de consolidations dans certaines institutions comme le relate le Secrétaire Général en ces termes: « Je me rappelle aussi la joie profonde avec laquelle mon collègue, le Secrétaire Général Associé de la CETA et moi-même avons vue à l’Ecole de Théologie de Porto-Novo ; au Dahomey. Pendant plus d’une heure une équipe réunissait des personnes de diverses églises francophones d’Afrique, à laquelle s’étaient joints des volontaires de Haïti, de France et de Suisse ».

3. Lusaka 1974 a entériné les recommandations passées.


Les séminaires sont au service des paroisses, il ne faut pas négliger celles-ci. Il faut encourager les efforts et les programmes (telle l’éducation théologique par extension) pour former les laïcs et le clergé.

L’éducation théologique doit refléter les problèmes sociaux et les besoins de l’être humain dans sa totalité ;

La formation théologique continue pour pasteurs et les laïcs devra être promue…

Nous incitons les séminaires théologiques sur le continent africain, dans leur formation académique, d’être plus préoccupés de produire des prédicateurs et des enseignants aussi bien que des érudits ».

Une recommandation spéciale a été faite à la CETA pour que son département de Théologie puisse communiquer aux églises membres les études théologiques qui s’y font afin d’encourager l’activité théologique locale.

5. Lomé 1987 l’AG a recommandé que « les Eglises en collaboration avec la CETA et autres organisations telles que CEVAA (Paris) et le Programme pour l’éducation théologique (Genève) recherchent pour l’Afrique des programmes imaginatifs, créatifs, pertinents à la formation au

9 Dans les limites de ce papier, nous ferons seulement un aperçu sur quelques AG car toutes n’ont pas répété les décisions à chaque fois.
10 Engagement, la 2e Assemblée Générale de la CETA ‘Abidjan 69’ 19
11 Rapport officiel de la 4e Assemblée de la CETA Nairobi-Kenya, Août 1981
3. Mozambique 2008, un nouveau départ pour les réseaux théologiques

Les ambitions au sortir de Maputo

La 9ème AG de la CETA à Maputo au Mozambique en Décembre 2008 a fait des options novatrices dans le cadre de la formation théologique en Afrique. C’était en effet, le retour des Instituts théologiques en marge des grands débats de l’Assemblée comme ce fut le cas quelques décennies auparavant.

Dès le début de l’année 2009, le nouveau Secrétaire Général de la CETA a engagé son équipe composée de directeurs, de secrétaires exécutifs et de consultants dans une série de réflexions devant baliser le terrain pour le travail à faire jusqu’à l’assemblée suivante normalement prévue en 2013.

En effet, la nouvelle équipe croit fermement que « la CETA, en tant que mouvement œcuménique en Afrique d’une viabilité évidente, possède un mandat de facilitateur du renouveau spirituel et de renaissance de l’espérance chez les peuples du continent. Le mouvement panafricain mène une lutte pour la dignité et la quête d’une place légitime de l’Afrique dans la communauté internationale. Aux yeux de la CETA, la vocation biblique à œuvrer pour la paix, la réconciliation et la transformation des conflits doit être comprise comme une partie intégrale de son mandat.

En tant que communauté continentale d’Eglises et de Conseils nationaux d’églises qui confessent Jésus-Christ comme Seigneur et Sauveur, la CETA, engage ses membres dans la recherche commune vers l’unité visible et en solidarité avec la libération du continent. Elles proclament l’Évangile en:

- Se mobilisant pour vivre avec fidélité le message de l’amour de Dieu,
- Entretenir une compréhension commune de la foi,
- Rendant aux défis que rencontrent la dignité humaine,
- En agissant de façon prophétique dans la manière de parler, de vivre et de servir pour la guérison.

Pour atteindre ces objectifs, quatre directions ont été formées autour du Secrétariat général pour mettre en œuvre le programme. Ainsi, en plus du Secrétariat Général le travail se fait avec les directions suivantes

- Renforcement et consolidation des capacités
- Théologie, relations œcuméniques et interreligieuses
- Paix, guérison et réconciliation
- Finance, administration et mobilisation des ressources

Deux bureaux importants situés hors du siège donnent la visibilité à l’action de la CETA, il s’agit du:

- Bureau régional de Lomé et
- Bureau de liaison avec l’Union Africaine à Addis-Abeba

…2009-2013, Sans date, 10 à 24

C’est notre raison d’être.

12 En 1987, la Cevaa qui avait son siège à Paris est aujourd’hui basé à Montpellier en France. De même le PTE de Genève est aujourd’hui ÉTÉ.
13 Lomé 1987, vous serez mes témoins, Rapport officiel de la 5ème Assemblée Générale de la CETA, 1988 110 et 111
14 Dans la brochure, Structure Programmatique de la CETA après l’Assemblée de Maputo, nous avons extrait la plupart des éléments utilisés dans ce point 1. Le travail qui se fait dans les différents départements est la traduction en actes concrets de ce qui a été pensé et écrit dans cette brochure que nous avons résumée. Cf. Structure programmatique …2009-2013, Sans date, 10 à 24

Part VI: Networks and Resources for Theological Education in Africa
Les objectifs du département de théologie s’inscrivent dans le prolongement de tout ce qui a été pensé et fait depuis la conférence théologique d’Ibadan en 1958. Avec des fortunes diverses, la CETA a réussi à atteindre certains de ces objectifs d’une assemblée à l’autre.

Depuis Maputo il a été décidé de reprendre en main les différents aspects de la formation théologique en :

- Promouvant la réflexion contextuelle à travers les églises et les Conseils nationaux d’Églises
- Renforçant les relations ecuméniques par la promotion du mouvement ecuménique en Afrique
- Encourageant le dialogue interreligieux et la coopération avec les agences locales et organisations au niveau local,
- Encourageant la formation des jeunes théologiens
- Permettant qu’une vraie vie soit donnée aux institutions de formation théologique et aux réseaux qui les supportent
- Assurant la qualité de la bibliothèque de la CETA en faisant sa publicité et lui donnant une visibilité
- Encourageant les Institutions de formation théologique à moderniser leurs bibliothèques

De façon spécifique, il s’agit de :

- Développer la littérature théologique en Afrique basée sur les défis contextuels
- Assister la revitalisation des Associations de formation théologique par un système de mécanisme d’auto-financement
- Initier des centres de réflexion théologique
- Organiser des publications théologiques accessibles aux communautés, aux leaders et aux pasteurs
- Entreprendre des réflexions théologiques sur le dialogue interreligieux
- Revisiter les manières d’adorer en aidant les populations à travailler pour leur bien-être afin de surmonter la pauvreté et la marginalisation
- Promouvoir le développement des bibliothèques par la mise en réseaux avec le reste du monde
- Prévoir des espaces pour jeunes théologiens par des engagements de courtes durées en vue de leur mise en condition dans le mouvement ecuménique à la CETA.

Le Comité de pilotage du département de Théologie s’active pour la mise en route des objectifs de la CETA dans ce domaine spécifique. Des propositions courageuses ont été faites pour joindre l’acte à la parole ; ce sont:

- La formation de l’Académie africaine de théologie et des Sciences Religieuses
- La création d’un fonds d’éducation théologique pour l’Afrique
- La rédaction du Manuel d’enseignement théologique en Afrique

Durant toute l’année 2011, les associations théologiques sous-régionales (ASTHEOL, ATIEA, ATISCA et WAATI) se sont penchées sur les meilleures façons de mettre à exécution ces recommandations. Leurs propositions ont été envoyées une fois de plus au comité de pilotage chargé d’y mettre les formes idoines avant de les acheminer au Comité Exécutif de la CETA pour décisions définitives.

L’enthousiasme des Associations théologiques à adhérer à ces propositions est tel que l’on puisse espérer une avancée notable dans la mise en œuvre des nouvelles visions de la CETA en matière de formation théologique en Afrique.

**Effets immédiats**

La revitalisation des réseaux théologiques est devenue une réalité dans toutes les sous-régions et les associations ont pris des engagements fermes d’accompagner effectivement les institutions de formation théologique de leur zone à atteindre les objectifs fixés. En effet, plusieurs institutions n’ont pas une bonne...

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15 Voir le Communiqué du Comité de Pilotage appelé ‘Advisory Committee’, qui s’est réuni à Nairobi, Kenya les 17 et 18 Novembre 2010, inédit 2
santé financière et par conséquent ne répondent pas aux critères minima pour prétendre répondre aux exigences qui leur sont imposées à savoir:

- Disposer d’un corps enseignant pouvant permettre une bonne qualité de l’enseignement
- Avoir une bibliothèque d’au moins 5000 volumes
- Jouir d’une reconnaissance officielle d’un organe de tutelle ayant ce pouvoir.

A vrai dire, la formation de l’Académie africaine vise entre autres à créer ce cadre de reconnaissance officielle et surtout à canaliser les initiatives diverses qui se créent ici et là en l’absence de toute structure de régulation digne de ce nom sur le continent.

4. La CETA et ses partenaires œcuméniques: Même combat ?

Les organisations regroupant des églises
Dans son effort de promouvoir la formation théologique en Afrique, la CETA a toujours travaillé avec des partenaires œcuméniques. Au nombre de ceux-ci, il faut mentionner quelques regroupements d’Églises tels que le Conseil Œcuménique des Églises (COE), la Cevaa, le Defap et plusieurs autres associations semblables.

Il existe dans le même ordre d’idée les agences partenaires au Développement comme EMW en Allemagne, ICCO en Hollande etc. Ces regroupements d’Églises et autres agences partenaires au développement contribuent financièrement pour que la CETA et les Églises puissent avoir les fonds nécessaires pour organiser les réunions en faveur des Institutions de formation théologique, et des renforcements de capacité des enseignants.

Les Institutions et Associations africaines de formation théologique
Il existe en Afrique, plusieurs institutions et associations travaillant dans le cadre du développement théologique. Certaines comme nos réseaux théologiques (ASTHEOL, ATISCA, ATIEA et WAATI) sont affiliés aux Églises dites réformées ; d’autres comme le CITAF, ATEA ; ACTEA sont liés aux Églises de tendances évangéliques ou pentecôtistes. Toutes ces associations ont pour ambitions de travailler au regroupement et au développement de toutes les structures travaillant dans la formation théologique. Ce qui est parfois paradoxal est que ces associations épousent les divisions des Églises et autres regroupements d’Églises qui les ont formées et qui les entretiennent avec leur argent et divers moyens. On constate parfois une concurrence fratricide tantôt ouverte, tantôt feutrée entre ces associations. C’est pourquoi plusieurs analystes des relations œcuméniques se demandent si les regroupements théologiques partenaires de la CETA croient véritablement à des relations sincères dans le domaine de la formation théologique ou si chacun estime qu’il faut gagner le combat tout seul.

A l’heure de la formation des grands ensembles ailleurs, n’est-il pas temps que l’Afrique aussi s’unisse dans un genre de vision commune de la formation théologique et pastorale ?

Pendant longtemps plusieurs Églises se sont interdites d’envoyer leurs candidats à la formation pastorale et théologique dans certaines institutions au motif que ces centres de formation peu évangéliques vont les corrompre avant leur sortie. Heureusement, la coopération est plus fructueuse de nos jours et des candidats des églises réformées vont dans des institutions évangéliques et vice-versa.

Conclusion
Ce parcours à travers le temps nous a permis de voir comment la CETA s’est attelée à promouvoir la formation des chrétiens africains depuis la fin de la deuxième guerre mondiale jusqu’à ce jour. S’appuyant solidement sur les intellectuels africains très tôt, la CETA est née sur la base des réflexions intellectuelles

Part VI: Networks and Resources for Theological Education in Africa
et théologiques qui prennent en compte la situation du continent. D’une assemblée générale à une autre, la CETA développe patiemment des objectifs qui doivent amener le continent à appeler Dieu à conduire l’Afrique vers la Paix, la Justice et la Dignité. La CETA a privilégié ses relations avec ses partenaires œcuméniques à travers le monde car elle sait que « pour aller loin, il faut oser cheminer avec les autres ». Les ambitions pour une formation théologique digne en vue de répondre aux défis de temps actuels ne manquent pas et la CETA s’attèle à les relever à l’approche du cinquantenaire de sa naissance.

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(109) LE CITAF, ENSEMBLE POUR UNE FORMATION THÉOLOGIQUE DE QUALITÉ EN AFRIQUE FRANCOPHONE

Sylvain Allaboe

Introduction
La naissance du Conseil des Instituions Théologiques de l’Afrique Francophone (CITAF) est considérée comme un momentum dans le monde africain francophone qui a été à la traîne pendant longtemps. En matière d’investissement par des missions occidentales évangéliques, on constate que l’Afrique francophone a été un parent très pauvre. La formation théologique était encore à l’état embryonnaire dans l’espace francophone vers les années 90. Les missions occidentales ont créé des écoles et instituts bibliques pour donner les rudiments de connaissances aux personnes qui recevaient leur appel pour le ministère chrétien. Ces institutions étaient très limitées, isolées parfois dans les ghettos dénominationnels et sans grande vision. Certaines furent par être fermées au gré des changements de stratégies missionnaires. La Faculté de Théologique Evangélique de Bangui (FATEB), la seule institution de niveau supérieure créée par et sous l’impulsion de l’Association des Evangéliques en Afrique (AEA) essayait de satisfaire selon ses moyens et capacités le monde évangélique francophone. Nous présentons dans cet article sur le CITAF, son historique, ses objectifs, sa configuration, ses défis et son utilité.

1. Des rencontres informelles à la naissance du CITAF
Les contacts entre des écoles et instituts bibliques ont révélés des besoins qui seront à la base des premières rencontres qui ont conduit tout doucement, mais surement à la création du CITAF.2

• Du 18 au 19 juillet 1994 à Bangui : une concertation initiée par le Dr Isaac Zokoué, Doyen de la FATEB avec des responsables d’institutions de formation biblique et théologique pour trouver de solution au décalage entre les programmes de formation de ces institutions.

• Du 11 au 13 septembre 1997 à Bangui : Une deuxième rencontre pour aborder diverses questions (programmes, contextualisation, méthodologie d’enseignement et bibliothèque). L’idée d’avoir un programme minimum commun (PMC) était née, consacrant ainsi le progrès dans les échanges.

• Du 10 au 12 septembre 1998 à Bangui : une troisième rencontre consacrée à la contextualisation et à la nomenclature des cours. Le PMC dans sa version première fut adopté.

• Du 23 au 28 août 1999 à Bouaké : une quatrième rencontre a donné lieu à un renforcement de capacité des participants à travers un séminaire sur l’andragogie, mais aussi à la rédaction des descriptifs des cours retenus au PMC. Le souci de pérenniser un tel cadre de rencontre a été exprimé et la possibilité de créer une organisation formelle a été soulevée comme une question. Le désir de sortir de l’isolement était perceptible chez tous ; mais la décision pour l’avenir a été reportée à la prochaine rencontre.


1 Abel NDJERAREOU, Lettre d’invitation à l’AG du CITAF, août 2010 à Ouagadougou
2 See also the website: http://citaf.org/index.html
Du 25 au 29 juillet 2005 à Lomé: une sixième rencontre qui était consacrée à l’évaluation du PMC et à la discussion sur l’introduction d’un sujet d’actualité dans le PMC: le VIH et SIDA. Le PMC révisé et adopté par les institutions présentes, a inclus deux modules de cours sur le VIH et SIDA (la prévention et le plaidoyer). C’est là aussi que la décision a été prise de créer un cadre formel de collaboration sous le nom de Conseil des Institutions Théologiques de l’Afrique Francophone (CITAF) dont la rédaction des textes a été confiée à un comité de suivi dirigé par le Dr NDJERAREOU Abel.

Du 13 au 19 juillet 2008 à Lomé: C’est à la septième rencontre que le CITAF a été porté sur les fonds baptismaux avec des textes adoptés et un coordonnateur général élu en la personne du Dr Abel NDJERAREOU pour un mandat de quatre ans. Cette rencontre qui avait pour thème: CITAF UNE VALEUR, UNE VISION, UNE VOLONTE: RELEVER LE DÉFI DE LA FORMATION THEOLOGIQUE DE QUALITE EN AFRIQUE, a aussi inclus une formation des directeurs académiques, un atelier sur le doctorat, un atelier sur la traduction biblique et un atelier sur le programme des femmes. Une collaboration avec l’Initiative Francophone, une plate-forme regroupant la SIL, l’ABU, les GBUAF et Wiclif, a permis de proposer les grandes lignes d’un cours sur l’importance de la traduction biblique et des langues maternelles en théologie.

En somme le CITAF est le fruit de la recherche d’une valeur poursuivie par une volonté inébranlable ayant donné lieu à une vision qui a mobilisé les attentions et les efforts.

2. Objectifs et composition du CITAF

2.1. Objectifs

Les objectifs du CITAF sont:
- Etre une plate-forme de rencontre, d’échange et de partage
- Etre un réseau des institutions de formation théologique en Afrique Francophone
- Offrir un service d’appui aux institutions de formation théologique d’Afrique Francophone dans leur effort de promotion d’une formation de qualité.

2.2. Composition

Le CITAF a vocation de regrouper toutes les institutions de formation biblique et théologique évangéliques de l’Afrique francophone. Les institutions membres sont classifiées en quatre catégories:
1. Institutions de niveau 1: formation en langues africaines
2. Institutions de niveau 2: Recrute des candidats ayant le niveau collège jusqu’en classe 3 ième
3. Institutions de niveau 3: Recrute des candidats ayant le BEPC jusqu’en classe de terminale
4. Institutions de niveau 4: Formation niveau universitaire

A la dernière assemblée générale tenue à Abidjan du 30 juillet au 3 août 2012, le nombre d’institutions qui ont participé étaient de 40 constituées par celles de l’Afrique de l’Ouest et l’Afrique centrale contre une...
trentaine en 2010 à Ouagadougou. Les institutions membres du CITAF viennent de plusieurs dénominations. Le CITAF fait ainsi son chemin et son répertoire de membres s’agrandit de plus en plus.

3. Les défis

Les institutions de formation biblique et théologique de l’Afrique francophone œuvrent dans un environnement et dans des contextes qui présentent de défis. Ces défis sont multiples et peuvent être regroupés en trois catégories que nous présentons brièvement ci-après.

Défi de l’enracinement biblique

Il est indéniable que sur le plan numérique le christianisme connaît un progrès assez spectaculaire sur le continent africain, et la région francophone fait partie de cette réalité. Mais sur le plan de l’enracinement biblique le progrès reste problématique. S’il est reconnu que l’approche des missionnaires occidentaux pour donner la Bible aux Africains n’a pas été adéquate pour permettre une appropriation véritable de la Bible, il est aussi vrai que les vagues de prédications qui déferlent sur le continent à travers tous les moyens possible ne convainquent pas toujours quant à leur enracinement biblique. Dans un tel contexte, les institutions de formation biblique et théologique, en tant que lieu de formation des leaders des églises et des organisations chrétiennes, doivent œuvrer pour promouvoir une vraie compréhension et une juste application des Écritures. C’est alors qu’elles auront véritablement rempli leur mission évangélique. C’est ce qu’a souligné le Prof Tite Tiénou dans son exposé à la troisième assemblée générale du CITAF à Abidjan du 30 juillet au 3 août 2012 quand il dit: « Nous ne pouvons pas être véritablement protestants et évangéliques sans adhésion joyeuse, pleine et entière à la parole de Dieu. »

Défi de contextualisation et de pertinence

Les institutions de formation biblique et théologique œuvrent dans un contexte qui a ses réalités et besoins propres. Des programmes et méthodes de formations qui ne tiennent pas compte de ces réalités et besoins ne peuvent pas être pertinents pour le contexte. Or à la troisième rencontre des responsables des institutions de formations bibliques et théologique en Afrique francophone, les participants ont unanimement déclaré dans le communiqué final: « Les programmes utilisés sont souvent la photocopie des cours dispensés dans les institutions des autres continents. Cela fait que le résultat ne cadre pas toujours avec les réalités socio-culturelles du milieu africain. »

C’est la reconnaissance d’un grand défi qui se dresse devant les institutions, telle une grande montagne difficile à gravir ou à déplacer. Ce défi sera encore mis en exergue par le Prof Isaac Zokoué dans sa leçon d’ouverture à la troisième assemblée générale du CITAF à Abidjan du 30 juillet au 3 août 2012, quand il exhortait les participants à sortir de la routine pour accepter le défi d’élaborer une théologie africaine, passage incontournable pour l’enracinement des églises en Afrique.

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7 Tite Tiénou, « Pour une éducation théologique enracinée en Dieu », Exposé à la 3ème AG CITAF, Abidjan, 30 juillet au 3 août 2012.
8 Communiqué final, Rencontre des responsables des établissements de formation théologique d’Afrique francophone, 10-12 septembre 1998, FATEB, Bangui, 1
9 Idem.
Défi de ressources (Financières, humaines, bibliographiques)

Le grand nombre d’institutions de formation biblique et théologique qui existent en Afrique francophone ont été créées suite aux besoins constatés et avec la volonté affichée d’apporter des solutions aux défis. Mais la réalité est qu’elles font face à une insuffisance criarde de ressources sur tous les plans. Sur le plan de ressources humaines, les institutions n’ont pas toujours les personnes qualifiées dont elles ont besoin pour accomplir leur mission. Dans les années 90 où les premières rencontres pré-CITAF ont commencé, en dehors de quelques missionnaires dans certaines institutions, le personnel formé au niveau supérieur était rare dans beaucoup d’institutions. Cela a naturellement limité certaines institutions de réaliser le niveau de formation le plus élevé qu’elles pouvaient offrir. Aussi la plupart de ceux qui enseignent la théologie dans les institutions le font sans une formation sérieuse au métier de l’enseignement, ce qui limite leur performance et leur impact dans leur travail ; et ceux qui dirigent n’ont pas reçu de formation en leadership.11 De la même façon il y a déficit en nombre et en qualité au niveau du leadership des églises aussi bien sur le plan local que sur le plan dénominationnel.

Sur le plan financier les institutions se battent pour survivre. Les candidats à la formation n’ont pas suffisamment de ressources pour payer normalement leur formation et les institutions qui, pour la plupart, ont des déficits budgétaires manquent de moyens pour combler le vide. En conséquence la dépendance vis-à-vis de l’extérieur devient un mal nécessaire dont plusieurs s’accommodent. Il y a alors le défi d’innover pour surmonter cet obstacle financier.

Sur le plan de la littérature il y a un grand défi. Plusieurs domaines manquent d’ouvrages de références à orientation évangélique. Plusieurs bibliothèques de nos institutions restent encore dominées par des ouvrages écrits en anglais. Aussi, parlant de ressources bibliographiques, les écrits d’Africains ne sont pas très nombreux. Il y a alors du chemin à faire à ce niveau.

Les défis, comme nous venons de le voir, sont grands et nombreux et demandent qu’on les affronte, comme le suggère le Prof Tienou, en développant la compétence et la créativité et en s’armant de courage dans une démarche communautaire. Etre ensemble dans le CITAF allège pour chacune des institutions le poids de ces défis dans une proportion significative. Il nous faut maintenant examiner en quoi CITAF est-il utile pour les institutions et pour le christianisme en Afrique francophone.

4. L’utilité du CITAF

En dehors du fait qu’il offre aux institutions un cadre de collaboration et de communion, CITAF est utile aux institutions membres et pour le développement de l’enseignement théologique en général dans le monde francophone en Afrique. Cette utilité se voit sur les plans suivants:
• L’assurance dans la qualité de la formation théologique à travers le programme Minimum Commun (PMC) mis à la disposition des institutions, l’organisation du Bac théologique et l’offre d’un service d’homologation des diplômes des institutions membres. L’Inspectorat général et la commission d’homologation s’occupent de ces aspects.
• L’accompagnement des institutions à travers des séminaires et autres rencontres de renforcement de la capacité du personnel des institutions (par exemple un séminaire sur les cours en ligne et sur le processus de Bologne, une formation des directeurs académiques, une formation des bibliothécaires, facilitation de la formation académique des enseignants au niveau Master et doctorat, etc.) à travers la commission d’animation scientifique du CITAF.

11 Ceci a poussé à une illustration donnée lors de la première assemblée générale de CITAF: « Les directeurs académiques sont comme des personnes qui ne savent pas nager mais qui sont jetées à l’eau et qui, au même moment qu’ils apprennent à nager, doivent utiliser leur ingéniosité pour éviter de se noyer. » (Voir Rapport de la commission de la formation des directeurs académiques, 1ère AG CITAF, Lomé, 25 au 29 juillet 2008.)
• Un programme d’échange de professeurs pour faire face au défi d’insuffisance criarde de ressources humaines qualifiées, géré au niveau de la coordination générale du CITAF
• La facilité d’accès des diplômés d’institutions de niveau inférieur à d’autres institutions de niveau supérieur pour la poursuite de leur formation
• La compilation et mise à disposition d’une bibliographie francophone pour faciliter les recherches.

Conclusion
Le CITAF est une institution au service des églises en Afrique francophone. A travers ses programmes et commissions, il accompagne les institutions de formation dans leur volonté de préparer des leaders qualifiés pour les églises, en les aidant à relever les défis de l’enracinement biblique, de la pertinence et de ressources.

THE PLACE AND ROLE OF THEOLOGICAL TRAINING IN CEVAA

Samuel Johnson

Introduction
Created in October 30, 1971, the CEVAA – Community of Churches in Mission – is the inheritor of western missionary action in francophone areas in the 19th century. In 1971, the former leaders of Paris Missionary Society (The former Society of Evangelical Missions of Paris, SMEP) and those of the former missionary fields which became autonomous churches in Africa, Madagascar and the Pacific, decided to form a community of action and sharing together. The founding fathers of CEVAA had the firm desire to support the proclamation of the Good News beyond all borders, united in one faith in Jesus Christ, Saviour and Lord. The founding churches of the CEVAA community were in fact “convinced that beyond the historical ties created between them through the activities of various missionary societies, the Lord called them to commit themselves in new relationships”.

This is how the Evangelical Community for Apostolic Action was born, later to be called CEVAA (Community of Churches in Missions). This new name expressed the concern of the member churches to underline the missionary dimension which informed their actions together. CEVAA wishes to be a missionary community which follows a missionary dynamic from everywhere to everywhere. It is the principle of mission without borders which can be seen here, after several centuries of a one-way mission, which in most cases was from the North to the South: “Thus, after grandfather’s mission, already crowned by legend, and before the mission of our fathers declines, that of the children begins as a new birth, in the name of an unchanged obedience. By the pure grace of God, it was a new beginning, a new departure together that was appearing.”

CEVAA has become an adult community, now forty years old, which in its modest ways practices sharing, action, and common witness. Above all CEVAA still continuous to be a living community, which now includes 37 member churches in Africa, Latin America, Europe, and the Pacific.

The training in the CEVAA
In the area of witnessing and Christian service for 40 years CEVAA has supported training programmes for men and women (theologians and non-theologians, pastors and lay persons), in order to answer the challenges of our society. In this way CEVAA community participates in strengthening the capacities of its member churches through the training of its leaders. CEVAA interest is to work in a way which allows the member churches to recognize that the ministry that Jesus carries out through the lives of all believers cannot fully unfold and take shape unless everyone is involved; and to be involved with efficacy, everyone needs to be trained.

In the area of training, theological training has played a privileged role in the community right from the very beginning. As a result, CEVAA promoted theological and pastoral training which prepared women and men for the ministry and the training of all of God’s people to take an active part in God’s mission locally, regionally, and globally. Theological and pastoral training in CEVAA is thus defined as a process

1 The CEVAA Charter adopted at the General Assembly of Porto-Novo (Benin) in 2002.
2 Decision of the Council of Nece (Maré, New Caledonia) in October 1999.
3 Quotation from an article in L’illustré Protestant, December 1964.
of transformation which makes the pastor a facilitator and not a shepherd in charge of feeding the flock of God.\textsuperscript{4}

In the beginning, CEVAA took over training from the SMEP, concentrating on training for church workers, i.e. pastors, school teachers, nurses or doctors mainly. However, it realized soon that the Church should not just be concerned with its own development but also with that of the whole country. In other words, the Church should influence the development of the nation. It was with this vision in mind that CEVAA Executive Council held in Strasbourg in 1975 took a position in favour of diversification of education, i.e. the expansion of the training programmes – as it was stated in a CEVAA text which was adopted and amended in Porto-Novo in 1976:

Up until now our churches have been used to offer scholarships to Christians in order to carry out a service within the institutions for which they are responsible. These institutions are in the service of the nation. We approve this manner of functioning, but we must not forget that Christian service also has another dimension; the training of lay people who are not Church employees, but who serve the Church and the nation. If our churches are to be of service to everyone, they must accept to not just use scholarships for the training of their own leaders, whoever they might be. They should also be ready to support young people who want to serve their country in other ways than through a ministry in the Church...

Through this decision, CEVAA has made a paradigm change in the area of training. Whereas before the churches only trained men and women who intended to serve in church-related ministries (parish, hospital or dispensary, grammar or secondary school...), from then onwards scholarships were also granted to citizens who would not directly be employed by the churches but whose service would benefit both the Church and the nation. By this change CEVAA wanted to make a significant contribution to the development of countries which emerged out of the process of de-colonization.

At the beginning of the 80s therefore, the churches related to CEVAA, besides benefitting from support for the training of their leaders, have greatly benefitted from scholarships to train their members in other areas. Scholarships were given for studies in law, finances, and architecture among others. In Africa at the time quite a few young people who were trained with CEVAA scholarships were later not employed by the churches, either because the churches could not hire them in principle or they could not afford to pay their salary if they would have hired them, which was a source of much criticism. Even more curiously, some churches which had recommended their training hardly ever requested their services afterwards, even as volunteers.

The CEVAA Congress of Torre Pelice (1996) has affirmed the same direction for training to be directed towards equipping all people of God (clergy and laity) to fulfil the primary vocation of mission, defined as the Church’s active presence in the world. Again it was emphasized to go beyond the training of pastors towards exercising a ministry of ecclesiastic maintenance. Training the people of God means responding to the call addressed to each member of this people to be sent as a worker in the harvest..\textsuperscript{5}

This new CEVAA vision in the area of training is what also motivated the grouping of programmes within the same Secretariat (later called a Pole), i.e. both Theological Training and general Theological Empowerment. CEVAA has thus chosen the option of supporting both the theological training of academic or professional orientation through its theological institutes and seminars, including the granting of some scholarships to lay people for training, as well as training in the wider sense through theological empowerment for all people of God.

In consequence, the follow-up group from this Congress has asked each member church to clearly define its training policy by taking into account real needs and missionary requirements related to its


\textsuperscript{5} Idem, op. cit.
specific context. This group also proposed to organize a colloquium in order to update the policies of CEVAA for theological training.

Following a colloquium for the Protestant theological seminaries of the Latin countries of Europe, which included countries from the South (from 11 to 13 September 2001), at the invitation of the CEVAA, another seminar took place in Sète, France, which was held from September 14 to 16 in 2001, for theological seminaries from countries of the South and the Latin countries of Europe.

The General Secretary of CEVAA pointed out three essential reasons for the strategic interest of CEVAA in the issue of training and theological education:

• Since its founding, CEVAA had developed training policies through its program of Training and Scholarships;
• The CEVAA Secretariat accompanies all efforts directed at defining theological perceptions and positions;
• CEVAA intends to maintain a connection and balance between Ministerial Training and general Theological Empowerment;

This meeting addressed the long-term purpose of theological training, which does not exist for its own sake but to fulfill its role to give the Word to the People of God; therefore, once again defining the proper relationship between ministerial training and theological empowerment was an issue at stake.6

We should note that, by this time, CEVAA had abandoned its ambitious project of training men and women who would also work in ministries not directly belonging to the churches. From then on the emphasis was placed on the proper balance and relationship between traditional theological training for pastors and general theological empowerment for all people of the Church. Presently any scholarship can only be granted if it corresponds to the missionary program of the Church which requests for it, as determined by the General Assemblies of Sète (2000) and Porto-Novô (2002):

The Missionary Program of the Churches is constituted by the strategy that each Church intends to develop in order to fulfill its mission. Through the concepts that it puts in place to give meaning to the actions of the Church, their ethics and their development, it affects all the activities of the Church...

The reflection on the relationship and balance between theological training and training of the wider people of God has thus a long history and is a constant in its journey of dialogue on education.7 The interest of CEVAA for theological training was once more underlined by a theological symposium which was organized in partnership with the IPT/Faculty of Montpellier from 7th to 10th September 2011 in Montpellier. This symposium brought together theologians from Africa, Europe and Pacific. They reflected on the question: How do theologies produced in Africa, Europe and the Pacific take into account the multicultural and inter-religious contexts which are ours today? This theme enabled participants to address

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7 The debate even goes further back in the history of further CEVAA. Well before the colloquium at Sète, an international colloquium was held at the Waldensian theological seminary in Rome, Italy, from September 7 to 13, 1984, on theological teaching and training in the CEVAA. The goals of the colloquium as presented by the theological Secretary at that time, Pastor Ametefe Nomenyo, were as follows: In light of a reflection on the experience of theological training:
- To seek, find, and highlight shared challenges;
- To do the same for those that are particular to each of our situations;
- To express remarks, questions, and proposals for the Churches and training institutions;
CEVAA thus nourished the hope that the Churches and training institutions would take the results of this colloquium seriously, and that they would consider the call expressed in the resulting resolutions. In this way, CEVAA reaffirmed the importance of the local parish as the genuine place of training, without in any way denying the specific role of the theological institutions in the process of training the people of God.
the issues of the relevance of theology in their different contexts and also highlighted mutual perspectives in the contexts of the others. The traditional terminology North-South was questioned by several speakers in favour of a vision of the multi-polar world, in which each culture has its own recognized specificity and is affirmed in it.8

**General Theological Empowerment as a Particular Feature of CEVAA in the Area of Theological Training**

Different documents from CEVAA have underlined that theological empowerment is not a new activity to be grafted and imposed on those that already exist, but rather an activity which serves the different aspects of the Church’s mission (edification, catechetic training, Bible study, financial activities, evangelisation, etc.)

Theological empowerment within the CEVAA was born out of the organization’s concern for helping the member churches of the community to carry out continued reflection about the meaning of the Gospel and the mission of the Church. This reflection should be carried out by the people of the Church themselves.9 This concern favours a method of research and education which is accessible to everyone (no one should feel excluded nor superior to others). Theological empowerment is participatory, because it invites all members of the Church to be involved.

Theological empowerment as understood and practised in CEVAA is mostly oriented towards missionary reflection. According to the CEVAA statutes theological reflection has to be attentive to local contexts: what does salvation through Jesus Christ mean today for men and women in a given context (cultural, political, economic, religious, or social)?10 In other words, “theological empowerment” was known and has been used before for what today is called Contextual Bible Studies (CBS); in fact, the methods of theological empowerment embody the CBS methods!

After the experience of a CEVAA team in French-speaking Switzerland in 1977 a meeting of theological trainers was called together in Cartigny, Switzerland, in 1978. It was after this meeting that the Permanent Team for Theological Activites (EPATH) was formed. EPATH would propose holding regional and international sessions of training/evaluation of theological trainers,11 which were held in all of the CEVAA regions with the goal of “helping the churches... discern as clearly as possible at the level of the Church members (and not just on the level of a few theologians or Church Presidents), the mission they have today to really prepare the coming of the kingdom of God” 12

**Training in the CEVAA Today**

Today, training programmes continue to be promoted in CEVAA community in the following three forms:

1. **Theological Training:** CEVAA continues to support theological training through the subsidies it provides to the theological training centres13 or the scholarships granted to members of its churches. It also supports theological publications through the CLCF (Agency for French Christian Literature) or the publication of research done by its scholarship holders.

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8 See the Final Communiqué of the colloquium in the Homepage of CEVAA (www.CEVAA.org).
10 Idem, op. cit.
11 Lomé 1979; Dabour 1980; Sanany-sur-mer 1981; Torre Pellice 1982; Sommières 1985; Vallécrosia 1986, etc.
13 The system of annual subsidies that the CEVAA grants certain training centres will end in 2014. However, support will continue because the CEVAA will fund projects presented by these centres.
2. **Theological Empowerment**: The network of theological trainers is in the process of being reinvigorated. It has now been widened to include youth workers and women’s workers. Seminars for theological empowerment continue to be organized. Themes such as migration and interreligious relations occupy an important place.

3. **Training of non-theological personnel**: CEVAA also continues to grant scholarships to church members who want to be trained in different areas, with the goal of strengthening the general staff capacities of the churches.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion we can say that training and theological education in CEVAA has evolved greatly over the last forty years. CEVAA churches began training the workers that the Church most deeply needed (pastors, teachers, nurses, and doctors mainly) and has gone on to provide training for all people of God. However, it must be pointed out that training for pastors continues to be (and has been) the priority (proportionally nearly 80% of the resources are given to theological training programmes).

In 1975/76 CEVAA made the revolutionary decision to also train persons who would not be employed in services of the churches. Several young people were trained, but the Church then had no control over them, because they were hired by private companies or by administrations. Their influence on the development of the churches practically was nil because the churches that had trained them did not entrust them with any responsibilities and did not have access to their expertise, not even on a voluntary basis. This change of paradigm therefore was abandoned again quickly towards the end of the 90s. In other words, CEVAA returned to its initial project of primarily training the personnel (especially pastors and theologians) that the Church needed for its service.

The Congress of Torre Pellice again marked a new change in CEVAA’s policy for training. It promoted training for all the people of God (clergy and laity). The focus was placed on training lay people who would fulfil their mission by an active presence in the world. Theological and ministerial training in the institutes and theological seminaries now is complemented or even added by programmes of theological empowerment for lay people.

The beginning of the 2000s brought a change again in that all scholarships are now granted only in relation to their relevance and compatibility with the general missionary program of a Church.

**Bibliography**

Website of CEVAA: http://www.cevaa.org/
1. Challenges of Theological Education Globally and in Africa

The following article concentrates on access to theological documents as a basis for theological education. What the hoe and the tractor are for the farmer, the book and libraries are for theologians: basic professional instruments. Each continent has its challenges and opportunities in theological education. In relation to access to theological documents in the perspective of world Christianity, they can be described, in simplified terms, as follows: European and North American theological institutions have good online access through their (university) libraries and networks of libraries, but decreasing budgets for physical books and journals. Students and scholars are often still focused on publications in their own language, Americans primarily in English, Europeans (whose multilingual capacities are better developed than in the US) primarily in German and English. In both continents, theological production from the Global South is still not much known and recognised, except in special, “exotic” disciplines such as ecumenism, missiology and contextual theologies. In Latin America, online access is quite good and a number of national or Latin American networks of academic online resources compensate more and more for the lack of books and journals in physical libraries. In most Asian countries – not only the emerging markets – internet access is good and online access is growing fast. Some scientific networks from national institutions offer a broad range of online content, but theological content is still mainly on paper and unavailable online. In Africa, the biggest challenge is fast, affordable broadband internet access. The improvements in the last few years are remarkable. The plans for new internet cables around and across the African continent and highly accelerated access through mobile phones are promising. But technological innovation needs awareness of the importance of fast internet access for all sectors of life – economic competitiveness as well as social, cultural, religious and political development – and political commitment to national and transnational cooperation. The obstacles to better internet access are mainly political.

All in all, internet access today is good on all continents, but still expensive in the Global South and less developed in Africa. In the Global North, access to university databases is normally possible via a virtual private network (VPN) connection. In the Global South, this is limited because the institutions do not allow access or because of the relatively high costs of private internet access.

The language barriers on all continents are much stronger than often recognised: In Europe, theological exchange between Francophone/South European and Central/North European countries is still weak, between Western and Eastern Europe almost non-existent. In North America, many European works are translated, but what is not translated is often unknown. In Latin America, many scholars and students still read only or mainly in Spanish and Portuguese, some of the older generation also in French, but not sufficiently in English. In many Asian countries, contemporary North American theological publications are much better known than their European equivalents. Publications in languages other than the national language (e.g. Korean, Chinese) and English are not well recognised. In Africa, the language barriers between Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone Africa are still substantial. South-South exchange and translation of theological publications is increasing, but still too low.

All these challenges imply huge potential for the future, especially for free or affordable online access to theological products.
2. Encouraging Examples

As a visiting lecturer, speaker at conferences and trainer of church leaders in many countries of the Global South, including Cameroon, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Nigeria, Indonesia, India and China, I always visit the theological libraries, librarians, and lecturers in theological institutions. In Africa, many lecturers, students and librarians complain that they have not sufficient access to new print publications. The Protestant University in Kinshasa, rated as one of the best universities in the DRC, with over 6000 students, has some international journals in science, but only four in theology, and none of them with the volumes of the last two years, as I saw during my lectures in 2010. In South Africa, where excellent theological books are produced, theological faculties have had to cut journal subscriptions drastically due to lack of funds. At the Protestant Free University of the Great Lakes in Goma in the eastern DRC, with over 5000 students, the librarian told me that for twelve months she could not add a single new book. The few books ordered have never been delivered; they disappeared at the border, according to the librarian.

But online access is one important (not the only) solution. Encouraging examples with the global online library on ethics of Globethics.net: In 2008, I asked the librarian of the Protestant University in Yaoundé/Cameroon to show me the doctoral theses in ethics accepted by the theological faculty during the previous year. Next day, after receiving permission from the Faculty, I uploaded the doctoral thesis (in French) of Pitshi Ngoy Kazadi on the role of the Methodist Church in DRC related to internally displaced people during the war of 2000-2003 to the Globethics.net library via the online submission system. It took ten minutes. In this way, four months after acceptance by the faculty, the thesis was available worldwide, including the whole of Africa. It can be downloaded for free. In 2010 I met Ngongo Kilongo Fatuma, doctoral student at the Protestant University of Congo (UPC) in Kinshasa. She published with the university press a book on violence against women in Bukavu in the DRC during the recent war in theological perspective. Ten dollars per copy was cheap, but still too much for many of the teachers and students in Bukavu. Next day, she brought me the book on a USB stick, with the confirmation that she owned the copyright. We uploaded it together and now it is available worldwide. The journal *African Journal of Business Ethics*, produced in South Africa, was available for print subscription, with a few hundred subscribers. Since 2009, it is now available online for free, and the number of paid print subscriptions is at the same time increasing! E-books are also an important future step for theological publishers. The Kenyan commercial publisher Pambazuka Press signed an agreement with Globethics.net, which buys the books for 1.5 times the price of the print copy and gets the online version as a PDF to put in its online library; 35 books on African themes are already available for free. At the same time, the print books are still selling well.

3. Global Online Library for Theology and Ecumenism

Globethics.net is a global network of people and institutions involved in ethics and religions around the globe. This foundation, created in 2005 and based in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland, with an international Board of Foundation with representatives from all continents, includes 29,000 registered participants from 211 countries and territories (as of July 2011), 150 registered organisations, and over 50 partner organisations. Globethics.net offers the leading global online library on ethics and on theology and ecumenism.

1 www.globethics.net: login, go to library, search, enter the author’s name.
2 www.globethics.net, login, go to library, submissions.
3 www.globethics.net: login, go to library, search, enter the author’s name.
4 www.globethics.net/journals.
3.1 The Globethics.net ethics library (GlobeEthicsLib)

The Globethics.net library is a global digital library specialising in applied ethics. Since Sept 2011, it is enlarged by a second library, the Library for Theology and Ecumenism which together build the Globethics.net libraries, built on the same technology and with the same concept. They include over 750’000 full text documents (articles, books) and over 250 journals. The libraries are global, because the target public is located everywhere on the globe and the content comes from all the countries in the world; digital, in that all the content is available in a digital format (there is no physical library); specialising in applied ethics, in that the content is intended to enable a researcher to study an ethical issue, a teacher to teach ethics or an ethical challenge or a professional to consider and overcome a work-related ethical issue.

The Globethics.net library tackles the challenge of the information gap that still separates the global North from parts of the global South. This is, in applied ethics, an injustice that needs to be overcome. In today’s world ethical challenges are by definition global: Climate change, society, politics, economics, information and religion cannot be dealt with seriously and justly or taught on a global scale by only one part of the world population (one part of the world, one religion, one pool of experts, etc.) Global ethical challenges need global ethical discussions and responses. Globethics.net aims to contribute to the emergence of this dialogue by connecting people (network) and offering access to content (digital library) that users normally cannot access. In the South, many people do not have access to knowledge and information from the global North, because it is too expensive; whereas in the global North, many people do not have access to knowledge and information from the global South, because it is not distributed in the channels they normally use.

The Globethics.net library means sharing of resources. It gets its content from three major sources: commercial publishers; open access actors; Globethics.net participants. Globethics.net buys journal subscriptions from commercial publishers and therefore receives the right to display the copyright protected content in its library. Registered users can access this content for free after having logged in (registration to Globethics.net is free). As specified before, this service addresses the issue of poor access to information/knowledge because of financial reasons. Globethics.net also harvests content from so called open access repositories, which are university-based or institution-based document servers providing free access to scientific or institutional documents. This content is harvested in a bulk import to the Globethics.net server and is then screened, as far as possible, for free full text ethics-related content before being displayed in the library. The last but very important source of the Globethics.net library are submissions of Globethics.net participants. Every registered user (=participant) is encouraged to submit his/her own ethics-related books and articles to the library. This can be done directly in four simple steps through an online submission process. Each submitter becomes a librarian supported by the quality control of reviewers.

The advantage of the Globethics.net library in comparison with a traditional physical library is that full-text content can be accessed from anywhere on the planet provided one has access to a computer and an internet connection. This means that people do not have to move to a physical place (often far away and expensive in transport) and do not have to be affiliated to an institution. Of course, this also implies some limits to the service: a physical library has real librarians, who can help and provide training in information systems that can be complicated to use. At Globethics.net assistance to participants is provided by email, but hopefully, communication technologies can soon allow for some distance training. Obviously, nothing can ever totally replace human contact.

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The advantage of the Globethics.net library in comparison with other digital libraries is its specialisation: the content is preselected in order to respond to the needs of the target users and the service is trying specifically to meet the needs of a global community of people working or simply interested in applied ethics. This makes the library very appropriate as a first source of information for this community. At the same time, the fact that this community is global implies some difficulties that need to be overcome. The collection that is selected for the library needs on the one hand to be representative of the diversity of religious, cultural, philosophical, linguistic, educational and professional background of our users and on the other hand to be coherent in order to ensure a proper documentary treatment and organisation of the information in the database.

The Globethics.net library aims to offer constantly improving services to the library users. It contributes to the effort of the open access community to develop better and fairer information services in order to improve education (life-long self-education as well as institutionalised education), mutual understanding, and the quality of lives and societies through value-oriented behaviour.

3.2 The online library on theology and ecumenism (GlobeTheoLib)

Lecturers, students and church leaders asked us if the ethics library could be enlarged by such subjects as biblical, ecumenical and dogmatic theology. Between April and December 2010, a joint planning group of Globethics.net and the World Council of Churches, through its programme for Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE), worked on a concept for a global online Library on Theology and Ecumenism (GlobeTheoLib). This library has the same basic characteristics as GlobeEthicsLib: It includes documents that are

- full-text
- for free (after registration and login at Globethics.net)
- downloadable, printable, storable
- multilingual (documents in all languages possible, metadata mainly in English)
- accessible from every internet access
- cross-searchable between the theological and ethics library
- with the possibility of online submissions to the library by all registered participants (with a professional quality control/review by Globethics.net)

It has a special focus on documents from the Global South and the content of both libraries (journal articles, books and encyclopaedias, unpublished documents) comes from four main sources:

- commercial publishers, where Globethics.net pays the subscription fee, as other libraries do (GlobeTheoLib is like the library of a virtual university)
- open access repositories/databases (about 1700 exist in the world; Globethics.net harvest the relevant ethics and theological content)
- institutional submissions through library agreements with partner institutions such as churches, ethics centres, international and ecumenical organisations, theological journals
- individual submissions from participants

Participants are encouraged to submit their own books and articles to the library. This can be done directly in four simple steps through an online submission process. Each submitter becomes a librarian, supported by the quality control of reviewers.

Specific characteristics, challenges and opportunities of GlobeTheoLib are:

The consortium of over twenty theological and ecumenical organisations from all continents is the consultative organ for strategic guidance and supervision of the library to make it as inclusive and as sensitive to regional and contextual participation as possible.

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7 Founding Institutions are the World Council of Churches and Globethics.net. Members of the consortium as of 1 July 2011 are All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), Anglican World Communion (AWC), Association for
The classification of the subject: How to organise the subjects of theology and ecumenism in a global and contextual perspective? The way in which a discipline is classified is highly dependent on worldview, theology, context, and library-specific and software-related requirements. Examples of the intense discussions we held: Under the heading “Intercultural and contextual theologies” the discussion was about continental differentiation: “African Theologies” or “Asian Theologies” seem to be clearer than “European Theologies”, which often claim to be global but are in fact as contextual as others. “Feminist Theologies” was enlarged to “Feminist, womanist, mujerista theologies, ecofeminism”. And how to acknowledge in “Global church history” that the early church is not only western but also includes, for example, India? A draft of the classification was sent to about twenty experts on all continents and the feedback has been integrated as much as possible in the final classification.

Harvesting of open repositories: Globethics.net, through its software partner Pointsoft in Zurich, harvests all existing open repositories (databases with a common software protocol, open to everybody by definition, mainly provided by universities around the world, with a strong focus on science): How to find the relevant theological documents out of more than 30 million documents in these 1700 repositories in order to include them in GlobeTheoLib? “Theol*”, “teol*”, meaning all words with theological, theology, théologie, teología, etc. are selected. To cover English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish is easy. But how to ensure that relevant documents in Swahili, Yoruba, Arabic, Chinese or Afrikaans are found? How to define the relevant search terms so that they are as inclusive as possible? This ongoing task is scientifically challenging but also rewarding. African scholars are invited to participate in this process by sending search terms in different languages they want to be included in the global theological library.

The definition of “scientific”: As a professor of ethics and an editor and publisher of many books and articles in and from all continents, I become more and more critical of today’s understanding of “scientific”. The rating systems of journals often discriminate against and unfairly exclude authors. Experts whose main language is not English are already at a clear disadvantage, and the conditions of knowledge production are often not considered. Theological scholars in Africa with daily power cuts of many hours, internet costs beyond their means, and teaching obligations three times higher than their colleagues in Europe or North America may have “only” twenty footnotes and quotations of latest articles, instead of sixty, and will then not be accepted in some well-known journals in the Global North. GlobeTheoLib wants to help to make visible and accessible important theological production from the Global South that is often not visible, neither in the South nor the North.

The type of content: Different contexts need different ways of teaching, training, research and communication. The Lutheran World Federation suggested that GlobeTheoLib include not only scientific documents but also, for example, sermons and other liturgical material. In many contexts, sermons are the main source for theological reflection. This is the case not only in Africa or Asia today but also in church history. The main sources for the ethics of John Calvin, the 16th-century Reformer, are his sermons! A theological library should include step by step selected documents of what is scientifically labelled “grey literature”. One addition: Audio and video files are other materials for teaching and training to be included.

Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA), Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools (COTS), Forum of Asian Theological Librarians (FORATL), Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia (FTESEA), Institut Catholique de Paris (ICP), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Red Latinoamericana de Información Teológica (RLIT), Volos Academy for Theological Studies, World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI), World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), World Methodist Council (WMC), University Institute (ISEDET) Argentina, University Library of Tübingen (Virtuelle Fachbibliothek Theologie und Religionswissenschaft – VirTheo). Pending are Conference of European Churches (CEC), Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias (CLAI), Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC).

8 See the classification of subjects in GlobeTheoLib on www.globethics.net.

Part VI: Networks and Resources for Theological Education in Africa
Participation or domination? A global online library on theology and ecumenism may be tempted “to define the world” again from a centre of power in Geneva or elsewhere. It runs the risk of continuing domination in the soft form of knowledge management. Search machines such as Google or Yahoo and social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn or Koprol are not neutral. To define the mathematical algorithms behind search machines (as in the case of Google) is an invisible exercise of global power. For GlobeTheoLib, the solution is methodological transparency and the critical participation of as many stakeholders as possible. The consortium, users, publishers, librarians, and theological scholars are all stakeholders. Participation can be enhanced by two additional instruments: Special collections and archives.

Special collections in GlobeTheoLib offer documents by institution (institutional collection) or by theme (thematic collection).9 For example, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), a publisher or a theological faculty can put all their publications in one collection and offer them both on their own website and as a special collection in GlobeTheoLib. Or the network of African Women Theologians can start a thematic collection of publications on African Women Theologies. Collections give an institution or theme additional visibility and outreach in the whole of Africa and worldwide.

Online Journals: Many Protestant universities in Africa have their own journals. Due to lack of staff, editorial capacity or money, they are often not published regularly or appear just once a year, in a few hundred copies. “Local” interests often make it difficult to form a consortium of Protestant scholars and institutions to produce more powerful theological journals, regularly published and well recognised both in the continent and internationally. Theologians in Africa, as in all continents, are often frustrated if their articles are not published in one of the “famous” journals in the North. An alternative is to start more African online journals. In the African Journals Online portal AJOL, the leading platform for peer-reviewed African-published scholarly journals10, there are already 410 journals in many disciplines (e.g. 106 on health), but only a few in theology (4 under “Religion”. Theology does even not exist in the list of categories!) Globethics.net offers a system of online production of journals, including international marketing. Two are already online (“African Journal of Business Ethics”, South Africa, and “Ramon Llull Journal of Applied Ethics”, Spain).11

Archives are important sources for research in and on Africa in church history, contextual theology, ecumenism and many other disciplines. It is a waste of time, energy, and money if each institution develops its own archiving system. Archives should be made available step by step online so that researchers can save on expensive travel and do a good part of the research from their own workplace. Such archives – even if they start with scanning and digitising only such materials as general assembly documents or key historical documents – can be easily established as a collection in GlobeTheoLib. The software and library system does not need to be reinvented. It is available for free. Thus, for example, an “AACC Archive” or archives of National Council of Churches could be accessible and fully searchable all over Africa by member churches and others interested. On the AACC website, the “AACC Archive” folder would be identical with the folder in the GlobeTheoLib collections.

3.3 Online doctoral theses series

In the Global North, doctoral theses have to be published in order to get the title of a D.Theol. In the Global South, many doctoral theses are never published, mainly for cost reasons. Important theological production is therefore not known. Theological institutions need a clear strategy of online publications of theses. E-theses need the same careful editing as printed monographs. Layout is no problem today and the characteristics of a book to be found via ISBN number and cataloguing are the same for e-books as for

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9 Existing collections can be found here: www.globethics.net/library/collections.
11 For more info contact Globethics.net, Dr. Stephen Brown brown@globethics.net.

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
print books. E-theses are relatively cheap since there are no printing costs. Print on demand for some copies is still possible.

In 2012 Globethics.net will start a series of electronic doctoral theses on ethics, with a focus on works from the Global South. The concept is to produce them at low cost and make them available online for free in GlobeEthicsLib, and also in GlobeTheoLib if they relate to theological ethics.12

4. About Money: Costs and Benefits

Leading commercial publishers from the Global North such as Springer are starting to earn more from online download of articles and books than from print products. But downloading online articles is expensive. One scientific article costs USD 20-30! This is unaffordable for many in the Global South and difficult for many in the Global North. That is why the GlobeTheoLib offers documents for free. But this system needs support from donors and library budgets, just as for physical libraries that subscribe to journals.

The authors still do not see the benefit of publication. As an author who has published scientific books and articles in many countries on all continents, I never received royalties, except for some tiny amounts. But I often had to subsidise the publisher in order to sell the books at an affordable price. I meet African authors and theologians who still hope to be able to get remuneration for publication. The expectation is justified but not realistic. We should rather look for a system of open access,13 where the works are produced at low cost and published and made accessible as widely as possible. This is the “mission” of theology and ecumenism. Authors get not direct, but indirect rewards: more publications increase their rating and position in the university teaching system, support their applications for jobs, create invitations to conferences, speaking engagements, etc.

5. Recommendations for theological institutions in Africa

1. Each theological institution (faculties, seminaries, churches, Christian schools, hospitals, diaconal, development and research centres) appoints a person (e.g. the librarian, documentalist, dean of research) responsible for submitting documents to GlobeTheoLib14 and making GlobeTheoLib known to the users of the institutions.

2. Each theological institution decides a policy of open access to its knowledge production (books, audio, video) in order to get the best outreach.

3. Each theological institution asks students and authors to mandate an electronic copy of their master thesis and other publications as a precondition for an open access policy.

4. Larger institutions such as universities including their theological faculties register their scientific production as open repository,15 which facilitates discovery in the internet. Such a repository can then be harvested automatically by GlobeTheoLib.

5. South-South exchange of theological publications is given special emphasis. The global platform of GlobeTheoLib should be used to make Southern production accessible to the North, Northern production to the South and Southern production to the South.

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12 For more information and sending manuscripts, send an email to the author: stueckelberger@globethics.net.
14 http://www.globethics.net/web/guest/submit-my-documents. For questions: Stephen Brown, Programme Executive GlobeTheoLib. brown@globethics.net.
15 More information from brown@globethics.net.
6. Special collections and archives are offered by theological institutions in Africa in online form within GlobetheoLib. Compared with isolated efforts, this common platform saves costs and increases theological cooperation and connection.

7. Journal editors review their policy and examine the possibility to go online and to seek cooperation with other theological journals with similar interests in Africa. Authors and theological institutions develop a policy to guarantee that doctoral theses are published online for free or an affordable price.
Introduction

A Publisher is an individual, firm or organization that links the Author with the Audience. The Author’s work may be a book, an article, a work of art or a piece of music. When the Author submits the Manuscript to the Publisher, the Publisher packages it in such a way as to make it readable, attractive and marketable for the target Audience. For this investment, the Publisher expects returns. For the authorship, the Author expects Royalties, depending on the success of the Work in the market. The bigger the distribution, the greater will be the income—and the more the royalties. On the other side of the equation the bigger the print-run, the more will be the amount that the publisher will have to invest in the production process. If too many copies are printed and not sold, the publisher loses the investment in ‘dead stock’. These facts have a great significance for the book industry in Africa, as we shall soon illustrate. Publishing has become a very competitive, capital-intensive, high technology industry bringing together several highly specialized professions.

An academic researcher who submits a Monograph to a Publisher for publication is interested only in seeing his or her work in print. The Publisher will accept a Manuscript only if it is deemed marketable to the target Audience. Printing is only one part in the publishing process, it is neither the first nor the last part, but it takes a huge chunk of the production budget for every title. The packaging of a Manuscript into a printed Book makes it possible to take it out to the prospective Readers. But it is not a guarantee that the Readers will buy it. Even if it is given as a free copy, there is no guarantee that it will be read. Books are published in order for them to be read. For this reason, it is in the interest of a Publisher to ensure that books bearing his imprint are not only bought, but that they are read. These introductory remarks lead me to comment about Africa as a market for the book industry.

Africa as a Market for the Book Industry

Although the African population is large [more than 1 billion people in 2012], the readership is very small. According to the 1997 UNDP Human Development Report, Tropical Africa uses 2.3 metric tons of printing and writing paper per 1000 people, in contrast with 74 metric tons in the industrialized countries. The following are some of the factors contributing to the dismal readership:

1. Foreign languages are used for schooling and administration in most African countries—English, French, Portuguese, Arabic and Spanish. Consequently, reading in foreign languages. Schooling is associated with cultural alienation rather than with cultural self-affirmation for most of those who can read and write.
2. The language of nurture is different from the language of education and governance. Consequently, reading and writing in foreign languages is for functional utility rather than aesthetic satisfaction.
3. Only a small percentage of the population is literate. According to the 1997 Human Development Report, adult literacy in the OECD countries is 100% while in tropical Africa it is 56%. The Gross enrolment ratio for all levels of schooling (age 6-23) is 39% for Tropical Africa and 100% for industrialized countries.
4. Of those who are literate, only a tiny percentage is proficient enough in foreign languages to read with full comprehension books written primarily for foreign audiences.
5. Only a tiny percentage of those who are proficient in these foreign languages have surplus savings they would be willing to set aside for books.
6. The economies of tropical Africa have deteriorated to such an extent that there is hardly any saving available for luxury expenditure, such as buying books. Thus the few who buy books do so as a matter of extreme necessity.
7. African culture is still predominantly oral rather than literary.
8. Of the very few who may wish to spend time and money on books, only very few are interested in religious literature of any specialization. The most widely read book is the Bible, mainly in the African languages, for devotional rather than academic purposes. Considering these and other factors, it requires a subtle strategy to cultivate a reliable target audience to sustain a publishing enterprise. Under these circumstances, foreign publishers with outlets in Africa have concentrated on the textbook market, exporting into this continent of Africa books that are culturally intended for schools, colleges and universities in Europe and North America. Education is a cultural enterprise. Ideally, the publishing industry ought to support that enterprise. Thus the publishing industry has contributed immensely towards the alienation of the African elite from its own culture, by providing texts that are culturally un-contextualized. I shall illustrate this point with reference to books in Christian theology and religious studies.

Available Books in Religious Studies and Christian Theology
I have travelled widely across tropical Africa. In every country I have been interested in visiting the bookshops in all the towns and cities through which I passed. I have also visited the college libraries in those countries. Theological literature is particularly worrying. It has been surprising for me to note that there are hardly any books by African scholars in the bookshops. Most of the books in stock are tracts intended for devotional reading, presupposing a North Atlantic urbanized and highly secularized culture. An African pastor, teacher, counsellor or lay leader can hardly find any texts relevant for daily use at home, in school or in church. The texts are highly subsidized, so they cost much less than they would in Europe and North America. Most of them are out of print and out of date in the countries where they were published. They seem to have been dumped into African bookshops. That is partly the reason why they are so cheap—published mainly by evangelical, Charismatic and Pentecostal groups sponsored by various foundations and charities mainly from North America. There are very few textbooks, and these are very expensive in the context of the local economies.

The libraries in colleges, seminaries and universities in tropical Africa are stocked with books written mainly for other education systems. Many of the books are donations and out of date. In some colleges the purchase of books stopped in the 1970s and 1980s. How can Africa’s elite chart the future of this continent when its education is based on policies and ideas intended for other cultures? How can Africa’s youth develop new insights to solve problems in the context of its own culture, while it is exposed only to literature coming from other cultures? The time has come for Africa’s elite to contribute towards shaping the future of this continent through publication of the knowledge and experience accumulated at home and abroad.

Publishing in Africa
It is interesting and worrying to note that most of the leading publishers in tropical Africa are subsidiaries of transnational corporations based in Europe and North America. Thus the corporate policies and
objectives of these subsidiaries originate in the metropolis, and the staff-employees are obliged to meet those objectives irrespective of what they themselves might think or feel. The regional managers of these subsidiaries are under pressure to make profits for repatriation. Under such pressure, there is hardly any motivation to develop new authors and new segments of readership. Most of the foreign subsidiaries have competed for the textbook market, very often canvassing with the relevant ministries in order to have their texts listed as required texts. Local publishers have found it difficult to compete under these circumstances. Only a few have survived. Most of them become insolvent within a few years after registration. Having failed to cultivate a sustainable audience of their own or compete in the textbook market, their proprietors often stop publishing books and focus on stationery, and eventually close down. A few church-sponsored publishing enterprises have survived through reprints of liturgical books, hymn books, lectionaries, and prayer guides. However, deterioration of African economies in the last quarter of the twentieth century has led to a heavy decline in sales, leading many such enterprises to become insolvent. Donations from abroad cannot sustain such loss-making projects for too long.

A Personal Story

Turning to Acton Publishers, I would like to tell you briefly how we have grown. I happen to be one of the very few African scholars educated and trained entirely within the continent of Africa (Most African academics tend to do their second or third degrees abroad). I spent one academic year at Selly Oak, Birmingham, in the late 1960s, but that was all. That was prior to my undergraduate training! All my academic books (thirty) have been published in Kenya except one, published in Geneva in 1987. I have dealt with most publishers in Kenya, including Oxford University Press, Heinemann, Longman, Nairobi University Press, East African Literature Bureau, Kenya Literature Bureau, Longhorn, Initiatives, Uzima Press and East African Educational Publishers. This long and wide exposure acquainted me with the intricacies of the publishing industry, particularly the constraints which scholars face when they wish to have their works published.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, most prescribed and recommended textbooks in theology and religious studies (as in other disciplines) in African tertiary institutions (including colleges, universities and seminaries) are still published abroad. This is not because there are no African scholars to write such books. Nor is it because of the absence of local publishers. It has to do with an old legacy, which has yet to be broken. I have committed myself to help younger African scholars to improve their research skills and to publish their works within the continent, for use in the courses they themselves teach, at affordable prices in the context of very weak economies. This is the background within which Acton Publishers was registered in 1992.

Acton Publishers

Acton Publishers was registered in Kenya for academic and specialized works. It was launched in response to the fact that reputable subsidiaries of transnational publishing firms were unwilling to publish academic texts unless they were prescribed textbooks with guaranteed sales of several thousand copies per year. Even when such sales could be assured, the production period was too long for the needs of the academic guild of theologians I was coordinating. By utilizing new technologies, it became possible to reduce production time and cost considerably. Our books are retailed in East Africa at Kenya Shillings 500.00 on average, which would be only Four Pounds Sterling (about seven US Dollars) at current exchange rates. Lamentably, the African currencies continue to depreciate arbitrarily against OECD currencies. The books

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1 http://www.acton.co.ke.
retailing at this price in Kenya would cost about Twenty Pounds Sterling in the UK. Thus the difference is five-fold. Compared with other North Atlantic countries, the difference ranges from three-fold to five-fold more than the local retail price in Kenya. Yet our prices are still considered high by our readers.

The distribution network of Acton Publishers extends to all English speaking countries, and we have the capacity to have some books translated into French for distribution to francophone countries. Marketing in a continent as vast as Africa is extremely expensive. We have tried to keep such costs as low as possible in view of the low returns. Since 1994 we have learned a great deal about the book market in Africa, particularly with regard to books in religious studies and Christian theology.

**Collaboration with North Atlantic Publishers**

It is in the context of this background that I have negotiated with some North Atlantic publishers for a small, nominal One-Time Royalty Fee for each title released to Acton Publishers for an Africa Edition. The first such titles are already off the Press:

- Kwesi Dickson, *Uncompleted Mission*.
- Mercy Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing*.
- Gerrie ter Haar, *Strangers and Sojourners and Halfway to Paradise*.
- Christoph Stückelbeger and Jesse N.K. Mugambi, eds., *Responsible Leadership: Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives*.

Acton Publishers are willing to discuss with North Atlantic publishers and foundations that are ready to sponsor us produce contextualized books by African scholars for African readers at an affordable cost.

**A Challenge to Africanist Scholars**

The ethics of Africanist scholarship is of great concern to me. Most Africanist scholars from Europe and North America come to Africa, collect knowledge from Africans, copyright it and publish it in their respective countries. They become experts at the expense of the people who give them the knowledge that they eventually claim as their own. That knowledge never comes back to the people who supplied it, and it never benefits the real owners of the knowledge or their posterity. What is the difference between this kind of exploitation and the exploitation of Africa’s natural resources? In my view, knowledge collected from Africa should be published in Africa. In this era of ‘globalization’ and electronic communication there should be hardly any difficulty in implementing such a policy. Acton Publishers would be willing to discuss with those Africanist scholars and publishers that have taken this challenge seriously.

**Conclusion**

In this essay I have raised several issues only peripherally. Each of them will need further elaboration and reflection. It is my hope that each African and Africanist scholar, and each publisher interested in Africa’s book market, will take the trouble to deal with the challenges I have posed.

**Postscript**

Nearly twelve years have elapsed since I wrote the foregoing paragraphs and presented them at the Conference of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) in Durban, South Africa,
in August 2000. The situation has deteriorated rather than improved since then. African scholars find it increasingly difficult to publish their academic works, and African publishers find it increasingly difficult to accept academic manuscripts, avoiding the risk of investing without returns. Some African scholars have in desperation taken the shortcut of e-publishing, foregoing the copyright control of their works, and making it almost impossible for their works to be read in Africa. For example, one such scholar published his Doctoral Thesis on the works of an African Scholar via an e-publishing firm in Germany. The book is available on order, at the cost of US$106.00. This is more than ten times what it would cost to publish that book in Kenya. The abridged version of the doctoral Thesis of another African scholar was published in the Netherlands, at the cost of US$77.00. The consequence is that African readers are deprived of relevant knowledge through exorbitant pricing, while African scholars surrender control of their knowledge to foreign corporations. Online publishers and libraries cannot be a substitute for conventional publishing in Tropical Africa. It is important to add that the continent of Africa is geographically vast, and the cost of travel is immense. At the same time, readership is segmented according to the languages in each commonwealth – English, French, Portuguese, Arabic and Spanish. Effective publishing, distribution, marketing, readership and librarianship will have to take these variables into serious account. There are regional networks within the continent of Africa, which can be promoted and encouraged for the development of sustainable academic publishing industries, one region at a time. It is much cost-effective to work regionally than continentally, in view of the vast distances and huge travel costs across Africa, North-South and East-West. Acton Publishers has acquired long and useful experience over two decades, which can be instructive in the quest for a sustainable academic publishing industry in the various parts of Africa. I conclude this Postscript with a challenge to African scholars. It is essential for African scholars to do the following:

1. Convert Dissertations and Theses into publishable manuscripts.
2. Convert their lecture notes into publishable manuscripts.
3. Convert their sermons and speeches into publishable manuscripts.
4. Convert Conference and Seminar papers into publishable manuscripts.
5. Convert Research Reports into publishable manuscripts.
6. Convert personal experiences and memoirs into publishable manuscripts.

The responsibility for these conversions is squarely on the authors, not on publishers. The Publisher can polish a manuscript, but a publisher cannot re-write a manuscript for an author, unless, of course, the author surrenders copyright. With word-processing technology and Internet connectivity this task is much easier now than it was before the advent of laptops and the Internet. We owe it to our future generations to bequeath to them the knowledge and experience we have acquired. If we fail in this task, history will judge us very harshly. To our friends and sponsors I strongly suggest a strategy of supporting publishers with proven expertise to publish carefully selected academic and professional texts that can effectively be marketed within Africa, regionally, and possibly abroad. Acton Publishers has proved that this can effectively and efficiently be done.

Part VI: Networks and Resources for Theological Education in Africa
In my role with Overseas Council International I have had the privilege over the last two decades to visit most of the many theological institutions throughout Africa – from grassroots level bible schools to theological faculties of university graduate programs. Without exception, the leadership of every theological institution mentioned – or, more accurately, lamented – that they had difficulty obtaining sufficient funds to meet their general budget requirements and, as a result, had few if any funds for special projects, not even for campus development. One of their key phrases is always “If we only had the funds, we could” do this or that, and then they list projects such as library improvement, building renovation, faculty subsidies or sabbaticals, to mention only a few from a long list.

When I have conducted seminars or workshops on fundraising, biblical stewardship, or resource development, those who attend have been primarily the leaders of para-church organizations, NGOs, and denominational and church leaders, but never the leadership of theological seminaries and never faculty members of departments of theology. This holds true from Ghana and Nigeria in West Africa to Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda in East Africa to Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe in Southern Africa. It seems that as theologians we are good at complaining and lamenting but reluctant to seek a practical solution to a problem.

Some institutions in Africa expect funding from the West and the North, simply believing that these “rich” countries have an obligation to send funds to Africa. Several of the larger theological institutions have even established fundraising operations in the West, with full-time or part-time staff seeking funds from Western foundations, churches, and organizations, often discovering that such an undertaking is rather difficult and costly.

However, there are many ways to substantially increase financial giving for theological education within Africa. Let me suggest seven steps to deal with the problem we call “lack of funds” or “insufficient funds”:

1. Everyone’s Responsibility – A Family Issue

Every individual, board, leader, faculty, staff, and student on the campus must be an integral part of the fundraising solution. The budget can be seen as a “statement of faith” that in summary form is to be shared with everyone. It is not an item to be dealt with exclusively by board members and the leadership.

I once found a seminary that mentioned their monthly income and expenditures in their regular monthly newsletter and even posted the figures on their bulletin board. Fundraising must become a priority item for prayer for everyone, including students. Every student must be made aware of the difficulties of receiving support to meet the needs of the institution. A quarterly day of fasting and prayer, led by the faculty and a required activity for every student, with a focus on the “daily heavenly manna,” would be a good beginning. Biblical stewardship must be a required course for every student. Sharing, giving, possessions, ownership, and accountability, including very practical implications, are subjects necessary for future leaders and pastors and must be taught in the seminary or bible school.

It is quite amazing that among the hundreds of theological seminaries in Africa I found only three that list a specific course on fundraising in their curriculum, and then only as an elective course. Usually the subject is dealt with superficially in connection with exegesis on Psalms, the parables of Jesus, or Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians. Biblical stewardship, with all its various facets, must become a basic subject for every student.
2. The Impulse Must Come from Within

We should encourage some of our graduate students to focus their Masters or Ph.D. research and thesis on the topic of biblical stewardship so that the subject can be taught in every seminary and bible school. We need published dissertations on “Sharing and Giving, Money and Power.” Jesus spoke more on this topic than on any other throughout his entire ministry. Every school should have a department of Biblical Stewardship with a full-time professor of biblical stewardship as its head, just as it has departments for church history, counseling, mission, ethics, etc.

One seminary held a “think tank” for all its students and faculty with the explicit task of obtaining more good theological books and journals for their library. The students came up with an idea that sounded fantastic, but was declared impossible. However, the students put it into practice anyway and received funds from hundreds of individuals and churches with the result that the school was able to purchase more than 1,400 new books and journals for its library. Each book had the name of the donor handwritten by a student on the inside cover. The slogan of the campaign was “Cut out one Sunday meal for a book which will be used by many students.” The students sold the idea as “Kingdom Building.” This was a simple, “impossible,” and seemingly ridiculous idea, but it worked! The whole campus spoke about it, and half of the senior class wrote their Master’s dissertations on various aspects of biblical stewardship. There are hundreds of other examples and ideas which would challenge students, staff, and faculty. At a faculty meeting at another seminary a president declared, “If someone is not willing to participate in helping with the needed funds, they should resign and transfer to a government funded institution.”

3. Alumni as Ambassadors

At graduation in most theological institutions everyone receives, along with their diploma and degree, a reminder that he or she is now automatically an alumnus. Some schools follow up with these graduates; the majority, however, do not. I know of one seminary that appointed every graduate as an official ambassador, giving each a special certificate to be framed and displayed in their home office. These alumni are contacted at least quarterly, they receive materials for distribution, and they are involved in interviewing applicants for future studies at the institution. They speak on behalf of the school, and they are part of an annual ambassadors’ gathering. This seminary has a full time alumni / ambassador director who works with all these colleagues on a regular basis.

In some schools it is the practice on the students’ first day on campus they are taught that this is now their campus. They are informed what the seminary, the faculty, and the leadership will do for them – academic training, character formation, spiritual development, prayer support, etc. – much more that what is covered by their tuition. At the same time, before classes even officially begin, the students are challenged to discuss what they are willing to do for the school. At one school I was told that everyone meets once a month to pray specifically for donors, churches, foundations, etc. Every student should learn what it means for a simple worker to donate $25, for a widow to contribute $10, for a Sunday school to send in $50 – all helping to meet the needs of theological education for every student. Students and faculty should learn what it means when people give sacrificial gifts towards their theological education. Every student should make a commitment, when they have the opportunity later in life as pastor or Christian leader, to repay what they received during their time as students. The idea of being appointed as an official ambassador will help this process.

4. Every Church Has an Obligation

The majority of the students in a seminary are planning to serve a church as pastors, or to become missionaries or leaders of a para-church organization. Strictly speaking, no church or para-church...
organization should be allowed to have a seminary or bible school graduate if they are not willing to help with the cost of training that student.

A theological institution in Ethiopia made a board decision that no student would be allowed to enter their training program if he or she did not have a letter from their home church or Christian organization indicating their willingness to help with that student’s expenses. Another seminary will not give a scholarship to a student unless he or she can provide, beyond any doubt, proof that they, their family, their relatives, or their church have absolutely no means to contribute towards their financial support. Some theological institutions have a program that every student throughout his or her entire study time will visit various churches, give their testimony, and participate in the church’s activities, with the understanding that these churches will provide a full or part time scholarship. One seminary invited the members of the mission committee of a church and/or its elders or pastors to visit the seminary as guests on a Monday. Representatives of more than forty-five churches visited that seminary in one year, with the result that these churches (about 150 in total over five years) agreed to give five percent of their annual Sunday offerings for the training of their future leaders. Some denominational seminaries declared one Sunday every year “Seminary Sunday”; on that Sunday all the offerings of all the churches of that denomination were given to the seminary. The statement “As the seminary goes, so goes the church” should be extended to “As the church goes, so goes the seminary.”

Some of the large Christian organizations that often have sufficient funds are taking the best and brightest graduates from the seminary for their leadership positions. They should be challenged to provide a full scholarship for a faculty member and/or to fund a special, needed project. Churches and denominations should not only play a vital role in the theological direction taken by the seminary or bible school but must also accept responsibility for financially undergirding their theological training institutions.

5. Faithful Outreach to Everyone

A theological institution should establish a database of everyone with whom they come in contact. Students and former students, their relatives, pastors, churches and mission committee members, visitors, merchants, suppliers, etc. – all should be listed, with their full name, title, postal and email addresses, and phone number. An average school will have far more than a thousand new names to be added to their database every year. In some cases, it may be difficult or impossible to contact individuals by mail, telephone, or email; nevertheless, a way can almost always be found to remain in contact with people who know us, have visited us, and have seen what we are doing. We must find ways to make our needs known. If we don’t ask – if we don’t explain our needs – no one will help. One seminary in rural Africa made a beautiful poster about the seminary (colorful, with photographs and not too much text) to be distributed for the wall or front door of every church in their territory. A simple bookmark with a prayer printed in the local language and given to every church member made a big difference. We have to take the initiative. We have to be creative.

Someone must keep this record of all of our friends. The database must be faithfully maintained, regularly updated, and corrected as necessary. No mistakes in spelling, title, addresses, etc., should be allowed. Every gift, however small, must be acknowledged immediately with a thank you note. Gifts in kind must be treated as real gifts, and must receive a thank you in an appropriate form. Most theological schools have developed a newsletter. I have collected hundreds of these newsletters over the years. Most are very poorly done, without any clear objectives. Most do not have lists of special prayer requests or references to specific projects or scholarships, or directions for sending donations (name, amount, and how funds could be sent). Some students could form a newsletter committee and help with gathering the information, or a journalist or marketing expert could be engaged as a volunteer to help produce something

Handbook of Theological Education in Africa
“worthwhile.” Recipients of newsletters should eagerly await the next issue. On occasions when I have written to institutions who have sent me samples of their materials, my recommendations and suggested changes for improvement have usually been ignored and very little was changed. It seems that our professionalism focuses only on the area of theology. In all other areas we are content to be “amateurs.”

6. Borrowing a Structure from the Business World

Decades ago, most secular institutions (museums, hospitals, sports facilities, youth clubs, etc.) set up a specific department for “Communications, Public Relations, and Fundraising.” They followed the structure of the business world, with three divisions: the production division, the administration and finances division, and the marketing and sales division. Each division is run by a professionally trained person. A theological institution should follow the same pattern. The three divisions should be:

The academic division: All classes, as well as spiritual formation, field work, the library and research departments, etc. – everything done to produce a “Christian leader” – should be in this division. The academic dean is the head of this division, leading the faculty and all the staff related to this task.

The administration and finance division: This division deals with everything that goes on on the campus from personnel, buildings, property, and maintenance, to legal issues, insurance, and taxes. It includes care of all vehicles, visitors, logistics, food, etc. The director of this division is in charge of all the staff related to the division. His position should be on an equal level to that of the academic dean.

The communication, public relations, and fundraising division: These are the functions usually neglected in most of our seminaries and bible schools. We usually believe that these tasks should be covered by the president. This is one of the main reasons why an institution lacks sufficient funds. This division should have professional staff equal to the faculty team. They should deal with church relations, alumni/ambassador relations, business relations, media relations, all publications of the institution, and national and international foundations. This is the only division that brings in finances. The other two only spend. The director of this division should be on the same level as the academic dean and the director of administration and finance. All three should have equal status and salary.

The president should be part of all three divisions equally. The president and the three division leaders should form the leadership team of the institution, making all the decisions together. Several theological institutions have begun to implement such a structure, with great success. Their only complaint is “Why did we not begin such a system earlier?”

7. A Theological and Ministry Issue

Dealing with the finances of a theological institution is indeed a theological issue and is part of ministry. The secrecy with which we often deal with money is not helpful; often giving the impression that dealing with finances is “dirty business.” The often quoted passage “Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (Matthew 6:3) seems to ignore the other passage that states “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21).

The two extremes, “the Prosperity Gospel” and the idea that “being poor is spiritual,” are both negative reactions to the question of finances. Neither is found in Scripture; both must be avoided. Instead, we should take a closer look at how Moses, David, Jesus, and Paul dealt with this issue. Not only in the West, but also in the majority world, numerous studies on this subject have become available in the last few years. A special lecture series on this topic could be an excellent exercise for every theological institution. A required course on the theology of giving, sharing, ownership, and possession would be extremely helpful. Acknowledging, teaching and preaching that “all that we have and all that we are is not ours” will help us to deal with this issue theologically.
One institution dedicated an entire week, “Deeper Spiritual Life Week,” to the topic “How do we deal theologically with sharing and giving?” This week was a great success, and the entire institution changed dramatically. From just lamenting that there were insufficient funds, the entire campus family came up with some positive solutions, resulting in a time of celebration.