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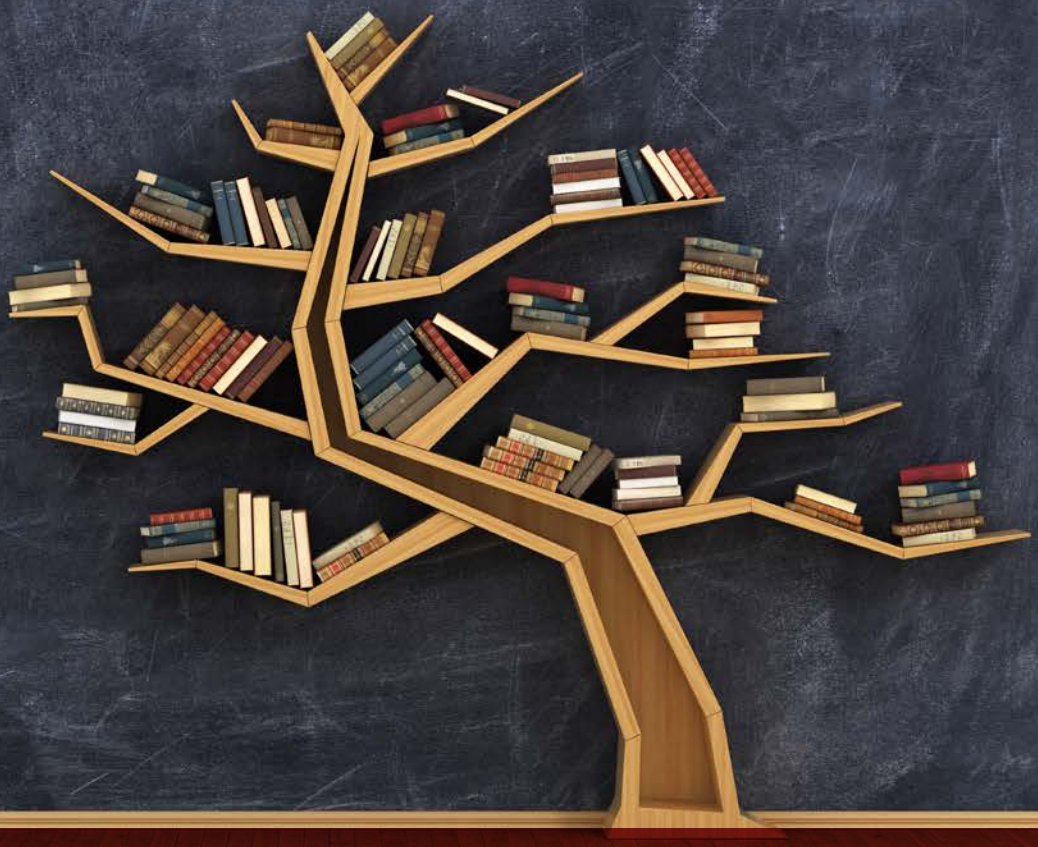
Reformed Theology in Africa

Volume 7

A critical engagement with theological education in Africa

A South African perspective



Edited by

Johannes J. Knoetze & Alfred R. Brunsdon

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The publisher (AOSIS) endorses the South African 'National Scholarly Book Publishers Forum Best Practice for Peer Review of Scholarly Books'. The manuscript was subjected to a rigorous two-step peer review prior to publication, with the identities of the reviewers not revealed to the author(s). The reviewers were independent of the publisher and/or authors in question. The reviewers commented positively on the scholarly merits of the manuscript and recommended that the manuscript be published. Where the reviewers recommended revision and/or improvements to the manuscript, the authors responded adequately to such recommendations.

Research Justification

In this book, a critical engagement with theological education in Africa is offered. As the book originates from South Africa, it is presented from a South African perspective although contributors are situated accross the African continent and abroad. The common denominator is, however, that all contributers are, in some way or another, invested in theological education in Africa.

The main contribution of this collaborative work is to be sought in the insights it offers on four main areas of theological education: a historical and current orientation on theological edcuation in Africa, some paradigm shifts in theological education in Africa, ministerial formation needs versus theological education challenges and a critical reflection on elective models and methods.

This book presents an original and innovative research of scholars involved in theological higher education, as it is grounded in the respective fields of interest of each contributor. It contributes to a better understanding of the complex African theological higher education landscape, a complex landscape that is experiencing even greater challenges since the dawn of COVID-19, which is noted in the research findings.

Methodologically, the work draws on a combination of methods, including literature studies, empirical work and, in some cases, sectional offerings from doctoral studies, as indicated in the various chapters.

The centre target consists of scholars in the field of higher theological education in Africa. No part of the book was plagiarised from another publication or published elsewhere before.

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Section D: Critical reflection on elective models and methods: A South African perspective

Abbreviations, Figures and Tables Appearing in the Text and Notes

List of Abbreviations

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
ABTEN	Africa Baptist Theological Education Network
ACTEA	Association of Christian Theological Education in Africa
ACTEZ	Association of Colleges with Theological Education in Zimbabwe
AEA	Association of Evangelicals in Africa
AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
AFMSA	Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa
AFMSATI	Apostolic Faith Mission South African Theological Institute
AFMTC	Apostolic Faith Mission Theological College
AIC	Africa Inland Church
AMFCC	Africa Multination for Christ College
ASET	Africa Society for Evangelical Theology
ATS	African Theological Seminary
BC	Belgic Confession
BEPC	Brevet d'Étude du Premier Cycle
BIE	Bureau International d'Education
CBC	Covenant Bible College
CCM	Church and Community Mobilisation
CCMP	Church and Community Mobilisation Process
CCT	Church and community transformation
CEDEP	Centre d'Étude et de Défense de l'École Publique
CHE	Council of Higher Education
CITAF	Conseil des Institutions Théologiques d'Afrique Francophone
CMP	Common Minimum Programme
CTBS	Cape Town Baptist Seminary
CUE	Commission for University Education
DD	Doctoral Divinitatis
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
DRCSA	Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa
DTC	Domboshawa Theological College

EBCS	Ebenezer Bible College and Seminary
ECCA	Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola
FATEB	Faculté de Théologie Evangélique de Bangui
GATE	Global Associates for Transformational Education
GTI	Global Theological Initiative
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HTC	Harare Theological College
ICETE	International Council for Evangelical Theological Education
ICHE	Institute for Christian Higher Education
IM	Integral Mission
IMB	International Mission Board
IPAL	ICETE Programme for Academic Leadership
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer and Other
LO	Learning Outcomes
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LWTS	Living Waters Theological Seminary
MBE	Mind, Brain and Education
MEATE	Middle East Association for Theological Education
MMDZ	More Than a Mile-Deep Zimbabwe
MPhenoBL	Missional Phenomenon-based Learning Model
NDRCA	Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa
NETACT	Network for African Congregational Theology
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NRF	National Research Foundation
NWU	North-West University
OAIC	Organisation of African Instituted Churches
OCI	Overseas Council's Institute for Excellence
ODEL	Open, Distance and Electronic Learning
PACC	Pan Africa Christian College
PhenoBL	Phenomenon-based Learning
PHETI	Private Higher Education Theological Institutions
PMC	Programme Minimum Commun
PU for CHE	Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education
RCSA	Reformed Church of South Africa
SAMS	South African Mission Society
SATS	South African Theological Seminary
SER	Self-evaluation Report

STBI	Soul Travailing Bible Institute
STC	Sarepta Theological College
TCZ	Theological College of Zimbabwe
TEE	Theological Education by Extension
UACA	University of the Christian Alliance of Abidjan
UNISA	University of South Africa
UTCZ	United Theological College of Zimbabwe
VSI	Vital Sustainability Initiative
WCC	World Council of Churches
WHO	World Health Organization
ZAOGA	Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa
ZAR	Zuid-Afrikaansche Republic

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Preface

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It is our observation that we are currently privileged to experience a growing interest in higher education (HE) matters in Africa. Not least of the reasons for this was the growing unrest that stirred emotions in South Africa since 2015 in the HE system. Apart from the negative consequences it had in terms of violent protests, it stimulated research and thinking about the sector.

For almost a decade, the editors of this compilation have been closely involved with a specific area of HE, namely theology, as we taught together on the Mahikeng campus of the North-West University, in a multicultural, but mainly African environment. In the field of theology, we soon experienced that there are many challenges that will require consideration, as well as many strong points to build forth on. After a number of individual publications and one collaborative publication on various aspects of theological education in the African context, we decided to embark on a collaborative project with as many voices as possible from colleagues across the continent. We were enthused by the positive response and willingness of educators to share their experiences and theories. Also, we are excited to receive contributions from partners for theological education in Africa, which have become a very important link in the African environment.

As with all collaborative projects, a number of perspectives are offered in this work. These are the individual opinions of the authors and should be regarded as such. As editors, we offer them here as we believe that the variety of viewpoints may resonate positively with a varied reader audience.

Furthermore, we trust that our collaborative effort will resonate well, first and foremost, not only with other theological educators in Africa but also with a wider audience in areas where theological education is challenged by some of the issues raised here. Above all, we hope that the book will stimulate thinking on this important matter, as we contend that

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theological education ultimately belongs to God and is aimed at a real context, in which the body of Christ needs to find expression in a changing era. In more ways than one, the church is depending on HE to nurture spiritual leaders that are well equipped and spiritually formed to minister to the contemporary church in Africa.

Section A

Historical and current perspectives in plotting the way forward

Chapter 1

A social history of mission and the influences on theological education in Africa

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Abstract

Cognisant of the fact that every historical overview has gaps, the author chooses not to follow traditional historic writing. Since history is not only about facts but also about the interpretation and presentation of those facts within a specific context, in this case the Africa continent, he is aware of the 'surplus of interpretations'. As such, the intention of this chapter is, firstly, to provide a social-historical context of theological education in Africa; secondly, to learn from the past – the failures and essentials of theological education in

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and for Africa and thirdly, to provide some orientational guidelines for reading the book and evaluating the different viewpoints.

Introduction

In any study that focuses on a topic like theological education in Africa, it is important to start with a historical reflection to know where we come from. Cognisant of the fact that every historical overview has gaps, I choose not to follow traditional historic writing. History is not only about facts but also about the interpretation and presentation of those facts within a specific context. Without going into any detail here, it is clearly argued by Brown (2007) that any historical interpretation has some form of intention. Dealing with historical events or historical texts, there is a 'surplus of interpretations'. Therefore (Brown 2007):

> The author's relevant intention or intended meaning is regarded as the original, the authentic or the real meaning, and so the most important aim of interpretation, if not the aim of interpretation, is to recover, discover, retrieve, reconstruct or recreate it. (p. 4)

As such, the first intention of this chapter, and some parts of the book, is to provide a social-historical setting from which theological education in Africa sprouted, as well as show how socio-political changes have influenced theological education on different levels, like *what is studied* (curriculum and content), *how is it studied* (structured, face-to-face, online, etc.), *where is it studied* (in Africa or overseas) or at *what institutions* (university, Bible school, seminary and so on). The second intention of the socio-historical overview is to determine what we can learn from the past and other continents, particularly regarding what is still relevant and applicable for the African continent. The idea is to take note of what has failed in the past but recognise what is essential for theological education in Africa and see how we can do it differently. This relates closely to contextualisation. The third intention of the historical overview is to orient the reader and provide some guidelines for reading the rest of the book as well as to evaluate the different viewpoints.

For example, an important aspect that needs some clarification is the understanding of what theological education entails. To elucidate this further, at the end of the book, the editors offer some conceptual clarifications based on the insights from the various chapters in the book. Just one or two examples: Can 'theological education' and 'theological training' be used synonymously? Are these concepts the same/synonyms? What is the sole purpose of theological education? Is there only one sole purpose for theological training, or are there multiple purposes?

Background

The starting point for this brief historical overview of theological education in Africa begins with writing about how theological education actually started

and spread across the globe. Pertinent in this regard is to realise that theological education commenced with St Mark in Alexandria on the African continent in Egypt (Twafik 2013):

> 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. (p. 267)

In view of the above quote, it is necessary to take cognisance of the earliest purpose of theological education. The first noteworthy point is the importance of research and the inclusion of religious studies; it was not only about Christianity, but other religions were also studied. Secondly, it was about establishing a system of theological studies – it was not 'hit and run' studies. Thirdly, Christian theology resisted the heresies of the time; in other words, it was contextual and dumbfounded the world with deep faith and persuasiveness and not only good arguments and knowledge. Other advantages of the school were the acceptance of all students – masters and slaves, males and females – as long as they were of good character and conduct as they believed that all are one in Christ Jesus.

Although theological education started in Africa, it was not always and may still not be accessible to those who want to study theology because of socio-political, denominational and economic reasons. Mbiti (2013) explained:

> 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. (p. xv)

As such, theological education in Africa is paradoxically 'very old' and yet 'very new' to Africa. However, having clearly described the origin of theological education, I will not engage in the daunting task of chronicling the history of theological education of the different denominations in Africa. For this, I refer readers to the *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa* (eds. Phiri & Werner 2013), which contains a wealth of literature on the topic.

Hermeneutics

The chapter will use the social history of mission (in Africa) as a hermeneutical key to discuss theological education in Africa (Grundlingh, cited in Saayman 2007):

> Social history [...] is the story of the interaction between different classes, and between people, structures and processes. It has the potential to deepen the understanding of the past and the present. (p. 1)

I am convinced that trying to study the history of theological education in Africa in isolation from political, social and mission history would be incomplete. According to Grundlingh (in Saayman 2007:3), social history expresses 'the holistic nature of human history of which religious history forms an integral dimension'. Following this interdisciplinary approach to the historical overview of the development of theological education in Africa, I wish to describe the cohesive nature of society and the equal relations between the parts and the whole. Ordinary events in the lives of individuals and societies seldom 'just happen'; they are the result of the relations between power structures, such as economic, political and ideological structures. An umbrella term for economic, political and ideological structures is 'globalisation' (Myers 2017:8). As such, culture (including education and theology) does not exist apart from globalisation as will become clear in the chapters of this book.

A global missional historical framework

Without further arguing my decision to follow a missiological historical paradigm as a framework for this chapter, and the later critical reflection on the chapters in the book, I refer to Saayman's (2012:136) assertion of 'theological education as a binding missionary vocation for the Christian community' running through the Old and New Testaments. Theological education in Africa is closely related to Christian mission, and, in this chapter, it is about *Christian theological education* grounded in the Christian faith. Christian faith, which is nothing else than biblical faith, always comes from the revelation of the Trinitarian God to people. In other words, it is 'incarnational', referring to the living God entering the reality of human affairs in their specific contexts. As such, I will give a historical overview of theological education in Africa from a mission historical perspective. This brings us to the question of whether mission history should be or could be separated from Africa's (secular) history. If it is accepted that the Christian faith is 'incarnational' and is described in mission history, then we can differentiate but never separate mission history from human history or in this instance, Africa's history. Therefore, whoever deals with a historical overview of the development of theological education in Africa also must deal with Africa's history and human history.

Further, those who just want to start with theological education in Africa and ignore the existence of the church that existed between the New Testament and the current era tend to ignore the working of God in the entire human history (York 2012). The Gospels give a uniform witness that Jesus leaves his followers with a command and a promise (York 2012):

> Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age' (Mt 28:18–20). (p. 104)

From this promise and command, it is clear that 'teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you' is part and parcel of the *missio Dei,* to make disciples, and spiritual formation has to do with teaching. When theological education is founded in the *missio Dei*, then it may not be detached from the inspirational power of the Holy Spirit. Pastors and/or missionaries in Africa or anywhere in the world cannot become qualified as spiritual leaders of justice and faith by attending lectures, taking notes and passing tests. A Christian minister is not qualified by knowledge but by spiritual wisdom (Sunquist 2013:399). As such, the divisions between theological education and spiritual formation or silence and academic study are false dichotomies. The influence of spirituality rather than theological education has influenced the history of mission as well as the African history.

Bosch (1991:181–362) helped us when he describes the era from the New Testament up to the current era in six mission paradigms. These paradigms are recognised by how the church has defined her purpose and approached her mission (York 2012:105).
Bosch describes the six paradigms as follows (York 2012):

> The first is the *missionary paradigm of the Eastern Church*. This paradigm was very different from that of primitive Christianity. 'The Christian tradition was reworked from the bottom up, and the end result was a way of theologizing that made sense to the Greek mind' (Bosch 1991:211), as such the Christian movement branched out into the *ecumene.* Distinguishing characteristics of this period were the effectiveness of the early prophets and teachers, and the changed lives and testimonies of women elevated in Christ to their rightful place in society. (p. 114)

The second is the *medieval Roman Catholic missionary paradigm* when the church as a small and persecuted minority became a mighty influential organisation. From being an oppressed sect, the church became the oppressor of sects. There was a clear distinction with Judaism, and a close relation between the church and the state evolved. Membership of the church becomes more important than a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and a faithful life. The eschatological expectations of the second coming of Christ became vague and Christendom expanded. During this time, 'the dogma was conclusively fixed and finalised' (Bosch 1991:237).

This was also the time of the Crusades and the so-called 'just war'. The lesson learnt from the Crusades is that good will and even sacrificial obedience to God are no replacement for the clear discernment of his will (York 2012:129).

The third is the *Protestant Reformation missionary paradigm*. This missionary paradigm tended to fluctuate between various extremes and is difficult to describe in one or two sentences (Bosch 1991:261). However, Gisbertius Voetius (1588–1676) was the first Protestant to develop a comprehensive 'theology of mission' that is recognised and still used by many missiologists. He formulated the threefold purpose of mission as the conversion of the Gentiles, the planting of the church with the ultimate aim of mission the glory and manifestation of divine grace (Bosch 1991:257).

The fourth is the *Enlightenment paradigm*. For a clearer understanding of theological education in Africa (and worldwide), this might be the most influential era. The central principle of the enlightenment was faith in humankind. Individuals experienced liberation from God and the church, who no longer need to legitimise everything; there were no classes, titles or prerogatives. Everybody was born equal, with equal rights. It is the era of radical anthropocentrism. Yet, 'Individuals could therefore also be degraded to machines, manipulated, and exploited by those who sought to use them for their own purposes' (Bosch 1991:267). In this anthropocentric world with no room left for God, the church and theology responded in different ways: *First* was the divorce between religion and reason, where religion was located in human feeling and experience. *Second* was the privatisation of religion and the withdrawal from the public square. *Third* was to declare theology itself a science 'superior, precisely as science, to any other science' (Bosch 1991:270). *Fourth* was to create a homogenous society where Christianity will be the official religion and all structures of society adhere to religious principles. The *fifth* response was to embrace the secular society and act as if there were no God.

A catalytic event in this regard seems to have been the World Student Christian Federation conference held in Strasbourg in 1960 where Johannes Hoekendijk urged participants to begin radically to desacralise the church and ecclesial activities (Cho 2019:16). North American theologians began to espouse a theology of the 'death of God' (Bosch 1991:270). According to Amanze (2012), it seems as if this characteristic of the enlightenment (Amanze describes it as 'secularisation') only recently started to influence Africa when he writes:

> It seems to me that contemporary Africa, especially in the past three decades or so, as people have become increasingly educated and scientifically minded, their choices and decision-making have become gradually more rational, guided largely by science and not religion. [...] Consequently, theology and religious studies have found themselves, pushed to the periphery of human knowledge and economic enterprise. (p. 192)

Some major shifts had taken place in missionary thinking according to Gerald Anderson (cited in Bosch 1991:322–323):

- Other religions were no longer thought to be entirely false. In this regard, the soteriological perception of Jesus disappears. Christ the Redeemer became Christ the sympathiser who fulfils other religions.
- Mission work meant less preaching and a broader range of transformational activities. Mission's new significance was the social regeneration of the world.
- The accent was now on salvation for life in the present world. Especially after World War I, this meant less evangelisation and rather grappling with the question of whether Christ offers any solution for the burning social and international questions of the day.

- The emphasis on mission has shifted from the individual to society. Other subjects, like sociology, helped elucidate that sin and evil are not only or primarily in the hearts of individuals but are also society's corporate sin through structures and 'the super-personal forces of evil'.

As such, for missionaries, theological education that embraced the Enlightenment worldview that denied the supernatural had little credibility in the majority world. During this time, a slogan like 'To colonise is to missionize' (Bosch 1991:306) was adopted by the Europeans. The other very important mission view during this paradigm was the three-selves that need to be applied to the younger churches, according to Venn and Anderson, namely 'self-supporting', 'self-governing' and 'self-propagating' (cited in Bosch 1991:307). Dealing with theological education, it is worthwhile to mention that self-theologising was never an option. It is against this background that today's Pentecostal Christians are at the forefront both in the majority and traditional world as well as the post-Enlightenment world as their testimonies ring true (York 2012:147). The tremendous growth of the African independent/initiated churches can also be subscribed to the principle of self-theologising. Interesting is to notice when self-theologising takes place the other three-selves almost automatically happen.

The fifth paradigm is the *emergence of postmodernism*, following modernism, where (Bosch 1991):

> Christianity was propagated as a unique religious experience; as something for private life alone; as more rational than science; as a rule, for all of society; and as humanity's liberator from every redundant religious attachment. (p. 353)

Many believers still hold these views in their thinking and actions with an anxiety that the future of religion is in danger. I find this anxiety with some African scholars, like Amanze (2012). However, postmodernism has found the narrow understanding of rationality 'to be an inadequate cornerstone on which to build one's life' (Bosch 1991:353). Rationality must be expanded, realising we need more than just language and definitions to solve life's problems, as it is short of capturing life in its fullness. Humans need metaphors, symbols, rituals, experiences, et cetera, and from there, the new interest in narrative theologies or theology as story and other non-conceptual forms of theologising. This expanded understanding resonates well with African worldviews and traditions. However, true rationality also encompasses experience as rationality is not without context. Bediako (1995) gave the following warning:

> [/]f the Christian way of life is to stay in Africa, the African Christianity should be brought to bear on the fundamental questions of African existence in such a way as to achieve a unified worldview which finally resolves the dilemma of an Africa uncertain of its identity, poised between the impact of the West and the pull of its indigenous tradition. (p. 5)

For humans to understand reality, we need to re-conceive rationality to include different religious dimensions.

Much of the emerging mission model is related to development, which includes both government and ecclesial plans. Amanze (2012:192–197) argued that in post-independent Africa, theological knowledge is no longer considered necessary for social development and economic growth. One important negative effect of development, especially in Africa, has to do with power. It became clear that real development cannot take place without the transfer of power, and the West and North were both unwilling and unable to transfer their power. This has the consequence that the powerful/rich become more powerful/richer, exacerbating the gap between the haves and the have nots. The developers that ascribe underdevelopment solely to the ignorance of technical know-how were indeed wrong as it became clear that it is (Bosch 1991):

> [*O*]ne structure of human power which exploited and destroyed the humanity of others. [...] The problem was not the relationship between backwardness and modernity, [...] but the relationship between dependency and liberation. (p. 358)

Although African Theology became 'kerygmatically universal', it stayed 'theologically provincial'. This relationship between dependency and liberation regarding theological education is best described by Mbiti (cited in Bediako 1995) as follows:

> Theologians from the new (or younger) churches have made their pilgrimages to the theological learning of the older churches. We had no alternative. We have eaten theology with you; we have drunk theology with you; we have dreamed theology with you. But it has all been one sided; it has all been, in a sense, your theology. [...] We know you theologically. The question is do you know us theologically? Would you like to know us theologically? (p. 155)

Myers (2011) in his book *Walking with the poor* expounded on development. He started off by presenting what he calls 'the great divorce' between the spiritual and material realms. The divorce and power issues are a result of distorted identities, which I also find in theological education in Africa. Myers (2011) propounded:

> The poor suffer from marred identities and the belief that they have no meaningful vocation other than serving the powerful. The non-poor, [...], suffer from the temptation to play god in the lives of the poor, and believe that what they have in terms of money, knowledge, and position is the result of their own cleverness or the right of their group. (p. 17)

It becomes clear that there is no objective truth, we are all committed to some belief, 'truth is not something that can be known and spoken independently of its realisation of life' (Bediako 1995:160). As such, the alternative to objectivism or absolutism is not necessarily subjectivism or relativism (Bosch 1991):

> A post-Enlightenment self-critical Christian stance may, in the modern world, be the only means of neutralising the ideologies; it is the only vehicle that can save us from self-deception and free us from dependence on utopian dreams. (p. 361)

The sixth paradigm described by Bosch is *ecumenism*, which is still evolving. The important realisation is that mission, and for that matter, theology and the church, is multidimensional and therefore cannot be captured in a single definition. Bediako (1995) helped me understand this when he succinctly stated:

> [/]n the old language of the Western church, that *ubi ecclesia ibi Christus* (where the church is there is Christ), whereas the deeper Biblical insight is that *ubi Christus ibi ecclesia* (where Christ is, there is the church). (p. 163)

Bosch then discussed the pluriverse of mission, completing the phrase 'mission as …' with an 'action word' as required by our different contexts (1991:368–510). Following on Bosch's understanding, Saayman (2012:136) added another element to the 12 ecumenical elements of Bosch's (1991:368–510) paradigm, namely 'mission as theological education'. It is from this understanding that I write this chapter.

An African contextual historical view

A wounded society

Although it is a generalisation, I believe that most Africans, theologians and scientists will agree with me that Africa is a wounded continent. The changing socio-political landscapes of Africa after colonisation and the ongoing tribal and religious wars raise new questions for the church and the academic study of theology to consider. The Western and Northern countries' involvement in the history and narratives of trauma in Africa disrupts the dichotomy between the theological truths and the political realities, forcing theologians in Africa and African theologies to intentionally engage 'the public sphere – the ecclesia and the society – that is shaped by the complexity of trauma' (Lakawa 2018:333). One example of such trauma is migration in and from Africa. Migration in and from Africa has become a 'natural' phenomenon; it also has many faces, of which some are more traumatic than others. In many parts of Africa, we find nomadic peoples, but other migrancy that is much more common in Africa and, more traumatic, is a migrant labour force and forced removals as a result of ethnic cleansing, either through political decisions or ethnic or religious wars (Hayes 2012:9). In and around cities across Africa, we find slumps/squatter camps of people migrating from the rural areas to the urban areas because of issues like drought, poverty and hunger, hoping for a 'better life'.

In his article, 'Migrants, mission and theological education', Hayes (2012) argued and described the development of Theological Education by Extension (TEE) as an alternative to seminary education in light of migration. Although the theological education context has changed, for example, with regard to technology and online or e-learning, the church, the ministry and the people have not changed. In contexts like these, 'teaching [theology] becomes a way

of participating in God's work and imagination for the flourishing of humanity and the whole creation' (Lakawa 2018:334). Theology is ruptured by trauma, and the theological response to trauma shapes a different kind of witness and discipleship. 'Trauma ruptures a theology that define Christian witnessing as practice of claiming the truth' (Lakawa 2018:338). Teaching un-contextualised theology in Africa often denies and even tries to erase wounds. Thus, theological institutions should rather aim to form a community who 'attend[s] to wounds rather than erase[s] them' (Lakawa 2018:341). Contextual theological education will not attempt to destroy worldviews and realities but transform them through different genres of culture. The aim of theological education as participation in the *missio Dei* must be transformation and not simply to learn new beliefs or behaviours (cf. Moon 2017:46).

This relates closely to the second mission paradigm, where the church became all-powerful, and the dogma was fixed and finalised. In many instances, theological education in Africa works with the curriculum of a 'powerful Western church' with a fixed and finalised dogma about God. Although the theological curriculum of the West with the neatly packaged different theological disciplines has great values and contributes tremendously to the development of theology in Africa, it does not resonate well with the holistic worldview of Africa. When such a curriculum with the different disciplines is prescribed as the only way to do theological education, it leaves theological education and the church *from* Africa powerless to discover unique revelations of God within their context. With all respect, it leaves God 'powerless' to reveal himself as the all-powerful and personal God to Africa. Going back to the first mission paradigm, theological education in Africa and the church in Africa should be allowed to rework theology within the new context from the bottom-up within the ecumenical context whilst they acknowledge and integrate the confessions of the early church.

Theological education and 'the ministry'

According to Amanze (2011), theological education in Africa should focus on spiritual formation based on African spirituality. Many assumed that the main purpose for 'theological education' is training for 'the ministry' (Hayes 2012:11). Biblically, theological education is the one ministry of Christ taken further by the church through the power of the Spirit (Kritzinger 2007:55; Sunquist 2013:399). It is part of the *missio Dei.* Hayes (2012) contended that a clear distinction needs to be made between 'the ministry' – *missio Dei* and different 'ministries' – *missiones ecclesia* within the church, according to the gifts received from Christ. Kritzinger (2007:9) remarked, 'The ministry [*missio Dei*] belongs to the being (*esse*) of the church. Ministerial formation [theological education?] belongs to the wellbeing (*bene* esse) of the church'. The implication is that much more attention must be given to the theology of the ministry when theological education takes place for the sake of the wellbeing

of the church. Kritzinger argues that churches need ministers who will fit into the practice of the church, which mostly was developed through (Western) tradition (the dogmas and curriculum) and is not contextually and sometimes even theologically sound. Too often the church expects one person to lead everything – in the Pentecostal churches, it is the pastor, and in the Episcopal churches – Anglican, Roman Catholic and Orthodox – it is the priest. Hayes makes a distinction between 'ordained ministries' – bishops, priests, deacons and what he called 'other ministries' – apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and healers, as described in the New Testament. He indicates that currently these ministries do not receive any training; they are not ordained or appointed; they are just recognised. However, these ministries also need some training – ministerial training. Within the African context, these are the people who usually do the ministries in the local congregation/ward, whilst many of the ordained people are travelling from congregation/ward to congregation/ward to do 'the ministry' – official church work, like administering the sacraments. What is at stake is the *missio Dei*. According to Kritzinger (2007:9), the demands of church life have a much stronger demand on the minister than the principles he or she was taught at the theological faculty or school. My conclusion is that the theological education African ministers receive at theological institutions is too far removed from the context of the ministry they are trained for. African ministers in Africa are trained from a modern and postmodern theological frame, meaning a two-tier religious belief system: *high religion* (the unseen world) and *science* (this world). In the modern and postmodern world, people turn more to science for answers for the issues they face. Whilst the church in Africa functions mostly, although not always, in a three-tier religious belief system: *high religion* (the unseen world), *folk religion* (includes both the unseen world and this world) and *folk sciences* (this world) (Moon 2017:26). Although there are some serious changes, Mbiti (2013) articulated the following:

> 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'. (p. xv)

Theological education and training for ministry

When attending to theological education and training for ministry, it is easier to determine the outcomes for ministry training than for theological education. In all honesty, at most theological institutions and for most churches, theological education and ministerial training are one and the same. Illustrating the difference, Hayes (2012:12–13) provided the example of a reader in a church who is floundering and stumbling over Bible verses. This goes on for over 10 min, with the congregation struggling to follow and comprehend what is being said, hearing 'the words one at a time, with many pauses to puzzle out

the next word often saying each word three times to correct previous mispronunciations' (Hayes 2012:12). Reflecting on the above example, *ministerial training*, in this instance, would be helping people to read a text in a comprehensible way. Whilst *theological education* would be the next step – to understand the text, explain it and apply it to the context. Thus, 'the most important thing about the word of the Lord is that we should hear and do it (Mt 7:24–27)' (Hayes 2012:13). Training for ministry enables people to act competently and to know what they are doing, whether it is reading from the Bible or preparing the sacraments.

In the Orthodox Church, this distinction is clearer, for example, in Greece where most of the parish priests have little theological education but more ministerial training through mentorship from another priest. In the Russian Orthodox Church, the main theological education is distinct from training for ministry. Mostly, training for ministry is carried out by seminaries whilst theological education is carried out by theological academies (Hayes 2012:13) or faculties of theology at state universities.

Some lessons from history

Aware that all history and all people are included in the *missio Dei*, we must attend to the lessons from history. Sunquist (2013:396–399) brought our attention to the following: Firstly, the mission of God, and I include theological education, is not confined to one structure or method. There will always be new centres, new methods, new people. Importantly he points out that 'the new…' becomes divisive when they do not embrace the Great Tradition, or 'refuse to work with others', or when 'others block them out of fellowship' (Sunquist 2013:397). The important aspect here is church unity that is a matter of fellowship, not structures. A second lesson is that of avarice. Many Bible schools and institutions start in poverty and simplicity and then when they managed to get buildings and land and a standing in society, they become preoccupied with wealth and the concern for the poor and the reaching of the unreached faded behind. The third lesson history teaches us, which also becomes clear from the different chapters in the book, is that the mission of God and theological education is more diverse than we can ever imagine. The fourth historical lesson that is of utmost important to the current context of Africa is the importance of the laity and is closely linked to the fifth lesson, namely the importance of the youth. The sixth historical lesson that we must take note of is that God's mission and the training of ministers are more often than not the story of suffering witnesses. May these lessons guide us not to become discouraged by the many challenges of theological education in Africa.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a number of historical mission characteristics that have either directly or indirectly influenced theological education in Africa or else have been ignored in the development of the curriculum. At the first school of theological education in Alexandria, the importance of research, systematic theology, the correction of heresies and witness/mission was recognised as salient. During this same time, in the first paradigm, two important characteristics stand out, namely a 'bottom-up theology' and *ecumene*. During the second paradigm, we notice the expansion of the church and the fixing and finalisation of the dogma and the implications thereof. In the third paradigm, we found the first 'theology of mission'. The question here is, how applicable is the theology from the West and the North for theological education in Africa today, or do we need another theology of theological education in Africa? In the fourth paradigm, we find a radical shift to the world of humankind with no room left for God, whilst the church responded in different ways, for instance, the divorce between religion and reason, privacy of faith and treating theology as a science. These and other responses seem most relevant for the discussion of theological education in Africa. The fifth mission paradigm foregrounds the whole question about power, poverty and development. With the movement of the epicentre of Christianity to the South, and more specifically, Africa, much attention needs to be given to these matters, especially in theological education. The six paradigms focus on ecumenism and the multi-layers of theology and mission. Finally, as you read through the chapters of this book, it will become obvious that most of these matters are very prominent in the theological education discourse in Africa, and some are even new or unresolved issues in the African context. It is also clear that the only realistic way forward to have 'centres of excellence' for theological education over the continent of Africa is through ecumenical cooperation. No single African denominational church has the financial or human resources to build its own confessionally exclusive 'centre for excellence' (Saayman 2012:133).

Chapter 2

Current perspectives on theological education in Southern Africa: Achievements and challenges with reference to Africa

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Abstract

Three broad themes are presented in this chapter. The first relates to historical achievements in the field of theological education in Africa. It describes what theological education achieved thus far. In this description, 'achievements' are not used to denote the accomplishments of people but rather to recognise the obedience of believers who gave heed to the calling of Jesus to prepare people to carry forth the torch of the Christian faith and to recognise his faithfulness to the church. This section highlights the fact that theological

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education in Africa is both a dynamic and vibrant endeavour growing purposefully towards the future. The second theme concerns a critical engagement with the current status quo. It recognises that, even though Africa has a lot to be thankful for in terms of theological education, several challenges are endemic to the continent that will require innovative thinking and ongoing commitment of all stakeholders in order to carry theological education into an uncertain future. It will inevitably also refer to some of the unforeseen factors that radically impacted on education in the current time, such as the emergence (and seeming persistence) of the COVID-19 pandemic. The third and last themes regard some suggestions for addressing a number of the challenges identified in the previous section, which I imagine will carry theological education in Africa forward.

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of contemporary theological education in Africa. It articulates some of the achievements as well as challenges that inspire theological educators in Africa whilst confronting their ability to be creative and resourceful in providing students with education that is theologically congruent, contextually appropriate and socially responsive. In a certain sense, it will provide a context for the unfolding of the following chapters that engage a wide variety of perspectives on theological education in Africa.

In a collective work such as this, readers will note that each chapter is immersed in the particular author's personal frame of reference. This chapter does not claim to be different and will reflect my own theological background and current position as a full-time academic at a public South African university.[1] What will probably speak the loudest word is nearly a decade of experience in teaching theology in a multi-cultured but mainly African university campus.[2] It may also be worth noting that I am an ordained minister actively serving in an auxiliary role at a Dutch Reformed congregation in the North-West province and have been married to a full-time pastor for more than 30 years, living in close union with everyday congregational life, witnessing the daily challenges of current-day ministry. This information is divulged because of the conviction that congregational life and theological education are two sides of the same coin and that insight in theological education draws on the experience of congregational ministry. The thinking shared here, hence, resonates with experiences and observations gained from being both pastor and academic.

1. For a reflective account of my theological background, see Brunsdon (2019).

2. For a comprehensive description of my teaching context, see Brunsdon and Van Der Merwe (2013:295–313).

The sources drawn upon for this chapter include available literature on theological education in Africa and abroad as well as results from a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning survey conducted during 2020 at the Faculty of Theology of the North-West University (NWU), South Africa.[3]

Three broad themes will be presented in this chapter. The first relates to historical achievements in the field of theological education in Africa. This theme addresses the question of what theological education has achieved thus far, that is, what is currently at our disposal in the ongoing quest of preparing men and women to serve the church on the African continent? In the descriptive response to this question, 'achievements' is not used to denote the accomplishments of people, but rather to pay homage to the obedience of believers who gave heed to the calling of Jesus to prepare people to carry forth the torch of the Christian faith and to recognise his faithfulness to the church. This section will highlight the fact that theological education in Africa is both a dynamic and vibrant endeavour growing purposefully towards the future.

The second theme concerns a critical engagement with the current status quo. It recognises that even though Africa has a lot to be thankful about in terms of theological education, several challenges are endemic to this continent that will require innovative thinking and the ongoing commitment of all stakeholders in order to carry theological education into an uncertain future. It will inevitably also refer to some of the unforeseen factors that radically impacted on education in the current time, such as the emergence (and seeming persistence) of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The third and last theme regards some suggestions for theological education in Africa in terms of minimum requirements that I imagine will carry the matter of education forward.

Achievements of theological education in Africa

In this section, a broad overview of the current status quo of theological education on the African continent is presented. This is done with a view of providing a unified picture of the African theological landscape that is currently shaping and educating future pastors for ministry and possible further theological training.

3. Some of the data used in this chapter was collected by means of an online survey done at the Faculty of Theology of the North-West University (NWU), South Africa, during 2020. The survey formed part of a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project (SoTL) in partnership with the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) of the NWU on online theological education at the NWU in the 21st century South Africa (Ethics number: NWU-00904-19-A6).

North Africa

A comprehensive account of theological education in Northern Africa is provided by Richard Hart in the collective work *Handbook of theological education in Africa* edited by Phiri and Werner (2013:129–145). His detailed account presents the achievements of, particularly evangelical theological education in the Nile River Valley, the Jordan River Valley, the Tigris-Euphrates Valley and the Levant Range whilst recognising the age-old efforts of the ancient Orthodox churches and various Catholic denominations.

The context for evangelical theological education is sought in the steady growth of evangelical Christians in the region, creating a need for training of men and women to serve congregations and the communities. Evangelical Christianity in Northern Africa can historically be regarded as fairly recent with missionaries from 'Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed, Episcopal, Lutheran and Pietist denominations from Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America' (Hart 2013:130) evangelising the area from the early 1800s, which resulted in the formation of the evangelical Christian church in the region. The theological education that ensued to train pastors to serve congregations is described as 'based on [...] common Gospel, cultural and educational commitments' (Hart 2013):

> 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. (p. 130)

Since the inception of the evangelical Christian faith communities, a surprisingly large number of Bible schools, colleges, institutes and even TEE programmes came into being. In Sudan and South Sudan, more than 10 institutions will be found that offer qualifications ranging from certificates to bachelor's degrees in theology (Hart 2013:132).

The area of Egypt is served by nine institutions, which include seminaries that offer a master's degree as their highest qualification (Hart 2013:135). To the western side of the Jordan River (Palestine and Israel), which includes well-known cities such as Bethlehem and Jerusalem, six Bible schools, colleges and universities are active, with the highest qualification being a PhD from the University of the Holy Land (Hart 2013:137). To the eastern side of the Jordan Valley, another five institutions make theological education accessible through a variety of programmes that can be done on site, via correspondence or even by an extension (Hart 2013:138).

In the Levant Range, Hart reports the activities of yet another six institutions, of which the Near East School of Theology, the oldest Protestant seminary in

Lebanon, offers degrees up to a doctoral level and whose graduates serve the areas of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Iran and Egypt (Hart 2013:140).

Hart ascribes the flourishing of these institutions in an Islamic environment primarily to the 'governmental tolerance and the resourcefulness of theological educators' (Hart 2013:129). Another reason is to be found in the enabling partnerships with educational associations such as Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA) and 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' (Hart 2013:133).

The flourishing and steady growth of these institutions and Christianity itself in this area become even more admirable in light of the ongoing violence and political unrest characteristic of this area.

East Africa

Like in the rest of Africa, the roots of theological education in East Africa relate to its missionary foundations. In the view of Christopher Byaruhanga (2013), theological education and ministerial formation in this region find itself at a crossroads because of the rapid intellectual and social development of the church population. Hence, '[...] 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' (Byaruhanga 2013:154). With this expression, he is advocating for an approach to theological education that is truly contextual to the region and that will meet the needs of the rapidly growing numbers of Christians and resulting congregations.

East Africa is home to at least four families of churches, including the mainline churches that emanated from Europe and North America, the African Instituted Churches (AICs) that grew from the local peoples, the Pentecostal movements, as well as the so-called new church movement that stems from recent evangelisation efforts (Byaruhanga 2013:155).

As the church in this region came into being from European missions, theological education initially also followed Western approaches. This was either in the form of training through an apprenticeship or via residential institutions. The main challenge with especially residential institutions related to its contextual inappropriateness as it simply ignored the African context and culture (Byaruhanga 2013:156). Since the 1960s, as churches became independent, they also started to take an own responsibility for theological education, leading to a number of unaccredited Bible schools, theological colleges and seminaries. Whilst some of these colleges and seminaries offer ecumenical training, most are denominational, thereby exclusively serving their own candidates.

In order for the church in East Africa to meet the current demand for pastors as well as the need to be contextually effective, Byaruhanga (2013:158) suggested at least the following:

- That ecumenical partnerships for theological education must be considered rather than a strictly denominational approach.
- That the international 'brain-drain' of prospective theology students be countered by supporting local universities rather than sending students to study abroad.
- That the growth of local private Christian universities is stimulated to enable the church to regain its voice in HE.

Whilst the church in East Africa is experiencing positive growth, there seems to be a concern that church groups will need to take hands to ensure that enough pastors are educated to meet the changing needs of this vibrant growth point of Christianity.

South Africa

Theological education in South Africa is closely related to its colonial history. With the inception of a Dutch trading post in the Cape during 1652, the Reformed Church of the Netherlands got a foothold in the Cape as Jan van Riebeeck and most of the Dutch settlers were members of this church. Initially, the settler community was spiritually tended to by lay pastors who travelled with the Dutch to new outposts as this was part of the Dutch East Company's policy under whose auspices a fortified base was set up in Table Bay (Thompson 2000:35).

The organisation of early church life in the Cape resorted under the Reformed Church in the Netherlands until British rule became a reality in 1795 (Olivier 2009:3). With a rise in the numbers of settlers and the expansion of the areas they occupied, the yearning for self-governance in all spheres of public life transpired. In light of the need for more pastors to tend to the spiritual needs of the growing populace, pleas for a local seminary where Dutch Reformed pastors could be trained was verbalised by the likes of Abraham Faure in 1817 (Olivier 2009:3). Through growing momentum and persistent efforts, the dream of an own seminary was realised on 01 November 1859 in Stellenbosch (Coertzen 2009:5).

For the sake of this chapter, the birth of theological education in South Africa needs to be seen in a certain context. Quoting Coertzen (2009:5), the following is noted about the theological seminary in Stellenbosch:

- It was an institution that wanted to cater for both the mind and the heart.
- It wanted to serve the Dutch culture and language.
- It was a significant development in the field of education and was the alma mater of the later University of Stellenbosch.

- The aim was to be an institution of reformed nature.
- The seminary started during a time of revival in South Africa – the teachers and curators not only supported these revivals but also encouraged it.
- Right from the start, the seminary was part of an attempt to find answers to pressing questions in society and church.

These characteristics of the first theological seminary are of seminal importance for a current understanding of theological education and will be returned to later in this chapter.

For nearly eight decades, the Theological Seminary in Stellenbosch would remain the sole provider of theological education of Dutch Reformed ministers in South Africa. This changed in 1938 with the inception of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria. This brought theological training into the then Transvaal (now Gauteng). Theological education in the Free State (previously Orange Free State) only became a reality in 1980 when record numbers of white males reported for theological training in the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (DRCSA) (Landman 2013:242). With these three faculties, training for the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) as well as the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa (NDRCA) was catered for, as the Section A of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria tended to the training needs for pastors of this sister-church of the DRC. The other sister-church of the DRC, the Reformed Church of South Africa (RCSA), which came into being in 1859, already instituted an own theological school in 1869 in Burgersdorp in the Eastern Cape Province (Van Tonder 2009:17). The Theological School of the RCSA moved to Potchefstroom in 1905, from which the current NWU was eventually born. Another significant development was the inception of a Faculty of Theology in 1930 at the NWU that would be open for theological studies for anyone and not dedicated to the training of pastors for a specific denomination. The Faculty of Theology is to be distinguished from the Theological School Potchefstroom, which is dedicated to the training of pastors for the RCSA.

Over the ensuing years, theological education would prove to be an important contributor to HE in South Africa as theology would develop a footprint across the country at several public universities. Amongst these are the Department of Theology at the University of Port Elizabeth previously (now Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University [NMMU]); School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal; The Centre of Theology and Religion at the University of Fort Hare; The Department of Religion and Theology at the University of the Western Cape; The Department of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town and the University of South Africa (UNISA) (Landman 2013:243–244). The contribution of UNISA can be regarded as unique in the sense that it pioneered distance learning in South Africa and made initial theological studies, as well as postgraduate studies, accessible to students who could not manage full-time, residential

studies at another university. This trend was also adopted by the Faculty of Theology of the NWU who also entered the open distance learning arena in 2013. This opened the door for partnerships between different denominations and the NWU who saw the theological degrees on offer as sufficient to meet the requirements for ordination in their respective churches. Since then, the Faculty of Theology of the NWU developed its Unit for Open Distance Learning, which initially made use of whiteboard broadcast technology, requiring real-time viewing at learning centres, to online learning, which is accessible at any time, thus making the use of venues and facilitators unnecessary.

The number of students from the original mainline churches, that is the DRCSA, RCSA and the NDRCA, has been in sharp decline over the last three decades. Subsequently, theology is no longer taught at the NMMU, and many other institutions grew smaller, employing two or three academic staff members. Irrespective of this, all of these institutions contributed consistently to the corpus of theological knowledge in South Africa and the training of theology students.

Formal theological training has over the years also been taught at a number of colleges and private universities across the country at institutions such as St. Augustine College of South Africa (Johannesburg) and George Whitefield College (Cape Town), to name but two, providing in the needs of churches who do not require university degrees as a prerequisite for their pastors.

West Africa

Theological education in West Africa displays an organic development through a rich history, which has produced some of the most influential sons and daughters of theology in Africa. To name a few, the likes of Emmanuel Lartey, John S. Pobee, Kwame Bediako, Mercy Oduyoye and Lamin Sanneh come to mind.

According to Gyadu (2013), current-day theological education in West Africa cannot be severed from the historical development it's undergone from informal training locals received from missionaries during the mission era, to Christian education that formed part of the school system, to theological education through teacher training and eventually, formal theological education at the tertiary level through a number of institutions. All of these efforts were facilitated by the important role that Bible translations into local vernaculars played, which was applied as a common way of teaching African vernaculars to the illiterate of the region (Gyadu 2013:150).

As in many African countries, theological education was initiated by mission denominations who sponsored suitable candidates to receive tertiary education abroad. These included the Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican and African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches (Gyadu 2013:151). Although it was

'lamented' that many West Africans were sent to Western institutions that could not really equip them for work in the African context, it is also true that it created an opportunity for these theologians to influence Western theology through their own research from an African perspective. They are also recognised for the way they 'helped to "Africanize" the otherwise very Western curriculum of African theological institutions' and 'facilitated the process of indigenization that became part of the ecclesial discourses prior to the emergence of contemporary Pentecostalism in the late 1970s' (Gyadu 2013:150).

Currently, West Africa boasts a number of influential institutions where candidates prepare for ministry in a network of Christian denominations. Under these are Fourah Bay in Sierra Leone, Trinity College in Ghana (now Trinity Theological Seminary), Emmanuel College in Nigeria and the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary at Ogbomoso. Over time, some of these institutions affiliated with other universities and students started to benefit from sponsoring organisations such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Langham Research Scholarships (Gyadu 2013:151).

According to Gyadu (2013:146), the growth of the Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal movements in West Africa has important implications for theological education as some of these churches partner with traditional mission church-related seminaries, whilst others establish independent Bible schools to protect their 'pneumatic identities' from the more traditional seminary-based training institutions.

Some preliminary remarks on the achievements of theological education in Africa

Considering the current offer of theological education in Africa, an obvious starting point would be to commend the institutional church in Africa for establishing, maintaining and growing a remarkable network of theological institutions across the continent. From public universities, colleges and seminaries to Bible schools and TEE, theological education in Africa presents itself as a vibrant and dynamic undertaking.

As training for ministry is first and foremost a denominational responsibility, theological education in Africa reflects an ongoing commitment of the Christian tradition to serve the church and society in a responsible fashion through the responsible and accountable training of pastors. It is therefore noted that the driving force behind each of the institutions discussed previously are church structures like synods and curatoria (an elected board/body of representatives to oversee theological education and the training of pastors) that oversee and revise the requirements and standards that serve as a prerequisite for ordination in the different churches.

Theological education on the continent is currently demonstrating a willingness to consider partnerships and collaborations in order to ensure ongoing education in the face of challenges, such as the financial implications associated with higher learning. This is especially noteworthy in light of the denominational exclusivity that historically characterised theological education. Currently, there is a growing trend towards partnerships and collaborations, even between historically divided denominations such as the Reformed and Pentecostal traditions, as illustrated by an agreement between the NWU and Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFMSA) to provide training for future pastors of this Pentecostal church.[4] The fact that the NWU is closely associated with the reformed tradition demonstrates a commitment by the AFMSA to seek sustainable ways of equipping students for ministry. It may also be indicative of a realisation within the church itself that current times require us to rethink the denominational exclusivity that characterised much of ecclesial practices until now by seeking the common convictions that bind us together as a Christian tradition.

As custodians of theological education, there is also a marked attempt by churches to accommodate the changing needs of prospective candidates by adapting training modes and creating new categories of ministry in which pastors can serve. In the DRCSA, for example, training was historically residential and full-time by design. The implication was that students, irrespective of age and familial status, had to register as full-time students at one of the acknowledged institutions to complete the obligatory degrees associated with legitimisation and ordination in the DRCSA. The practical implication was that a candidate had to relocate physically for the duration of their studies at great cost. Whilst this may not have been a disqualifying obstacle for younger persons, it was the opposite for older persons who became aware of a calling in later life. Over the years, this practice not only disqualified many who felt a calling to full-time ministry but also discouraged them to pursue a heartfelt calling as it was impossible to sustain their families when relocating to a university city and giving up an established career and income. In a new approach adopted by the DRC, candidates can now study at different institutions closer to home or via open distance facilities to reach the requirements for legitimisation. Newly accepted ministerial categories, like tentmakers, also created new opportunities as it not only allows ministers to pursue a secular career at the same time but also makes their services more affordable for shrinking congregations in areas where the population is dwindling.

Another encouraging and positive development in current approaches to theological education in Africa is the role played by supporting and enabling

4. The AFMSA entered into an agreement in 2011 with the NWU to provide training for students who wished to enter the ordained ministry in the AFMSA with a Bachelor of Theology and Bachelor of Arts. For a more elaborate discussion on the historical development of this agreement, see the chapter by Nel.

networks, such as the ACTEA,[5] the Network for African Congregational Theology (NETACT) and Tearfund.[6] These associations and networks play a growing role in bringing partners together in order to consolidate resources and to ensure the quality of the qualifications on offer in Africa. On a continent plagued by poverty and lack of infrastructure, partnerships seem to provide a workable option for going forward. The growing formation of partnerships for training is thus one of the positive developments within the current situation.

Challenges for theological education in Africa

Contextually appropriate education

A golden thread that seems to run through the African theological education discourse is pleas for education that is appropriate for the African context. In the historical account of how theological education developed in Africa, a point of concern that is often raised is the fact that African theologians had to go to the West to receive training and that Western-orientated academic frameworks were then uncritically carried over to the African context. The challenge this creates for education is that African students are then equipped with knowledge that is not ideally suited to address ministry in the unique African environment. Although this theme has been addressed for some time by many concerned academics over a period (Brunsdon & Knoetze 2014; Brunsdon & Van der Merwe 2013; De Jongh Van Arkel 1995; Higgs 2015), it is clear that Africa is still yearning for an authentic theology that can stimulate the thriving of the African church. This yearning, and growing frustration, suspectedly lies at the root of many of the decolonisation and Africanisation drives that have become a well-known phenomenon in countries like South Africa. This is a concern that resonates clearly in at least two other chapters in this publication. For instance, when Elizabeth Mburu discusses the importance of African hermeneutics for authentic African theological education and when Marius Nel underlines the importance of mutual acknowledgement and respect for another's hermeneutics in cases where students of different hermeneutic orientations are receiving training at the same institution.

As this matter lies at the heart of theological education and influences the outcome of training and the effectiveness of ministries, I argue that this is one of the biggest challenges begging the attention of stakeholders on the continent. To my mind, it brings the matter of the meaning of context to the foreground: What is meant by the African context? What is meant by the context of students?

5. See the chapter by David Tarus on the work of ACTEA.

6. Tearfund is a UK-based Christian relief and development organisation with commitments to theological education and networks in Africa. Their website can be accessed at https://www.tearfund.org/.

Who are they and what are their needs? What is meant by the global context of which Africa is a part of? More clarity seems to be needed in light of the fact that contextual relevancy has become one of the enduring challenges of theological education in Africa.

The cost of theological education (accessibility)

Although not unique to theological education in Africa, but to tertiary education in general, the costs associated with tertiary education remain one of the biggest challenges to prospective students feeling a call for ministry, excluding many and making accessibility an issue. Whilst theology is arguably one of the more financially accessible qualifications available at the institution where I am located, it remains an extremely costly endeavour in a country where most are poor. Over the years, I have learned of many students enduring dire personal living conditions just to be able to study at a university. This raises critical questions about the historic practice of residential theology studies that implicate the relocation of students for a number of years, generating a host of other costs, such as accommodation, travel and sustenance. Whilst from a spiritual formation point of view, it can be argued that there is no substitute for residential studies, I have witnessed many students whose calling was defeated by costs that outweighed their financial means.

In a country like South Africa, the growing demand for tertiary education is also progressively outweighing the government's ability to provide sufficient funding for all. The notorious '#FeesMustFall' campaigns that crippled many South African campuses towards the end of 2015 and during 2016 (Brunsdon 2017; Mavunga 2019), in part, paid testimony to the disgruntled youths wanting to enter the tertiary education segment but not having the means to do so. This is reflecting in a notable number of mature theological students at the institution where I teach as they are the only ones having the means to afford tertiary education because of generating an income or having retired. This renders questions about the future younger voice of pastors in African churches as we are often training more mature students; hence preparing an older ministerial core as younger students cannot afford to study.

Recognising financial accessibility as a challenge to theological education in Africa, I agree with Kohl (2013:1110) that African institutions must rid themselves of the perception that funding is owed to Africa by the more affluent West and North but rather commit ourselves to generate funds for self-sustenance and the provision of financial support to students. Whilst theological faculties at public universities in countries such as South Africa are partially state funded, there are no guarantees that this scenario will remain intact in the future, hence demanding creative thinking by all stakeholders to overcome the issue of the financial accessibility of theological education in Africa.

COVID-19 and the decentralisation of (theological) education

Towards the end of December 2019, what was initially regarded as 'pneumonia of unknown cause' in Wuhan City of the Hubei Province in China (World Health Organization [WHO] 2020), erupted into one of the biggest modern-day pandemics. At the time of writing, the WHO stated that internationally, 83 715 617 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 1 835 901 deaths have been reported to them. Of this, the African continent carried 1 961 234 of this burden in terms of confirmed cases of which 43 592 resulted in death (WHO 2021).

In South Africa, a national lockdown was announced towards the end of March 2020 as an emergency measure to prevent the spread of the disease. The core issue at stake was personal isolation and the avoidance of social contact. As these measures came during a traditional academic recess period, the education sector had a few days' grace to reposition itself in terms of teaching and learning. At the NWU, the slogan 'Keep on teaching' was adopted, and the most practical way of attaining this was by reverting to online teaching. As the NWU already had a digital learning platform as part of its blended learning approach in place, the transition was, to some degree, less radical than would have been if no such platform existed. For the Faculty of Theology of the NWU, which already offered its qualifications via open distance learning, it was a matter of migrating contact students to the open distance learning environment too. The biggest impact of this measure was felt by full-time residential students who lived on or near one of the three campuses of the NWU and who were used to face-to-face tuition and regular interaction with lecturers. Within a short space of time, these students had to evacuate student residences and return home. Over the following weeks, the NWU assessed the situation and mitigated immediate effects by providing data to students and even hard copy study material to students in deep rural areas where Internet facilities were not available.

The above scenario was, however, not unique to the institution where I teach, but indeed an international phenomenon, effectively decentralising education from physical locations and severing the human contact traditionally associated with it. For private and smaller institutions who did not have the privilege of state funding and support, this decentralisation even proved to be a decentring experience, as many initially lost all contact with students who had neither Internet or private computers to work on. Because institutions themselves also did not have the digital infrastructure in place, COVID-19 posed a serious threat to the continuation of theological education in some areas.

At the time of writing, the second wave of COVID-19 was still engulfing the globe. Consequently, what educators thought were temporary measures may now beg serious consideration as a norm for the future. Depending on the

infrastructure of institutions, experiences with decentralised theological education in the form of online teaching were in no way experienced negatively by the author. Considering my own teaching experience on pre-graduate and postgraduate (Honours level) for six modules during the COVID-19 pandemic, I am encouraged by the resilience and adaptability demonstrated by students in the online environment. Apart from students who deregistered because of unforeseen circumstances, all registered students passed the modules they started. By utilising the functions of the digital platform optimally, students could still experience a sense of academic and ecumenical community. By being more approachable via social media and traditional telephone conversations, students had access to their lecturer and personal challenges could be addressed timeously, resulting in good academic outcomes.

The bigger challenge, however, seems to be on the terrain of academic work that includes practical work, like homiletics, and the very important matter of spiritual formation. As the latter will be addressed in the next section, a few remarks on practical work in the online environment are made. Before COVID-19, homiletic students had, as part of their module in preaching, some practical work. In the setting of so-called class sermons, students were required to prepare a sermon within the theoretical framework completed earlier. The ensuing delivering of the sermon in front of fellow students and the evaluation by the lecturer and other students, according to a set evaluation framework, were of immense value, aiding students to internalise homiletic theory by applying it in practice. Although the real-time physical interaction created in this way cannot be duplicated in a digital environment, students can record sermons digitally and place them on the relevant platform for feedback by the lecturer and fellow students. This is but one example of the implications of decentralised theological education that begs our consideration but worth pursuing for the sake of the practical formation of students for the foreseeable future.

Spiritual formation

I deal with the matter of the spiritual formation of theology students separately as it is regarded by some as an inseparable (Byaruhanga 2013:154), or at the least, a significant part of theological education (Naidoo 2013:755). As my goal here is not to enter the formation discourse in a critical or novel way, I am using it loosely to denote what we can also call ministerial formation. According to Hoffman (2015:87), spiritual formation relates to the 'intentional providing of opportunities to deepen the spiritual journey of students through the integrating of the intellectual, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of life'. My motivation for making this part of the discussion is that I believe it has become one of the challenges of theological education in contemporary Africa, especially in light of the above discussion of the effects of COVID-19 and the resultant decentralisation of theological education.

In my own experience, spiritual or ministerial formation took place in a close proximity to my professors, fellow students and others I encountered during my residential studies at seminary. To a lesser degree, it, of course, also took place before and after my studies. During my studies, however, I was intent on learning what a pastor should be and what I could anticipate from the congregational ministry for which I was called. For this reason, I was focused on the narratives lecturers shared about ministry above and beyond the theory they provided in class. I learned more by worshipping with them at faculty prayer meetings and taking part in faculty outreaches and retreats and, more especially, from the wise professor that was assigned by the faculty as my mentor, who by default even had to pay house visits to me and my wife. The earnest prayers he prayed for us and our future ministry remained with me until this day. And the wisdom that all of these kind men and women of God shared with me shaped my ministry in many ways.

From this short personal account, it can be said that spiritual or ministerial formation at least implies the following: The physical presence of others; time to build relationships of trust; the sharing of faith experiences and ministerial narratives; and the sharing of worship and the physical working together on spiritual activities, such as outreaches. The dedicated space of the seminary and the opportunities that were created by faculty, with its rich religious symbolism, presented an enduring atmosphere that made these experiences richer and assisted in making a lasting impression that steered my ministry in many ways. It goes without saying that the privilege I had to retreat to this environment for a period of 3 years, to enter into a kind of apprenticeship period, was the very basis on which my own formation took place.

Comparing my personal account to what most of my own students had at their disposal, especially over the last year, a big void presents itself in the area of formation. Because of social restrictions put in place by authorities, there was no physical presence of others, nor the opportunities to build relationships. No physical sharing of worship and working together on spiritual activities, such as outreaches, were possible either. The space of the theology building with its communal area became out of bounds. In short, the traditional avenues of spiritual formation were at once blocked by the new realities that transpired with the outbreak of COVID-19. Contemplating the important role that all of these played in my own ministerial formation, it goes without saying that theological educators need to put the rethinking of formation high on the agenda as we move forward with theological education in this uncertain dispensation.

Addressing challenges for theological education in Africa

In this final section of the chapter, I will offer a few proposals on the challenges highlighted in the aforegoing section that I trust will stimulate further discussion on contemporary theological education in the African context.

Revisiting issues of context

I perceive the enduring matter of context in theological education in Africa as an appeal to actively revisit issues of context. As indicated previously, we need to ask anew: What is meant by the African context? What is meant by the context of students? Who are they and what are their needs? What is meant by the global context of which Africa is a part of? Answers to these questions are pivotal in developing knowledge that will educate students better for the context they are serving.

The importance of further investigation into questions such as these resonates in many different understandings about these matters. One simple example is to be found in the array of understandings of the African context. For some, the African context merely denotes a geographical location, that is, Africa is to be found on the African continent. Added to that is a *troublesome* continent that needs the guidance of others (Nicolson 2016:2). Views like this perpetuate a stereotypical view that is carried over in the idea that 'we' know what 'they' need, as seen in the oblivious sharing of knowledge that does not necessarily serve the needs of the particular context the best. Obviously, views such as this are not helpful in taking us forward in terms of a better understanding. For others, like Louw (2008), Africa denotes a philosophical concept and spiritual category. As a philosophical concept, Africa (African context) denotes the 'complexity and diversity of different cultural, local and contextual settings as related to a state of being and mind' (Louw 2008:147). As a spiritual category, it denotes a 'hermeneutical paradigm indicating a unique approach to life that differs from the analytical approach emanating from Western thinking and Hellenism' (Louw 2008:147).

Although Louw's definition seems more viable, it illustrates the complexity related to definitions of context, particularly the African context, which became the mother to an immense variety of people, cultures, beliefs and worldviews. In the light of this, my contention is that theological education in Africa should first and foremost be dedicated to contextual analysis of the particular area where it aims to become involved in education, as the micro-contextual issues in Africa can literally vary within a few miles apart, from village to village, from province to province and, only eventually, from country to country.

For theological education, in particular, questions of context do not end with geographical and cultural context either. It also pertains to the very students we teach; what is meant by the context of students? Who are they and what are their needs? The pivotal importance of these human-contextual questions transpired for me through a recent research project that was conducted amongst staff and students at the faculty where I teach, as mentioned earlier in the chapter. The results of this project showed that many of the assumptions that I held together with steadfast perceptions about the

'end users' (students) were not accurate. For example, where I assumed that most of our students were studying theology to become full-time pastors, research results yielded that only 20% of the respondents were actually planning to follow a full-time career. As there is a qualitative difference between a full-time career in ministry and tentmaker ministry, we need to address the differences in our training, which is currently not done. In fact, the survey indicated that 62% of the respondents agreed that theological education should include non-theological subjects in order to develop secondary career skills to support a tentmaker ministry.

In terms of the mode of delivery, I also never had questions about Internet accessibility issues, whilst the research yielded that nearly half of the respondents had some sort of issue with accessibility, or they were neutral rather than positive about it, because of challenges they experience, putting undue stress on them. Whilst some of these issues may seem trivial, they should be taken into account in the planning and design of theological education, as they are linked to the particular context we are serving. What makes this point even more salient is that a project such as this one does not require enormous effort, yet it yields pertinent information for enhancing the effectiveness of our institutions. More importantly though, it embodies an ethic of care as it demonstrates interest in the most important asset in training, namely the students we train.

A last contextual issue I want to raise pertains to the global context and Africa's place in it. This issue emanates from the tension often experienced in current debates surrounding the African context. Over the last number of years, especially in South Africa, there has been a marked acceleration of the drives towards decolonisation, Africanisation, indigenisation and such. In education, these efforts can be understood within the bigger framework of the transformation of HE, which, in the opinion of many, is taking place at a too slow rate (Brunsdon 2020:1). Whilst these matters rightly deserve the attention of all stakeholders in education, there is, however, a balance to maintain because Africa is a member of the global village. Hence, we must keep in mind that we do not exist for ourselves only. The theology we do and teach can never be exclusively for Africa but must resonate positively with issues the world is grappling with as well. In this way, we must strive to be authentically African whilst being global citizens. Eventually, African graduates must be able to have a voice beyond the borders of Africa. One of the ways of going about this is to refrain from 'retributive decolonisation' and even 'romantic decolonisation' but rather engage in a process of restorative contextualisation (Brunsdon 2019:7). Such an approach will be intent on rejuvenating African knowledge that can transform Africa, whilst being mindful of its macro-context, contributing to the healing of a world that suffers from many shared ills, such as poverty, migration, gender and many other challenges.

Addressing cost and accessibility

As mentioned earlier, tertiary education is expensive. It requires specialised staff and comprehensive infrastructure that are costly to maintain, putting financial strain on those who want to access it. It was also shown, according to observations in my personal context, that this results in predominantly more mature students that study theology as they have accumulated the means to afford it, whilst a younger cohort of students is deterred as a result of a lack of funds. As this will eventually pose challenges for the church in terms of an ageing ministerial corps, the issue of cost will require a concerted effort from stakeholders to make theological education more accessible.

Looking at existing cost structures and sources of funding, it seems unlikely that costs can be lowered or that more funding will be generated from the same sources. In South Africa, many theological institutions at public universities rely on a combination of church and state funding, which partially makes provision for study-bursaries for students. With local and global economies, however, under growing strain, it becomes an open question how long current forms of funding can be sustained. It is hence imperative that theological institutions will need to think pro-actively and strategically about sustainable future funding.

In this regard, Kohl (2013) suggested that funding for theological education should be placed in a theological framework, such as stewardship, to guide theological institutions to accept ownership of funding and encourage them to explore novel avenues of financial income. Some ideas include tapping into resources like alumni or creating a specific office for fundraising that can liaise and network with all friends of a particular institution to financially support their work.

From the research conducted at my own institution, it appears that the majority of students (65%) are not receiving financial support from their respective denominations, identifying another untapped resource of funding. Certainly, it will carry weight when academic institutions approach churches formally to source funding from such denominations, stressing the principle that theological education is at its core a partnership with the church, as the church is the biggest benefactor of theological education.

Interestingly, I learned that African students often looked to their broader family structures to assist in funding their studies. This may be indicative of the possibility that funding can also be placed in a cultural context such as *ubuntu,* in order to generate funding that can make theological education accessible to all.

Adapting to decentralised (theological) education

One of the biggest contemporary challenges of theological education in Africa was indicated as the management of a decentralised approach. As the decentralisation of education basically translates to online teaching, the

biggest challenge for most institutions will be in the establishment of infrastructure through which lectures can be presented. For students, the biggest challenge will relate to the procurement of a personal computer or mobile device and the ongoing acquisition of data, which have proved to be an expensive commodity in Africa.

In the initial stages of migration to an online environment, training in the use of such platforms is usually an important requirement. Public universities in South Africa usually have dedicated platforms that are specifically developed for online teaching and learning. Less privileged institutions may, however, consider popular platforms, such as Skype or Microsoft Teams, which are accessible in the public domain. Older whiteboard technology is another consideration, which proved effective in the recent past. At many institutions, whiteboard hardware components have fallen into disuse. Partnering between institutions to procure the use of dormant equipment can be a blessing for some institutions.

The decentralisation of education also took students away from libraries that used to be the most important link in the academic chain. This brought open access sources into new focus as they are available online and free of charge. The implication of such a measure will put new burdens on lecturers to find suitable academic sources that can serve current module outcomes.

In many parts of the world, the forced migration to the online environment caught academics and students alike unaware. Apart from the physical differences between contact and online teaching and learning that had to be mitigated, many educators discovered that the pedagogical principles for contact and online teaching are not the same, challenging them to revisit their teaching philosophy and general approaches to teaching and learning to nurture and stimulate effective learning.

As is apparent from this discussion, the decentralisation of theological education represents complex challenges, of which only a few were articulated. For the time being, we are without a doubt at the dawn of a new day in education that will require much creativity and effort to serve the learning community best.

Rethinking spiritual formation

The rethinking of spiritual formation directly relates to the decentralisation of theological education and the important element of physical presence as discussed earlier. The gist of reconsiderations in the current climate of social distancing at least relates to the question whether formation can take place without human agency (Hess 2008:21).

As it was shown that human proximity and the special atmosphere of dedicated religious spaces like the seminary play an important role in spiritual

or ministerial formation, the challenge before us lies in the finding of partners that can aid theological institutions in this important function of the training of theology students.

In the DRCSA where I serve, a system of partnering with local congregations developed, which plays a meaningful and pragmatic role in the theological education of this church. In this system, theological institutions assign a mentor to students during the period when they do practical work in congregations as part of their practical work. The same principle can most probably be applied in the home congregations of students or in the area where students may already serve in congregations. The mentoring of students can include any number of activities, such as candidates accompanying ordained pastors during their daily ministerial work, or having pastoral conversations with candidates on personal or ministerial matters. The point is that spiritual formation need not seize in light of decentralised education that was forced upon us by the prevailing circumstances.

Conclusion

Theological education in Africa is built upon a rich heritage. Its rich heritage pays tribute to the commitment of many denominations who over centuries ensured that ministers received training to serve Christian faith communities. It also testifies to the faithfulness of the head of the church, Jesus Christ. Theological education in Africa is, however, not without challenges. In this chapter, it was pointed out that theological education in Africa is yet to establish a contextually appropriate education. Because of the rising costs of tertiary education, Africa is also challenged by issues of accessibility, with many being excluded from entering the domain of higher learning. Like all other spheres of society, the HE sector was also severely impacted by COVID-19, which essentially decentralised theological education and forced educators and students into the online environment as an alternative to conventional training. Apart from the many challenges, the issue of spiritual formation as part of theological education was also affected. Theological education in Africa is hence called to think anew about these issues in order to show resilience and growth in the light of adversities and uncertainties facing the global community.

Chapter 3

The epistemic becoming of students in higher education: A decolonial lens

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Abstract

Theoretically, this chapter is framed within a socio-cultural perspective on learning that recognises that human actions are mediated by social, cultural, historical and material means. From this theoretical lens, we argue that values and norms in HE practices need to acknowledge and incorporate all students' prior experiences and histories and recognise their powerful contribution in working towards a decolonial HE. The massification of HE in widening formal access, effects of globalisation and marketisation, the emphasis on social inclusion and lifelong learning all necessitate this shift. Universities need to re-evaluate their identities and core business in an attempt to respond to a fast diversifying student body both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels

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of study. The purpose of HE, with specific reference to social justice and transformation, and the provision of ontological and epistemological access, cannot be separated from decolonising HE and, in particular, the curriculum. Education is about knowing and being, and the epistemic becoming of students is nurtured in curriculum decisions and pedagogies. With a focus on teaching and learning within the field of theology, this chapter explores possibilities for decolonial pedagogic approaches necessary for a Christian minister's epistemic becoming. We argue in the chapter that university education is primarily about knowledge construction and secondarily about knowledge acquisition. For this reason, academics have the challenge to enable learning, which can only be achieved through a democratic pedagogic approach that focuses on developing future thinkers to push the boundaries of the field. Academics, particularly disciplinary experts such as university teachers, have to clearly articulate what constitutes knowledge in their discipline and field of practice. They also have to understand the relevant knowledge structures of the discipline and the nature of the knowledge creation process of their discipline.

Introduction

The epistemic becoming of a Christian minister in higher education (HE) is nurtured by a pedagogical approach that regards the socio-cultural diversity of students. The subsequent need of indigenising disciplinary knowledge in HE is accelerated by educating the Christian minister through a decolonial lens and therefore we put forth the argument of a decolonial pedagogy in HE. This is accentuated by an analysis carried out during 2019 at a faculty of Theology in a South African university, where it was found that, amongst other factors, the subsequent reason for students and modules being at risk is portrayed by the socio-cultural background of the diverse student profiles in theological HE classrooms. Low-throughput rates revealed that students are struggling in their learning where their prior knowledge is not taken into consideration when course design, delivery and assessment are carried out. This makes the curriculum appear colonial, with teaching approaches that assume a plethora of acquired capabilities by students before entering university (Mgqwashu 2000). In becoming a Christian minister in South Africa today, a deliberate focus on the calling of a student in cognisance of factors that influence knowledge creation, for example, decolonisation, globalisation and marketisation, is eminent in HE teaching and learning. There is thus an urgent need to revisit the extent to which conditions for epistemic access in becoming a Christian minister are created. Cloete (in Knoetze 2020) confirms that 'theological training is not only about transferring information, but also requires critical engagement with what is known'. This is needed in order to transform the knower and create a responsibility towards what is known. Moreover, we emphasise the fact that 71% of South African students are first-

generation students (Beginning University Survey of Student Engagement [BUSSE] 2019). Furthermore, the typical student profile in theological education is characterised by a high percentage (72%) of students older than 36 years of age, with more than 20% older than 50 years. These are typically students who might already be church ministers in their local communities and thus have been out of the HE context for a whilst or are engaging with HE for the first time. During a scholarship of teaching and learning project and study carried out during 2020 at a South African university, more specifically, in a faculty of Theology, statistical analysis indicated that there is a moderate to strong correlation between curriculum development and design and the student's marital status, highest qualification and church denomination. This emphasises the fact that these independent variables significantly affect the manner in which students perceive the current curricula. In this specific university, descriptive statistics revealed that almost 30% of students perceive the applicability of the current theological curriculum negative to very negative, and subsequently, more than 30% of students reported their current perception of church ministry as a career as neutral to negative. Amongst other narratives from qualitative analysis, feelings like studying more books about the Bible, and not the Bible itself, and not feeling theologically equipped, raise concerns in the epistemic becoming of a Christian minister. We suggest that teaching and learning excellence in theological education could greatly augment and transform Christianity in South Africa.

It is for this reason that, theoretically, this chapter is framed within a socio-cultural perspective on learning that recognises that human actions are mediated by social, cultural, historical and material means. From this theoretical lens, we argue that values and norms in HE practices need to acknowledge and incorporate all students' prior experiences and histories and recognise their powerful contribution in working towards a decolonial HE. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to provide a decolonial lens through which academics as university teachers in a faculty of Theology could revisit their pedagogical practices in educating their students towards epistemological access accompanied by epistemic justice. The chapter firstly provides an account of the context of HE in South Africa, followed by the conditions for the epistemic becoming of a Christian minister in South Africa. We further define 'Discourse' and 'discourse' to advance an argument that developing students' sense of ownership of discipline-specific practices, and the discipline itself will open opportunities for local knowledge to feature greatly in their becoming Christian ministers. This, in turn, will enable academics in theology to play a vital role in ensuring that discipline-specific practices are made explicit to their students and showing them in practice how to integrate local experiences and knowledge in the curriculum. It is in this way that we clarify how decolonising the curriculum is an imperative that is possible if we make an effort. Pedagogically, such brave efforts have exciting consequences with the potential to create opportunities for the extension of the boundaries of the field. We conclude the chapter by

accentuating the fact that it is inevitable that ongoing discourses, debates and critical conversations are needed with regard to transformation, quality enhancement and social justice in HE.

Context

As South Africa has been characterised by its own unique context of social injustices and went through major social change during the past two decades, deliberate demands are placed on teaching and learning more broadly and in HE in the context of this chapter. According to the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of HE (Department of Education 1997), tertiary institutions are given a responsibility to contribute to South Africa's transformation project, which includes decolonising and democratising the entire fabric of society. Redistribution of power, economic resources and a deliberate recognition and inclusion of diverse socio-cultural capitals remain major priorities in the post-apartheid dispensation. Given the resilience of past inequalities in most spheres of society, the purpose of HE has had to be revisited, re-thought and revised in line with the post 1994 aspirations shared by all South Africans.

In addition to these local concerns, HE has had to deal with globalisation imperatives as well. In its response, HE has had to shift focus from producing graduates with skills geared for industrialisation to skills designed for the quickly post-industrial information communication technologies and the World Wide Web. In this context, universities offer hope to be places that develop high-level skills responsive to current context and demands, with a task to achieve the twin objectives of global competitiveness and getting good local jobs that contribute meaningfully to the economy. All of these concerns encompass the transformation of the HE imperatives. The high-level skills have already been highlighted within the National Qualifications Framework. This framework uses the universal language of learning outcomes (LOs) of knowledge, values and skills required in qualifications, thus espousing quality HE for all. Whilst it is clear that HE has not ensured the realisation of the 'education for all' dream, it is not enough to only recognise it (Scott 2012). Instead, we argue in this chapter that we need to think about how to do things differently. Our key argument is that universities have to accept the responsibility of educating students in ways that ensure that all have the equal opportunity to gain access to and succeed in receiving the quality education.

The question of whether the quality is evident in HE in terms of the national goals of equity, transformation and social justice (fitness of purpose) and quality teaching and learning in terms of institutional missions (fitness for purpose) is debatable. We also wonder whether HE teaching and learning has been responsive to its accountability of social transformation, quality enhancement and addressing social injustice in South Africa.

Such transformation in the context of South Africa also means the decolonisation, de-racialisation and de-genderisation of the universities; engaging with complex issues of ontology and epistemology and the implications for teaching and learning, pedagogy and curriculum, research and methodology and scholarship of teaching and learning.

It is in this context that we argue in this chapter that student access and success should be the main goal of teaching and learning agendas of universities. For this to be realised, teaching and learning have to enable epistemic justice. We value the notion of HE access *with* success. We argue that traditional teaching and learning approaches seem not to be working in a landscape requiring a serious decolonial project. A decolonial project will necessarily mean taking seriously the need to take into cognisance the multiple structural issues in HE that might have impacted on student access and success. Thus, the purpose of HE, with specific reference to social justice and transformation, and the provision of ontological and epistemological access to all students, cannot be separated from the decolonising project of HE, and in particular, the curriculum.

In line with this project, universities need to re-evaluate their identities and core business in an attempt to respond and indeed account to a fast diversifying student body both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels of study. Re-establishing academic identity in resolving tensions between the core academic roles of teaching, research and social responsiveness could be established through integrity brought into the academic project by taking seriously the fact that the world is bigger than Europe and America (Mgqwashu 2016). We thus argue for a critical engagement with ontological and epistemological aspects relating to teaching and learning in HE. Such critical engagement is as applicable in the context of educating a Christian minister as any context where university teaching and learning occur.

Conditions for the epistemic becoming of a Christian minister in South Africa

As already argued in the previous sections, scholarship on student access and success reveals consistently that providing formal access to HE is not enough, and that epistemological access is as crucial to enable successful discipline participation by all students, regardless of race, class and gender. Epistemological access can be best defined as learning how to become a successful participant in academic practices that 'see' and 'bring' into the teaching and learning process of 'who the student is'. This is contrary to a view of students as autonomous individuals whose learning is devoid of contextual factors that play out in the teaching and learning process (Boughey 2013; McKenna 2010; Mgqwashu et al. 2020; Morrow 2009). It is for this reason that many scholars argue for the recognition of the student as a contextualised

learner, where students' social accounts and practices; prior knowledge, experiences and expectations; inherent abilities, talent or intelligence; hard work, efforts, motivation and work ethics; language proficiency and other individual attributes, as well as institutional and contextual factors that are necessary for their academic achievements are considered (Clarence & McKenna 2017; Mgqwashu 2019). Most literacy specialists would say that these ideas relate to the understanding of the student as decontextualised, whereas an academic literacies approach understands learning as taking place in a specific disciplinary context.

'Language' in a broad sense refers to the appropriate usage of language structures (i.e. grammar and spelling) in a manner that makes linguistic sense. The use of 'language' also refers to a system of choices based on context and location (Boughey & McKenna 2016) and is thus never neutral. Whilst 'language' focuses on the teaching of grammatical aspects, with spelling rubrics becoming a part to improve students' writing and reading activities, literacy focuses on the multiple ways of engaging with the production of different types of written texts that are valued in various disciplines. Academic literacy, in contrast, refers to an academic language that provides evidence of propositions or statements supported by literature, testifying of specificity, value, evidence and definitions (Van Schalkwyk 2008). Thus, academic literacy is not only a matter of proper language usage but is also discipline specific. The practices that constitute the central processes through which students learn these new ways of knowing and develop their knowledge about the new areas of study are therefore equally crucial. Linked to this idea is the importance of academic literacies, which have to do with the mastery of a way of being that is required of students as they engage with HE (Boughey & McKenna 2016). These refer to reading, writing and talking in ways that are valued within disciplines, which is essentially part of the process of developing knowledge about a discipline. Successfully adapting to new ways of knowing, understanding, interpreting and organising knowledge becomes the measure disciplines use to determine membership into a discipline (Gee 1991).

The difference between language and academic literacy lies in the fact that the former is a means of communication, and the latter is for successful engagement in a disciplinary discourse through writing academically. When (academic) literacy is understood simply at the level of the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), it erroneously gets presented as a neutral instrument, which results in the marginalisation of students who do not speak the LoLT as a home language. It also sidelines the importance of the acquisition of the discourse of the discipline (Boughey & McKenna 2016). This is the reason epistemological access gets compromised in most contexts in HE.

Epistemological access refers to accessing the knowledge and knowledge-making processes of the discipline. If one understands how to read, write and make knowledge claims in ways that are discipline specific, then one can be

said to have access to the epistemology of the discipline. We argue, however, that access to epistemology needs to extend to asking the question, whose epistemology? In a context like South Africa, with the history of colonialism and apartheid, this question is critical. It is therefore crucial to discuss a decolonial approach to such epistemic access.

Decolonisation has different dimensions to it: the political, economic, cultural, material and epistemic (Maldonado-Torres 2011). For Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008:4), it is a clarion call 'to confront the problem of overrepresentation of European (and the Global North) thought in knowledge, social theory and education or to de-Europeanize the world' in African curricula. In other words, decolonising HE is a clarion call for a decolonial university curriculum and pedagogies, with a focus on the promotion of the epistemologies of Africa and the Global South. These clarion calls for the promotion of epistemologies of the South should not be seen, in Prah's (2017:226) words, as a 'philistine rejection of Western-derived knowledge and argumentation'. On a contrary, they are a deliberate attempt to rectify centuries of cognitive injustice that has allowed Europe to distort and misrepresent the social experiences of the people of the Global South (Angu, Boakye & Eybers 2019).

Calls for decolonising African HE are not new. They began in the 1960s and 1970s where post-independent African nations began to engage in the process of seeking to redress colonial injustices and undertaking effective means to achieve socio-economic development (Zembylas 2018). In Kenya, for example, Ngugi (1986:16) wrote that, after gaining its independence in 1963, there have been quests for decolonising the curriculum in the Kenyan HE institutions in terms of 'relevance of our situations, and contribution towards understanding ourselves'. Similar decolonising calls have been made in many African countries after independence, where universities, students and some academics engaged in vigorous attempts to decolonise university curriculums in an effort to neutralise the overemphasis on Eurocentric epistemologies. The most recent impactful call for decolonialising HE took place in South Africa in 2015, where South African students and a small number of progressive academics began a campaign to decolonise the curriculum at universities 'by ending the domination of Western epistemological traditions, histories and figures' (Molefe 2016:32). In particular, the students called for the end of domination by 'white, male, Western, capitalist, heterosexual, European worldviews' in HE and incorporation of other South African, African and Global South 'perspectives, experiences [and] epistemologies' as the central tenets of the curriculum, teaching, learning and research in the country (Shay 2016).

Whilst the proponents of a decolonised curriculum in South African universities argue that Africans have their own ways of being, knowing and doing that emerge from African cultural repertoires, histories and social experiences (Angu et al. 2019), there is not much literature that indicates that academics in many African universities are opening spaces for African students

to express these unique ontologies or ways of being and doing. Angu et al. (2019), for example, argued that there is a need to see disciplinary literacies primarily as communication, ways to communicate that include those from Africa, such as storytelling and oral performances. However, most academics in many African countries that use English as the LoLT have tended to privilege hegemonic discourses that construct Global South ways of being and of knowing as subservient to the Global North ways of being and of knowing. According to Angu et al. (2019), not much is done within academic disciplines to allow African students to communicate through the mediums or modes they bring from their home environments. This is seen largely as a consequence of, amongst other things, the use of English as a LoLT, an additional language for the majority of university students in the Global South (Mgqwashu 2006).

As Mgqwashu (2006) reminded us, this is despite the fact that most African countries are multilingual yet have generally chosen monolingual European language policies from primary to tertiary education levels. It is in this context that proponents of the decolonialisation of the HE curriculum are advocating, amongst other things, for the use of *translanguaging* and *code switching* as a pedagogical approach. It is in this way, argued Makalela (2015), Li (2018) and Angu et al. (2019), that diversity, critique of hegemonic Eurocentric worldviews and power can receive primacy. According to Li (2018), 'translanguaging' is a term coined by Williams (1994) to refer to a planned systematic use of two languages for both teaching and learning. In other words, *translanguaging* refers to a pedagogical practice that deliberately switches the language mode of input and output in bilingual classrooms. Translanguaging is similar to code-switching in that they both refer to multilingual speakers shuttling between languages in a natural manner (Makalela 2015). However, 'translanguaging is more than "code-switching" because "translanguaging" is not simply going from one language code to another' (García 2012:1). According to Park (2014):

> [*W*]hile the notion of code-switching assumes that the two languages of bilinguals are two separate monolingual codes that could be used without reference to each other' (García 2012:1), 'translanguaging seeks to assist multilingual speakers in making meaning, shaping experiences, and gaining deeper understandings and knowledge of the languages in use and even of the content that is being taught'. (p. 50)

Although research has shown that translanguaging might be beneficial in multilingual classrooms, it can be a challenge to implement in typical lecture halls that are not homogenous in terms of language orientation, as is the case with most African contexts. Besides the language issue within disciplinary academic contexts, the disciplinary courses of many African universities are also influenced by epistemologies of the West. Angu et al. (2019:8), for example, argued that students are not introduced to African history, practices or epistemic modes, which are directly linked to processes valued by mainstream disciplines.

There is therefore the need for African universities to deconstruct dominant Global North worldviews and pedagogical choices and practices that promote Eurocentric ways of knowing only as though there were no other alternatives. It is therefore necessary to consider the pedagogical practices required to enable the marginalised to access the knowledge needed to navigate society and survive whilst using their acquired skills to fight for complete liberation (Mgqwashu 2019). This is the reason this chapter also draws from Bernstein's pedagogical discourse theory (1990) in making the case for decolonial understandings of the academic project. By 'pedagogical practices', or what Bernstein (2000) called 'pedagogic discourse', the chapter explores how our conceptualisations of how the academic project could be approached in the field of theology in ways that democratise the teaching and assessment practices to achieve epistemological access and epistemic justice (Leibowitz 2017).

If a student understands how to read, write and make knowledge claims in the discipline, then only is epistemological access achieved. What is important to understand here is that the teacher is still regarded during this phase as a change agent in controlling the teaching and learning environment. Pedagogy does matter, and the role of the teacher in learning is crucial. There must be a drive towards valuing explicit teaching and learning approaches so that students can access the ways of being within a discipline as illustrated by the discourses (language) that typify specific disciplines. We therefore argue that thinking about the link between discipline-specific literacies and epistemological access, coupled with epistemic justice, is a gap all academics need to make an effort to bridge.

Distinguishing between 'Discourse' and 'discourse'

Gee (1996:131) referred to 'Discourse' (with a capital 'D') as a socially accepted association amongst ways of using language, other symbolic expressions and artifacts of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network'. Similarly, Friman (2010) added that Discourse is a specific way of perceiving, talking about and understanding the world (or part of it) based on certain assumptions governed and reproduced by exclusion and inclusion (power). As such, Gee (1996) maintained that Discourses provide ideologies in a given Discourse community and so determine what is acceptable or not within such a community. Thus, there are innumerable Discourses at higher education institutions (HEI), for example, Engineering, Science, Commerce, Education and many others.

In the context of this chapter, 'Discourses' customarily in HEIs have certain ways of doing-saying-being-valuing-believing. Possessing these sets of being collectively determines successful access to valued community spaces and

events: the 'discourse' of an individual user shows their integration (or not) with the dominant 'Discourse' community. In trying to simplify the meaning of Discourse, Gee (1999) advised that it should be thought of as sub-cultures within a larger culture or society. In this sense, according to Gee (1999), a person can belong to many sub-cultures (Discourses) at the same time. Within each Discourse that a person belongs to, there are common identities, beliefs, 'ways of thinking, feeling, and being' (Gee 1999:9) that are recognisable as both appropriate and defining of membership to other members of the Discourse. Gee (1999) agreed that one cannot engage in a Discourse without taking on the related identity. Furthermore, if one does not display an identity associated with a Discourse, then one can be deemed by the Discourse community not to have that identity. Therefore, the quest for students to acquire disciplinary literacies requires them to become 'apprentices' in specific disciplinary Discourse communities (Butler 2013). Taking on the literacy practices of a discipline entails 'socialisation into a distinct community with its set of discourse practices' (Bangeni & Greenbaum 2019). Whilst Kapp and Bangeni (2020) acknowledged that taking on academic Discourses can bring significant affective implications for students, they critique the representation of this process as being one whereby students are simply 'colonised' by the academic discourse. Students have agency in the process of taking on (or resisting) the ways of being in the academy.

The 'discourse' (with a small 'd'), in contrast, entails the ability to read, write, think critically and speak in a well-informed manner (Leibowitz 2010). Gee (1990, 1996) used the term 'discourse' (with a small 'd') to denote any stretch of language in use (spoken, or written, or signed, or painted, or in any other way represented), which hangs together and allows members belonging to a community to understand one another. In other words, a specific 'discourse' is made up of all the language bits and uses that are associated with a particular 'Discourse'. According to MacKay (2003:2, 4, 7), these very specific 'language patterns' are developed as conventions that eventually are observed as prescriptions. Failure to heed the discursive rules that make up university 'Discourses', which prescribe the type of 'discourse' that is acceptable, may alienate a speaker from the community and limit the kind of success they can expect within the institution. This suggests that knowing a specific 'discourse' means knowing how to use its specific features in a manner that is acceptable within that Discourse (MacKay 2003). Taking on the norms and values of a discipline, alongside the literacy practices that emerge from them, can be experienced as a challenge to students' prior identities (Bangeni & Greenbaum 2019; Gee 1996). Bangeni's research shows that students sometimes feel torn between past and present ways of being (Bangeni 2009; Mgqwashu 2009). This has a number of implications for pedagogy, including the need to truly understand and value the practices our students bring with them into the academy.

In the context of this chapter, for example, knowing a disciplinary academic literacy ought to mean knowing all the language bits and uses that are associated with a specific discipline in a manner that is recognisable to the members of that discipline. As such, disciplinary literacy is considered a type of 'Discourse' (a form of language use and awareness of how to behave and interact) in which knowledge is presented for learning purposes (cf. Janks & Locke 2008). Millin and Millin (2014:28) pointed out that it 'has been developed within school and university contexts and has become quite rigidly conventionalised as the preferred form of "Discourse" for the schooling purposes'.

With the increased understanding that universities, disciplines and learning are not neutral, and that the practices expected of students are deeply ideological in nature, came a call for the explicit teaching of the relevant literacy practices. We therefore argue that if so much rests on the extent to which students take ownership of discipline-specific practices, then academics have the responsibility to ensure that such practices are made explicit to their students.

Curriculum imperatives for a decolonial approach to educating a Christian minister

> [*T*]he university curriculum is that idea expressed in multiple ways that include but go beyond the ways of teaching, learning and assessing within a particular institutional context. It encapsulates what most workers within that institutional setting understand to be the character, content and boundaries of knowledge that came with being in that place, the university. It extends to include the understanding by institution dwellers of the particular link between knowledge and authority, about who possesses knowledge to act on and against others, and who are positioned simply as the recipients of authoritative knowledge. (Jansen 2009:126–127)

University curricula for the education of a Christian minister need to consider a process of re-evaluating its identity, character and attributes if it is to meet the needs of a fast diversifying student body both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels of study. In this regard, the purpose of HE, with specific reference to social justice and transformation through the provision of ontological and epistemological access, cannot be separated from teaching and learning practices, curriculum responsiveness and assessment approaches. These aspects need to be a core consideration for transformation in HE in understanding the effects of globalisation (Maasen & Cloete 2002), massification (Barnett 2000), managerialism (Gibbon & Kabaki 2002), democratisation (Barnett 2000) and decolonisation (Mbembe 2001). The authors believe that not sufficient and due consideration is given to curriculum design, curriculum responsiveness and pedagogy to facilitate epistemological and ontological access for the majority of students in HE in South Africa.

Designing engaging teaching and learning spaces entails a much more responsive approach evident of various considerations in terms of student access with success. Our main argument revolves around epistemological and ontological access for students in HE towards social justice and transformation encapsulated in the purpose of HE.

From an epistemic perspective, curriculum responsiveness cannot be unmerged from pedagogical responsiveness and a regard for the socio-cultural diversity of our students. Furthermore, curriculum development is not only about being responsive but also being responsible in educational terms. The explanation of what makes the delivery of an educational programme responsive to socio-economic demands necessarily entails an 'ontological focus on learning' (see Ntshoe 2020) and subsequently being responsive to students (i.e. learning responsiveness). Curriculum responsiveness relates to design and pedagogy and is envisaged and practiced by HE in a variety of forms. This has led to multifaceted practices that are evident of a combination of various accounts of the concept and thus causing tension between numerous imperatives associated with it.

They also have to understand the relevant knowledge structures of the discipline and the nature of the knowledge creation process of their discipline. Academics enter university teaching as experts in their discipline. In order to convey (i.e. teaching) disciplinary knowledge and facilitate expertise of the academic to the student, a curriculum is needed. Disciplinary knowledge remains important as part of our pedagogical approach. Barnett (2009) explained disciplinary knowledge as knowledge and knowing and how it influences being and becoming within a discipline. This requires epistemic, that is, dispositions and qualities important for being – the art of coming to know or engaging with knowledge (Knight & Shum 2014). In becoming, the curriculum should be demanding, contrasting insights and perspectives, creating an openness, a continual presence and commitment towards the creation of self-discipline and, ultimately, creating space and spaces where authenticity and integrity unfold. Disciplinary knowledge and curriculum knowledge are thus related but not similar.

Implications for pedagogy

Education is about knowing and being, and the epistemic becoming of students is nurtured in curriculum decisions and pedagogies. With a focus on teaching and learning within the field of theology, this chapter explores possibilities for decolonial pedagogic approaches necessary for a Christian minister's epistemic becoming. We argue in the chapter that university education is primarily about knowledge construction and secondarily about knowledge acquisition. For this reason, academics have the challenge to enable learning, which can only be achieved through a democratic pedagogic

approach that focuses on developing future thinkers to push the boundaries of the field. Academics, particularly disciplinary experts such as university teachers, have to clearly articulate what constitutes knowledge in their discipline and field of practice.

The teaching challenge entails taking seriously how students learn. This is especially crucial in a fast diversifying student body, with the majority becoming the first generation to be university students in their families (BUSSE 2019). Education is about conceptual change. It is therefore not surprising that experts say that education is never neutral (Freire 1990) and that learning is not an automated process that happens perfunctorily in classrooms. Learning happens in contexts: the 'world' the students bring into the learning, the 'world' of the discipline and the socio-economic and historical context we find ourselves in as a country, in a continent of Africa, in fast globalising HE institutions. Thus, approaching teaching and learning in a manner that ignores these realities, that is, in a decontextualised manner, is bound to lead to failure.

These considerations call for a teaching approach that critiques didactic monologues and/or 'student-centered' approaches (Mgqwashu 2009). We suggest that university teachers realise that a pedagogy that considers that learning starts with the prior knowledge students have, and that is further mediated by the expertise and skills of the teacher, is needed. The application of a social constructivist learning approach that testifies of guided and scaffolded instruction is called for to prepare the student for the academic excursion into the specialist discourse through a 'lending capacity' approach from the teacher to the student. Mgqwashu (2019) explained that pedagogical practices should be evident of the application of the 'scaffolding interaction cycle', where students are supported and guided to a learning space where they can display learning confidence. In this manner, epistemological access could be ensured in the provision of access to the knowledge and the knowledge-making process of the discipline. HE institutions do not exist in isolation from societies in which they are located. This might be why the socio-cultural backgrounds of students either enhance or inhibit success in HE. Student success should be the main goal of the teaching and learning agendas of universities. University skills are needed for the personal development and growth of students and also for social, economic and political development of the country. Students may suffer from imposter phenomena because of the unfamiliar online environment combined with limited prior learning in a discipline. Reimagining the pedagogical approach to teaching and learning is essential in optimising student success. A radical shift in teaching is needed in recognition of the socio-cultural context of learning and teaching, where learning should be modelled to enable students to acquire the capacity to participate in discourses of an unfamiliar and new knowledge community in HE.

The diverse student population today poses various challenges on teaching and learning, both for students and lecturers. There are several challenges and discourses associated with teaching and learning in HE. According to Gee (in Boughey & McKenna 2016), a discourse refers to a socially recognisable identity and a way of being in the world. This typically expresses that ways of being are acquired through our exposure to the social spaces we find ourselves in, and the easiness of acquisition depends on the 'familiar' connection between primary and secondary discourses. That is why the socio-cultural backgrounds of students either enhance or inhibit success in HE. The dominant discourse of language issues in HE, for example, has disguised the previous apartheid explanations of cognitive differences (Boughey & McKenna 2016). The language problem became the sanctimonious answer to racially differentiated success rates in HE, where structural mechanisms in HE institutions remain unchanged. In particular, if one does not understand what a discourse means or entails, practices become a mere compliance matter to structural mechanisms. What is the way forward? Boughey (2013) asserted that we need to strengthen informed discourses around HE, particularly those that challenge constructions of it as meritocracy, which privilege ranking systems.

Conclusion

It is inevitable that ongoing discourses, debates and critical conversations are needed with regard to transformation, quality enhancement and social justice in HE. These are driven by continuing policy developments and/or amendments and discourse analysis in the global HE landscape, as well as South African HE. The draft Ministerial Statement on the implementation of the UCDP 2021–2023 advocates for transforming teaching, learning, researching and leading towards enhanced quality, success and equity in universities. The Department of Higher Education and Training framework for enhancing academics as university teachers also emphasises that universities in South Africa play a pivotal role in giving expression to the rights and values in the country's Constitution and Bill of Rights, which include improving student access and success, and developing contextually responsive curricula that promote transformative values, attitudes and actions in HE (see Human 2017). Insufficient consideration is given to curriculum design and pedagogy to facilitate epistemological and ontological access for the majority of students.

This chapter attempts to reveal ways in teaching *how* to know (not only *what* to know) through which academics could ensure student development in the ways of being and becoming successful disciplinary discourse participants and thereby guarantee the future survival of their fields.

Section B

Some paradigm shifts in theological education in Africa

Chapter 4

Excellence and renewal of theological education in Africa: The case of ACTEA

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Abstract

This chapter describes the contributions of the ACTEA to the advancement of quality theological education in Africa. ACTEA is a project of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) and a founding member of The International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE), a global partner within the World Evangelical Alliance.[7] ACTEA, a trusted continent-wide theological

7. The International Council for Evangelical Theological Education's (ICETE) core members are the eight regional accrediting associations (Africa: ACTEA; Asia: Asia Theological Association (ATA); Caribbean: Caribbean Evangelical Theological Association (CETA); Europe: European Council for Theological Education (ECTE); Eurasia: Euro-Asian Accrediting Association (E-AAA); Latin America: Association for Evangelical Theological Education in Latin America (AETAL); Middle East and North Africa: Middle East-North Africa Association for Theological Education (MENATE); North America: Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE).

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association, functions in various roles highlighted below. A short history of ACTEA begins the chapter and gives prominence to the roles played by Dr. Byang Kato, the first African General Secretary of the AEA. Examination of the threefold work of ACTEA, that is, accreditation, networking and support services, follows. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the current challenges and opportunities for theological education in Africa and ACTEA's strategy to ensure the flourishing of theological institutions.

Introduction

Professor Andrew Walls observes that 'it is Africans and Asians and Latin Americans who will be the representative Christians, those who represent the Christian norm, the Christian mainstream, of the 21st and 22nd centuries' (Walls 2001:47). If Walls' sentiments are true, and evidence shows that they are, then the African church needs to worry about the quality of the Christian faith in Africa. Two dimensions of Andrew Wall's sentiments may be deduced. The first is African theology. The heartlands of Christianity have shifted to Africa, Latin America and some parts of Asia. Consequently, non-Western theologies are or at least should be the predominant theology in the world. Non-Western theologies, African theology included, should set the pace for world Christianity. Consequently, we need to worry about the quality of African theology. It is Africa's theological institutions that set the pace for quality African theology. The second is the church's public witness. What is the quality of the church's public witness in Africa? It is Africa's theological institutions that set the pace for quality African churches. Theological education is a key player in the quality of the African church as well as the health and wellbeing of the African society.

Quality matters if the church in Africa is to 'represent the Christian norm, the Christian mainstream, of the 21st and 22nd centuries' as Walls mentioned above. Unfortunately, the African church has not represented the Christian faith well. How can it do that when the majority of pastors are insufficiently trained? How can it do that when the church does not know how to address contextual challenges like nominalism, syncretism, corruption and compromise of the biblical faith? But is the problem with the church or theological institutions? What kind of graduates are Africa's theological institutions sending to the church? Are they sufficiently trained to meet the challenges facing African society?

Although this chapter does not address these pertinent questions, it explores the roles played by ACTEA, a quality assurance agency in ensuring quality theological education in Africa to help build a healthier church able to represent the Christian faith to the world in the 21st century. The next section provides a brief history of ACTEA.

A brief history of the Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa

Association of Evangelicals in Africa established ACTEA in 1976 as a project of its Theological Education Commission under the impetus of the General Secretary from Nigeria, Dr. Byang Kato. Kato assumed his role with a grand vision for theological education and the renewal of the church in Africa. He believed that rigorous evangelical theological education would most incontrovertibly cure African Christianity's 'theological anemia', which he understood as the compromise of evangelical faith in the face of 'syncretism, universalism, and Christo-paganism' (Kato 1985:11). Kato envisaged for the church in Africa: (1) the establishment of an accrediting agency for theological institutions; (2) the establishment of graduate-level theological institutions, one to serve the Francophone region and another to serve the Anglophone region; (3) publications by evangelical African scholars; and (4) an establishment of an African academic journal akin to *Christianity Today* (Kato 1974:6–7).

Unfortunately, Kato did not live long enough to see his vision fulfilled. He died tragically in a drowning accident in 1975 at the age of 39 years. The crucial loss of Kato compelled the AEA Executive Committee to convene on 15–19 March 1976. Paul Bowers (2016), who had served with ACTEA since its formation, noted that the initial decision of this strategic meeting included:

> [*E*]stablishment of an accrediting service for evangelical theological schools in Africa, appointment of a Council to direct this new initiative, designation of a coordinator to implement the project, and placement of the whole under the oversight of the AEA Theological Commission. (n.p.)

Thus, in fulfilment of Kato's vision, ACTEA became the first AEA project. The following year of 1977 saw the formation of Faculté de Théologie Evangélique de Bangui (FATEB) located in the Central Africa Republic, offering graduate-level theological programmes in the French language. In 1981, Christian Learning Materials Centre was established in Nairobi to produce African Christian education materials especially for children. The Anglophone region gained its graduate-level theological institution in 1983 with the establishment of Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, which is now named Africa International University. The *Africa Journal for Evangelical Theology* produced by Scott Christian University (formerly Scott Theological College in Kenya), one of ACTEA's first institutions, fulfils Kato's vision of seeing more publications by African scholars.

All of these AEA projects and many other AEA initiatives have preserved Kato's memory (Bowers 2009:4). Noll and Nystrom (2011) extended this tribute to Byang Kato and his enduring legacy:

> Death at the age of thirty-nine could have meant a premature end to Kato's vision. Yet the strength of his personality, the breadth of his influence, the intensity of his learning, the passion of his faith, the resources of his networking and the persistence of his many friends sustained the vision he inspired. The four goals that he outlined in a dusty construction site in Jos, Nigeria, continued with hundreds of hands and minds and donations (both Western and African) to make it happen. Today evangelical theological higher education is alive and well in Africa. [...] The legacy of Byang Kato continues to expand. (p. 94)

Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA) has overcome nearly insurmountable odds to fulfil its vision of enriching and renewing theological education in Africa. Bowers (2016) described the conditions that could have hampered the progress of the initial ACTEA office:

> When ACTEA was launched in 1976 there were no personal computers, no printers, no photocopiers, no fax, no email, no web, no mobile phones, no text-messaging. All documents were typed by hand on manual typewriters. [...] All documents were reproduced by mimeograph. (p. 14)

In our contemporary world, technology has facilitated immediate communication. Yet the ACTEA office still serves Sub-Saharan Africa with limited resources, staff and facilities, surely a testimony of God's grace. Furthermore, God's providence established ACTEA in a permanent office in Nairobi in 2014 with an official registration as a non-profit society. ACTEA recently purchased office space at the newly constructed and impressively designed AEA Plaza in the Upper Hill section of Nairobi. From here, ACTEA will continue to serve Africa's theological institutions with its recognised and appreciated services.

Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa as a 'full-service petrol station'

Paul Bowers uses the analogy of a 'full-service petrol station' to capture the current work of ACTEA. He asserts that ACTEA is not an antiquated one-service station but a contemporary full-service station that provides a wide range of services to its clientele. He writes (Bowers 2015):

> When ACTEA was founded almost 40 years ago, it was founded initially, so to speak, with a single pump – but with the definite intention to develop ways to provide that fuel as part of a full-service station for evangelical theological education in Africa. Not because that is a good marketing strategy. It is. But the intention was guided by a much deeper motive, namely that the needs of its constituency were for much more than just accreditation. Academic validation and recognition, or accreditation, was definitely felt as a vital urgent need right across the continent at that time. So ACTEA was birthed to meet a clearly felt need. But to serve its intended community well, ACTEA needed to attempt as best it could to embed an effective accreditation service within a broader range of practical community services, in order to sustain

> and to bond its community together with identity and voice and commitment, to facilitate body-life amongst the growing number of these institutions across the continent, so crucial to the effective grounding and maturation of the rapidly growing Christian communities across Africa. (pp. 1–2)

Thus, from its formation, ACTEA intended to extend its services beyond the validation of academic programmes. Not only did ACTEA serve as a validating agency but also as a forum for sharing ideas, a connector of resources and an avenue for capacity-building of theological institutions in Africa. Writing about the key contribution of ACTEA to the flourishing of Africa's theological institutions, Tiénou (1990) noted:

> I myself see the greatest strength of ACTEA in the fact that it can be a catalyst for cooperation and excellence in theological education in our continent. If there is one word that summarises for me what the future of ACTEA is, it is the word cooperation among all of us for assuring excellence in theological education in our continent. [...] In brief, in my estimation ACTEA's major contribution is to provide a framework for continental networking and collaboration among us as evangelical theological educators. (pp. 2–3)

Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa has had to change its name in line with this comprehensive mandate. The original name ACTEA, not comprehensive enough to capture the full services that ACTEA offered Africa's theological institutions, was updated in 2014. The mission statement of ACTEA also required recasting, 'to strengthen member institutions in offering quality theological programmes through accreditation, networking, and support services'. Although ACTEA is known historically for accreditation, ACTEA provides a range of holistic support services for theological institutions in Africa. The three comprehensive ministrations that ACTEA performs are examined below.

Accreditation

Accreditation ensures accountability and improvement of theological institutions (Ott 2017:191). It is through accreditation that institutions measure up to accepted standards of quality. The credentials earned from accredited programmes allow students to transfer credits or to do advanced level study, both within Africa and within the international educational community, given that ACTEA's standards are in line with ICETE's standards. ACTEA accreditation has allowed students to study in places like South Africa, India, Australia, Europe, the United States and Canada. In other words, ACTEA's recognition or accreditation is not simply an affirmation of quality. Because of ACTEA being a part of ICETE, it is an international recognition that allows the international network to acknowledge that quality. *The ACTEA Standards and Guide to Self-Evaluation* notes the following about accreditation (ACTEA 2011):

> Accreditation is a process with at least two basic functions. (1) The accreditation process is designed to enable an educational institution to come to a clear analysis

> of itself in relation to commonly accepted standards of quality, and in that light to plan and execute for itself an orderly programme of improvement. (2) The accreditation process is also designed to enable such an institution to demonstrate its achievements in relation to commonly accepted standards of quality in such a way that the soundness of its operation can be recognised and appreciated externally and its credibility thus secured within the wider community. (p. 3)

Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa facilitates academic recognition of theological programmes at three levels: post-secondary diploma, post-secondary degree (bachelors), postgraduate (masters) and doctoral (academic or professional). Thus, ACTEA offers programmatic accreditation instead of institutional accreditation. The accreditation is offered in three stages. The first stage is the Affiliate Status wherein an interested institution applies to become an affiliate member with ACTEA with the approval of the institution's governing council. The Affiliate Status is granted when an institution can meet three core academic standards relating to admissions, teaching staff qualifications and length of programme, that is, graduation requirements. The second stage is candidate status. It is granted once an institution shows that it is capable of meeting five core ACTEA standards within a 4-year period. The standards encompass:

1. *Administration* – including governance of the institution, compilation of student outcome-based institutional objectives and mission statement, institutional stability with respect to personnel and finances, organisational review policies and practices;
2. *Teaching staff* – including academic, professional and character qualifications of faculty, Africanisation and faculty welfare policies;
3. *Facilities* – including suitability of site, well-managed library with sufficient contemporary resources, adequacy of office equipment and furnishings;
4. *Educational programmes* – including quality curriculum that is contextual, balanced and relevant, recognised admission standards and globally accepted graduation requirements and length of programme;
5. *Students* – including quality of community life, spiritual formation activities, student policies and services and regular assessment of student fees.

During candidacy status, institutions engage in a rigorous self-evaluation process and submit a self-evaluation report (SER) in accordance with the stipulated guidelines of the *ACTEA Standards and Guide to Self-Evaluation*. The third stage culminates in Accredited Status, which is granted after review of the institution's SER and confirmation by the ACTEA visitation team and an anonymous review panel of theologians, familiar with ACTEA Standards, that the institution and its programmes comply with accreditation standards. The period of accreditation lasts 8–10 years. In response to current trends in the educational sector of Africa, ACTEA also offers accreditation to institutions that hold some other form of academic recognition such as a government charter. ACTEA's accreditation validates the evangelical ethos of such

institutions, which might be necessary for their constituency. This Associate Status accreditation with ACTEA modifies the review process of submission of an application, SER and hosting a visitation team. ACTEA also offers non-accreditation services to institutions that are not yet ready for the formal process of accreditation under Correspondent Status.

Networking

Whilst the challenges facing theological education in Africa and around the world are at times great, these challenges can be overcome or at least reduced through networking, mutual exchange and pooling of resources. It is through networking that scholars, institutions and Christian networks can share ideas for mutual benefits. Networks open doors for research, writing, publishing, the latest trends in a particular field, fundraising opportunities and many other dividends. The *ICETE Manifesto* reinforces the place of collaboration in theological education (ICETE 2002):

> Our programmes of theological education must pursue contact and collaboration among themselves for mutual support, encouragement, edification and cross-fertilisation. We are at fault that so often in evangelical theological education we attend merely to our own assignments under God. Others in the same calling need us, and we need them. The biblical notion of mutuality needs to be much more visibly expressed and pragmatically pursued among our theological programmes. Too long we have acquiesced in an isolation of effort that denies the larger body of Christ, thus failing both ourselves and Christ's body. The times in which we serve, no less than biblical expectations, demand of each of us active ongoing initiatives in cooperation. This we must accomplish, by God's grace. (n.p.)

Consequently, networking has compelled ACTEA's promotion of continental and inter-continental partnerships. ACTEA facilitates the networking of theological institutions for sharing vital resources, networks and programmes so as to strengthen the capacity, vision and mission of theological institutions. ACTEA encourages theological educators, faculty members and students from different African institutions to collaborate in theological endeavours and invites member institutions to participate in the triennial global ICETE consultations. ACTEA also shares pertinent information that enriches and builds institutions whenever it becomes available.

Support services

Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa provides manifold supporting services to enrich Africa's evangelical theological institutions. ACTEA offers periodic news, information and resources through various avenues, such as the *ACTEA Bulletin* distributed in print for many years but now offered electronically as *ACTEA eNews*. The ACTEA Tools and Resources and ACTEA Forum sections of the ACTEA website make accessible archives of still useful resources that have benefited institutions formerly. A visit to the

ACTEA website reveals that past editions of the *eNews* are readily available under the News/Notices section, as well as an ACTEA Directory of Theological Schools in Africa, and ACTEA Tools & Studies, ACTEA Lectureships, ACTEA TEE Services, ACTEA Islamics Network, ACTEA Librarians Fellowship and ACTEA Continental Consultations. Whilst some of these programmes were discontinued because of unsustainable costs, nonetheless, ACTEA continues to offer diverse capacity-building programmes in partnership with like-minded organisations, enumerated below:

- Global Associates for Transformational Education (GATE). GATE, administered by ACTEA throughout Africa, is an innovative programme designed by world renowned theological educators to cultivate truly transformative theological education.
- ICETE Programme for Academic Leadership (IPAL). This programme trains, resources and facilitates the networking and collaboration of academic administrative leaders, such as academic deans and presidents (principals) of theological colleges, who lack formal training for their current administrative roles and responsibilities. The first year of the three-year IPAL programme examines the person and roles of an academic dean; the second year focuses on the role of academic leadership in curriculum development and the final year focuses on the role of academic leadership in the development of a teaching team. The excellent work of Fritz Deininger, a key IPAL curriculum developer, distinguishes the significant roles of the president and deans to advance the renewal and excellence of theological institutions (Deininger 2017:129–148).
- Overseas Council's Institute for Excellence (OCI) held annually in rotating regions of Africa. OCI and ACTEA recruit theological educators and administrators to address pertinent topics in Africa, including 'Extending Online Theological Education throughout Southern and Eastern Africa' and 'Training for Effective Ministry in Africa through Contextual Research', amongst others.
- White Horse Inn's Global Theological Initiative (GTI). GTI brings together African theologians and scholars, holders of doctoral degrees or candidates, for a three-day conference on foundational theological issues. Hence, the forum is an excellent opportunity for renewal, networking and development.
- Vital sustainability initiative (VSI). ACTEA's strategic planning to develop institutional capacity and sustainability in Africa's theological institutions has merged fruitfully with the VSI project of ScholarLeaders International. Through VSI, ScholarLeaders empower theological institutions in the Majority World to clarify their vision and mission to create strategic plans for sustainability and to develop administrative competencies.

The above partnership arrangements exemplify the support services that ACTEA offers its member institutions. ACTEA actively searches for further collaborative endeavours and partnerships to enrich, resource and enhance

quality theological education in Africa. Moreover, ACTEA has helped to create and encourage networking amongst theological institutions within Africa. This has happened through various channels like joint workshops, collaboration between theological institutions in helping each other with quality assurance needs, sharing of faculty members and librarian's networks.

The shape of theological education in Africa and opportunities for Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa

Historically, Africa was a continent receiving the gospel and its movements. Missionaries came to the continent to plant churches and later to establish Bible training schools and theological institutions. Presently, the gospel is rooted in Africa. Even though expatriate missionaries still come to Africa, Africa also sends indigenous missionaries. It is not uncommon, for instance, for a Nigerian pastor, locally trained at a Bible school, to plant churches on a different continent. The accelerated growth of the African church demands trained Christian workers such as pastors. Africa's churches need equipped pastors to help nourish, encourage, build and direct the church in the midst of overwhelming contemporary challenges, such as ethnopolitical conflict, poverty, health issues like Ebola and COVID-19, ethno-religious violence and property destruction, corruption in every sector of society, neglected infrastructure of society, falling educational standards and many others. That Christian workers are mostly trained and nurtured in theological institutions amplifies the urgent call for theological education in Africa.

Consequently, Africa needs more theological institutions, not fewer. But these institutions need to be of excellence. Trusted accrediting agencies like ACTEA are positioned to empower theological institutions in their quest for quality. Quality theological education is a multifaceted endeavour. Hardy (2017), a seasoned educational consultant and ACTEA advisor, explicated 11 key factors that contribute to quality theological training:

> (1) clarity of purpose, (2) a leadership team that understands leadership, (3) a coherent and comprehensive strategic plan, (4) responsiveness to the context, (5) the right students, (6) quality teachers, (7) solid administrative support, (8) adequate facilities, (9) structured input by owners, (10) stability and (11) commitment to reflection and change. (pp. 83–84)

Every institution embarks on the journey of excellence to manifest truly these factors in their institutions.

The insistence upon excellence in theological education is crucial because of an influx of institutions that have little to no interest in quality. Often their concern is producing men and women for ministry as quickly as possible. Some are ill-equipped training centres conducted inside the church or the pastor's house. Others lack library resources and curriculums, importing

materials wholesale from the West. Some are merely diploma or degree mills, resisting accountability to quality assurance bodies like ACTEA. Yet, some are honestly seeking to produce servants for the church but must consider quality measures and collaborative engagements with other theological institutions and accrediting bodies. They question the effectiveness of traditional models of theological education and the obsession with academics at the expense of ministerial and spiritual formation. At the same time, they must understand that quality theological education need not compromise ministerial formation and spiritual commitments (Botha 2010:151), for commitment to rigorous intellectual engagement is not in conflict with passionate commitment for spiritual and ministerial formation. ACTEA Standards, for example, affirm the necessity of the integration of both. As Bernhard Ott observes, church-related accrediting agencies, like ACTEA, assist institutions to fulfil their 'desired outcome qualities for ministries in church and mission' (Ott 2017:208).

Africa is home to great intellectual theological engagements. The continent has produced distinguished theologians for several generations. Accomplished publications in diverse theological fields attest to this reality. However, greater collaboration between African theological scholars and those from other continents may accelerate Africa's achievements. Where the ideology of difference and independence hinders Africa's global interactions, interdependence and collaborative engagements must prevail. Africa belongs to the global body of Christ, which is enriched through collaboration and the exchange of ideas. Furthermore, if Africa's theological institutions are to thrive in the global arena, they must learn to collaborate with each other and with those outside the continent. The most innovative institutions will equip students and faculty to function fruitfully in the global community. As ACTEA institutions originate from different faith traditions, contexts and languages, they already are practiced in sharing variegated ideas, resources and materials. Fulfilment of ACTEA's mission to foster networking amongst institutions will reap the level of collaboration that yields excellence in theological education.

Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa recognises that theological institutions and their scholars exist to serve the church. Therefore, there is a need for a 'trialogue' amongst the theological scholar, the church and the academy. The evangelical theological scholar must find ways of constantly being in touch with the church and letting his or her scholarship impact the church's worship, theology and ministry. ACTEA standards direct institutions to maintain relevancy in their theological education programmes through ministry partnership with the local church in the task of training leaders and theologians. Without this strong partnership, theological institutions may succumb to the charge of irrelevancy. The Lausanne *Cape Town Commitment* clearly articulates the missional nature of theological education (The Lausanne Movement 2011):

> The mission of the Church on earth is to serve the mission of God, and the mission of theological education is to strengthen and accompany the mission

> of the Church. Theological education serves first to train those who lead the Church as pastor-teachers, equipping them to teach the truth of God's Word with faithfulness, relevance and clarity; and second, to equip all God's people for the missional task of understanding and relevantly communicating God's truth in every cultural context. (pp. 2–6)

The format of theological education once offered strictly face-to-face at a residential seminary has expanded with manifold non-traditional means. Many more people are embracing online or blended modes of learning. Whilst some prefer intensive, short-term programmes, some students find only evening or weekends formats suitable to their schedules. Many full-time students increasingly are interested in education that do not require uprooting from their families and local communities and the familiarity of workplaces and churches. However, many churches resist these formats of theological education, even though their Bible schools have declining enrolments. Churches fear, sometimes legitimately, that these formats of learning are not rigorous enough. Thus, institutions embracing these non-traditional models of learning ought to think about quality measures. Accreditation standards guide institutions in the process of designing, developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating open, distance and technology-enhanced education for purposes of excellence in theological education and/or Christian HE.

ICETE's *Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education* referred to as SG-GETE, 2019, also updated in 2021, provides a template for such accreditation standards for distance and online programmes (ICETE 2019). The ACTEA council recently approved accreditation standards for Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODeL) programmes as well as guidelines for virtual accreditation site visits. These new standards help institutions in their quest for quality in these alternative means of theological education. ACTEA is currently working on standards for non-formal programmes like TEE. It is important to note that in the 1990s ACTEA developed and published detailed accreditation standards and procedures for TEE programmes. TEE was much more prominent as an alternative mode of theological education than it is now. But it is a mode not without similarities to the challenges of online theological education today and of accrediting such. ACTEA's offer of accreditation for TEE programmes was, however, never implemented, owing to internal transitions, and was thus forgotten.[8] Critical questions concerning the quality and equivalence of alternative programmes are an ongoing concern. Institutions launching quality online education will have to ensure that the materials are prepared by a qualified person, the lecturers are trained in online teaching and the students are exposed to the pedagogy of online education.

Contemporary educational philosophy rightly focuses on the outcome(s) of theological education in Africa and has alerted institutions of the value of

8. I thank Paul Bowers for this historical point.

measuring their performance. Whilst most institutions have composed professionally written documents about the institutional vision, mission, objectives and strategic plans, few have gathered data to assess educational outcomes of their programmes. This data could be gleaned readily through honest institutional self-evaluation, by talking with alumni, boards, denominations and the public. Moreover, ACTEA Guide to Self-Evaluation provides sets of probing questions that guide institutional self-assessment. Yet ACTEA seeks to partner with educational specialists in developing more tools for assessing educational outcomes.

Many institutions have not achieved financial sustainability and face uncertain futures. The paucity of funds translates into a reduction of payments of salaries and maintenance cutbacks. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has intensified sustainability challenges. Relying on Western donors, whose economies are also impacted by COVID-19, is no longer viable and supported by ACTEA Standards. Providentially, African institutions will have to cultivate home-grown solutions to their sustainability needs. Nevertheless, institutions will exhibit wisdom by building partnerships, without undue dependence, with their international partners. Financially robust institutions will raise most of the support locally and regionally even as they maintain their international networks. Thus, healthy institutions in Africa nurture partnerships with local communities, churches, organisations and other like-minded people from Africa whilst also seeking support abroad.

The growing recognition of the importance of holistic training will impact programmes and curricula. Institutions have realised the value of training in life skills such as leadership, public speaking, research, publishing, media, technology and marketing. However, few institutions have such competencies incorporated in their curricula. Theological institutions must build upon traditional cross-cultural training that emphasised evangelism, discipleship and mission outreach, and equip students with competencies in public speaking, community development, community cohesion, conflict transformation, public theology and public service. Theological institutions also need to educate in prophetic witness to equip students to engage in critical areas facing African societies such as materialism, corruption, sexual depravity, creation care, peace-making, urbanisation and interfaith relations. Yet evidence that Africa's theological institutions are adequately prepared for effective training in this endeavour seems lacking. Consequently, ACTEA has the opportunity for impact.

One challenge facing seminaries in many regions of Africa is the pressure of transformation into Christian universities with an expansion of programmes beyond theological and biblical training. Several reasons drive this transition. One factor involves the sustainability of seminaries, which may be enhanced; it is thought by expanding institutional programmes to attract more students and funds. Another issue is pressure from governments, such as The Commission for University Education (CUE) in Kenya. As CUE rarely accredits one programme,

seminaries must offer programmes in disciplines other than theology to gain accreditation (charter) from CUE. The transformation of the seminary to Christian University might benefit the institution through increased students and faculty, but such institutions may be fraught with the serious problem of diminishing evangelical Christian identity (Kintu 2019:160; Mulatu 2017:190–201).

These institutions must think critically about preserving the vision and mission of the founders and the sponsoring denominations and agencies. ACTEA observes that seminaries that have become Christian universities have had to redefine their vision and mission; that many struggles to maintain their evangelical distinctive and that nearly all wrestle with secular impulses introduced variously from the character of students admitted to the university programmes to the secular departments on campus. The gravity of these issues compels honest conversation, which ACTEA has encouraged. Should seminaries become liberal arts universities? What are the benefits of such a transition? Would the benefits align with the vision and mission of the institution? If the transition from seminary to university is inevitable, how does the seminary, now religion department, preserve an evangelical distinctive? What needs to be preserved, and what needs to be redefined or abandoned?

Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa encourages accredited seminaries that have become Christian universities to maintain their ACTEA accreditation, even adjusting the accreditation process for such institutions. Only ACTEA, and not federal or secular accrediting agencies without commitment to the evangelical faith, works with such institutions to preserve, enrich and renew their evangelical vision. Only ACTEA Standards monitor the spiritual formation of students and vocational development of pastors produced by chartered Christian universities with theological departments. Those are ACTEA concerns. ACTEA is concerned that institutions produce the best graduates for the church as Steve Hardy (2017) noted:

> Great fruit is the best indication of excellence in theological education. The graduates of excellent programmes preach better, evangelize better, administrate better, and live better in that their lives faithfully imitate our Lord Jesus Christ. Their learning prepared them well for the ministries to which God has called them. (p. 83)

ACTEA hopes that Africa's theological institutions and Christian universities will preserve this vision of producing excellent graduates for the church and society because the health of the church depends on such graduates.

Conclusion

The future of theological education in Africa greatly depends on the efficiency and effectiveness of vision-setting institutions such as ACTEA. ACTEA is a premier association that stands beside theological institutions in the African continent to serve the church and society. ACTEA will not waver in its mission to serve theological institutions in their quest for excellence and renewal.

Chapter 5

A missional phenomenon-based learning model for integrative theological education

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Abstract

This chapter is a relatively new attempt to contribute to a more integrated theological education. It is a matter of fact that the various theological disciplines are normally presented too fragmented, which can lead to a lack of cooperation between the 'head, heart and hands'. This model serves as a bastion against an individual orientated, decontextualised and disconnected education. It wants to move pedagogically away from the old school way of teaching and parrot learning.

To be truly contextual, use is made of the proposed transformative circle of community analysis that involves the following: the involvement phase, the

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social context analysis phase, the normative theological interpretation phase and the transformative action phase.

The missional phenomenon-based learning model (MPhenoBL) especially takes the Finnish model of education as a source and applies it to Theology. In short, world visions and contextualisation are taken seriously within a missionally driven model where daily practice determines the topics that are then addressed in an interdisciplinary manner.

The overarching goal of this model is what is called a transformative missional spirituality. It is seen as an all-encompassing spirituality that derives from the experiences of practical events in this world. It is further defined as African contextualised, reconciling, anti-racist and ex-centric by nature directed to this world with all its pain and suffering.

Introduction

This contribution explores MPhenoBL as a means to effectively equip ministers for their roles in the world. This exploration is driven by the following research question: How do we design an integrated curriculum that can prepare competent ministers to deal with the growing needs of the church, be competent in pastoral work, be theologically sound, take cognisance of worldviews, be contextual and with the required spiritual maturity?

In short, what is a missional phenomenon-based learning model?

The proposed MPhenoBL model is radically different from other more orthodox theological education models. In this model, emphasis is on integrated theological education through (1) a missional orientation that is directed towards the world; (2) a rigorous praxis directed modus operandi, that is writing a curriculum with the praxis as the point of departure and developing a missional spirituality via engagement with the community; (3) a phenomenon-based educational philosophy that is a topic-based learning model developing student's problem solving skills and thinking through an interdisciplinary approach; and (4) moving away from expensive published books to digital technology.

In the Introduction of the book, *Between the real and the ideal: Ministerial formation in South African churches,* Marilyn Naidoo (ed. 2012) mentions that there is an urgent need for a new contemporary theological educational model:

> [*T*]o cut across traditional ways of thinking through the integration of an understanding of tradition, experience, practice through reflection, producing an interdisciplinary model for spiritual/ministerial formation which is by its very nature interdisciplinary. (n.p.)

The proposed MPhenoBL model cuts across traditional ways of thinking; it is all-encompassing and serves as a bastion against (1) fragmentation between theological disciplines; (2) a lack of cohesion between 'head, heart and hands'; (3) a dualistic spirituality; (4) an individual orientated, decontextualised and disconnected education; (5) an old school pedagogy of a lecturer giving classes; (6) parrot learning; (7) expensive published books; and (8) poverty.

Before advancing to the different central elements that form part of this MPhenoBL model, it will be proper to first note the devastating results of a fragmented curriculum.

The negative results of a fragmented curriculum

Kathleen A. Cahalan (2017) in the introduction of the book *Integrating Work in Theological Education* showed very clearly that the lack of integration in theological education and ministerial practice comes at a high price. According to her (Cahalan 2017), fragmented curricula:

> [*R*]everberates through the personal, ecclesial and systematic messes we see every day in the church. It can leave ministers depleted, disconnected from their vocation, feeling inadequate, or on the verge of dishonesty with themselves and others. Lack of integration also has negative consequences for contexts of ministry. A community of faith can become unmoored from its tradition or lack the critical lens by which to reform it. Systems become imbued with arrogance, self-seeking power, even corruption. (p. 2)

Cahalan reiterates that theological knowledge is increasing and becoming highly specialised and that in the process, spiritual formation is lacking. She (Cahalan 2017) poignantly comments:

> Our disciplines remain in silos, disconnected from each other; we are unsure to embark on the long and hard task of skill building and competent practice; increasingly the moral and spiritual formation, which the church once performed and for which most faculty are unprepared, is now left to the school and seminary structures are quickly unravelling as enrolments, finances, and church support dwindles. (p. 2)

In workshops on *Integrated Theology* conducted in 2019 by myself and Professor Marilyn Naidoo from UNISA at two theological schools – one in South Africa and the other in Zambia – it became clear that students also experience a lack of integration, especially in so far as theological and spiritual formation is concerned. At one of these theological institutions, the opinions of the current and alumni students were summarised (in an unpublished workshop feedback document) as follows:

> Many participants stated that the focus on academic education did not adequately prepare them for ministry on the ground and expressed a desire for more practical experience and spiritual development**.** Academic education did not sufficiently prepare students. Some students and graduates argued that their academic

> education did not sufficiently prepare them for their careers. This related to the statement that whilst the acquisition of knowledge is essential in ministerial formation, the scope of the education must go beyond a restrictive cognitive qualification towards a more integrated human development. (Respondents unspecified, unpublished workshop feedback, 2019)

On the integration of academic and spiritual lives, they reported rather negatively:

> That God becomes a subject that is studied in a purely academic manner. That the theological institution is not a spiritual environment and ministerial training has been reduced to essentially an academic exercise with some variation in ministry exposure as the institution's primary concern remains academic and professional, not spiritual. (Respondents unspecified, unpublished workshop feedback, 2019)

It is clear that for the best interest of the kingdom of God and the church of Christ, this situation should not be continued. Integrated theological education is much more than a topic for a theological debate – it is a must if we are serious about effective theological schools and about growing churches.

The solution for this fragmented curricula and 'schizophrenic' theology at theological schools in general should begin with an all-out contextual missional approach as the first element of the MPhenoBL model.

A contextual missional approach

No missiological orientation towards the world – then no theological education. This is quite a radical statement. But this is exactly what Steve De Gruchy (2010) is alluding to when he states:

> When theological education is removed from its missiological orientation it loses touch with the world, and it turns inwards. What happens then is that it creates problems, tensions, arguments and debates that are wholly internal to the academics involved, and which soon bear little resemblance to the lives that ordinary people are living. Books and essays are written, conferences are attended and research projects are undertaken to deal with issues raised by other academics, as theological educators seek to mimic their colleagues in the academy in the search for wider cultural acceptability. Yet, the gnawing question remains: if there is no missiological orientation towards the world, in response to the challenge of the gospel itself, then is theological education theological? (p. 43)

The idea of placing 'missional' at the heart of theological curricula already found its roots in Bosch's (1991) magnum opus, *Transforming missions*: *Paradigm shifts in mission theology*:

> Just as the church ceases to be the church if it is not missionary, theology ceases to be theology if it loses its missionary character. The crucial question then is not simply or only or largely what church is or what mission is; it is also what theology is and is about. We are in need of a missiological agenda for theology rather than just a theological agenda for mission, for theology rightly understood, has no reason to exist other than crucially to accompany the *missio Dei*. (p. 494)

The concept: Praxis-oriented

I found Banks' (1999) reasoning about the concept 'missional' in line with David Bosch's views, but with even more emphasis on the practical part of missions:

> By missional I mean not just 'mission orientated', but an education undertaken with a view to what God is doing in the world, considered from a global perspective. I also mean something more than what 'missiological' education generally covers. I'm thinking rather of reflection, training and formation for work on the mission field, whether the latter takes place overseas or locally. (p. 142)

Banks takes the whole idea of missional to be a practical relationship between theological education and community and a continuous interplay between reflection and action to a new level. For him, theological education should be field based (Banks 1999:142). Furthermore, for Banks and others, this missional model is a 'hands on partnership' between theological education as the science of interpreting and reflecting on the religious experience of a community, on the one hand, and the going over to action, on the other hand – this all with a strong spiritual and communal dimension.

I would like to place the emphasis a little bit differently. The missional praxis-oriented model should nearly exclusively start with the identifying of the worldviews and the directed observation of the practical social-religious lives of the community. The emphasis should be on the needs and shortcomings in the community. From there, it should go back to the academic processes of reflecting and analysing, and eventually, this should lead through brainstorming to the publishing of a realistic practical oriented project that should be interdisciplinary and that should address all these issues. From there, students should be trained how to use this information in their practical lives and then go back to the community for implementation. The reaction of the community should then be monitored with feedback from the academics to rectify or elaborate on the 'living' curriculum.

Studying a community – The transformative circle of community analysis

To study and analyse a community is very important in the MPhenoBL model. In this regard, I use what I call a 'transformative circle of analysing'. I should say, at this point, that this circle is not an entirely novel idea. It was derived from the so-called pastoral circle of Holland and Henriot, which was altered and adapted by Karecki and Kritzinger, which they called 'the praxis circle' (Kritzinger 2010:144–173).

As was stated, the first important step in the missional praxis-oriented model is the studying of a community. For this, it is important to (1) get involved in a community, (2) analyse the social context, (3) make a theological interpretation

of the worldviews and norms of the community, (4) make a value judgement about the spirituality of the community in question and at the end, and (5) go over to the transformative action phase.

I would like to call this process a 'transformative circle of community analysis'. In this regard, the following is of importance:

The involvement phase

In the 'involvement phase', the key concept is to listen with empathy and compassion, to delight in otherness and to listen to their stories of pain and resistance. One has to develop a 'listening heart'.

Nico Botha (2011:181–196) observed, inter alia, the following during this phase: 'We learn to discover their language, resistance, potentialities, customs, organisation, and leadership. More profoundly we discover the "seeds of the Word" present in them'.

The social context analysis phase

Botha (2011) narrated the story of Roman Catholic nuns who went to a new community. In this phase – 'the social context analysis phase' – one of them, a certain sister Rodriquez, commented the following:

> We have become open to the world in its historical, social, political, and economic dimensions; there is a constant dialogue with the people in all dimensions of their lives. Our manner of seeing the world has changed radically; where before we saw it through the eyes of the rich, today we see it from the perspective of the oppressed. (pp. 181–196)

In this step of the transforming circle, the theological curricula should take cognisance of the social context, and especially then, of 'issues of life and death'. De Gruchy (2010) put it as follows:

> Engaging the world in the service of life means shaping our curricula around HIV and AIDS, climate change, gender-based violence, food security, and the like. These are the *issues of life and death* in the world today, and if our theological education is not preparing students for providing leadership to the people of God in their response to the *missio Dei*, then it falls short of its goal. (p. 43; [*author's added emphasis*])

What this means for theological education is that the world is not just a place for 'applied theology' learnt in books and classrooms, but a place in which theology itself emerges from the ground up.

The normative theological interpretation phase

At the 'normative theological interpretation phase', the idea is to make a theological interpretation of the worldviews and norms of the community. The

reformed theologian and philosopher, Bennie Van der Walt (2012), dedicated much of his time and energy to formulating a Reformed worldview. To establish this worldview, he asks seven questions, which are presented in the following sections with a brief summary.

☐ Who is God and what is his relationship with this creation?

According to Van der Walt (2012), the first question that one should ask oneself concerns the concept of 'community'. It inquires who God is and what his relationship with creation entails. Is he seen as the sole Creator? Is he actively maintaining the creation? Or is he an absent Creator leaving things over to humankind to run according to their liking? What would be the powers and freedom of human beings within this creation? How sensitive are they towards the ecology?

☐ What kind of reality are we living in?

How do people see the reality that they are living in? Are they pessimistic about it? Are things like violence, corruption and fear paramount in their minds? How do they appreciate the beauty of nature? How do they see the development and use of technology?

☐ What went wrong?

Is there really an awareness of the devastating effects of sin in today's world? Do they have answers to the question of where evil/sin originates? What are the 'wrong' things perceived by them?

☐ How can that which went wrong be remedied?

What are the solutions, according to the people, of the problems that exist? Does the soteriology of the Bible play a role in their thinking? What do they think about the role of the church and are they churchgoers? Do they believe and practice a personal relationship with Christ?

☐ Who are we? What does it mean to be human?

It is necessary to establish the anthropology of the community. To what extent do they see human beings made into the image of God? What are their views on the sanctity of life? What are their views about the relation between men and women? Patriarchal or equal? What is their evaluation of the worth of those who are marginalised, including the elderly, children, impoverished people, people with HIV/AIDS, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer and other (LGBTIQ+) community, etc.? To what extent

are they inclusive in their thinking about races and tribes? How do they evaluate their own culture?

How can we improve society?

To what extend does the community care for one another? How do they steer away from totalitarianism, etc.? Does God, and then, especially Jesus Christ, play a part in the strategy to improve the society? If so, how?

At the end of the day, the idea is that an integrated Christian worldview should lead to spiritual maturity. For that reason, it should be proper to talk at this stage more about spiritual maturity as this should be the ultimate goal of theological education.

But let us proceed to the last phase of the transformative circle of community analysis.

The transformative action phase

The process of observation and analysis is not complete until a curriculum is designed and implemented. It is for this reason that the last phase of the transformative circle of community analyses is called the 'transformative action phase'. It is also called 'transformative' because it should lead to something, in this case, to spiritual maturity, to a relevant curriculum and to academic excellence. Such a 'planning for action' is illustrated by the following example (Du Preez 2013b):

> In the accounts of the two Roman Catholic sisters, Rodriguez and Da Cunha, who left the convent to live among the poor, it is astonishing to observe the amount of continuous planning, action, and transformation that took place among the poor. It was not so much planning in the strategic, technical sense of the word, but planning for action – planning for praxis. The planning included forming groups for dialogue, bringing together children, the youth, and adults in basic communities to celebrate their faith and their lives, and addressing the social needs of the community. (p. 198)

In the transformative action phase, such planning should not occur haphazardly but should be informed by (1) emphatic involvement and faith commitment, (2) social analysis to assist the community in understanding their situation and its root causes and (3) the reading of the Bible in the light of their situation.

It is not enough just to reflect biblically and theologically on all the challenges that face Africa. What is needed at the end of the day are plans of action. This last step in the transformative circle of transformation is called 'transformative action' because it should be a well thought through action that has authentic transformation as its goal.

The transformative action that I am proposing has its roots in Finland. I have a special interest in Finland, and their education as my grandchild is

studying there. In particular, my interest is in 'Phenomenal Education'. I see enormous potential for this type of education to become more and more part of and serve as a practical model for an integrative theological education model. What follows below is an explanation of what phenomenal education entails, the rational and an attempt to demonstrate how it could be put into practice in our theological schools.

What is phenomenon-based learning?

When consulting the website of Finland's phenomenon-based learning (Phenomenal Education 2015–2019), the following becomes clear:

> 'Phenomenon-based learning' is a learner centred, multidisciplinary instructional approach that is based on student inquiry and problem solving. No specific subject is taught, nor is there any pre-set learning objective. Instead, students investigate and solve their own questions by applying what subjects are relevant to the problem. For example, to understand and solve a question about the problems of the elderly in the church, knowledge from different disciplines such as gerontology, physiology, neuro-psychology, pastoral psychology, the views of the Old Testament and New Testament towards the elderly, homiletics, etc., may be needed. (n.p.)

This type of learning shares similarities with project-based learning, problem-based learning and inquiry-based learning. A key difference, however, is that phenomenon-based learning must have a global context and an interdisciplinary approach. This means that a topic must be a real-world issue or 'phenomena', and that learners need to apply different perspectives to study the topic. Instead of passively learning abstract or disconnected concepts, phenomenon-based learning presents real-life problems and asks learners to actively discover the knowledge and skills required to solve them.

A criticism of traditional instruction is that learning is passive. This means that lecturers dictate knowledge to students. As a result, learners are more focused on the memorisation of facts instead of how to apply the knowledge to new problems or ideas. There is also no active engagement on the part of the student. Traditional instruction is also focused on isolated subjects that seem separate from each other. Quite often learners are taught the theories and concepts of different subjects but then cannot make the connections between them and how they relate to real life. In other words, learning lacks meaning and context.

In contrast, engaging students to solve real-life problems, scenarios and events encourages connected learning. The students can discover how the knowledge from different areas is connected and applied to real life. Phenomenon-based learning provides a more meaningful learning experience by actively engaging students to solve problems that have a real-world context. It also helps students to make connections across different disciplines.

Origins of phenomenon-based learning

Phenomenon-based learning has its origins in a 2016 education movement in Finland's educational system. To gradually phase in the phenomenon-based learning model, the revised education system asks that students take one module each year with the phenomenon-based learning approach. The purpose is to better prepare students for real life. With this instructional approach, students engage in learning that has more context to real-life issues, apply knowledge and skills from different subjects and develop important skills like communication, critical thinking, problem solving and teamwork.

How does phenomenon-based learning relate to learning theory?

Phenomenon-based learning is not an entirely new idea; it has its roots in constructivist learning theory, socio-constructivist learning theory, as well as socio-cultural learning theory. These theories propose that learning is best achieved by the learner actively constructing their own knowledge and experience, instead of by passive instruction. When learners work in a group, learning is seen as also being socially constructed.

How does phenomenon-based learning work?

The model of phenomenon-based learning is basically based on the following:

- Learners ask a question that relates to real life and that is of personal interest.
- Learners engage in research to find a solution by studying the topic from different angles and perspectives.
- Instructors facilitate the process by guiding students to learn the concepts and skills needed to solve the problem.
- Learners present and deliver their solutions in a chosen format.

How to set-up phenomenon-based learning for students?

If one would like to try and incorporate the ideas of phenomenon-based learning in an educational institution, the following steps are recommended:

- Have learners choose a 'phenomena' from the real world; the topic should have a global context and be related to real-life issues or events.
- Develop an inquiry question around this topic that begins with 'how', 'why' or 'what if'.
- Identify and teach the basic concepts that pertain to the learner's chosen question; what skills or knowledge will they need to solve the problem?

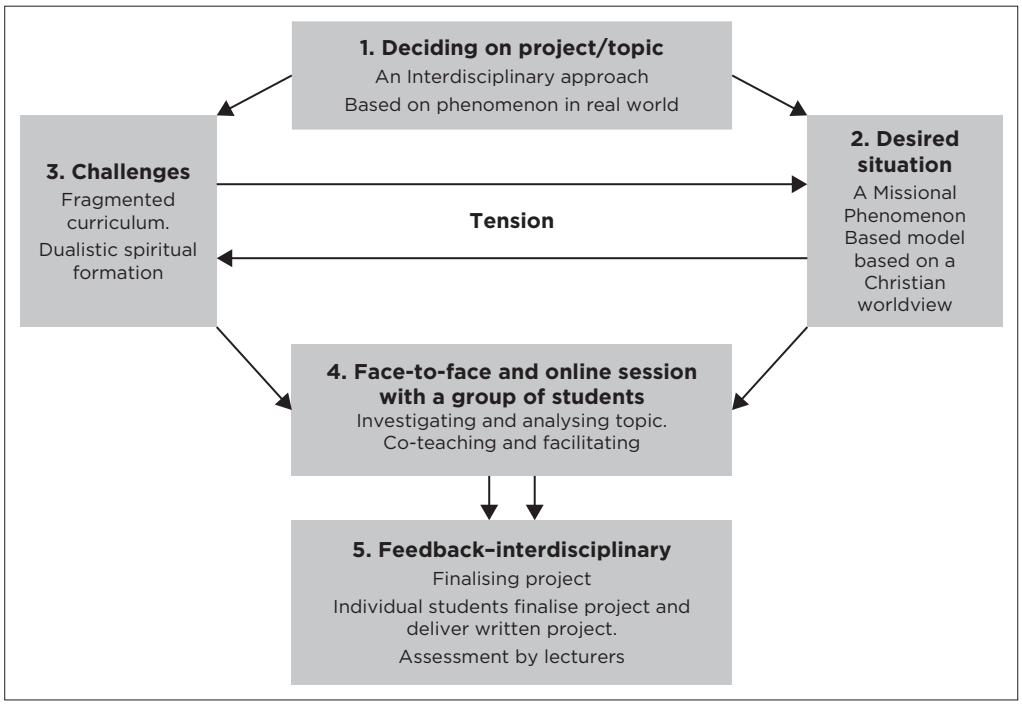


FIGURE 5.1: Diagram of the missional phenomenon-based learning process.

- Ensure that there is an open structure of time for learners to engage in the necessary research and problem solving.
- Facilitate the process by setting up a framework that will help guide students through the process and develop their own way of solving the problem.

Figure 5.1 is an attempt to put the whole MPhenoBL into perspective.

Strengths of phenomenon-based learning

The strengths of phenomenon-based learning include:

- Fosters greater engagement in learning new knowledge and skills because learners are working towards what interests them personally.
- Enables deeper learning because learners are making connections across subjects and seeing practical relevance to real life.
- Learners develop stronger skills in communication, teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving.
- Learners become more independent as they become responsible for their own learning; this helps to create a more independent and self-sufficient student body.

Finland is renowned for its good education. Helsinki University is ranked globally amongst the best 100 universities in the world. Their success in both Programme for International Student Assessment and many other surveys has attracted international interest in Finnish education. Finnish education is in high demand internationally and is considered amongst the leading countries in creating new innovation in education.

Kirsti Lonka (2018), an educationist from Finland, noted that what makes Finland's education so special and is worthwhile imitating:

1. It has world-class research-based training, especially at the University of Helsinki.
2. The teaching profession is highly valued and Finland takes pride in training the world's best teachers and lecturers.
3. To keep at the cutting edge, the education system and learning methods are constantly re-evaluated to keep up with the changing world.
4. Work is now increasingly done in projects, with non-permanent teams solving complex issues together. Information is not only acquired but also created together. This method is called 'phenomenon-based learning' (PhenoBL).
5. The pedagogy style has changed completely – their education system is moving away from subjects towards a future where teachers increasingly serve as facilitators teaching comprehensive learning skills. This makes teaching more and more problem and phenomenon-based.
6. Learning takes place in multidisciplinary projects that centre on complex phenomena and develop student's problem solving and thinking skills.
7. New technologies are integrated into teaching and learning environments are increasingly modified to promote learning.
8. The rational is that memory does not work like a scanner that accepts information as given. Instead, it draws conclusions and constructs meanings for and on what was learned.
9. Education in Finland works closely with other disciplines, especially neuro-psychology and educational psychology.
10. Schools and universities started offering multidisciplinary learning concepts and universities now offer multidisciplinary degree programmes.

To further promote the advantages of the Finnish education system, Lonka also adds that this type of education helped Finland to rise out of a situation of poverty. She wrote: 'The narrative of Finns rising from rags to riches speaks to many countries – many African countries, for example, are still combatting poverty […]' (Lonka 2018:n.p.).

By implication, she sees this way of education as a way to combat poverty in the long run.

The above serves as directives for the proposed MPhenoBL model that the author is proposing for integrative theological education.

Teach students how to learn and how to prepare for professional life

In an article by Salla Jokela (2019) entitled, 'Future challenges are so complex that solving them requires multidisciplinary groups, collaboration and new kinds of learning', she writes about the importance of focusing on 'teaching to learn' and professional skills.

Another point of departure is that students should learn that there are no 'perfect' solutions; rather, what is most important is for them to be able to justify their proposals well and communicate them in an understandable and respectful manner to different groups.

All these train students for professional life. Many students find employment in various projects or as entrepreneurs, which requires them to have the ability to acquire funding, communicate on the purpose of their work and their personal strengths, seek and combine information from several sources, as well as report on their achievements.

The emphasis is on the fact that learning should increasingly be based on motivating students and boosting their thirst for knowledge. She writes that professional life is evolving at such a fast pace that they are currently not even fully aware of the skills needed in the future. They can no longer think of graduates as 'completed' individuals. 'Lifelong learning and self-management will have to gain even more importance' (Jokela 2019).

Get rid of all subjects!

In the *CuriousMindMagazine,* Elizabeth Williams (2020) published an article with the following catching title: 'Yeap! Finland will become the first country in the world to get rid of all school subjects…' She quotes from the website of Phenomenal Education to explain in short the concept of 'phenomenal education' (Williams 2020):

> In Phenomenon Based Learning (PhenoBL) and teaching, holistic real-world phenomena provide the starting point for learning. The phenomena are studied as complete entities, in their real context, and the information and skills related to them are studied by crossing the boundaries between subjects. (n.p.)

Why follow PhenoBL education?

In her article, Williams gives her understanding of PhenoBL education and her motivational reasons why one should follow this model. Some of the points have already been mentioned, but for the sake of completeness, it will be repeated. What follows is a summary of her article.

Learning starts with the goal of understanding real-world phenomena:

- These phenomena will be studied through an interdisciplinary approach, which means subjects will be included, but only those (and only parts of them) that contribute to excelling in the topic.
- This kind of learning will include both face-to-face and online sessions, with a strong emphasis on the beneficial use of technology and the Internet, especially through the process of e-Learning.
- Instead of the traditional style of teacher-centred learning with students sitting behind their desks and recording every instruction given by the lecturer, the approach is going to change to a holistic level. This means that every phenomenon will be approached in the most suitable and natural way possible.
- The starting point of phenomenal-based teaching is constructivism, in which learners are seen as active knowledge builders and information is seen as being constructed as a result of problem solving, constructed out of 'little pieces' into a whole that suits the situation in which it is used at the time.
- This educational system tends to include leaning in a collaborative setting (e.g. teamwork), where they would like to see information being formed in a social context, instead of it being seen only as an internal element of an individual.
- This way of teaching requires a lot of cooperation between lecturers of different disciplines and this is why they have to undergo an intense training.
- Co-teaching is at the base of the curriculum creation, with input from more than one subject specialist and lecturers who embrace this new teaching style.

Williams (2020) closed her article with the following positive note to lecturers:

> From a teaching perspective, this style is very rewarding and worthwhile for the teachers too. Some teachers, who have already implemented this style in their work, say that they cannot go back to the old style. This is indeed not surprising at all, as the interaction in this teaching style is something every teacher has always dreamed of. (n.p.)

Weaknesses of phenomenon-based learning: A critical view

The weaknesses of PhenoBL include:

- If there is a specific learning goal that a lecturer would like learners to achieve, then PhenoBL could be a problem. There are no imposed learning goals in PhenoBL because they are created during the learning process.
- Sufficient resources and support need to be available for students to tackle self-led projects. Without a facilitator, learners may struggle to identify and learn the skills and knowledge required to complete the project.

- Phenomenon-based learning is characterised by its lack of formal structure. If your theological institution is required to have a formal structure where students need to show completion of skills or knowledge required, this form of learning may not be ideal.
- If feedback and assessment are important to theological school, this may be more difficult with PhenoBL, where assessment is mainly based on learner progress.

The future of phenomenon-based learning

I am convinced that problem solving, teamwork and critical thinking are skills that cannot be developed by sitting in a classroom listening to a lecturer or by reading and watching e-learning videos. These skills are developed from active engagement and doing, a key requirement in PhenoBL. Phenomenon-based learning will surely become more common as the 21st century continues to get individuals who can learn and take initiatives on their own and together will solve some of life's biggest problems.

Emphasis on public theology

The new emphasis in the theological world on Public Theology is to be welcomed. In this regard, the recent published book, *African Public Theology* (2020), written by African theologians, is particularly important. The following topics are discussed: Democracy, Work, Economics, Poverty, Rural Community, Development, Education, the Environment, Science, Health, Human Rights, Gender, Migrations and Human trafficking, Refugees and Stateless People, Interfaith relations, the State, Police and Armed Forces, Land Issues, the Media, the Arts and Intergenerational issues. These topics can easily be researched in an interdisciplinary, integrated way according to the proposed MPhenoBL model.

The ultimate goal of MPhenoBL is to prepare and produce component ministers that will be mature – emotionally and spiritually. It is then proper to write something more about spirituality – what I call, a 'transformative missional spirituality'.

A transformative missional spirituality

The importance of spirituality not only for the church but also for theological schools is emphasised in the WCC document *Together Towards Life Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*. For them, it is important to see spirituality as holistic and as an integral part of life – yes, every sphere of life (WCC 2012):

> Spirituality gives deepest meaning to our lives in its fullness and calls for a commitment to resist all forces, power and systems which deny, destroy and

> reduce life. It reveals to us a deepening sense of God who cares about all living things. Mission is the praxis of affirming and caring for life and spirituality is the sacred gift of the Creator, which make mission possible. (para. 37)

Nelus Niemandt (2013:1) addressed about a '*transformative missional spirituality'.* The idea is that spirituality should to a large extent derive from missional involvement, and this type of spirituality should be able to be transformative by nature. This will overcome the dualism that exists of a spirituality separate from praxis, separate from academic involvement. Niemandt is therefore pleading for a more encompassing kind of spirituality that will involve 'heads, hearts and hands'.

Matthey (2010:251) also placed 'missional' in a broader and more holistic perspective and described 'spirituality' as a 'way of life, a relational attitude nourished by a theological worldview in a frame shaped by the famous triangle of faith, hope and love in 1 Corinthians 13'. Doorenbal's (2012:212) description was succinctly to the point – 'missional spirituality is a spirituality that forms and feeds mission*'.*

This missional spirituality should, according to Kritzinger (2010:229), be (1) rooted in grace, (2) inclusively African, (3) reconciling, (4) creation-affirming, (5) anti-racist and anti-tribalistic and (6) ex-centric or missional by nature.

Let's close this topic about a missional spirituality with some remarks from Robert Banks (1999) when writing about the importance of the classroom atmosphere and the way the traditional theological disciplines should be taught to help in the personal spiritual formation of students. He (Banks 1999) then adds:

> But their impact strengthens when they form part of a missional model of theological education [...] Here is the answer to a deficiency in other proposals for reform, providing new ways to help students grow beyond the inclination to become more Christ-like and to realise it in practice. What we need is a more dynamic context for personal formation, a more vibrant interaction between teachers and learners, and a more urgent need to communicate the faith to others. Working together in mission makes a significant difference. (pp. 203–204)

In my personal experience, the things that stood out in his spiritual formation were especially related to outreaches to communities in missional outreaches. Whilst still a theological student, he witnessed for the first time in his life demon possessed people and how the demons were driven out in Jesus Name. This made a lasting effect on his ministry. He visited also with theological students an unreached Muslim community on the island of Busi in Mozambique and went back later to witness how 90% of the inhabitants turned to Christ during a revival that was initiated by an evangelist for children. These kinds of outreaches then later formed part of the missional spirituality of the students of HEFSIBA Institute for Christian Higher Education (ICHE) to do their practical work inter alia amongst the Yao Muslim community in Malawi in cooperation with The *Church* of Central Africa Presbyterian.

Based on my doctoral thesis (Du Preez 2013b) on contextual and missional spirituality, I would like to reaffirm my conclusive statement on this in the following way:

> Of particular interest for theological institutions that really takes interest in integrative theological education, is of the importance a missional all-encompassing spirituality that derives from the experiences of practical events in this world. This kind of spirituality is based on the Word of God, guided by the Holy Spirit to influence and transform the thought life, the emotions and the lifestyle and accompanying actions of especially the students. Typical characteristics of this kind of spirituality is that it should be rooted in grace and compassion, is African contextualised, reconciling, anti-racist and ex-centric and missional by nature directed to this world with all its pain and suffering. (pp. 247–249)

Conclusion

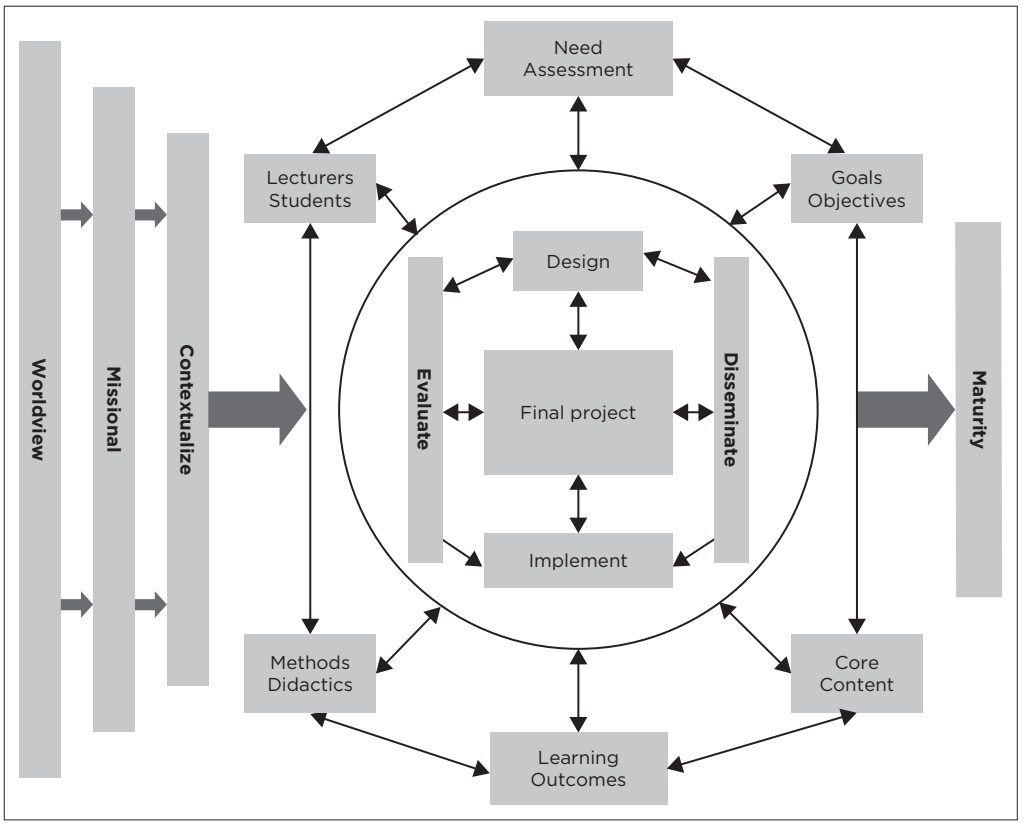
In this chapter, attention was given to the following question: How do we design an integrated curriculum that can prepare competent ministers to deal with the growing needs of the church, be competent in pastoral work, be theologically sound, take cognisance of the worldviews and with the required spiritual maturity?

Figure 5.2 sums up the content of the chapter as it reflects to a large extent the process put forward in this proposed MPhenoBL model.

Figure 5.2 clearly shows the driving forces of the MPhenoBL model, namely an integrated biblical worldview and a missional approach that is fully contextualised in African soil. A need assessment of 'life and death' phenomena should be established. Specific goals and objectives of what the project would like to accomplish should it be established. The lecturer should put forward the core content in collaboration with lecturers of other disciplines.

The outcomes of models should be written with a missional, contextual underground not ignoring the affective outcomes. There should be clarity on the didactics to be used – not lecture centred but student centred. For online and face-to-face sessions between lecturers and students, the emphasis should not only be on the involvement of students in the whole process of deciding on the topics and the gaining of information through research from books and the Internet but also 'hands-on' research in practical life. The framework should then be designed and distributed for comments. There should be solid evaluation by the lecturers involved with the project before the final project will be written and handed in.

All of the above-mentioned steps should always have in mind the academic, emotional and spiritual maturity of the students. After all, this should be the aim of all the endeavours, as shown in Figure 5.2, to produce competent pastors that can think for themselves, that can solve problems, that have compassionate pastoral hearts and that think theologically sound and



Source: Du Preez (2013b:259).

FIGURE 5.2: The complete missional phenomenon-based learning model.

integrated. Furthermore, as shown in the figure, spiritual maturity is the aim to work fruitful in the church of Christ and in the kingdom of God as a whole.

Acknowledgements

This chapter contains adaptations of parts of the author's PhD dissertation on Worldviews and Contextualisation (ch. 3 & ch. 5): Du Preez, K.P., 2013, *A framework for Curriculum development in Theological Institutions of the Network for African Congregational Theology* (NetACT), US Printers, Stellenbosch.

Chapter 6

The importance of African hermeneutics in African theological education

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Abstract

The Bible is at the heart of theological education. How we read it matters. From the onset of the modern missionary movement with Schleiermacher and Dilthey, many scholars argued that Bible interpretation was neutral. On the author-text-reader continuum, the trend was to emphasise either the author or the text. In more recent times, the place of the reader began to receive more attention. Readers come to the different texts with their assumptions. Whilst our assumptions may sometimes aid in reading the text, we sometimes import these assumptions into the text with negative results. At the same time, the various

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methods that we use in hermeneutics are also based on certain assumptions. Most students in African theological institutions study hermeneutics, exegesis and various courses on Bible exposition using the resources available to them. These are mainly Western sources. Whilst these resources are useful, what theological educators may not realise is that we are imposing Western assumptions on African students that result in a double hermeneutical gap. At the same time, we are failing to interrogate the assumptions our students bring to the text from their various backgrounds.

This article will begin with an examination of the role of context in hermeneutics to ground the validity of African contextual approaches. A brief section on how the Bible is read in Africa will follow. The main section will give an overview of current trends in hermeneutical approaches in Africa and then focus specifically on the four-legged stool African intercultural hermeneutic. The positive implications of using such a method in classrooms will then be provided. It is hoped that this article will provide a rationale for the value of hermeneutics from African perspectives in contextual theological education in Africa.

Introduction

The Bible is at the heart of theological education. How we read/interpret it matters because it shapes our doctrine and practice. Hermeneutics can be defined as the theory and practice of interpretation. It comes from the Greek word *hermeneuein,* which means 'to understand'. One of the challenges that have faced hermeneutics throughout its history is the lack of objective criteria as is expected of the natural sciences. For that reason, its status as a science has often been questioned. Nevertheless, in that it involves critical reflection on the processes of interpretation and understanding, hermeneutics is both a science and an art.

Most students in African theological institutions use the resources available to them. These are mainly Western sources. Whilst these resources are useful, what theological educators may not realise is that we are imposing Western assumptions on our students, which makes understanding more complicated. The assumptions underlying our worldviews naturally influence how we understand. For instance, if my assumptions allow for a mono-sectional reality in which the spiritual realm is as real as the physical, then texts related to demon possession will be understood from a spiritual perspective. If my assumptions do not allow for such a reality, then they are likely to be seen from a psychological perspective. Whilst Western assumptions are by no means monolithic, either amongst communities or individuals given that there are confessional, historical, theological and ecclesiological distinctives,[9] there

9. 'Western' is a general category that comprises the United States, Canada and the countries of Western, Northern and Southern Europe. Identifying all the distinctives represented in Western confessional, historical, theological and ecclesiological thought is beyond the scope of this paper.

are some commonalities that justify addressing them together. Take the field of Hermeneutics, for instance. Some Western assumptions might include linear reasoning, a greater dependence on scientific methods, a more individualistic approach in understanding and representing texts, an antispirititualist approach and a more fragmented view of reality (as opposed to African holism).

At the same time, we are failing to interrogate the assumptions African students bring to the text from their various backgrounds. As with Western assumptions, African assumptions are also not monolithic. Nevertheless, there are enough commonalities (particularly south of the Sahara) that make it possible to speak generally of 'Africans' as I do in this chapter. Granted, sources from African scholars are on the increase; however, these are nowhere near enough to make an impact. There is the general consensus now that Africans need to move away from the Western approaches that have been imposed on us because they promote a 'foreign' way of reading the Bible that introduces a 'double hermeneutical gap' (Van den Toren, Mburu & Bussey 2021). This does not mean that Africans should put aside Western resources altogether or that some assumptions do not overlap. Rather, they should be viewed as complementary but read critically with the aim of interrogating the assumptions that inevitably come with every form of communication. The purpose of African approaches is to find a means of communication that resonates with Africans and deals with the double hermeneutical gap. This is the general impetus or motivation behind the development of African hermeneutical approaches. Introducing African hermeneutics in our curricula is one way of ensuring that students learn to read the Bible from a position of contextual awareness.

This article will begin with an examination of the role of context in hermeneutics to ground the validity of African contextual approaches. A brief section on how the Bible is read in Africa will follow. The main section will give an overview of current trends in hermeneutical approaches in Africa and then focus specifically on the four-legged stool African intercultural hermeneutic. This will be followed by the implications of African hermeneutical approaches for theological education in Africa and a conclusion.

The role of context in hermeneutics

From the onset of modern hermeneutics in the 19th and early-20th centuries with figures such as Schleiermacher and Dilthey, many scholars argued that Bible interpretation was neutral. On the author-text-reader continuum, the trend was to emphasise either the author or the text. Several approaches focused on the role played by the historical context of the given text without much regard for the context of the interpreter, for example, historical approaches. Other approaches have tended to emphasise the text and

downplay the author and reader, for example, narrative approaches. In the last century, the place of the reader has begun to receive more attention. More theories in hermeneutics now acknowledge that whilst the author and the text are important, so is the reader, for example, reader–response approaches. There is the recognition of the two-sided nature of historical conditioning (Mburu 2019a:67–68). As Thiselton (2005:11) pointed out, the interpreter also stands in a given historical context and tradition and the two are in constant engagement. Effective hermeneutics, therefore, requires dialogue between an author, a text and a reader. This can also be referred to as the 'world behind the text', 'the world of the text' and 'the world in front of the text'. This has three implications. Firstly, the world of the reader cannot be handled uniformly across the globe because cultural contexts are not identical. Secondly, readers come to the different texts with their assumptions, be they communal or individual. Whilst our assumptions may sometimes help us in reading the text, we sometimes impose these assumptions onto the text with negative results. Thirdly, the various methods that we use in hermeneutics are also based on certain assumptions that need to be interrogated and understood.

Contextual situatedness is critical in hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is not new to Africa. African literature demonstrates that there are rules to interpret stories, poetry, proverbs, riddles and songs that make understanding possible. For instance, take the story of the tortoise and the hare that is common in many African communities. Tortoise challenges hare to a race, and through some clever manoeuvring, he emerges as the undisputed winner.

Without knowing which rules to apply, or 'how to read', one might misunderstand this story to be a criticism of tortoise's deception. However, African hearers or readers of this story understand and apply certain rules of interpretation that enable them to arrive at the inevitable conclusion that cooperation is necessary in society and that honour in an honour/shame culture is important (which might surprise Western readers given the way in which tortoise accomplishes his goals). This story is not about deception. Rather, it emphasises the moral that unity in society is essential in order to avoid disgrace. Our contextual situatedness leads us to understand this story in this way.

Reading the Bible in Africa

History records that interpretation of the Bible was being done by Africans almost 2000 years ago. Some of the most important early interpreters of the Bible include church fathers like Origen and Augustine in Northern Africa. Whilst we cannot claim that the approaches they used are in any way similar to the African approaches suggested below (Augustine has long been recognised as the biggest contributor to Western theology), this is evidence

that Bible interpretation was being done in Africa long before the modern missionary movement. As Van den Toren et al. (2021) note:

> The Bible has been read in Africa since the time of the early church. Indeed, the history of Christianity in Africa could be written as the story of African readers understanding, translating, interpreting, explaining and applying its teachings. (n.p.)

In more recent times, missionaries re-introduced biblical hermeneutics into Africa. As hermeneutics can never be done in a vacuum, they inevitably brought with them cultural baggage from their Western context. Unfortunately, at around the same time, colonisation was also taking place. Because of this, some Africans have objected to Western approaches, preferring instead to 'decolonise' hermeneutics and make it applicable to the African context. Consequently, African hermeneutics generally tends to be liberational and against the colonial missionary enterprise.

Today much biblical interpretation in Africa is done by ordinary Christians or church leaders at the 'grassroots' level. This is generally seen in worship, prayer and preaching. A point to remember is that statistics show that about 85% of African pastors do not have any formal theological education. Biblical hermeneutics in Africa is therefore not limited to academic study or even written forms of interpretation but also includes oral hermeneutical reflection (Van den Toren et al. 2021). It also tends to be functional. In general, modern African hermeneutics have generally been driven by sociological and historical interests (West 2005:7). The text is always interpreted with application in mind. In other words, how does the text speak to concrete, contextual realities being experienced by the African people? Because of this, how Africans approach the discipline of biblical hermeneutics may look different from that from the West. Biblical hermeneutics in Africa, therefore includes both the theories of interpretation as well as general principles and methods implicit in practices of interpretation (Van den Toren et al. 2021).

Current trends

The aim of African hermeneutics is to recover the message of the Bible and to separate it from Western assumptions. The main reason for this is the recognition of contextual situatedness, as has been noted above. These approaches are based on a few common assumptions: Faith in God, the Holy Spirit is actively involved in the process of interpretation, the Bible is a significant sacred text, the Bible is powerful, the socio-cultural and religious contexts of the African reader are important and interpretation is not just an academic exercise but should result in the transformation of believers and society as a whole (Mburu forthcoming). The following section will briefly introduce some of the approaches developed since the mid-20th century (Van den Toren et al. 2021). Some of these approaches overlap. My aim is not to assess, or even to endorse, all the different streams of hermeneutical

approaches in Africa but to show the presence of approaches that originate from a position of African contextual situatedness:

- *Ethiopian hermeneutics* is known as *Andemta* and includes translation and commentary in Amharic on the Bible and related literature written in Ge'ez.
- *African independent hermeneutics* understands Scripture as directly related to the challenges facing African Christians and its authority is combined with the authority accorded to African traditions. The physical Bible is itself an object of power.
- *Liberation and black hermeneutics* are characterised by the sequence of see-judge-act in which the understanding of the meaning of the Scriptures begins with an understanding of the context, particularly the realities of oppression and injustice. Epistemological privilege is granted to the poor/oppressed. Black hermeneutics is similar to North American black theology. It originated in the South African apartheid context of an oppressed majority.
- *Feminist/womanist hermeneutics* focuses on the struggle against the subordination of women in contemporary society, and ecclesial and familial roles.
- *Inculturation and intercultural hermeneutics* are very similar. Inculturation hermeneutics is a contextual, interdisciplinary hermeneutic that acknowledges that there is no neutral or acultural exegesis and that explicitly makes the African context the subject of biblical interpretation. The goal is socio-cultural transformation and its ethos is cultural diversity and identity in reading practices. Intercultural hermeneutics evolved from inculturation hermeneutics. The major development is that whilst inculturation hermeneutics focuses on the incarnation of the gospel in a culture as well as the evangelisation of that culture, intercultural hermeneutics consolidates a constructive dialogue between the biblical and the African cultures.
- *Contextual Bible Study* foregrounds the role of the ordinary, non-academically trained Bible reader and specifically the reading of Scripture with marginalised communities.
- *Pentecostal hermeneutics* provides a new method of interpretation that is founded on an understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit and the contemporary church in the process of interpretation.
- *Reconstruction hermeneutics* emphasises the interpretation of the Scriptures in the light of political, social and economic realities, but the focus is no longer on the fight against the oppressors, but on the collaborative and inclusive task of reconstruction.
- *Postcolonial hermeneutics* analyses how literary texts themselves are shaped by 'imperialism' and how the subjugated voices of the oppressed can be retrieved.
- *Mother Tongue hermeneutics* uses indigenous language translations of the Bible as resources for interpretation. It focuses on the world in front of the text and is a collaborative, communal task.

The following section will focus on the four-legged stool model as a case study to demonstrate the value of incorporating African hermeneutics in theological institutions in Africa.

Four-legged stool model: A case study

Literature review

The intercultural approach proposed in this chapter fits into the general category of African intercultural hermeneutics. It can also be placed in the general category of African biblical hermeneutics whose foundational principle is that of transformation for Africa (Adamo 2015:32). In an article that surveyed the history of Johannine research in Africa, Van der Watt (2015) noted that in recent times African scholars have promoted inculturation readings of the text (which I refer to in this chapter as 'intercultural hermeneutics'). He (Van der Watt 2015) summarises this as follows:

> It is a hermeneutical program of reading the text, since *explication* and *application* tend to overlap. It is acknowledged that the reader is emerged in a particular culture [...] has certain views of reality [...] experiences reality in certain ways [...] and brings all this subjective complexity by way of synthesis to the reading process. A process of 'reading with' is preferred to a 'reading from above' [...] It is therefore not a matter of understanding the text primarily within its original context, but understanding the text within the present context of the readers within their reading processes – the text *must* address the reader. (p. 3)

Loba-Mkole (2008) traced the rise and development of intercultural biblical exegesis in Africa, especially with regard to New Testament interpretation and concludes that it evolved from inculturation hermeneutics. He notes that 'inculturation' and 'intercultural' are virtually synonymous, except that the latter emphasises 'mutual understanding and mutual conversion from different cultures engaged in the dialogical process' (Loba-Mkole 2012:40). Both are Africentric, as opposed to Eurocentric; both emphasise a two-way dialogue between the world of the biblical text and the world of traditional and contemporary African realities, both include exegesis of the text as well as analysis of contextual African realities, both include ordinary readers' contribution to biblical scholarship, both legitimise cultural diversity and both are hermeneutics of trust rather than suspicion.

The term 'inculturation hermeneutics' was first introduced by Justin Ukpong in 1995. He based it on his general methodology of inculturation theology. The rise of this approach was fuelled by the growing perception of Christianity as foreign and irrelevant to the African religio-cultural context. In one sense, it is opposed to the methods of biblical interpretation that were imposed and promoted by the missionaries and Western academies. In his programmatic article, Ukpong proposes a method that addresses the inadequacy of Western methods of biblical interpretation and answers the questions of African readers.

He suggests 'rereading the Bible' through an eclectic method that combines resources of the African people's culture and historical life experience with Western approaches. He grounds his method in a concrete procedure, exegetical conceptual framework, and methodological presuppositions (Ukpong 1995). Ukpong (2000) pointed out that:

> The goal of interpretation is the actualization of the theological meaning of the text in today's context so as to forge integration between faith and life, and engender commitment to personal and societal transformation. (p. 24)

His model includes determining the biblical context, providing an African religious or life-world context that relates to the biblical text, providing an exegetical analysis of the text, using the insights from the African context to ask questions of the text and having the text in turn answer these questions in applications (Ukpong 2000:37–41).

The intercultural approach was first introduced by Cilumba (2001) and Manus (2003) who developed Ukpong's inculturation hermeneutic further (Loba-Mkole 2008). Cilumba (2001) was also strongly influenced by Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. His approach takes into account the assumptions of the reader, a fusion of the two horizons of 'what it meant' and 'what it means' as well as application of the text in the context of the reader.

Ukachukwu (2003), whose folkloristic model closely follows that of Ukpong, rightly recommended that African non-biblical material culture should be used as a critical resource for hermeneutics. He starts off with the ordinary African's socio-cultural context and connects this with a 'similar' biblical context. It is in these similar contexts that he finds practical points of application that resonate with the African context. He asserts that 'this approach empowers the practitioner to engage in the retrieval of values found in traditions handed down to posterity through folktales, poems, hymns, proverbs, riddles and art' (Ukachukwu 2003:21–22). He also combines historical, literary and social methods in analysing various New Testament texts and integrates this with African folk stories. His method is eclectic and uses both folkloric approaches and intercultural exegesis as well as other paradigms such as liberation, (re)construction and even postcolonialism.

Loba-Mkole (2012, 2019) added a further dimension of intercultural mediations to the exegetical approach. His approach engages in a dialogue with a triple dimension that incorporates both horizontal and vertical ecclesial contexts. These include the original biblical cultures, ecclesial cultures and contemporary cultures. His method grants each cultural context its own epistemological privilege. Each of these cultural entities thus contributes equally and yet distinctively in the process of a constructive dialogue.

One of the key theoreticians of this approach is Hans De Wit who writes from the South African perspective. He identifies intercultural hermeneutics as a distinct form of liberation hermeneutics, showing that the categories of

African biblical hermeneutics often tend to overlap. This is because of the pivotal role that context and dialogue play in reading. For De Wit, 'intercultural' is an ethical concept whereby dialogue between different cultures reminds one of the presence of 'the other' in other local contexts and challenges us about what we exclude when we privilege a certain context (De Wit 2004, 2012). It extracts readers from their dominant reading perspectives. For De Wit, intercultural hermeneutics is about transformation. It '... probes the relationship between Bible reading and social action or transformation and asks what kinds of social action or transformation actually emerge from Bible reading' (West 2014:8).

As with inculturation hermeneutics, some proponents differentiate between the exegetical process and contextualisation in applications (Cilumba 2001). Others integrate the African context throughout the process, albeit in slightly different ways (Manus, Loba-Mkole, Mburu). Like inculturation hermeneutics, it complements, rather than replaces, approaches from other cultural perspectives. An intercultural approach reveals that the biblical culture, as well as African material and non-material culture, should play a significant role in hermeneutics intended for an African audience. Indeed, the variety of indigenous interpretive resources that Africans used with their oral tradition should be viewed as a valuable resource in the hermeneutical task. There is at least one other reason why these indigenous resources are important. Communication within communities is based on certain shared rules. These resources provide us with the means to identify these shared rules.

Theoretical and conceptual aspects of the four-legged stool model[10]

The four-legged stool model is understood within the general approaches of intercultural or inculturation hermeneutics. It is Africentric as opposed to Eurocentric; it emphasises a two-way dialogue between the world of the biblical text and the world of traditional and contemporary African realities; it focuses on religio-cultural dimensions rather than social or political; it recognises ordinary readers' contribution to biblical scholarship; it legitimises cultural diversity and it is a hermeneutic of trust rather than suspicion.

This model can be described using the metaphor of a four-legged stool. A stool is a familiar object in Africa, both in the past and in the present. Just as a good stool is stable and supports our weight, so this hermeneutical stool is one we can put our weight on, confident that it provides a stable or accurate interpretation of the biblical text. This approach has four legs and a seat, as described below. However, the legs do not function in isolation and the

10. This material is summarised from Mburu (2019a). Used with permission. https://langhamliterature.org/books/african-hermeneutics.

interpreter must move back and forth between them until a right balance is found (Mburu 2019a:66). This method is interdisciplinary in methodology and recognises the importance of culture and worldview, as well as the theological, literary and historical aspects of the text.

Paul's speech in Athens (Ac 17:16–34) is the blueprint for this model. This speech demonstrates Paul's great skill in building bridges of communication across cultures and worldviews through contextualisation. Paul does two significant things: One, he interrogates and confronts the worldviews of the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers by using several points of contact as effective bridges. Two, he uses their cultural resources to lead them into an understanding of biblical truth by quoting two poems from their own poets – Epimenides the Cretan and Aratus.

This model is based on the concept of moving from the known to the unknown and takes into consideration the fact that those parallels that exist between the biblical and the African worldview(s) (and cultures) can effectively be used as bridges to promote understanding, internalisation and application of the biblical text. It therefore has an intercultural dialogue as its basis. Like the intercultural approaches cited above, it recognises that the African culture (material and non-material) is a significant resource in the interpretive process. It therefore makes use of cultural resources such as stories, proverbs, songs, etc., and applies principles of interpreting these genres (oral as well as postcolonial) to the biblical text.

However, this model goes further by considering the worldviews represented in the biblical and African cultures. This approach recognises that there are numerous African worldviews but that the commonalities make it possible to address the African worldview as a single entity.

Important elements of worldview identified in this approach include theological aspects such as ultimate reality, external reality and human relationships and philosophical aspects such as knowledge, morality, suffering, history and time and the arts (Mburu 2019a:25–63). Consequently, a major premise of this approach is that understanding African worldview(s) and finding points of reference between it and the biblical one represented in Scripture, that is, the canonical books of the Old and New Testament, provides a solid foundation for the hermeneutical enterprise. This is particularly significant for African readers. Even with modernisation and globalisation, there are many elements that intersect with the biblical cultures and worldview. Consequently, the leap that must be taken to fill any hermeneutical 'gaps' is significantly diminished if one utilises an African hermeneutic as opposed to the Eurocentric models currently in use (Mburu 2019a:6).

Worldview is shaped within one's culture (CliffsNotes 2020):

> Culture can be defined as the beliefs, behaviours, objects, and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society. It is through culture

> that people and groups define themselves, conform to society's shared values, and contribute to society. (n.p.)

Most people in Africa today have a cultural background that is diverse, with key features ranging from the traditional to the modern (Mburu 2019a:24). Modernisation, urbanisation and globalisation mean that not only do people occupy and are defined within geographical spaces, but the presence of the digital space is making itself felt as well. The result is that one's culture is formed within a multiplicity of influences. Seto (1987) astutely pointed out that one cannot afford to ignore culture in biblical and theological interpretation. He notes that (Seto 1987):

> Since cognitive structures such as language, symbols, thought patterns and worldviews are all culturally determined, people cannot perceive, understand and apply truths apart from culture. Thus eternal truths and cultural truths are inevitably linked. (p. 138)

This model also recognises that culture and worldview are founded on certain assumptions. As many worldview discussions have noted, the human person does not view life from a neutral perspective. Assumptions about life, which form the foundation for one's worldview, influence one's understanding and interpretation of life, and by implication, Scripture (Mburu 2019a:22). Osborne (1991) stated that:

> A close reading of the text cannot be done without a perspective provided by one's preunderstanding [...] Reflection itself demands mental categories, and these are built upon one's presupposed worldview and by the faith or reading community to which one belongs. [...] neutral exegesis is impossible. (p. 412)

As readers are contextually situated within their cultural settings and cannot realistically remove themselves totally from this situation, it is clear that there is a 'mutually reinforcing relationship between our culture's worldview (with its underlying assumptions) and our interpretation' (Mburu 2019a:24). One way to balance the subjectivity of the interpreter is to identify and interrogate these assumptions, ensuring that they do not influence us to make interpretive decisions that may be inaccurate (Mburu 2019a:9).

Morever, whilst the context of the reader and that of the biblical text may share certain common interests in some cases, they are not identical (Mburu 2019a:9). Therefore, a more accurate reading of the text would demand that the reader step into the world of the biblical text and allow the text to speak for itself. This is an ethical position that ensures that the alterity or otherness of the text is respected. This is with the recognition that as the text is urged to speak from its own perspective, the reader is himself or herself consciously stepping into the text – an inter-dynamic process that ensures that no faulty assumptions interfere with the interpretive process (Mburu 2019a:9). Consequently, this model does not collapse the contexts of author, text and reader. All three stand in a context that must be interrogated and the two horizons of meaning and significance are kept distinct. This model therefore 'makes a distinction between

meaning (as intended for the original readers) and significance (as applied to the modern reader)' (Mburu 2019a:85). This is also a distinction that has been observed in some modern hermeneutical theories. Hirsch (1978:79–80) defined this as follows: 'An interpreted text is always taken to represent something, but that something can always be related to something else. Significance is meaning-as-related-to-something-else'. It recognises that 'meaning is the determinate or fixed representation of a text for an interpreter whereas significance is fluid' (Mburu 2019a:85).

Steps in the four-legged stool model[11]

In general, Africans tend to have a more holistic approach to life (even with the influence of Western education), which translates to the way they understand literature, the Bible included. This means that from the moment an African reader begins to interact with the text, he or she is already deriving meaning and significance or application simultaneously. The model described, whilst somewhat artificial given this way of thinking, nevertheless provides guidelines that isolate a process that leads to effective interpretation. This model recognises the importance of deriving all interpretations on five steps.

Leg 1: The first step is an analysis of parallels to the African context, both traditional and modern. Whilst this leg includes mainly the theological and cultural contexts (which tend to be the primary contributors to worldview), the social, political and geographical contexts may feature here as well (Mburu 2019a:67). It involves a recognition and interrogation of cultural assumptions. These are then used as a bridge to come to an understanding of the biblical text. This first leg also allows the reader to examine himself or herself so as to confront any faulty assumptions that would otherwise skew accurate interpretation and application of the text (Mburu 2019a:70).

Leg 2: The second step is an analysis of the theological context of the text. The spiritual dimension of life is always a factor in an African's interaction with the realities around him or her (Mburu 2019a:70). Because of this orientation to life, an understanding of the theological emphases of the text therefore provides the foundational data for the reader, orienting his or her approach to the interpretation of the text. West accurately points out that in Africa, biblical hermeneutics is inseparable from theological reflection as the emphasis is generally to address contextual realities within our culture (West 2005:4). Key to the interpretive process, therefore, is a correct understanding of the theological emphases of a text and how these are expressed within the structural framework of the parts as well as the whole (Mburu 2019:70).

11. For a more thorough application of this model to a text (Jn 4), see Mburu (2020).

Leg 3: The third step is an analysis of the literary context of the text (Mburu 2019:73). Having oriented oneself with regard to parallels to the African context and the theological emphases of the text, the next step is to identify the type of literature, including genre, literary techniques, language used and the progression of the text in relation to surrounding texts. The tentative points of application derived as a result of the processes of legs 1 and 2 receive further sharpening and clarification as a result of engaging with the literary context. African literature is very diverse and has a number of functions within the society. In order to achieve these functions, Africans had developed a variety of indigenous interpretive resources for working with their oral traditions (West 2005:6). Moreover, the literary techniques an author uses may vary depending on whether the material is to be presented orally or in writing. Finnegan points out that when it appears in print it is only a shadow of itself although we can still recognise some of its imagery and the way the words are associated with one another (Finnegan [1970] 2012:5). These resources, therefore, ought to play a major role in modern African biblical hermeneutics.

Leg 4: The fourth step is an analysis of the historical and cultural context of the text. As in African literature, it is crucial to remember that the historical and cultural elements of the biblical text must also be given their proper place in the interpretive task (Finnegan [1970] 2012:17). This extra linguistic context is a crucial factor in determining the meaning of any given biblical texts if indeed our aim in interpretation is to uncover the original meaning intended by the author. Porter notes that all texts have an inherent historicality (Porter 1995:116). The insights gleaned from the historical and cultural background are related to factors such as the perspective and mindset of the original communicator that are rarely made explicit in the writing as both the author and his or her audience lived at the same time and in the same cultural context (Klein et al. 2005:229–230). A crucial aim of our study of the Bible is to understand first what the text meant in its own context. To do so, we must 'enter into' the world of the author and allow his or her world to guide our understanding (Mburu 2019a:84).

The seat: These four legs together reveal the meaning as it was intended for the original readers. This leads to the final aspect of the model, the seat. This is where application of the text in the context of the modern African reader takes place. This final step confirms the tentative application of the text as uncovered in legs 1 to 4 above. A basic principle of this model is that of authorial intent. Meaning is therefore understood to be single (Mburu 2019a:84–85). However, meaning is not the same as application. Application is the significance of the text for a modern audience. This means that whilst meaning is single, application is multiple. As we go through this process, syncretism must be avoided. One must also keep in mind that there are certain truths that are relative and applicable only in the specific biblical context, that is, culture-bound truths. There are also truths that are absolute and apply to

any culture at any time in history, that is, trans-contextual truths (Mburu 2019a:86–87).

In summary, consciously interrogate our own African worldview and uncover the points of similarity and difference between it and the biblical context; identify the theological themes that arise from the text; identify the genre, literary techniques, language and flow of the text; identify the historical and cultural context and finally, determine the meaning of the text to its original readers before coming to a final determination of its application to our present African context.

A brief example from Mark 1:21–28

Leg 1: Parallels to the African context

Demon exorcism (or deliverance) in Africa is a way of life. In the traditional African worldview, Africans believed in the spiritual realm without question. Even today, traces of this worldview continue to influence how we live. The existence of both good and bad spirits is generally taken for granted. Some denominations in East Africa even have deliverance classes for their church members. Some churches conduct exorcisms in which dramatic vomiting, screaming and violent body movements are the norm. Our assumptions about the spiritual realm are validated in this text. However, we must be open to have those assumptions sharpened through this pericope. In particular, how to deal with demonic presence.

Leg 2: Theological context

This text highlights a major theological emphasis in the Gospel of Mark that revolves around the identity of Jesus. How is Jesus to be understood in relation to the spiritual realm of demons? How is his authority and power over those who are demon possessed demonstrated in this account? This text reveals that Jesus Christ is the miracle working son of God with power and authority over the spiritual realm.

Leg 3: Literary context

The genre of this pericope is narrative. The style has many affinities with African oral literature. It is a compact, action packed, vivid story with graphic descriptions. The setting of this pericope is Capernaum where we find Jesus and his disciples. Mark tells us that when the Sabbath came, Jesus went to the synagogue and began to teach. What is different about Jesus' teaching is that unlike the teachers of the law, his teaching has authority (Mk 1:21–22). In addition to his authoritative manner of teaching, it may be that Jesus did not refer to tradition or the authorities as the teachers of the law did (Guelich 1989:56). This comparison bears seed later in the story as Mark reveals the

growing animosity between Jesus and the teachers of the law, who eventually align themselves with the Pharisees, and with the elders and chief priests (see Mk 1:22; 2:6; 7:15; 8:31, etc.). Mark tells us that Jesus' teaching is interrupted by a man with an impure spirit or demon. Mark has previously related Jesus' success in confronting Satan in the wilderness (Mk 1:13) and he now turns us to Jesus' first confrontation with an impure spirit (Mk 1:23–24). The man's questions and statement reveal two things. The first is that impure spirits are capable of using people to communicate. The second is that this impure spirit recognises who Jesus is and the presence of the kingdom of God in his ministry. Ultimately, it is Jesus who will defeat the Satanic forces, both now and at the end of time (see Mk 3:27). The question the impure spirit asks, 'What do you want with us?' is a rhetorical, formulaic question that has an Old Testament background (Guelich 1989:56). It is also translated, 'What do we have in common?' in the original Greek. It is usually used in the context of an inferior to a superior and betrays the impure spirits' recognition of Jesus' superior position (Keener 2014:131). Without any fanfare or drama, Jesus commands the man to be silent and the impure spirit to come out of him (Mk 1:25–26). As in the case of his teaching, the authority with which he exorcises the impure spirit is not lost on the crowd. For Mark, Jesus' identity is revealed both through his words and his works.

☐ Leg 4: Historical context

There are two main aspects of the historical context that are important for understanding this incident. The first is that the teachers of the law (or scribes) were regarded as the experts of the law by the people. Their job was threefold: (1) to develop and interpret the law, (2) to teach students the law and (3) to function as judges. It is therefore surprising to the people that they compare unfavourably with Jesus. Secondly, the Jewish historian, Josephus and the writings of the sect of Qumran suggest evidence of the practice of exorcism in this period. Exorcists of the day either used magical formulas that called on a higher spirit to expel the lower one, or they repulsed or scared the demon out by physical means (Keener 2014:131–132). Success in exorcism simply by giving a command was something unheard of. Jesus demonstrates an authority and power that is different from that previously seen.

☐ The seat: Application

Sometimes church leaders in Africa want to conform to the way other religious leaders run their ministries. Sermons lack the authority of the Word of God and when exorcisms are conducted, they are overly dramatic, focusing more on the one exorcising than the power of God at work in the life of the person possessed. In some cases, pastors even consult witch doctors to achieve their goals. There is a need to refocus our source of power and authority from ourselves and other

sources, back to God. Only then will we begin to see genuine transformation in the church in Africa.

Implications for theological training

There are several implications of this approach that give us a rationale for promoting African hermeneutics in our institutions:

1. The biblical text finds a home in the African heart because it speaks to the contextual realities that believers face daily. It is no longer an object that has been imposed on us by the West but rather a relevant text that allows us to engage in constructive dialogue and confronts us where it matters. Because it pays attention to the African context, application is more relevant.
2. It confronts dichotomy and syncretism by allowing for dialogue between the biblical and African cultures and worldviews, thus exposing wrong doctrine and practice.
3. It acknowledges the multidimensional/global character of the Christian faith. This is because it allows for fresh insights from the biblical texts. It provides a different way of reading that complements Western and other readings.
4. It includes ordinary readers. Rather than relegate hermeneutics to the domain of academics/intellectuals, it makes it possible for ordinary readers to participate actively in Bible interpretation.
5. It encourages transformation of society. Because it promotes understanding and internationalisation of biblical truths within the African context, the potential for transformation of society is increased.
6. It promotes understanding and interrogation of African contexts and awareness of our religious spaces. This is very important because Africa is very pluralistic and religious spaces are quite porous, which is why syncretism is so prevalent.
7. Perhaps most importantly, it helps redefine African Christian identity. Identity is core to our human existence. We operate on the basis of our identities.

In Africa, culture (including religious culture) and ethnic identity may even overshadow Christian identity. Our identity markers should not be decided for us by African Traditional Religion, culture or even our African worldview. This approach allows for a redefinition of identity based on biblical criteria.

Conclusion

This chapter began with an examination of the role of context in hermeneutics to ground the validity of African contextual approaches. A brief section on how the Bible is read in Africa followed. The main section

gave an overview of current trends in hermeneutical approaches in Africa and then focused specifically on the four-legged stool African intercultural hermeneutic. The positive implications of using such a method in our classrooms were provided. The value of African hermeneutics as a foundational course for contextual theological education was provided in the implications.

Methods of hermeneutics from Africa are not intended to replace Western methods. Rather, they ought to be seen as complementary. African hermeneutics recognises that the Bible speaks powerfully into the present. This can be seen in the various approaches that have developed since the 20th century. Dependable methods of African hermeneutics that recognise the importance of preserving the original biblical message and communicating it in a way that is relevant to the African context are crucial if we are to begin to develop a truly transformational theology. This century has seen a radical shift in the growth of the church in the Southern hemisphere. By 2018, the number of Christians in Africa far outstripped that of any other part of the world. Africa now has the largest number of Christians in the world, a growth that accelerated after the end of colonialism and of mainline missions (Sanneh 2003:17–19). This unprecedented growth of the church in Africa has caught many by surprise. One consequence of this growth is the phenomenon of reverse missions. Some of the biggest churches in Europe have been founded by Africans (Religion and race n.d.). Without a doubt, the founders transplant their hermeneutics as well. Technology has also contributed to the exposure of African ways of biblical interpretation to a wider audience. Particularly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the latter part of 2019, many churches in Africa have started using technology to stream and/or record and upload their worship services. Just by sheer virtue of numbers, it is probably not an exaggeration to suggest that Africa now has the sober responsibility of shaping the global church for the 21st century and beyond. African hermeneutics cannot be ignored either on a continental or a global level if we are serious about a genuine transformation of the African Church and society in general.

Chapter 7

The importance/ precondition of calling for ministerial training in private higher education theological institutions in South Africa

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Abstract

The role of education and training is increasingly important for ministerial students in South Africa. This truth is not surprising given the overall increase in the number of students seeking HE that reflects the perceived importance

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of education and training in light of globalisation and the demand for skills formation. Balcomb (2013:9), critiquing the Department of Theology and Development at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, argued that the secular nature of the university pressurises theological departments within universities to justify their existence by conforming to the standards and norms of modern universities. The shift, Balcomb (2013:7) contested, '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'. From this observation, we will investigate the effectiveness of theological training provided at private HE theological institutions (PHETI). In order to evaluate the effectiveness of training students in ministry, the fundamental differences between both the philosophy of education and training and between training for ministry and training in ministry must be engaged. Thus, this chapter will concentrate on calling and curriculum that guides PHETI. The argument postulated in this chapter is that PHETI with denominational affiliation in South Africa are better positioned to deliver training in ministry because of the emphasis on calling, praxis, spiritual formation and accountability of both student and lecturer to their respective denominations.

Introduction

In 1974, Cape Town Baptist Seminary (CTBS) began offering theological training as a ministry wing of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, training its students for Christian ministry for the evangelical context nationally and internationally. Prior to 1994, theological qualifications granted by PHETI were not recognised by the then Department of Higher Education, which in many ways controlled theological education at universities to promote a particular political ideology. In 1994, the dawn of a democratic South Africa and *Higher Education Act* of 1997 enabled PHETI to register with the Council of Higher Education (CHE) and have their programme qualifications accredited with the South African Qualifications Authority in keeping with the mandate of the new South African Government to make education accessible to all. Accordingly, institutions, like CTBS, were provided the opportunity by the Higher Education Quality Committee to be evaluated and audited by them on our vision and mission statements – thus providing institutions the opportunity to differentiate its reason for being. The mission of CTBS is to 'Train Christian leaders to transform the world biblically', thus the emphasis on training. It is this mandate that guides our doing of theology as we prepare men and women for the context of evangelical ministry.

Training versus education

Because of the fundamental mission to which CTBS is called, it is important to address the distinction between theological education and training. Whilst

these words are used interchangeably, for the purpose of this chapter, a distinction needs to be made to guide our understanding.

Training

The benefits of training (Sommerville 2007; Wilson 1999) are numerous and widely documented with institutions as well as students reaping the rewards in terms of improved skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours (Teven 2003), as well as results in enhanced performance, job satisfaction and productivity (Hughey & Mussnug 1997:52–57). Most students enrolling for theological training at CTBS are already engaged in some form of church-based ministry because of the sense of call upon their lives (this will be discussed more clearly below), which enhances the need for training. Training as defined by Reid, Barrington and Brown (2004:2) is "a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or skill behaviour through a learning experience to achieve effective performance in any activity or range of activities". The philosophical and intentional shift to training at Cape Town Baptist Seminary is to develop the abilities of our students to meet the demanding current and future needs of ministry, more specifically for churches within the Evangelical tradition. Truelove (1992:273) asserted that, "training endeavours to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to perform job-related tasks. It aims to improve job performance in a direct way."

Wills (1994:10), however, argued against such a definition because he believed 'attitudes are notoriously difficult to quantify and, therefore, training alone is insufficient to bring about major long-term changes in attitude'. Please reword or place in quotation marks and cite intext and in the references the correct source.

However, disagreement must be lodged against Wills. Whilst Wills' assessment might be true in the secular workplace, the attitude of students enrolling at CTBS does not see their training as a 'ticket' for upward mobility but rather their training as better equipping them to be participating in God's mission; therefore, the attitude of the students is adjudicated by the strong sense of call to ministry.

It is because of this strong sense of call that most students are already integrated into local church ministry and the theological training offered at CTBS is supplemented with theoretical and practical hands-on experience of doing, which is clearly demonstrated by the CTBS motif of 'Training the Head, Training the Heart, and Training the Hands!'

Education

Education, in contrast, is usually more broadly defined as a 'more general, less specialised or hands-on approach' to enhancing knowledge; however, education in necessary for training (see Council of Europe 2015).

The calling

Throughout Scripture, one encounters the wonder of God – the Creator and Sustainer of the universe – moving amongst his people, engaging with them and leading them. A key element of many such narratives is God's action in setting apart a leader, empowering an individual or revealing a word to be shared with others. Such an encounter and the resultant human activity can be examined in terms of a 'calling'. Although the language varies, the consistent elements involve God initiating a move to set apart an individual for a task or role. Such encounters are described in various terms such as the moving of the Spirit of the Lord, the sending of a vision, direct instruction from God or God's messenger or the orchestration of events. When considering the role of HE in theological institutions, especially PHETI established for denominational training, the understanding of calling is critical to the educational process. As a means of exploring this assertion, one needs to consider the importance of calling in the biblical texts and its expression both in modern ministry and PHETI, examine the influence of calling on praxis in theological education, reflect on the connection between calling and spiritual formation in an educational setting and explain the reality of calling as a ground for accountability in a PHETI setting. Once these elements of the dynamic of calling are explored, one must reflect upon the practical implications of the relationship between calling and training in a PHETI setting.

The importance of calling

The Apostle Paul[12] in the opening few verses of the Letter to the Romans (Rm 1:5) emphasises his calling in terms of both the role to which he has been called, an apostle, as well as the task to which he had been called in that role, 'to call people from amongst all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith'. One can find a number of nuances to the understanding of calling throughout Scripture. In order to grasp more fully the significance of calling for the current theological educational environment of PHETIs, one would benefit from a brief biblical theological overview of 'calling' and an examination of calling in a modern ministry setting.

Biblical overview of calling

'Call' is definitely not a 'one-size-fits-all' reality. If one engages the topic honestly, calling is expressed with varying nuance and emphasis throughout Scripture. The International Mission Board (IMB n.d.) in seeking to define key terminology provides four aspects of calling that are helpful in gaining

12. In most of the Pauline epistles, Paul will assert his role as apostle in the initial greeting and connect that role to God's activity; in other words, Paul understands his role as having been established by the will of God, and he has submitted to God's authority in functioning in that role.

a full understanding of 'calling': call to salvation, call to mission, call to station and call to service (IMB n.d.:65). Whilst the latter aspect is of primary focus in the arena of theological education, some understanding of the general or universal expressions of calling are important.

The call to salvation

The primary universal call of God is the drawing of all persons to salvation. This truth reflects the biblical testimony of God's desire for the salvation of humanity. As Paul will express in 1 Timothy 2:3–4, 'This is good and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth'.[13] In the larger biblical canon, the activity of God in calling out a people to live in relationship with him is the norm. The call of Abraham can be viewed as a particular beginning of the establishment of a 'called out' people. This call initiated in Genesis 12 will bear fruit at Sinai as God offers a covenant with the Israelites. Polhill (1996:67) stated that throughout Scripture the terms 'election' and 'calling' are both used to describe this general drawing of God to become his people and further elaborates that '[f]irst and foremost, calling is the gracious act of God by which he draws people to become disciples of Jesus and members of his church'. This calling is experienced through the proclamation of the gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit.[14] Polhill (1996) reflected on the New Testament terminology and meaning of 'call' in relation to salvation:

> When one examines the New Testament usage of the noun form 'calling' (*klesis*) and the adjective form 'called' (*kletos*) the religious meaning is the only one that appears. Both terms refer to God's calling to salvation and discipleship and not to a special call to ministry. There is one exception – when Paul speaks of his call to be an apostle. [...] The more common uses of 'calling' and 'called' [...] refer almost exclusively to God's calling Christians to salvation. One's calling (*klesis)* is when they first come to faith in Christ (1 Cor 1:26; 7:20). Calling is thus closely connected with the hope of eternal life in Christ (Eph 1:18; 4:4). It is the higher, heavenly calling of God to faithful discipleship (Phlp 3:14; 2 Th 1:11). The one who is 'called' (*kletos*) is 'sanctified', 'set apart' in Christ Jesus (Rm 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2; Jud 1). (pp. 66–67)

This calling to salvation is not isolated for the disciple of Jesus; rather, the follower of Jesus also experiences the call to holiness, the call to deny self, the call to follow radically with the expectation of suffering. These aspects are not counter to the call to salvation; rather, they are the normal experience. For the disciple of Jesus, the call to salvation with its complete expression serves and 'forms the unshakeable foundation of a disciple's primary identity now and forever' (IMB n.d.:65).

13. All Scriptures quoted are from the NIV translation.

14. See Acts 13:48–52; 16:14–15; Romans 10:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:14.

The call to mission

Every follower of Jesus is drawn not only into relationship with God Almighty, but also included in God's purposes for the glory of God. Within the Old Testament, such a call is connected to the very reality of being a part of the people of God. God's covenant with Israel at Sinai demands that those who would be 'his people' and for whom he is 'their God' should live in a distinct manner. Such a call is not simply to reflect the character of God, but to fulfil the promise of God to Abraham that his descendants would be a blessing to all nations (Gn 12:3). It is true, however, that this calling was rarely lived out to the fullness in the history of the nation of Israel (and later the two nations of Israel and Judah). One can find, then, the call to mission is expressed most fully in the New Testament. This idea is explicit in the command to make disciples (Mt 28:18–20) and the call to witness faithfully in the power of the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:8). These passages, and others, highlight the normal expression for the disciple of Jesus as faithful witness to God. As such, the believer is called to participate with God in furthering the desire of God for his glory to fill the earth (Hab 2:14) and for people of every nation, people and language to be gathered around the throne of God (Rv 7:9). Much of the language of calling and following in the New Testament is both a call to membership in the body of Christ, the church, and the commission to live and proclaim the gospel faithfully. The New Testament word translated as church, *ekklesia*, has as its basic meaning 'the ones called out'. There is an assumption that to be a part of the body of Christ is to respond to the call to salvation and live out the call to mission: 'disciple making is thus the God-given, Christ-enabled, Spirit-empowered duty of every disciple whatever his or her station, location, or vocation' (IMB n.d.:65).

The call to station

One aspect of call that is often overlooked is the expectation of the follower of Jesus to glorify God in daily life and work, regardless of one's role or occupation. Any station in which one finds oneself can become a platform and opportunity to fulfil the call to mission. The division between laity and clergy should not inhibit any individual from grasping their station in life as a God-ordained calling. Paul reflects such an understanding in his instructions for family life in Ephesians 5. One's role as a parent or child becomes an opportunity to glorify God in fulfilling the functions of that station in a godly manner. Similarly, Paul will exhort the members of the church at Corinth with the perspective that whatever actions are done, '[...] do it all for the glory of God' (1 Cor 10:31). The understanding of serving God in every station encompasses both the expected participation in the life of the church as well as meaningful engagement as part of a community. In both realms of life, one is called to glorify God in those stations of life. Paul describes the role of giftedness within the church in 1

Corinthians, Romans and Ephesians. The normal experience within the early church seemed to be that as observed by Polhill (1996), that:

> [*M*]embers exercised their particular gifts, and the congregation acknowledged those gifts. There was a diversity of gifts in the congregation and, as Paul argued, the wellbeing of the congregation depended on all members exercising their diverse gifts. (p. 70)

Such gifting, however, was not limited to influence within the church; rather, the follower of Jesus is empowered by the Holy Spirit to engage God's mission for God's glory in every station and role one should find oneself.

The call to service

Whilst the previous aspects of calling are true for every follower of Jesus, the call to service is more specifically connected to God's gracious calling 'by which he directs disciples to make disciples in a certain way, at a certain time, amongst a certain people, in a certain location, or through a certain vocation' (IMB n.d.:66). As this aspect of call is the more critical to the task of theological education in PHETIs, one can explore the meaning further by examining some biblical examples or models to provide a more complete understanding of this call dynamic.

Call to service is often connected to specific tasks or roles. Within the Old Testament narrative, such a specific call was most often connected to the prophet as a distinction from other servants, such as priests.[15] The experience of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel are clear examples of such prophetic calls. Whilst other prophets may not relate the specifics of their call, they will relate a moment when some 'word of the Lord' came to them. One finds similar definitive moments of calling beyond the prophet to other leaders within Israel's history – the angel of the Lord before Gideon; the burning bush of Moses' experience; the anointing of David by Samuel. Even in such dramatic calls one can encounter a level of fluidity. For Moses, the calling extended for the whole of his life whilst Amos presumably returned to his vocation tending fig trees. Not every call to service described in the biblical text was permanent; rather, some were connected to very specific tasks. Additionally, one might have a lifelong call, but have some shift in roles in that calling because of circumstance or additional direction from God. Jeremiah could no longer serve as a prophetic voice to the king once Jerusalem fell; however, he continued as a prophetic voice for Israel into exile.

15. See Polhill (1996:72) who echoes this understanding: 'In the Old Testament the idea of a call is generally associated with prophets. Priest served God by virtue of their birth. One was born a priest, but one was called by God to be a prophet'.

The testimony of the New Testament rarely depicts such a dramatic call. As Stone (1991:80) argued, '[A]side from Paul's conversion, there is no Scriptural instance in which any person received a miraculous call from God to the public ministry of the church'. One misunderstanding of calling that is too often encountered is that every pastor needs a 'Macedonian call' experience like Paul. De Young (2009:68) argued against *expecting* or *requiring* special revelation in discerning God's direction in life; rather, he further argues that God already has given direction and 'apart from the Spirit working through Scripture, God does not promise to use any other means to guide us' (Young 2009:17–26).[16] In surveying the larger New Testament texts, one does encounter the language of calling in connection to specific roles or tasks as in the Old Testament. Paul repeatedly refers to his call to be an apostle (see Rm 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1). Once again, Polhill (1996:70) noted that 'In the earliest churches, "giftedness" seems to have been the all-important factor in congregational leadership'.[17] Within the Pauline epistles, one can note a progression in the examination of gifts over the years from the earlier consideration in 1 Corinthians to the latter discussion in Ephesians. It is in this later epistle that Paul moves from quality type gifts to an expression of offices: apostle, prophet, evangelist and pastor-teacher. Polhill (1996) rightly noted:

> Ephesians 4:11–12 is a crucial passage for showing the relationship between the general call of all Christians and the more restricted call of the professional ministers [...] When properly punctuated, the passage states that the more 'full-time' ministers (the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers) have as their primary function 'equipping the saints for the work of ministry' (NKJV). All are called; all are ministers. But those with a special calling are to be leaders, equippers, and facilitators to assist all the members of the church in the ministries to which they are called. (p. 72)

The task of discerning such a special calling is critical. Stone (1991:77) argued for three 'components' involved in a call to specific service: 'ability, opportunity, and desire'. Whilst he seems a bit simplistic in his application or analysis when he quotes Haley (1983):

> The desire to preach without the ability is not the call; the desire and the ability without the opportunity is not the call; but ability, desire and opportunity may be taken as the divine call. (p. 4280)

he does connect the important observation that calling does not occur in a vacuum; rather, God calls the individual to service within a context and

16. De Young argues that rather than timidly waiting for a new revelation while searching for a 'will of direction' (guidance in non-moral aspects of life, that is, 'what job should I take?'), De Young argues that the Christian should seek out God's 'will of decree' (God's stated plans and purposes outlined in Scripture) and 'will of desire' (God's desires for his children as explicitly stated in Scripture). At points, De Young seems to move a bit too far as one should acknowledge that calling to service does, indeed, often involve some unique engagement with an individual towards a particular role or task.

17. Polhill (1996:72) notes that 'Even though the language of "calling" is not generally used in the New Testament for those who are called to a special ministry, the experience of receiving such a call is common'.

a community. Calls to service are not expressed as a personal preference or individual acclamation; rather, God's call to service is discerned and affirmed consistently through faithful and prayerful reading of Scripture within the context of God's people, the church.[18] A word of the Lord comes to a prophet who, then, delivers that word to the people who are instructed in God's law on receiving and evaluating the true prophet. Within the New Testament, calling is affirmed in the context of the local church through the leading of the Holy Spirit. The discernment of calling is often in response to a need (such as the need for the gospel to reach the Gentiles in Acts), as an acknowledgement of gifting and character (such as the setting aside of Stephen and others in Ac 6), as an act of obedience to the study of God's Word and seeking God in prayer. God often makes known his guidance and desires through his Word so that a prayerful examination of Scripture by the believer is more often the only catalyst needed. For example, as one encounters the Spirit of God in the written Word of God, one may upon reading the words of Jesus commanding 'Go', sincerely and obediently respond, 'Where, Lord?' Such variety should not minimise the reality that it is God who calls and moves. Blackaby, Brandt and Skinner (1997:26) posited that 'One does not choose the ministry! A pastor is chosen [...] chosen by God for God's purposes, in God's time and place, and serves Him in God's ways'. Polhill (1996) finished his examination of a biblical view of call by considering six recurring elements in the various biblical accounts of callings:

> *The Dramatic Call*: 'The Bible frequently depicts the call to a special task or witness in a very dramatic fashion. Often it is the form of a theophany, a more or less direct appearance of God to the one receiving the call'.
>
> *The Reluctant Call*: A 'common biblical pattern of resistance to God's call was the feeling of unworthiness on the part of the one called'.
>
> *The Family-Influenced Call*: One of the most common biblical types of call is that in which the called person's family plays a major role. In many instances, it is the child's mother or father who dedicates the new-born to God.
>
> *The Community Call*: Sometimes the faith community has a major role in encouraging one or more of its members to enter the ministry.
>
> *The Redefined Call*: If one follows the biblical account it becomes evident that calls are not set in store. A prophet, for instance, is sometime called to address a particular circumstance rather than to assume a permanent prophetic role.
>
> *The Misdirected Call*: It isn't unusual for someone to have a very powerful spiritual experience that convinces them they are being called into full-time ministry, when in fact they are being called to greater commitment in their present life situation. (pp. 73-78)

18. De Young (2009:87–98) similarly argues that one can access wisdom from God through reading Scripture responsibly, seeking and heeding the wise counsel of faithful believers and praying for illumination and wisdom around the known will of God.

In summary (IMB n.d.):

> Calls to service are discerned and affirmed not just individually, but as a member of the church on mission in the world through Spirit-led, Word-driven, prayer-focused examination of a disciple's desires, gifts, abilities, and opportunities. (p. 66)

Furthermore (IMB n.d.):

> [*D*]espite some fluidity in the form and experience of calling, the disciple is expected to remain constant in faithfulness to God's call, no matter the cost, until God calls the disciple to different service. (p. 66)

The PHETI engages the student at the point of his or her calling. The training offered is directly connected to this divine calling. The command of the minister (Eph 4):

> [*T*]o prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (vv. 12–13)

In light of this Scripture, any theological training must have in focus the task of equipping those called to special service with the tools, knowledge and understanding to equip the larger church for the mission of God to God's glory.

As most PHETI are connected to a denomination, there exists an explicit expectation of ministerial training from both the student as well as the churches of the denomination. To this end, the educational goals of the institution is often connected to the training needs specific to ministry in the local church or denominational context. In the case of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, any candidate for ministerial recognition is expected to either have completed a degree at either the Baptist College in Johannesburg or the CTBS or to have completed certain courses at one of those institutions connected to Baptist ministry (i.e. Baptist principles). The schools, then, are seen as a first line of confirmation of fitness for ministry by not only the denominational leadership that recognises ministers formally by including them on the ministerial list but also by the local churches that look to that list for suitable ministerial candidates. Whilst non-Congregational denominations have alternative paths of recognition, PHETIs connected to a specific denomination are given a loud voice in the recognition of readiness for ministry. The educational institution, then, is given the charge to confirm or challenge an individual's claim of calling to service. Such a task is a daunting one and should not be taken lightly.

The influence of calling on praxis in theological training

Given the seriousness of the task entrusted to a theological institution, the understanding that the institution exists for purposes beyond itself is critical.

The PHETI existence is connected to the process of making disciples as commanded by Jesus (Mt 28:19–20), or more pointedly, making disciples who can make disciples – teaching those who will become teachers in the local ministries – as Paul exhorts Timothy (2 Tm 2:2). If the very existence of theological education institutions is connected to the plans and activities of God, then the expectation of those serving in the institution as well as those attending the institution is some sense of calling to the task at hand and the roles required to see that task fulfilled.

In the situation for many PHETIs when compared to departments in state universities, the financial benefits are significantly less. Similarly, opportunities of publication and recognition are less numerous. Nevertheless, one finds that many of the faculty and staff *chose* PHETI over state opportunities. A consistent reason given is 'calling'. More specifically, calling in relation to the more hands-on opportunity for training students in ministry. Both calling to a post (lecturer) and calling to a task (equipping for ministry) are constant expressions of their reasoning for where they are teaching. This reality is not to suggest such an element is absent in state settings; rather, it is to highlight that it is critical in PHETIs and impacts both the admission process and the education process.

Calling and the admission process

A consideration of call for the student by the PHETI begins at the admission process. For CTBS, every potential student is interviewed by a panel of three faculty members as a part of the admission process. During that 20-min to 30-min interview, the experience and understanding of call are addressed. For the prospective student, the focus on call provides an appropriate framework for an understanding of the role of the institution in the training process. This dynamic is vital for several reasons. Firstly, if a prospective student has no sense of divine call to service, the rationale for attending a PHETI is unsettled. If the end goal is training for ministry and not simply a degree, then a student without any sense of call to service struggles with the important distinction of education vs training. Secondly, for the student with a sense of calling to service (even without a clear understanding of the role of that service – i.e. pastoral ministry, missionary service, youth or children work, chaplaincy or others), the admission process is an opportunity to help create an appropriate balance in the expectation of training the head (educational development), training the heart (spiritual formation) and training the hands (practical ministry training and experience). A type of covenant is offered between the institution and the student around the promise of training from the institution and the promise of commitment from the student.

Calling and the education process

As the expectation of call to service is extended to the student by the PHETI, the institution in the process of training must be intentional in equipping the student to fulfil the call of God. Such a statement is not intended as a cliché expression, but as a purpose that finds its foundation in Scripture. Leadership development is an expected norm for the church, and by extension, the PHETI connected to a denomination is often viewed by the churches within that denomination as a trusted means of training leaders for the church. The purpose of training leaders who have been gifted by the Holy Spirit and called out by God is aptly expressed in Ephesians 4:11–16. The Holy Spirit writing in this passage gives a number of reasons for the gifting and calling out of leaders within the church: to equip saints for ministry; to build up the body of Christ, to move toward unity of faith and fullness of knowledge of Jesus; to mature as believers so that one grows toward the fullness of Christ; to be sound in doctrine so as to not be swayed by false teaching; to grow into our role in the body of Christ so that it might work together to fulfil the mission of God for the glory of God. One can argue that such a list fits the task of the theological institution well concerning the equipping of students for ministry. The expectation of growth in knowledge coupled with skills for ministry as well as godly compassion for both the church and the lost expressed in these verses provide insight into the purpose of *theological education* and need to be reflected in the educational process.

Curriculum

A first area of consideration is that of curriculum development. For the PHETI, some aspects of curriculum relate directly to the expected forms and opportunities of ministry. Especially for those institutions more immediately connected to a denomination, the churches served by the PHETI expect for students leaving the institution to be not only ready for ministry, but fully equipped for the forms, challenges and faith expressions of the denomination served. For example, a Baptist institution is expected to provide some foundation in Baptist principles which include not only doctrinal interpretation, but also explain form and polity of the Baptist Church. The curriculum, however, must move beyond denominational specifics to provide skills and knowledge common to ministry across the church universal. To this end, the institution needs to re-examine regularly the demands of ministry (i.e. theology of worship, principles of youth ministry, counselling children) in the local context augmenting classical disciplines (i.e. biblical languages, systematic theology, hermeneutics). The evaluation of curriculum must be ongoing as the context of service changes rapidly in the modern environment. The curriculum must be driven by the expected outcome of saints equipped for ministry and should engage the full breadth expressed in the Ephesians passage: Knowledge of Christ, sound doctrine, maturity of the believer,

perception of the role of the church and the believer in relation to the body of Christ, and clear vision of the mission of God. As the student who has been called out by God to be equipped for God's glory in whatever ministry God leads moves through the training process at a theological institution, the courses and engagement with faculty must be designed to assist the Holy Spirit in the maturing of the disciple of Jesus for God's purposes and glory.

Teaching methods

One aspect that may have been neglected historically amongst training institutions is the question of method of teaching. Whilst many have seen the default setting as simply the classroom lecture format, reality suggests that genuine training and learning needs a more holistic and comprehensive approach to education. The smaller size of the PHETI often allows for greater engagement beyond the classroom with opportunities for mentoring relationships between faculty and students. Such personal interaction, however, is not the primary challenge of teaching methodology. Rather, the form of classes themselves can be varied, addressing the different elements expressed in training for ministry.

Reflecting again on the words found in Ephesians, a clear purpose in equipping of the saints is to mature in faith and grow toward the fullness of Christ. Spiritual formation runs parallel to such a task. Any PHETI engaged in the training of ministers must move intentionally with a focus on spiritual formation. Education that provides a knowledge of an array of theological subjects but does not equip the disciple towards a maturing of one's faith, fails in its purpose as expressed in Ephesians.

Conclusion

Because of the strong sense of 'call to ministry', most students enrolling at CTBS for theological training want to see themselves better equipped to serve the local church. Whilst maintaining a high academic standard, this has not eclipsed the focus of the curriculum at CTBS in the training of Christian leaders. This is proven by many of our graduates who are still effective in Christian ministry on mission with Christ in and around the world.

Chapter 8

Consistency and relevance of the curricula of theological training institutions in French-speaking Africa

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Abstract[19]

The curriculum is the core of any training and education system. It is the essential political and pedagogical tool for societies and their educational system.

19. This chapter is a translated version of the Original French Chapter, also included as an appendix.

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Following the example of a society in general, the church in Africa, which wants to be both the channel of spiritual salvation and also of social, economic, political salvation, etc. of the people, is equipping itself with training structures for its leaders. However, with regard to African contingencies that are subject to constant change, one wonders whether the training curricula of the various theological and biblical training institutions in Africa are in line with the theological expectations and socio-cultural realities prevailing on the continent.

To address this concern, the member institutions of the Council of Theological Institutions of French-speaking Africa (Conseil des Institutions Théologiques d'Afrique Francophone) (CITAF) have been working, since 1984, to put in place a Common Minimum Programme (CMP), which is presented as an integrated set of planned teaching actions to provide a valid, homogeneous biblical and theological training adapted to the theological education and training system in French-speaking Africa.

This contribution entitled *Coherence and relevance of the curricula of theological training Institutions in French-speaking Africa* aims to reflect on this CMP of CITAF member institutions, more than a decade after its official adoption. More specifically, it is a question of analysing its relevance and coherence with regard to a constantly changing social, political and cultural and other African contexts.

To this end, the contribution is structured around certain main axes, such as knowledge of CITAF and its mission, a presentation of the CMP as an accreditation standard of the teaching of CITAF member institutions. This is followed by an assessment of the coherence and relevance of the CITAF CMP to the ever-changing African contextual realities. Proposals for an updated, useful and relevant CMP are finally put forward. For, if it is true that society is the main goal of all education, the African Church is led to reformulate and redefine the curricula for the formation of its servants of God by making them more coherent and more relevant to the needs of human development and communities.

Introduction

The curriculum is the core of any training and education system. According to the Centre for the Study and Defence of State Schools (Centre d'Étude et de Défense de l'École Publique [CEDEP] 2016), the main and primary mission of the schools is to:

> Train citizens who are well in their minds and bodies, who are fulfilled, ready to see their future with confidence and determination and who have mastered a certain number of concepts, knowledge and working methods. Citizens capable of

> building the society that we want to be fairer and more united. Free, autonomous, emancipated citizens. (p. 23)

This CEDEP declaration places schools and training systems at the centre of societies that want to be prosperous end emancipated with socialised, qualified, competent citizens who are aware or their societal missions. However, in order to better accomplish this mission, schools and education systems must be equipped with appropriate training and educational tools. Here, the curriculum appears to be the essential political and pedagogical tool for this purpose, as it will enable the following fundamental questions: What should be taught? How to teach? And how to organise the progression of learning? To achieve which objectives?

Following the example of society in general, the church in Africa, which wants to be not only a channel of the spiritual salvation of the people but also a channel for social, economic and political salvation, is equipping itself with structures for the training of its leaders. In order to meet this need, the member institutions of the Council of Theological Institutions of French-speaking Africa (CITAF), since 1984, have been working to put in place a CMP, which is presented as an integrated set of planned teaching actions to provide a valid, homogenous biblical and theological system of theological education and training in French-speaking Africa.

However, with regard to a constantly changing socio-cultural contingencies in Africa, one wonders whether this CMP, the training curriculum of various theological and biblical institutions in Africa, is and remains in line with theological expectations and socio-cultural realities prevailing on the continent. More specifically, the following questions will be analysed: What theory underpinned the curriculum design of CITAF? What assessment can be made of this curriculum in relation to the criteria of coherence and relevance? And finally, how can this curriculum be made coherent and relevant for the church and African society?

These questions lead to a reflection on the curricular reality in the member institutions of the CITAF. The main objective of this contribution is therefore to present the CMP in its constituent elements in relation to the question of coherence and relevance, more than a decade after its official adoption. Therefore, '*Coherence and relevance of the curricula of theological training Institutions in French-speaking Africa'* is the theme that we will endeavour to analyse here.

For a better understanding of this theme, we organise the approach around three specific angles, namely, firstly, to get to know CITAF and its CMP, then to analyse the CMP with regard to the criteria of coherence and relevance and finally, to reflect on a more utilitarian curriculum in a transformational perspective with regard to a constantly changing social, political, economic, cultural and other African contexts.

Council of Theological Institutions of French-speaking Africa and Its Common Minimum Programme

Brief history of Council of Theological Institutions of French-speaking Africa

With the aim of offering biblical and theological institutions a platform for reflection, sharing and exchange for a training that considers African realities, the FATEB[20] initiated in 1994 a series of meetings of theological and biblical training institutions of French-speaking Africa. The first formal meeting that give birth to CITAF was held in Bangui from 11 to 13 September 1997, on questions relating to programmes, contextualisation, teaching methodology and library. The meeting in Lomé in 2005 officially gave birth to a platform called CITAF. Its mission is to serve as a framework for consultation and theological reflection, approval, collaboration and monitoring of the institutions of biblical and theological institutions in French-speaking Africa. The last meetings of the General Assembly and the School of Governance of CITAF that were held from 29 July to 04 August 2018 in Yaoundé, Cameroun mobilised more than 40 active member institutions. These institutions come mainly from West Africa (Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Benin, Guinea, Togo, Mali, Niger, etc.) and from Central Africa (Chad, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Gabon, etc.). One institution from North Africa and some from Madagascar are registered as members of CITAF.

The Common Minimum Programme, an accreditation standard for members institutions of Council of Theological Institutions of French-speaking Africa

Design of a Common Minimum Programme

One of the main missions assigned to CITAF from its inception was the elaboration of a CMP to serve as a standardisation of the study programmes in the different biblical and theological educational institutions of French-speaking Africa. Thus, already at the meeting in Bangui (RCA) in 1997, the participants asked the FATEB with a great interest to propose a Common Minimum Curriculum to the other institutions. A proposal of a nomenclature of courses was therefore on agenda of the Bangui meeting on 10–12 September 1998. The first draft of the description of the courses selected to constitute the architecture of the CMP was drawn up and adopted at the

20. FATEB: Faculté de Théologie Évangélique de Bangui (Faculty of Evangelical Theology of Bangui).

meeting in Bouake (Ivory Coast) on 23–28 August 1999. In July 2001 in Bangui, the CMP was put back on the agenda. The annual amount of teaching hours is defined, as well as the duration of training per level and the required qualification of teacher for each level.

The proposed CMP has been improved over the years and was finally adopted at the consultation in Lomé, Togo, in July 2005. This document, according to Isaac Sokoke, is already in itself a standard of accreditation of the teachings of member institutions. It is a unique creation in the field of theological education in Africa (cf. eds. Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005:6).

The objectives of the CMP were therefore to describe the courses, to determine the delivery of the courses and the qualification of the teachers.

Brief overview of the content of the Common Minimum Programme

The CMP adopted by CITAF consists largely of a nomenclature and course descriptions for the different levels of education in the member institutions. These different levels or orders of education considered by the CMP are as follows.

Level I

Level I institutions are those that provide Bible training in African languages. The main lines of teaching at this level as prescribed by the CMP (eds. Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005:17–29) are as follows.

These different courses are spread over a period of 3 years for at least 1840 hours of teaching.

Box 8.1: Level I main line of teaching.

Knowledge of the Bible	***Practical courses***
- Overview of the OT	- Homiletics
- Overview of the NT	- Liturgy and musicology
- Overview of the world of the Bible	- Church and development
- Analysis of books of Bible	- Pastoral ministry
- etc.	- etc.
Doctrine	***General Subjects***
History	- African oral literature
Mission	- French
Religions and contemporary sects	- etc.

NT, New Testament; OT, Old Testament.

☐ *Level II*

The institutions of this order concern those whose learners are recruited from the 6th to the 3rd year of secondary school without the Brevet d'Étude du Premier Cycle (BEPC).[21] The main line of teaching at this level as prescribed by the CMP (cf. eds. Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005:35–46) is as follows.

These different courses are spread over a period of 3 years for at least 1670 hours of teaching.

☐ *Level III*

The institutions of this order concern those whose learners are recruited from about third year of secondary school with the BEPC up to final year classes without the Baccalaureate. The main line of teaching at this level as prescribed by the CMP (cf. eds. Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005:51–63) is as follows.

These different courses are spread over a period of 3 years for at least 1575 hours of teaching.

☐ *Level IV*

This refers to training institutions at the university level. In particular, those that offer a Bachelor's degree programme in Theology. The main lines of teaching at this level as prescribed by the CMP (eds. Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005:71–87) are as follows.

These different courses are spread over a period of 3 years for at least 2030 hours of teaching.

BOX 8.2: Level II main line of teaching.

Knowledge of the Bible - Overview of the books of the Bible - Biblical Geography - Analysis of biblical books - etc. ***Doctrine*** ***Practical theology*** - Homiletics - Christian education - Discipleship - Christian education - Church and development	***History*** ***Sects and religions*** ***Mission and evangelism*** ***General subjects*** - French - Methods of research

21. Junior Secondary School Certificate (BEPC).

BOX 8.3: Level III main line of teaching.

Knowledge of the Bible - Introduction to the OT and the NT - Biblical Greek - etc. ***Biblical theology and systematic practical theology*** - Homiletics - Church development - Pastoral theology - etc.	***History and religions*** ***General subjects*** - French - English - Methods of research - etc.

NT, New Testament; OT, Old Testament.

BOX 8.4: Level IV main line of teaching.

Biblical subjects - Introduction to the OT and the NT - Biblical languages (Hebrew and/or Greek) - Theology OT and NT - Exegesis OT and NT ***Systematic theology*** ***Practical theology***	***Missiology*** ***Historical disciplines*** ***General disciplines***

NT, New Testament; OT, Old Testament.

School for women

The main line of teaching of this level (eds. Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005:91–92) are:

- Bible and ministry courses
- doctrine courses
- health courses
- practical courses
- general courses.

The Common Minimum Programme as a standard for accreditation of education in Council of Theological Institutions of French-speaking Africa member institutions

The CMP thus established is adopted by almost all the CITAF member institutions. It is therefore no longer a simple training reference framework for them but rather a standard for accreditation within CITAF. This was stated earlier on by Isaac Sokoke (cf. eds. Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005) when he said:

> CITAF wants to equip itself with instruments, the priority of which is a credible accreditation service, to enable it to accomplish its mission. The CMP is already an accreditation standard in itself. (p. 10)

We note that the concept of accreditation is broadly understood in education and training system as a 'quality assessment procedure that aims at the approval of a study programme by an expert body or governing authority' (ed. DGQE 2018:5). Therefore, CITAF as the coordinating authority for biblical and theological training institutions in French-speaking countries is nourished by the concern for the quality of the teaching provided. With the CMP as a reference of training offers, CITAF sets the standards for the assessment of the different teaching programmes of member institutions. This procedure of investigation, of internal questioning on the organisation of the courses of study in the member institutions, aims at judging the harmony and the minimal conformity between the training offers of the said institutions and the orientations prescribed by the CMP. It is therefore around that core that the whole process of accreditation, approval and academic recognition sets up by CITAF and made formal by the CITAF General Assembly held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, on 01–03 August 2018. The credibility, quality and 'normality' of an institution and its teaching programme are now based on the CMP. Thus, as a reference for assessment, standardisation and accreditation, the CMP should bring together a set of relevant fields, coherent and contextual elements. These should contribute to the fulfilment of the expectations of the institutions, churches, learners, partners and the African society in a whole. Hence the need to evaluate the coherence and the relevance of this reference system of training offers within CITAF, in the light of the constantly changing contextual African realities.

In essence, as explained above, the CMP was the result of long consultations and consensus between the major actors of biblical and theological education in geographical and linguistic space under the authority of CITAF. Several reasons, not all of which we necessary understand, have obviously governed the choice and the organisation of the different disciplines at the different levels of training. But after more than 15 years of implementing the CMP as a referential basis for the training of any ecclesiastical and para-ecclesiastical leaders in the African French-speaking space, what assessment can we allow ourselves to make? More specifically, what assessment can be made of its coherence and relevance to the constantly changing social, political, economic, cultural and other African context?

Coherence and relevance of the Council of Theological Institutions of French-speaking Africa Common Minimum Programme

Coherence and relevance are characteristics that help judge the effectiveness and guide the utility of a given curriculum. For what use is a curriculum that does not have an impact on the abilities and capacities of the learners, nor on the expectations of the society? This concern is more alarming in the field of theological education whose expectation is directed towards the transformation

of peoples and communities. Whilst seeking to understand the concepts of coherence and relevance in the context of a curricular assessment, we will analyse the elements that help and participate in the coherence of curricula on the one hand and their relevance on the other. The elements will allow us to reflect on the current state of the CMP as competent curriculum on the one hand and on the other hand to reflect on the relationship between curriculum coherence and competence and contextual African realities.

What do we understand about the concepts of coherence and relevance?

Understand the concepts of coherence and relevance in curricula

Coherence in curricula

The principle of coherence is defined as a close union, an adherence of the various elements of a material body. Coherence shows harmony, logic and close relationship between the various elements of a set of facts, actions and ideas. It also denotes a lack of contradiction within a given set.

In curricula management, the lack of coherence in the structure of the curriculum as well as in the organisation of the training courses partly explains the failure of learning. Coherence in this curricular area therefore consists, on the one hand, of removing any contradiction in the design of the curriculum (internal coherence) and, on the other hand, of eliminating any contradiction between the curriculum, the objectives assigned to it and the expectations of society and context (external coherence).[22]

Relevance in curricula

Relevance is generally defined as what is appropriate. It is what is timely, well founded and appropriate. Relevance appeals to appropriateness and points to effectiveness. In the context of curriculum management, the term relevance, according to Nyagah (2014):

> [*C*]onnotes a close link between the content of the curriculum and the goals, which it is intended to serve. In this sense, content is only relevant if it supports the outcomes it is intended. (p. 84)

Again, this is about the match or coherence between the curriculum and the goals and objectives assigned to it (external coherence). However, relevance also refers to the adequacy of the curriculum with the needs of those for whom the curriculum is designed, their priorities, their policies, their aspirations.

22. See also Jonnaert (2008:5) who believes that the quality of a curriculum is based on four axes amongst which he mentions the degrees of internal and external coherence.

In the analysis of curricular relevance, it is possible to estimate it in relation to the different components of the curriculum. One can therefore 'estimate the relevance of *objectives, subjects*, *teaching and learning strategies*, and *resources*' (Nyagah 2014:136).

In essence, in the approach of curricula, the concepts of coherence and relevance are based on the internal structural harmony of the curriculum, as well as on its external adequacy with its objectives and the various societal needs. Coherence and relevance are therefore concepts that address together the issue of internal and external coherence of curricula.

Thus, a curriculum that is coherent, on the one hand, in the balance of its different constituent elements, and on the other hand with the socio-cultural realities, will be able to produce citizens capable of building a more just and united society. Free, autonomous, emancipated learners in perfect adequacy with the contemporary existential challenges.

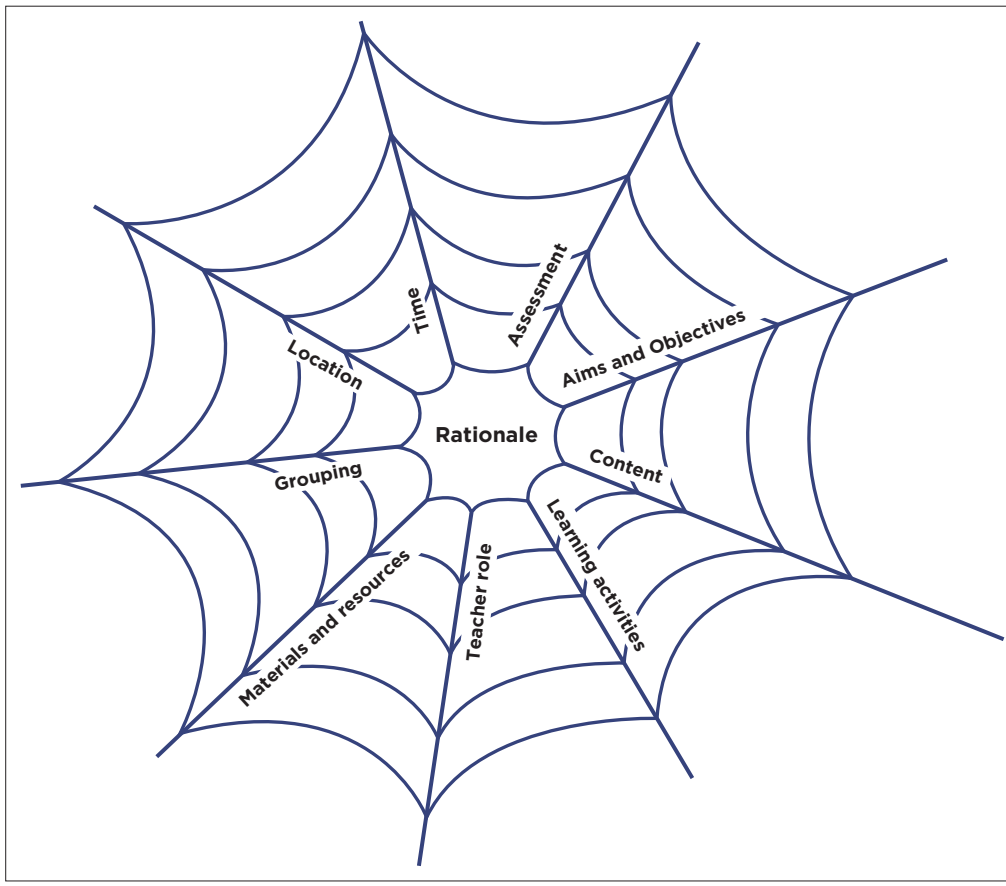
Upon reflection, this principle of coherence raises many questions about the relationship between coherence and curriculum in the field of theological education in Africa and more specifically in the framework of the CMP as a curricular concept of CITAF.

In other words, was there a real concern for internal and external coherence at the level of the CMP that underpins the training of many ecclesiastical leaders in the various training institutions in French-speaking Africa?

An evaluative view of the coherence et relevance of the Council of Theological Institutions of French-speaking Africa Common Minimum Programme

There are currently several theoretical approaches available for conducting educational assessments. The family of theoretical approaches in this area is more than respectable in size and continues to grow (Daigneault 2011:2). Thus, within the framework of the evaluative approach of the CTAF CMP, we choose, amongst many other possibilities, to base our approach on the fundamental building blocks of curricular coherence proposed by Van den Akker, Fasoglio and Mulder (2008).

Indeed, according to Van den Akker et al. (2008), the indicators of curriculum coherence are based on core elements whose interrelation and interaction contribute to its success. Thus, between these core elements, a balance needs to be found to maintain coherence. Van den Akker et al. (2008:9) established the coherence of the elements of the curriculum by means of a diagram that not only shows the perfect interconnection between these elements but also underlines the fragility of their link, like a spider's web.



Source: Van den Akker et al. (2008:9).
FIGURE 8.1: The curricular web.

Van den Akker and his colleagues identify nine basic elements of a coherent curriculum. These are the *content*, *learning activities,* the *role of teachers*, *teaching materials* and *resources, groupings, places, time, assessments goals* and *objectives*. These nine components are interrelated and interconnected around a tenth *reason* or *rationality*. It is in this vein that Beacco et al. (2010) argued that:

> The search of a better coherence presupposes an examination of the content and teaching approaches of the various subject areas [...] in order to identify all the possible links, to harmonise the contributions of each and to organise the chronology of these teachings in order to ensure a coherent pedagogical action in both of their vertical and horizontal dimensions. (p. 22)

The fundamental factors of the curricular coherence also consider the fact that the content and the consequences that the curriculum tries to bring about must be in harmony with the social and cultural realities of the time and context. This implies, on the one hand, that the curriculum underlying the education and training project must be sensitive to societal condition such as

economic, cultural, social, political, etc., and on the other hand, the curriculum must establish complementarities between the knowledge available in society and the knowledge proposed in its pedagogical and educational objectives.

Based on this theoretical approach to indicators of curriculum coherence, we establish an evaluative analysis of the CMP according to Table 8.1.

When analysing the curriculum of these biblical and theological institutions, a number of indicators of coherence do not seem to have been considered. These include:

- *The raison d'être of CMP*: even if the founding texts of CITAF (the minutes of various meetings and general assemblies of CITAF) suggest the possibility of a raison d'être of the CMP, the CMP itself says nothing about it.

TABLE 8.1: Analytical table of the theoretical approach of the CITAF curriculum coherence indicators.

Indicators of coherence	Items	CITAF CMP	Observations
1. Reason	*Why do we learn?/or what is the reason for learning?*	No rationale for the training is specified by the CMP.	-
2. Goals and objectives	*What are the goals of learning?*	Lack of overall objective and goals of the different levels of training.	Presence of objectives for each course.
3. Contents	*What do we learn ?*	The CMP clearly sets out the different disciplines and subjects that make up the content of the courses at the different levels of education.	-
4. Learning activities	*How do we learn ?*	Learning activities not specified.	-
5. Role of the teacher	*How can the teacher facilitate learning?*	The CMP does not specify the role of the teacher in the learning process.	Only the required teacher's qualifications are mentioned in the CMP.
6. Materials and resources	*What do we learn with?*	There are no suggested materials and resources for learning. There is no indicative bibliography accompanying the suggested content for training.	-
7. Grouping	*Who do we learn with?*	No indication is given about this.	-
8. Location	*Where do we learn?*	No indication is given about this.	-
9. Time	*When do we learn?*	A time quantum is clearly defined for the different courses as well as for the different levels of training.	Le CMP[a] says that this hourly quantum is defined as a minimum.
10. Evaluation	*How far has this learning gone?*	No indication is given in this respect.	-
11. Sensitivity to societal realities	*What societal realities are considered?*	The CMP includes courses that consider certain African realities.	-

CITAF, Council of Theological Institutions of French-peaking Africa; CMP, Common Minimum Programme.
[a]The CITAF manual draws attention of member institutions to the fact that the CMP is a minimum programme ad that they can increase and distribute the hourly volume ... however, institutions cannot go below the proposed hourly quantum, otherwise the quality of the training will be undermined (cf. eds. Ndjerareou, Kouassi & Pohor s.d.:108).

- *The purposes and objectives of the CMP*: this curriculum, as reference framework to guide the training offer of all the institutions of CITAF, does not set out any explicit goal or objective.
- *The nature of the learning activities*: the nature of learning activities seems to be left to the sole discretion of the training institutions and their teachers in the sense that the CMP does not mention it.
- *The role of the teachers in the learning process*: CMP only mentions here the qualifications of the teachers for the different levels of training. But is this required qualification sufficient to determine that the teachers should play a role in the transmission of knowledge?
- *Learning materials and resources*: here, the CMP merely mentions that under teaching tools and methods 'CITAF serves as a network and platform for the study and the promotion of tools and methodologies for an appropriate quality teaching'. (eds. Ndjerareou et al. s.d.:15). Thus, in the lack of designated materials and resources for the various course, the CMP instead encourages the teachers to propose a minimum bibliography of 10 books (cf. eds. Ndjerareou et al. s.d.:108). But how these disparate bibliographies could ensure harmony in a curriculum set out to provide a common knowledge base for leaners?
- *The learning community*: the CMP does not mention it; however, we believe that the existing one in the member institutions is considered.
- *The place of learning*: the CMP does not mention it; however, we believe that the existing one in the member institutions is concerned.
- *Learning assessment tools*: the CMP does not mention these; however, we believe that those existing in the member institutions should be continued.

However, the CMP has been carefully making clear other indicators of coherence, namely:

- *The content of learning*: at this level, it should be noted that there is an interrelationship and interaction, even a transversality between the different disciplines offered for teaching. For example, the departments of 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament' are complementary for an understanding of biblical data. The department of 'Systematic Theology' highlights all the doctrines underlying the biblical texts of the Old and New Testaments, etc. The different disciplines that make up the learning subject thus show a certain degree of internal coherence.
- *The learning time*: the CMP rigorously defines the hourly quantum spent on various courses.
- *The sensitivity to societal realities*: several debates around the CMP have constantly returned to the need of contextualisation of training and learning (cf. eds. Ndjerareou et al. s.d.:105, 108). However, even the CMP seems to have some sensitivities to African societal realities, several questions still remain without explicit solutions. Indeed, some actors and 'consumers' of the products issued by the CMP still wonder about the nature and

relationship between the social realities of the theological learner and the biblical languages (Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic), which are characterised as dead languages. Or, how to understand the nature of relationship that can be established amongst the political, economic or social situation of the learner and the disciplines of systematic theology that are characterised as dogmatic sciences?

After all, this analysis of the CMP has shown that only three of the 11 coherence criteria are considered here. This suggests the shortcomings because of the lack of internal and external coherence in the curriculum. Moreover, the drafters of the CMP themselves use the term courses nomenclature to refer to the content of the CMP (cf. eds. Ndjerareou et al. s.d.:23, 41, 57, 75; eds. Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005:15, 33, 49, 69). However, a simple descriptive nomenclature of courses is far from constituting a relevant and adequate reference system for conducting a training and education policy. Even if the nomenclature can designate a list or a classified identity that is authoritative and serves as reference in the context of a given professional activity or discipline, it cannot be called a curriculum and function as it.

For a coherent and useful Common Minimum Programme for biblical and theological training institutions in French-speaking Africa

Need for a coherent and relevant Common Minimum Programme for Council of Theological Institutions of French-speaking Africa

After more than 15 years of practice of the CITAF CMP, the challenges on the continent and particular to religious institutions, spirituality, society, culture economy, politic, environment, etc., have much changed. Also, the 'feverish ecstasy' that surrounded the advent of the CMP has passed. The various actors in the theological education system of French-speaking Africa must provide their institutions with a curriculum that meets the quality standards in this area.

Guidelines for a coherent and relevant Common Minimum Programme

On the basis of the core indicators of a coherent curriculum that we have examined, and in the light of the evaluative view of the CITAF CMP, some guidelines can be suggested in order to enable the reconstruction of a coherent, relevant and contextualised curriculum for the member institutions of CITAF.

☐ Redefining the fundamental axes of the curriculum

This involved identifying the areas of competence of the curriculum, then defining its objectives, training, content, teaching methods, teaching materials and methods of assessment for the teachers and learners (cf. N'Dri 2017:188).

☐ *Defining the purposes of CMP*

In general, curricula have two main purposes: institutional purposes and educational and pedagogical purposes (cf. N'Dri 2017:191; N'Dri 2018).

The institutional purpose or objective is indeed a prescriptive framework that indicates the main missions that decision-makers assign to education and training. This perspective framework also indicates the skills expected of learners at the end of the learning process.

The educational and/or pedagogical purpose identifies, defines and structures the educational and training content with a view to the transmission of transformational and operational knowledges that can be subject to evaluation. This assessments in turn will enable the learner to assert his or her knowledge and skills socially and professionally.

☐ *Redefining the exogenous elements that can influence the CMP*

No construction of curricula can emerge ex nihilo and evolve in a hermetic manner. Indeed, the biblical and theological sciences that constitute the favourite domain of the member institutions of CITAF are subject, indeed, to general principles in their themes. However, in their applications, they remain contextual, and at best, they remain situational. In other words, they are able to adapt to the concrete realities of the environment in which the curriculum is deployed. Therefore, certain elements such as the socio-religious and socio-political contexts can and must influence the content of curricula and learnings. Indeed, the culture of the peoples and their worldview, their environmental, socio-economic challenges, etc., should be known and analysed in their relation with biblical and theological sciences in the context in which they will be applied. In this sense, different parameters will allow to some extent to deconstruct the initial and generic models of 'inherited theology' and constitute the pledge for the reconstruction of models of theological thinking that give meaning to the existential realities of learners, communities and peoples.

☐ Reviewing the content of the Common Minimum Programme

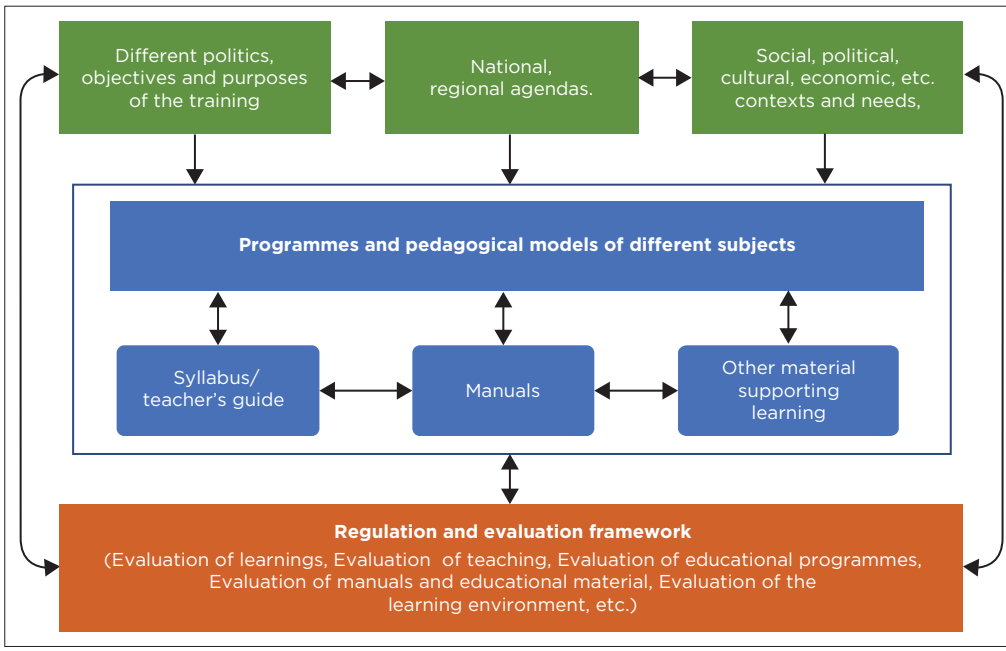
The contents of the curriculum are the different articulations and different elements around which all the courses constituting the curriculum evolve. Talking about the content leads to the identification of the main thread and

content of the teaching. It is true that the contents of curricula can be variously oriented. Indeed, they can be either subject oriented, learner oriented or core oriented (cf. N'Dri 2017:195). However, whatever the focus of the curriculum, its contents will have to meet quality requirements and foster the development of skills. Therefore, far for being a simple list of 'facts' or information to be disclosed to the learners, the curriculum includes high-quality 'contents', which must be (cf. Stabback 2016:16):

- *Upgraded and relevant*: The nature and extent of human knowledge are changing at a rapid pace: knowledge provided in the curriculum can therefore quickly be replaced, lose its relevance or be refuted (Stabback 2016:18). The CITAF CMP is over 15 years old. Have religious, socio-economic, cultural and challenges not changed in Africa since then? How, for example, will the CMP enable learners to respond to the migration phenomena in Africa? To the pandemic of COVID-19? Thus, apart from the so-called 'spiritual' and religious contents in the CMP, a section must be opened up to examine issues specific to African society. This includes reflecting on the challenges of the African people that are not sufficiently addressed in Western curricula, for which several theological institutions on the continent are still heavily in debt. This will include issues related to:
    - marriage problems: polygamy, dowry
    - corruption
    - witchcraft
    - underdevelopment, poverty, illiteracy
    - politics, civil wars, terrorism, jihadism
    - hunger, malnutrition
    - clan strength, ethnicity, gender, etc.
- *Sufficiently demanding*: implementing the mechanism to enable the CMP to deploy learners' capabilities by fostering the acquisition of higher-order thinking skills and stimulating their curiosity, critical reflection and imagination (cf. Stabback 2016:21) and in return their adaptability.
- *Balanced*: the balance of the content of the CMP here should consider both the theoretical and the practical aspects of biblical and theological education. Indeed, biblical and theological education, far from being a simple accumulation of theoretical knowledge, should integrate all the dimensions that are the aim of any learning process. The communication of knowledge (know), skill (know how) and values (know how to be). The content of the CMP should aim to balance this triple objective of learning and training.

☐ Redefining the curricular framework

The CMP, in its present state, in order to fulfil its vocation as a curriculum, will have to integrate an overall curricular framework. The existence of a



Source: Adapted from Jonnaert (2015:35) and Stabback (2016:24).
FIGURE 8.2: Integrated curriculum set.

curricular framework will prevent the CMP from being a mere nomenclature or a descriptive list of courses. This framework should bring together in an integrated whole the statements of values and understandings that underpin the whole educational project, the main purposes, objectives and missions of education, development of the culture and philosophy of training (cf. Stabback 2016:25). This integrated curricular set could be schematised as follows:

Such a curricular framework has the merit of serving as a basic architectural plan to enable all the ingredients necessary for the construction of a coherent and relevant curriculum to be brought together in an integrated whole. The upper part of the framework whilst establishing the rationale, objectives and purposes of the training project relates it to exogenous contingencies to establish the relevance of the curriculum. The middle part of the framework deals with the operational aspect of the curriculum by putting together all the pedagogical, academic and administrative action plans. The lower part of the framework is in charge of the assessment of all the operational aspects of the curriculum and ensures the regulation informing the upper part in view of possible adjustment and adaptation.

In essence, in order to be more useful to the member institutions, CITAF will need to understand the need for a coherent, relevant and useful CMP, but even more to understand the whole mechanism to achieve this.

Conclusion

At the end of our reflection on the theme '*Coherence and relevance of the curricula of theological training Institutions in French-speaking Africa*', we say that the Church has both a divine and a human mission. Her mission is to worship God and to serve him. But isn't the true service of God done by being at the service of humans and human society? Therefore, if it is true, according to Halaoui (2003), that society is the main goal of all education, the African Church will be led to reformulate or even redefine the curricula for the training of Her servants of God by making them more coherent and more relevant to the needs of the human development and communities.

It will therefore be necessary that CITAF, which intervenes in the name and on behalf of the churches, establishes a true adequacy between '*why the training of the servants of God*', '*how to train*' et le '*a training what for*', that is to say the reals needs (spiritual, social, economic, political, environmental ...) of the society.

Council of Theological Institutions of French-speaking Africa will therefore have to create a truly relevant training process that not only addresses the problems of society but also considers the real needs of learners. Hence the need to review the type of curriculum that seems most appropriate. In this African context, would a common core curriculum or at least a learner-centred one not be preferable to the subject-centred one that constitutes the main framework of several of our curricula, mainly the CMP?

In short, it will be a matter of having a curriculum capable of overturning traditions and apprehensions and bringing about a holistic transformation in African society. A curriculum modelled on that of Christ who, in three years of training, made the disciples capable of turning the world upside down (Ac 17:6).

Chapter 9

Utilising accessible mobile technology in teaching Biblical exegesis to undergraduate students within a decolonised South African context

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Abstract

Mobile technology has changed the world that we live in. This technology is utilised across a broad spectrum of the various population groups in South Africa, which includes people in lower socio-economic groups. One of the areas in which mobile technology has become very useful is in the area of tertiary education. Apart from the way in which mobile technology can

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enhance students' access to online lecture materials and in which it can facilitate effective communication between lecturers and students, an area where mobile technology has become particularly helpful is the area of Biblical exegesis. Regardless of the way in which the Bible is contextualised, the basic technical skill of biblical exegesis remains an important building block of theological education across the board. As Bible software is generally expensive, this contribution focuses on how to utilise free online or downloadable Bible software to enhance accessibility and an integrated learning experience. Apart from accessibility, free Bible software has the potential to empower students to acquire and utilise the basic skills of exegesis, which in turn can be used in undergraduate theological studies, research and ministry.

Introduction

Brown (2005:308) already indicated in 2005 that 'in certain areas in Africa, the growth of wireless infrastructure is enormous – even more rapid than in many first world countries'. Aker and Mbiti (2010) pointed out that access to mobile phones in sub-Saharan Africa has increased dramatically between 2000 and 2010, averaging an increase of 49% annual growth between 2002 and 2007 (cf. Porter 2012:241). Porter et al. (2018:541) argued that massively reduced costs of communication are allowing poor people to have connectivities that they never envisaged before. In many rural areas, mobile phones represented the first modern telecommunications infrastructure of any kind (Aker & Mbiti 2010:208). According to research conducted by Porter et al. (2018:540) amongst people between 9 and 25 years across 12 poor urban and peri-urban sites across Ghana, Malawi and South Africa, the use of low-cost handsets, which include smart phones, has picked up rapidly. One of the main reasons for the rapid growth in people having cell phones in Africa is that '[e]ven for many very poor people in sub-Saharan Africa, including children, the mobile phone is now perceived as an essential requisite: an object of desire and a symbol of success' (Porter 2012:241).

A quantitative survey has been administered in 2020 wherein theology students and lecturers at the NWU were questioned on their use of mobile technology. From a total of 769 undergraduate and postgraduate registered students,[23] 55 students participated in the survey. From this student sample, 72.7% were black persons, 16.4% white, 7.3% coloured and 1.8% Asian. In respect of age, 21.8% were between 51 and 65 years, 50.9% between 36 and 50 years, 9.1% between 28 and 35 years, 7.3% between 22 and 27 years and 9.1% between the age of 18 and 21 years. With respect to their highest

23. This figure was obtained by direct correspondence with the faculty administrator of the Theological faculty of NWU.

qualification, 30.9% had matric, 25.5% had a Bachelor's degree, 21.8% a diploma, 10.9% a Honours degree, 1.8% an intermediate certificate, 3.6% a Masters degree and 5.5% had a PhD. In this student sample, 92.7% indicated that they have regular or easy access to an electronic device such as a smartphone, tablet or laptop[24] and 81.8% indicated that they have regular or easy access to the Internet. Some of the main complaints in accessing the Internet pertained to connectivity problems, data availability and the supply of electricity. Most tertiary students indicated that they have access to electronic devices and the Internet.

In respect of the theological lecturers, 16 participated in the quantitative survey conducted at NWU, which is about half of the lecturing staff. Of these, 13 were white and 1 black. From these, 87.5% had a PhD as the highest qualification, whilst 6.3% had a Bachelor's degree and 6.3% a Honours degree. Of this sample, 68.8% indicated that they think that the students they teach have regular or easy access to the Internet and an electronic device such as a smartphone, tablet or laptop. This percentage seems to be lower than the actual figure, which indicates that students' level of access to electronic devices and the Internet is probably higher than is anticipated amongst lecturers.

Although mobile learning (m-learning) within a tertiary environment has long been recognised, the initial approach was to focus on communication rather than on content (Brown 2005:304). In other words, initially, mobile devices were not so much used as an actual instrument of learning as it has been used to enhance communication between lecturers and students. Yet, as Internet access and the use of smart phones have become increasingly widespread, even amongst poor African people, a gradual shift has taken place within a tertiary environment from using mobile devices primarily for communication to using them for accessing contents. Such a shift was already predicted by Brown (2005:304) in 2005.

Within a diverse, postcolonial and increasingly globalised South African context, it is of paramount importance to advance a curriculum that focuses on accessibility and contextualisation (Brunsdon & Knoetze 2014). In view of the prevalence and advance in mobile technology, it has become an increasingly important medium to advance such values. In respect of theological education, the use of mobile technology is no exception. At NWU, apart from enhancing communication between the lecturer and the students, mobile technology has been used with great success in the teaching and learning environment. An online educational Learning Management System called 'eFundi' has been implemented to facilitate the teaching of both contact and distance students. This system can be accessed via the Internet on any device that can access

24. 58.2% strongly agreed with the statement, 34.5% agreed, 1.8% disagreed and 5.5% strongly disagreed.

the Internet. Students can access lecture content as well as course information, even from mobile devices.[25] This includes so-called whiteboard classes[26] and listening to pre-recorded lectures. The tendency is, however, to move away from whiteboard classes to pre-recorded lectures so that students can access the content at any time, which is extremely useful for students that study after hours.

In respect of utilising mobile technology, theological education at NWU is no exception. In fact, mobile technology has been used with increasing success in teaching biblical exegesis. This article focuses on the possibilities of using free, accessible mobile software to teach exegetical skills to students of diverse backgrounds.

Exegetical skills as a basis for contextualised hermeneutical application

Although within a postcolonial African context, epistemological approaches at universities should include African knowledge systems instead of solely relying on Eurocentric epistemologies (cf. Methula 2017), exegetical skills can be understood as a basic set of skills that form the basis of theological interpretation and application in diverse contexts. In broader terms, biblical exegesis can be understood as the careful historical, literary and theological analysis of a text (Gorman 2009:10; cf. Fee 2002:1). Yet, in narrower terms, exegesis involves a 'close reading' of a text, which comprises 'the deliberate, word-by-word and phrase-by-phrase consideration of all the parts of a text in order to understand it as a whole' (Gorman 2009:10). The idea in exegesis is to lead out *from* the text rather than to read meaning *into* the text (Virkler & Ayayo 2007:17).

Although the concept of hermeneutics was originally understood to include exegesis, in the last few decades, the concept of hermeneutics has been understood to denote the enterprise of interpreting a text within a contemporary existential reality (cf. Fee 2002:1; Thomas 2002). According to Thiselton (2012), exegesis and interpretation point to the actual process of interpreting texts, whereas hermeneutics also includes the discipline of asking what exactly we are doing when we read, understand and apply texts. In other words, exegesis, especially in the narrower sense of the word, is not intended to be confined to a specific hermeneutical approach but is intended to lay the groundwork and to set certain constraints on the possible interpretations or applications of any given text within a specific contemporary context (hermeneutics). The intention

25. Although eFundi can be accessed via a smartphone or tablet, the user experience is still not on the same level as with a personal computer.

26. In a whiteboard class, the lecturer presents an online class and students can connect to the class in real time. In such a session, students can participate by making comments or asking questions during the lecture.

of learning exegetical skills is thus to help facilitate a responsible interpretation and application of the biblical text within any given context. Examples of the continued relevance of biblical exegesis within postcolonial African contexts can be found in the single volume *Africa Bible Commentary* (Adeyemo 2006), the *Africa Bible Commentary Series*, edited by Nupanga Weanzana and Samuel Ngewa (since 2009), as well as in the *Africa Study Bible* (Jusu 2016). Although the *Africa Bible Commentary* (2006) is not intended to be a critical, academic commentary, it claims to be 'true to the text and honest to its context both in Bible days and in our day' (Adeyemo 2006:ix). The introduction to the *Africa Bible Commentary Series* that occurs in all of the commentaries in the series states that 'more complex academic issues relating to the original languages and academic controversies are discussed in the comprehensive endnotes' (e.g. Tamfu 2018:xiii).

The accessibility of digital Bibles

In the past 15 years or so, there has been a massive explosion in the digitisation of books. A noteworthy repository of digitised books is *Internet Archive*,[27] an online digital library that started to digitise books in 2005. They claim that they can now scan 3500 books per day in 18 locations around the world. Currently, they have digitised more then 28 million books and texts (About the Internet Archive n.d.). Books that have entered the public domain have become available for download or online access. Typically, these are books that were published before 1923, books that were published from 1923 to 1977 without a copyright notice or books published under certain copyright conditions within the latter category (Copyright Term and the Public Domain in the United States n.d.). In respect of Bible resources, there is no shortage of digitised material.

Many older Bible translations such as the King James Version (1769), the Revised Version (1881), the Young's Literal Translation (1898) and the American Standard Version (1901) have become available for download or open online access. Although the New Testament of these older Bible translations is mainly based on the *Textus Receptus*, which did not always utilise the best Greek manuscripts, these translations are still useful if used with discretion. At the same time, apart from the availability of the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint, some of the earlier critical editions of the Hebrew Old Testament (e.g. Kittel 1906) and the Greek New Testament (e.g. Nestle 1904; Von Tischendorf 1878; Westcott & Hort 1882) have also become freely available in digital form.

Another welcome phenomenon in the world of digitised Biblical texts is that the Society of Biblical Literature in collaboration with Logos Bible Software has published the critical *SBL Greek New Testament* (Holmes 2010) under a permissive

27. See https://archive.org.

licence that allows royalty-free commercial and non-commercial use (End User License Agreement n.d.), which is available to download free of charge from their website (Download the SBLGNT n.d.). A similar, critical Hebrew edition by the Society of Biblical Literature, is underway (The Hebrew Bible n.d.). In respect of contemporary Bible translations, certain Bible translation publishers have agreements with online Bible software publishers to make their translations available for open access via the use of the Bible software publishers' online or mobile Bible software applications. A noteworthy example is *YouVersion*.[28] Currently, *YouVersion* features over 2062 Bible versions in 1372 languages (The Bible App n.d.). *YouVersion* can be accessed either online or through mobile phone applications on Android, iOS and Windows Phone platforms. *YouVersion* provides free access to various up-to-date English translations, such as the *New King James Version* (1982, although still based on the *Textus Receptus*), the *Amplified Bible* (1987), the *New Revised Standard Version* (1989), the *Good News Bible* (1992), the *New International Version* (2011), the *New Living Translation* (2015) and the *English Standard Version* (2016). It even features Bible translations in Afrikaans (1953, 1983), Zulu (1997), Xhosa (1975), Southern Sotho (1961), Pedi (1986), Tswana (1970), Tsonga (1989), Swazi (1996), Venda (1998), Ndebele (2012) and Shona (2017), which represent all of South Africa's 11 official languages as well as the main language of Zimbabwean immigrants. Other African languages that are featured by *YouVersion* include languages such as Chibemba (2015, spoken in Zambia), Chichewa (2014, Malawi), Igbo (Nigeria), Khoekhoegowab (Namibia), Luganda (Uganda), Malagasy (Madagascar), Oshindonga (Namibia), Swahili (Kenya, Tanzania) and Yoruba (Nigeria). On the free *YouVersion* mobile application, any of these Bible translations can be downloaded permanently and accessed offline.

Accessible Bible commentaries and other resources

Although access to the original languages and translations of the Bible forms an important part of exegetical skills, the real advantage of online and mobile technology becomes evident in the use of lexicons in the original languages, language tools, commentaries on the Bible and other Bible study resources. With regard to lexicons, all the older Hebrew and Greek lexicons are available from *Internet Archive*, for example, Strong's (1890a, 1890b) Hebrew and Greek lexicons, the Hebrew lexicon of Brown, Driver and Briggs (1906) as well as Thayer's (1889) Greek lexicon. With respect to language aids, grammar books such as Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar (Kautzsch & Cowley 1910), Blass's (1905) *Grammar of New Testament Greek* and Robertson's (1919) *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* are available. Many of the older critical

28. See https://www.bible.com.

commentaries can also be downloaded at no cost from *Internet Archive*, including commentary series such as Barnes' (1847–1885) notes on the Old and New Testament, Bengel's (1860–1866) *Gnomon of the New Testament*, Keil and Delitzsch's (1866–1891) *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown's (1871) commentary on the Old and New Testaments, Meyer's (1880) commentary on the New Testament, Alford's (1874–1908) *Greek Testament* commentary, Exell's (1900) *Biblical Illustrator*, Nicholl and Joseph's (1903) *Expositor's Bible*, Ellicott's (1905) *Bible Commentary for English Readers*, *The Pulpit Commentary* series (Spence 1909–1919), the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* (Perowne 1882–1922) and the older commentaries in the *International Critical Commentary* series on the New Testament (Driver, Plummer & Briggs 1863–1922). Although these commentaries are not up to date in terms of contemporary interpretations of the Bible, they nevertheless offer rich exegetical insight, especially in respect of the original languages and other technical aspects of the text. Many contemporary commentaries still rely on these older commentaries and stand in continuity with them.

Another welcome edition to the wealth of free online Bible commentaries is the recent commentaries on the whole Bible by Thomas L. Constable (2012) and Bob Utley (1997–2019). These commentaries are not overly technical or intended as comprehensive commentaries. However, as both of the writers have a scholarly background, the commentaries are generally more up-to-date, especially in respect of the application. It can be noted though that Constable's commentary generally shows more scholarly interaction than that of Utley.

Accessible Bible software

Although there are a number of advanced digital Bible library applications available, resources for these applications are generally expensive. The best known and most widely used application is probably *Logos Bible Software*.[29] Although the base software package, which includes very basic resources, is now free, buying resources for the application is still quite expensive, even in respect of the older commentaries or resources that are otherwise freely downloadable. Another package that can either be installed without cost on a computer or a mobile device is *Olive Tree Bible Software*.[30] Although this package offers good functionality when paid resources are purchased and downloaded, the resources that are downloadable free of charge are still quite limited.[31]

29. See https://www.logos.com.

30. See https://www.olivetree.com.

31. Other notable paid Bible software packages at the time of writing include *Accordance Bible Software* for Macintosh and iOS (https://www.accordancebible.com), *iLumina Gold* for Windows and Macintosh (https://www.amazon.com/Ilumina-Live-Bible-Pc/dp/1414311583), *PC Study Bible Version* for Windows (https://www.amazon.com/PC-Study-Bible-Version-Professional/dp/1565145127) and *Quickverse Bible Suite* for Windows (https://www.amazon.com/Quickverse-Bible-Suite-Study-Software/dp/B001D2AS38).

The most accessible Bible library software with the most default functionality is probably *Bible Hub* (https://biblehub.com), which is made available by Helps Ministries.[32] This software is fully functional in webpage form. It is also available as a free mobile application on an iPhone or an Android-based phone, provided that the user can access the Internet whilst using the application. In other words, when you browse to https://biblehub.com, you have immediate open access to fully functional Bible software without the need for registration. With the permission of the publishers, it features English Translations such as the *New King James Version* (1982), the *New American Standard Bible* (1995), *God's Word* (1995), the *New International Version* (2011), the *New Living Translation* (2015), the *English Standard Version* (2016) and the *Christian Standard Bible* (2017). In respect of Hebrew, *Bible Hub* offers the *Westminster Leningrad Codex*, which forms the basis of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. With respect to Greek texts, it features the texts of Von Tischendorf (1878), Westcott and Hort (1882) and Nestle (1904). One of the best features of *Bible Hub* is probably its interlinear mode for both the Hebrew Old Testament (based on the *Westminster Leningrad Codex*) and the Greek New Testament. In interlinear mode, the New Testament Greek text is mainly based on the Nestle (1904) text, but it includes variant readings of the *SBL Greek New Testament* (Holmes 2010), the 27th edition of the Nestle-Aland text (Aland et al. 1993), the Westcott and Hort (1882) text, the *Byzantine Majority Text* (Robinson & Pierpont 2005) and Scrivener's (1894) text. When using the interlinear function, apart from having access to a direct translation beneath the Hebrew or Greek text, the user has instant access to each Hebrew or Greek word's Strong's number, their transliteration and even their full parsing. The software also supports hovering, which means that when the user hovers with a mouse over the parts of the interlinear text, it displays quick information such as the meaning of a word or a short description of its parsing. When the Strong's number above the Hebrew or Greek word is clicked, the user is directed to a page that provides access to the lexical data of any particular word. Amongst others, *Bible Hub* features Strong's (1890a, 1890b) Hebrew and Greek lexicons, the Hebrew lexicon of Brown et al. (1906), as well as Thayer's (1889) Greek lexicon. In respect of commentaries, amongst many others, the user has instant open access in any given biblical text to the series of Barnes (1847–1885), Bengel (1860–1866), Keil and Delitzsch's (1866–1891), Jamieson et al. (1871), Meyer (1880), Alford (1874–1908), Exell (1900), Nicholl and Joseph (1903), Ellicott (1905), Spence (1909–1919), Perowne (1882–1922) and Driver et al. (1863–1922). *Bible Hub* also features various cross

32. At the time of writing, similar online Bible software packages, albeit with generally lesser resources and lesser functionality include *BibleGateway* (https://www.biblegateway.com), *Blue Letter Bible* (https://www.blueletterbible.org), *Bible Study Tools* (https://www.biblestudytools.com), *Net Bible* (https://netbible.org), *Faithlife Study Bible* (https://bible.faithlife.com), *Biblewebapp* (http://biblewebapp.com) and *The Bible Tool* (http://www2.crosswire.org/study).

reference systems, as well as (older) sermon helps and topical resources. The main disadvantage of the *Bible Hub* software is that one has to be online to access the resources.

A noteworthy accessible digital Bible library application that can be used offline is *e-Sword*[33] by Rick Meyers. The base installation file is freely downloadable for computers with Windows or Macintosh operating systems. Although a low cost version of *e-Sword* is available for iPhones and iPads (ZAR49.99), an application is not yet available for the Android platform. Yet, on all the platforms for which *e-Sword* is available, it can be used offline. Amongst many free Bibles in various languages, such as French, German, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian and Portugese, it features free Bibles in Afrikaans (1953) and Xhosa (1864). In respect of English translations, one can download the *King James Version* (1769), the *Revised Version* (1881), *Young's Literal Translation* (1898), the *American Standard Version* (1901), the *Good News Bible* (1992), *God's Word* (1995), the *Literal Translation of the Bible* by J.P. Green (2000, although based on the *Textus Receptus*), the *International Standard Version* (2010), the *Lexham English Bible* (2012) and the *English Standard Version* (2016) at no cost. In respect of Bibles in the original languages, a Hebrew Bible without vowels is available as well as one with Strong's numbers. The Greek Septuagint is available for free download, as well as the *Textus Receptus* and Westcott and Hort's (1882) text of the New Testament. Similar to *Bible Hub*, *e-Sword* also provides open access to commentary series such as Barnes (1847–1885), Keil and Delitzsch's (1866–1891), Jamieson et al. (1871), Exell (1900), Nicholl and Joseph (1903), Spence (1909–1919) and Perowne (1882–1922). With respect to lexicons, Strong's (1890a, 1890b) Hebrew and Greek lexicons, the Hebrew lexicon of Brown et al. (1906) and Thayer's (1889) Greek lexicon are available at no cost. However, the default versions of the latter two lexicons are featured in the abbreviated form. A particularly useful Greek text that can be installed is that of Westcott and Hort (1882). If this text is installed, the user gains instant access to each Greek word's Strong's number as well as its parsing. By searching for specific Strong's numbers, the user can see which Greek words are used in which texts, which means that the user has access to a function similar to a Greek concordance. Moreover, *e-Sword* features cross reference systems as well as a reference library for which many free resources such as the Ante-Nicene Fathers, Josephus' works and older devotional works can be installed at no cost. Apart from the option in *e-Sword* to purchase numerous up-to-date paid resources, the real advantage of the software is that one can add resources from third parties. One such a third party is *Bible Support*[34] from which many

33. Downloadable from https://www.e-sword.net.

34. See http://www.biblesupport.com.

of the public domain resources that are not downloadable in *e-Sword* by default can be downloaded and installed.[35]

Two other noteworthy packages, although they offer less options than *e-Sword*, are *Heavenword Bible Study Toolbox* and *Heavenword New Testament Studies Toolkit* by HeavenWord Incorporated. These applications can be installed free of charge from the Microsoft Store on a computer with Windows 8–10 or on a Windows mobile phone. After installation, they work offline. Although these two applications by the same publisher overlap in functionality, the *Bible Study Toolbox* focuses more on the whole Bible whilst the *New Testament Studies Toolkit* provides more specialised aids and tools for the New Testament. The *Bible Study Toolbox* offers the *New American Standard Bible* (1995). Amongst others, it provides access to the commentary of Jamieson et al. (1871) and James Gray's (1999) *Concise Bible Commentary*. The *New Testament Studies Toolkit* also provides access to the *New American Standard Bible* (1995) but when one clicks on any verse, it provides the text of the *SBL Greek New Testament* (Holmes 2010), the Greek root words in that verse, their Strong's number, their parsing and translation. One can even listen to an audio clip of its pronunciation. When one clicks on any Greek word, information is displayed about how many times that word occurs in the *SBL Greek New Testament* (Holmes 2010), Westcott and Hort's (1882) Greek New Testament, Robinson and Pierpont's (2005) Byzantine Greek New Testament and the *Textus Receptus*. The same page also displays the lexical entries of Souter's (1917) pocket lexicon, the *Zondervan NASB Exhaustive Concordance* (Olson et al. 2000) and Strong's (1890b) concordance.

Tendencies in Bible software use at NWU

From the NWU survey (2020), 83.6% of the students indicated that they are acquainted with Bible software for learning and studying,[36] of which 80% regularly use such software in doing exegesis[37] and 67.3% use it for ministry.[38] Most students that indicated their preference for specific software, indicated that they use *Bible Hub* (32.7%), *e-Sword* (14.5%) and *Logos Bible Software* (10.9%) or a combination thereof.

35. At the time of writing comparable free packages, albeit with fewer possibilities in terms of add-ons include *The Word* (https://www.theword.net), *Scripture for All* (https://www.scripture4all.org), *The Online Bible* (http://onlinebible.net), Bible Analyzer (https://www.bibleanalyzer.com) and *Xiphos* (http://xiphos.org).

36. 52.7% agreed and 30.9% strongly agreed.

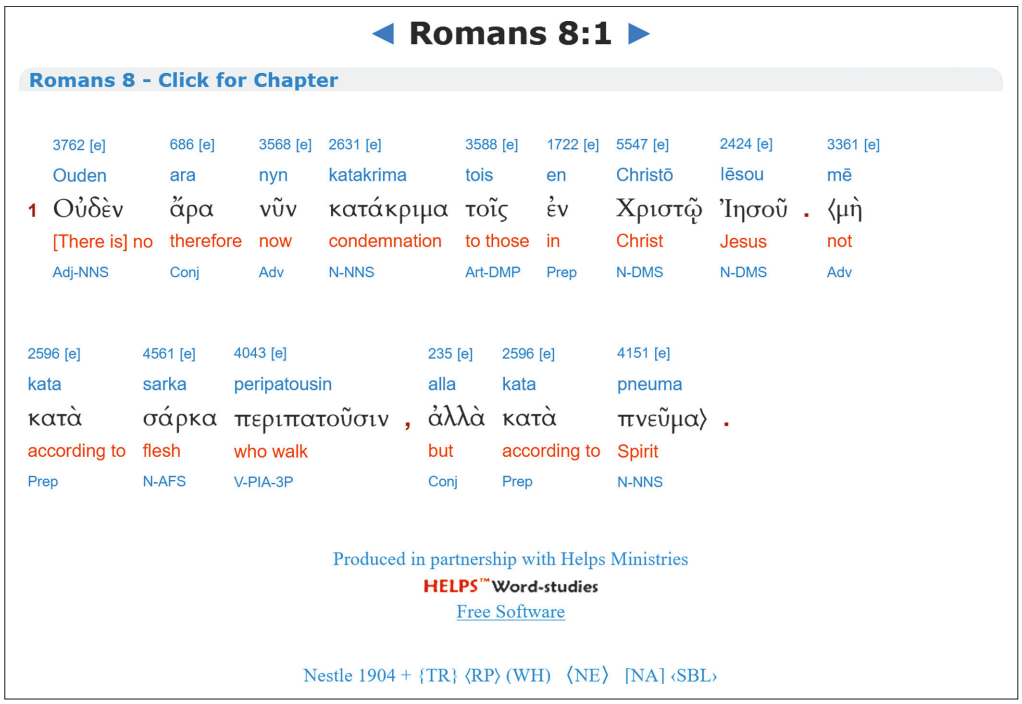
37. 45.5% agreed and 34.5% strongly agreed.

38. 47.3% agreed and 20% strongly agreed.

With respect to the lecturers, 68.8% of the lecturers indicated that they are acquainted with Bible software and that they use it for teaching and doing exegesis. Most of the lecturers that were surveyed use *Logos Bible Software* (37.5%). Interestingly, 18.8% indicated that they use *Bible Hub* and 6.3% that they use *e-Sword* although not necessarily exclusively. It seems thus that there is a clear preference for free, accessible Bible software amongst students and that even some lecturers make (occasional) use of free Bible software.

An example of applying free online Bible software in undergraduate education

In my own lecturing in New Testament and Greek, I use *Bible Hub* and other freely accessible resources on a regular basis. In lecturing to first year Greek students,[39] I teach the students word parsing and semantic principles with the use of the interlinear function in *Bible Hub*. For example, when the text of Romans 8:1 is displayed in the interlinear function, the following information is displayed in Figure 9.1.



Source: https://biblehub.com/interlinear/romans/8-1.htm

FIGURE 9.1: The example of Romans 8:1.

39. This is a year module, called 'Greek Language Competency' (GRKS172). It is not on the same level as Greek 1 proper, but teaches students to become acquainted with the Greek text by using mainly electronic helps and tools.

As can be seen from Figure 9.1, the following information is displayed (from top to bottom): the Strong's number, the transliteration, the Greek text, the English translation and the parsing of each Greek word. The latter part of the verse (μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν, ἀλλά κατά πνεῦμα, 'who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit') is displayed in brackets (‹›). Right at the bottom, a clickable legend is displayed, which indicates that this latter part of the verse does not occur in the Westcott and Hort (1882) text, the Nestle texts (Nestle 1904; Nestle et al. 2006) and the SBL text (Holmes 2010). The last version to have the addition is the Byzantine Majority Text (Robinson & Pierpont 2005). This interlinear function is helpful in that the Greek text is prioritised and the reader can see how the words are pronounced and translated. Moreover, the reader is also made aware of the fact that there are different versions of the Greek text and that there was development in the compilation of critical Greek editions. By clicking on any of the blue words or numbers, the reader can go a level deeper and obtain more information on each aspect, including lexical data. Apart from using this functionality in the classroom or in online lectures, assignments and exam questions, I provide the Greek text only, but the student can utilise any possible aids to answer questions, including electronic aids. The typical questions that are asked are questions where students have to parse Greek words and provide lexical definitions in context.

When one clicks on the Strong's number at the top of the interlinear Bible in *Bible Hub*, it redirects the user to a page on which various lexical definitions are displayed. For example, if the reader clicks on the Strong's number 2631 above κατάκριμα, the user is directed to lexical definitions from various sources. Amongst these is Thayer's (1889) lexicon, which has the useful feature of listing the various New Testament textual references in which the various lexical meanings are used. This feature makes the reader aware of the fact that a word in the original language normally has one specific meaning within a specific context, and that one cannot randomly assign any possible meaning to a Hebrew or Greek word in any given text. This feature can also be used to teach students to guard against the fallacy of illegitimate totality transfer in which all or various meanings of a word can be applied to any given text in which a word is used (see, e.g. Barr 1961:218). In some questions, I ask students to compare Thayer's (1889) lexical definitions with that of Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich's (1957) lexicon, which is also available online[40] and provides individual textual references under each meaning. The idea is to compare the lexical definitions of these two lexicons of a word that occurs in a specific text and interpret the lexical definitions in view of the context. Although the lexical definitions might in some instances be outdated in terms of recent scholarship,

40. See http://lareopage.free.fr/a&g/main.htm.

the student becomes acquainted with semantic principles, which remains valid when the student transitions to more recent lexical sources.

In the New Testament modules that I lecture, I use the same functionality as indicated above but also require the students to compare and interpret various commentaries on the text. In New Testament assignments or exam questions, students are encouraged to also use more recent commentaries if they have access to a theological library. If not, they are encouraged to compare older commentaries with that of more recent free commentaries such as that of Constable (2012) or Utley (1997–2019). Although the latter two commentaries are more recent, in many instances, they rely on older scholarship and thus have to be used with discretion. In most instances, I thus supply the students with excerpts from a more recent commentary to read in conjunction with older commentaries. In working with commentaries, students become aware of the complexity of interpreting Biblical texts and especially how one applies an ancient text to a new, postcolonial context.

Conclusion

The intention of this contribution is not to promote any specific Bible software package but to demonstrate some of the current possibilities in providing an accessible and inclusive solution that can be utilised within a postcolonial, globalised society, where (mobile) digital technology and Internet access have seen rapid growth over the past two decades. The aim of this contribution is rather to point out the current trends and functionality in easily accessible or free Bible software, which might well look very different in the coming decade.

One of the main challenges of using freely accessible Bible software is that most of the scholarly resources that are currently available are older and thus have to be used with discretion. One is also confronted with the fact that most of these older resources originated within a colonial context. Students can thus not be exposed to these resources in an uncritical manner. At the same time, however, in exposing students to these older resources, it can be used as an opportunity to teach them how to use resources critically, being aware of the context in which they originated. Yet, even though one could argue that many of the current accessible resources that are available come from a prior, colonial era, they are still useful if used with discretion, especially the technical resources, which form the basis of exegesis and hermeneutics.

Accessible electronic biblical resources are here to stay and improve, which brings an unprecedented opportunity to empower students of the Bible from virtually every socio-economic background to interpret the Bible in a responsible and critical manner. In training undergraduate theological students to use these accessible resources, they are enabled to share their knowledge and skills with people in their sphere of influence, including other people in ministry or other church members. Such a service is especially needed in a

society in which televangelists and large congregations who follow so-called 'celebrity pastors' are at the order of the day and the prosperity gospel enjoys a large following. This phenomenon is often coupled with the gullibility of ordinary and unsuspecting poor members who are fed grass, petrol and even snakes in an effort to prove their faith (Mashau & Kgatle 2019). Empowering congregants to gain access to critical tools in interpreting the Bible themselves, might help curbing this phenomenon.

Chapter 10

E-Learning for Africa: The relevance of ODEL methods for theological education in Africa

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Abstract

In the light of the explosive growth of Christianity in Africa, raising up godly, well-trained pastoral leaders is critical for the health of the church. For a variety of reasons, residential theological programmes have no hope of meeting the need for exponential growth in the number of trained pastors. The ODEL model represents the most promising ways of meeting the need; however, many theological educators remain sceptical of whether ODEL methods are fit for purpose when it comes to training pastoral leaders. Church leadership is a relational vocation, in which character formation is more important than knowledge acquisition. Can online, disembodied training

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produce the character and skills required? Although many theological institutions doubt whether e-learning is fit for training men and women for Christian ministry, I argue that it will become the dominant form of theological education in Africa because it is more effective and efficient than traditional modalities. There is conclusive evidence to show that e-learning can achieve LOs that are at least equal to the outcomes achieved using contact methods. A growing body of evidence suggest that the spiritual and ministerial formation of theological students studying online may surpass that of their classroom-based colleagues. This surprises most people because they fail to recognise the difference between the seminary as an intellectual community (community as *akademeia*) and the church as a relationship community (community as *ekklesia*). The practical obstacles that restrict African institutions from a wholesale adoption of e-learning can be overcome in the short term using a mixture of ODEL methods, and they will disappear in the long term as access to technology becomes ubiquitous.

Introduction

In a survey of 1650 Christian leaders and theological educators, representing all regions and traditions, 86% of the respondents deemed theological education as '"most important" for world Christianity' (Esterline, Werner & Johnson 2013:8). To quote Manfred Kohl (2018:65), one of the most influential figures in theological education in the Global South: '[A]s goes the seminary, so goes the church'. As the epicentre of Christianity has moved to the Global South with approximately one in four professing Christians now living in Africa, the contributions of African seminaries are critical for the health of the church in the 21st century.

Although many theological institutions doubt whether e-learning is fit for training men and women for vocational ministry, I argue that it will become the dominant form of theological education in Africa because it is more effective and efficient than traditional modalities. The growing body of research on the effectiveness of e-learning for both education and formation proves that 'we are past the point when the efficacy of online education can be questioned' (Miller & Scharen 2018:11). I shall review the evidence that proves the effectiveness of e-learning and refutes the traditional objections regarding spiritual formation, before considering the practical challenges of implementing these methods in African institutions.

The educational effectiveness of e-learning

The reality of its effectiveness

The educational effectiveness of e-learning has been demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt. The entire world knows it, and numerous studies prove it.

And yet, much like the infamous Flat-Earth Society, some seminary leaders continue to deny reality. Whenever I make presentations about the power and potential of online theological education to groups of seminary leaders, doubts and scepticism abound. The sceptics and scoffers are fewer than they were 10 years ago; However, the seminary community sustains astonishing levels of ignorance about how effective e-learning is. Maybe, it is a case of the adage, '[t]here are none so blind as those who will not see'.

Numerous studies show that the cognitive effects of e-learning equal or surpass those of traditional classroom teaching, the evidence of which has been available since 2010. In 2009, the US Department of Education reported 99 published studies that compared the outcomes of traditional models of delivery with online or hybrid delivery (Means et al. 2009) during the period 1996–2008. One of the key findings was that '[s]tudents who took all or part of their class online performed better, on average, than those taking the same course through traditional face-to-face instruction' (Means et al. 2009:xiv). The e-learning students outperformed their classroom peers by a small but statistically significant margin. At the same time, a similar but independent study by Shachar and Neumann (2010) reported almost identical findings, but with one important nuance – the gap was growing as e-learning improved. Subsequent empirical studies verify the findings (e.g. Titthasiri 2013; Wong & Ng 2016).

Many practitioners testify that their e-learning classes are as effective as their traditional classes even with respect to spiritual and ministerial formation. I have cited several examples in this chapter. For now, I will add my own voice to the mix. I completed all my theological studies by distance education in the days before e-learning emerged. Being rooted in a wonderful local church with leaders who mentored me and provided me platforms to apply what I was learning made it an empowering and transformative experience. Could leaving my church family to attend a residential seminary have been more impactful? I doubt it. For the past 15 years, I have served at a distance education institution that evolved into an online distance education institution during that period. For 15 years, I have received almost weekly testimonies from students about how God has worked in and through them whilst they are studying. Although most of this chapter focuses on scholarly evidence, these concepts are not theoretical constructs to me. These are my lived experiences as a theological student and educator for the past 28 years.

The reasons for its effectiveness

There is compelling evidence to show that e-learning is as effective for a person's intellectual development as traditional modes of education. There is also compelling evidence to show that online distance education is an effective instrument for spiritual and ministerial formation (more about this later).

Why? What makes e-learning very effective? There are multitudes of factors that produce effective e-learning. Scholars would differ widely about which aspects are most influential. Lewis (2018) mentioned such factors as the engaging nature of multimedia learning objects, the power of self-paced, personalised learning to combat boredom and fatigue, and the freedom to fail without embarrassment. I content myself with two of the factors that theological educators should prize.

Firstly, e-learning requires active, student-centred learning; students learn more in less time. Referring to high-intensity short courses for corporate training, Lewis (2018) boldly claimed that e-learning improves retention by 60% and enables trainers to cover five times as much material in the same amount of time. In traditional classrooms, students are passive for large portions of their learning time. Well-designed online learning forces active learning, which greatly enhances speed and retention. The COVID-19 pandemic provided me a powerful illustration of this truth. Because of the national lockdown, my Grade 4 son's school switched to e-learning for 6 months. He could master his curriculum in 1½ h of study per day, when compared with the 6 h of classroom time he was spending at school each day. In terms of time usage, carrying out his work online was three to four times as efficient as on-campus schooling, which underlines how inefficiently traditional learning systems use time.

Secondly, e-learning forces all students to engage equally, ensuring that everyone learns everything. Shaun Cossin, a graduate from an online ministerial programme, reflected on the key takeaway in these words: '[t]he online program moved me beyond my comfort zone and almost forced me to engage not only professors in conversation but also classmates with my own thoughts' (Kennedy 2010:49). In the classroom, the norm is for a few talkative students to dominate discussions. If a student has not done their reading, they can hide it by keeping silent. Introverted students are spared the need for verbalising their thoughts. In online theological education, every student is forced to participate fully in each activity and has to articulate their thoughts. Nobody can hide in the crowd and conceal their lack of diligence.

Alex Schroeber was forced to start teaching supervised ministry courses online despite his belief that e-learning was inferior to traditional teaching. After teaching his supervised ministry course both online and in-person for seven years, he reflected on the benefit of online discussions that involve all students.

These discussions confirm a common claim about online learning. As each student must contribute to every topic, and as students think through written posts with probably greater care than most verbal interactions in a face-to-face classroom, the quality of their interactions is generally deeper, and therefore, more formative of good pastoral attitudes and praxis. The discussions draw students into a learning community and, over time, become

deeply personal. They facilitate the 'dialogical space' that is an important component of the pedagogy of engagement (Schoeber 2017:179).

The jury is in – as an educational strategy, e-learning is more effective than traditional classroom-based learning. How do sceptical theological educators respond to this evidence? They dismiss it as applying only to the intellectual aspects of education. E-Learning may be an effective way of mastering content and concepts; however, the goal of theological education is the holistic formation of effective ministers. Surely, e-learning cannot do that effectively, right? Wrong!

The obsolete objections to e-learning

The traditional objection against online theological education alleges that it is unfit for shaping ministers for ministry, which is an inherently relational vocation (Van Driel 2015). The objection typically contains two intertwined elements: the alleged inability of e-learning to form a *learning community* and produce *spiritual formation*. Dan Aleshire, the head of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States, summarised the concern well: '[f]ace-to-face, person-to-person interaction is a critical part of ministerial education because it is a relational kind of work. If it's done well, [online] learning can be very effective. What we don't know is if all the learning that's necessary for good pastoral work can be learned that way' (cited in Kennedy 2010:52). In their major studies of online theological distance education, Miller and Scharen (2017, 2018) mentioned these as two of the five challenges, which they expressed well:

> Closely related to the concern about preserving community is the question of student formation. More than half of the deans in the ATS [*African theological seminary*] deans' survey indicated that doing formation online could be difficult. They wondered: How do you ensure that your graduates are spiritually, psychologically, and socially healthy and able to handle the responsibilities entrusted to them as leaders of a congregation or parish? (p. 10)

These concerns are as alive in 2020 as they were in 2010. Paddey (2019:11) cited theological educators who believe 'a key difference [between studying theology and other disciplines online] is the emphasis given to community building and student formation'. I have been championing theological e-learning for 15 years at gatherings of African seminary leaders. Ministerial and spiritual formation remain roadblocks in the hearts and minds of those who harbour doubts about the suitability of e-learning for training Christian ministers.

However, they are obsolete objections that have been adequately answered. The doubts about spiritual formation are disproven by the growing number of studies and testimonies validating the transformative power of training people for ministry in ministry. The debate about the role of community wrongly

assumes that the seminary should be its students' main spiritual community, which is not true even for residential seminaries.

E-learning maximises spiritual formation

The evidence shows that students carrying out their theological studies online experience as much character and spiritual formation as students studying in residential settings. According to Kennedy (2010:50), '[t]he Learning on Demand survey shows that 53 per cent of chief academic officers believe LOs in online education are the same as in face-to-face instruction'. Ulrich (2010) argued that his online students learned as much and sometimes more than his classroom students, and concluded that e-learning *could* be better. In his doctoral research, Tran (2011) reported that 78.9% of his respondents experienced their online theological studies as positively transformative.

After teaching his class about supervised ministry both online and onsite for 7 years, Schoeber (2017:169) is adamant that 'digital learning can be transformative'. He confesses to starting with the belief that 'physical classrooms are better at creating interaction that shapes mind and spirit, character and practice' (Schoeber 2017:173). He ends by convincing that both methods are effective. He even asks the open-minded question, '[c]ould making them [students] uproot to go to school actually lessen the effectiveness of ministry preparation?' He does not conclude that e-learning is better; however, his instincts suggest that leaving people rooted in their primary spiritual communities and offering an engaging online intellectual community may be optimal.

The recent work of Miller and Scharen (2017, 2018) provides the most compelling evidence that e-learning can form Christian ministers, with their most disclosing statement:

> In fact, a growing number of educators believe that training for ministry is more – not less – effective if students remain in their own context rather than being uprooted and moved to a residential campus. Their reasoning: The integration between classes and the 'real world' is likely to happen more quickly and more organically if students are living, learning, and perhaps working, in their own faith environment. One dean commented on the ATS deans' survey, 'Because students in the online program learn in the ministry setting in which they will serve, we have had virtually no problems with graduates failing in their first congregation'. (pp. 9–10)

They proceed to suggest that the numerical data may provide definitive proof that studying whilst remaining in a real-life ministry setting is maximally formative. In a 2015–2016 survey of spiritual formation, students who carried out the majority of their theological studies online rate themselves more highly on 'strength of spiritual life', 'trust in God', 'ability to live one's faith in daily life', 'ability to give spiritual direction', 'ability to lead others', 'ability to

teach' and 'ability to administer a parish' (Miller & Scharen 2018:10). They reach these definitive conclusions (Miller & Scharen 2018):

> *At this point, evidence indicates that online education produces outcomes at least equal to the level of traditional classroom outcomes.* Some would go so far as to say that their online students do better overall in a course than those in a traditional class. [...] *Clearly, this report shows we are past the point when the efficacy of online education can be questioned.* 'Our recent past, and our present results, indicate online learning is becoming a proven pedagogy for theological schools', says Tom Tanner, summarizing the finding of the survey of ATS deans. 'This educational model is proving to be effective, not just for many, but for most of our member school'. (p. 11; [*author's added emphasis*])

E-learning may be more effective than contact education in facilitating spiritual and ministerial formation. It is not that e-learning itself is superior, but that situated learning, which does not divorce students from their spiritual family and ministry context, can integrate theory with practice in real-world settings in a way that residential seminaries cannot match.

E-learning maximises community

As theological education began moving online, there has been a stalemate between opponents and proponents over the issue of community. Opponents of e-learning allege that in a residential theological programme, the student body constitutes a transformative learning community. The community dynamic is more than intellectual. In this community, students and faculty worship together. Students observe their teachers' way of life, and they build lifelong friendships with people who will be their ministerial confidants after seminary. Miller and Scharen (2017:3) referred to such institutions as 'schools that value highly the formative power of "being there" in classroom, chapel, and community life'. Proponents of e-learning counter by arguing that online communities can be just as deep and meaningful. They champion the idea that the interactions between students and faculty in an online learning environment can replicate the community dynamics at residential seminaries.

The case for online theological education does not lie in arguing that the online seminary can be its students' formative community just as an onsite seminary is. That argument overstates the significance of both the onsite seminary community and the online seminary community in students' spiritual and ministerial formation. The relationships amongst students in campus-based programmes are often deeply impactful. Many ministers make lifelong ministry partners at a seminary. Nevertheless, the literature abounds with concerns that character and ministerial formation in residential programmes remain elusive (Mogashoa & Makofane 2017; Naidoo 2008, 2016; Nmah 2013), which exposes the folly of making the traditional modality the ideal model to which alternatives should conform (Nichols 2011:6). The relationships that develop between online students and staff can be meaningful too. The South

African Theological Seminary's (SATS) staff is a tight-knit community that meets daily to pray and study God's Word. There are some amazing testimonies of friendships (and even marriages) that developed online amongst its students. Nevertheless, it is unusual for students' online interactions with staff and classmates to become their primary community. For the most part, the online interactions are functional and transactional. People share aspects of their lives, but seldom in a way that mirrors the intimacy and accountability of a healthy church family.

The key that unlocks the correct view of formation and community for theological education is Nichols's (2011) inspired distinction between community as *akademeia* and community as *ekklesia*. The importance of this article cannot be overstated. Lamenting that the word 'community' is seldom defined in the debate, Nichols (2011:9) argued that it is 'a person's entire social ecology including their church membership'. He cites sociologists to distinguish between a primary, social community and a pragmatic, intellectual community. A seminary is an intellectual community, which is in other words defined as *akademeia* community. Seminary creates a temporary, transactional expression of community that seldom becomes the student's true spiritual family. '[S]ome 72.3 per cent of on-campus MDiv seminary students indicated that their support community was outside the seminary structure; 56.2 per cent said the same of their spiritual development' (Nichols 2011:13). Even for on-campus students, their church family remains their authentic community and their primary sphere of spiritual and ministry formation; this community is defined as *ekklesia*. 'Students enrol in theological education to engage with ideas and pursue understanding' (Nichols 2011:13). The discussions that take place in class and online prioritise sharing information more than sharing life. The seminary is their secondary, intellectual community; the church remains their primary, spiritual community.

e-Learning, therefore, provides a community setting more conducive to spiritual and ministerial formation than residential seminaries do. This is why both Ulrich (2010) and Schoeber (2017) intuited that formation may be more effective online. '[R]esidential theological education removes students from a holistic community into one that focuses on disciplined academic study, which constitutes an artificial and temporary setting for formation and community' (Nichols 2011:14). By contrast, online theological education leaves students rooted and grounded in the community that God designed for formation – their *ekklesia*. This explains Nichols's (2011) observation:

> Preliminary results indicate that distance students are not disadvantaged at all in terms of their spiritual formation because, firstly, distance theological students tend to be well-ensconced and already serving in their local churches, and secondly, distance theological students tend to be older and already mature believers. (p. 9)

These findings were corroborated by Miller and Scharen (2017) in their more recent study:

> In the final analysis, she suggests, the question theological education must grapple with isn't so much 'being there' as it is 'being where?' She posits that with ODE, the focus shifts from the culture of the schools (the focus in Being There) to the culture of the students, and therefore offers the possibility of attending to the influential power of local communities, with schools as adjuncts to, and partners with, that formation in community. (p. 6)

The most effective context for the spiritual and ministerial formation of pastors and church leaders is not a residential seminary, but a local faith community. The optimal means of formation occurs when students have community as both *ekklesia* and *akademeia*, that is, when they live in a church family and supplement it through interaction in an academic community. Distance education need not strive to provide a second-rate parallel for the glories of on-campus community and formation. It provides an invaluable intellectual stimulation for ministers serving in the optimal community for formation. Therefore, e-learning optimises both spiritual formation and community.

The African obstacles to e-learning

If e-learning is carried out well, it is an effective tool for intellectual, spiritual and ministerial formation. For theological educators in Africa, the crucial question is not whether e-learning is effective but whether effective learning is possible given the obstacles confronting African institutions and students (Kaunda 2016:122–23). The African obstacles are real and significant; however, they can be progressively overcome through creative alternatives. I make five observations about e-learning in the light of African obstacles.

Firstly, Africa faces challenges with respect to computer literacy, access to the Internet, the affordability of bandwidth and even unstable power supply. These constraints make some North American and European models of good practice in e-learning suboptimal for many African institutions and students. The obstacles are both significant and self-evident to anyone considering an e-learning initiative on the continent. The brutal fact is that many African institutions are ill-equipped to offer e-learning programmes, which require extensive interaction of teachers and students online. Even where the institutions have the capacity to do it, their target students may not be ready for it.

Secondly, instead of replicating North American and European models and ideals about e-learning, Africa needs to adapt open, distance and electronic learning (ODEL) approaches that are workable amidst the continental challenges whilst building for the future, which the SATS followed. In 1996, when the distance education institution started functioning, e-learning was impossible in South Africa. In 2008, SATS morphed into an e-learning institution. Because of the South African context, few of the best practice

guidelines emanating from North America and Europe were plausible. The seminary adapted its brand of e-learning to fit the context, offering a text-based mode that did not require high bandwidth from students. As the accessibility and affordability of bandwidth improved, the seminary changed its pedagogy to harness the new opportunities.

Open, distance and electronic learning rightly distinguishes distance education from electronic learning (Guri-Rosenblit 2005). The literature from North America and Europe tends to conflate distance education with e-learning, because the context is such that almost all distance education is delivered online (Guri-Rosenblit 2009). However, the terms should be kept distinct. e-Learning refers to the use of electronic technologies to deliver or enhance teaching and learning; however, it can be used in contact, distance and blended modes. Distance education occurs when the teacher and students are geographically separated. Distance education remains a credible and effective means of training whether it is delivered online (Nichols 2011). Africa should embrace various expressions of ODEL, including blended learning, mobile learning and variations of distance that include low-bandwidth e-learning.

Thirdly, ODEL alone has the potential economy of scale to meet the vast training needs of the church in Africa. The Centre for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary estimates that there are approximately 5 million pastors and priests worldwide, with only 5% having a theological degree. Richard (2015) claimed that there are 2 million untrained pastoral leaders worldwide in need of urgent training, with Africa having its share of pastors needing training. Whilst there are many non-formal training programmes and a good number of traditional institutions, ODEL programmes provide an important and scalable way of training large numbers of pastors.

Fourthly, some may protest that promoting e-learning in Africa is ethically questionable because it perpetuates and exasperates the gap between those who have access to technology and those who do not. However, Christians have always been early adopters of technologies that they can use in service of Christ's mission, as Horsfield (2015) had powerfully demonstrated in his book *From Jesus to the Internet: A History of Christianity and the Media*. Horsfield (2015) noted various objections to the widespread use of writing to communicate the gospel: (1) only the personal human voice could communicate a personal faith, (2) presenting teachings in writing will result in a loss of control over their use, (3) the inability to judge the integrity and sincerity of the communicator if one does not know them personally, (4) writing would distance the faith from its authentic attachment to Jesus, and (5) adopting writing as a medium for teaching would exclude the majority of believers and privilege a minority of literate Christians (Horsfield 2015:ch. 3). He notes that these objections are similar to those that well-intentioned believers raised each time a new media was available for spreading the gospel. They are

strikingly similar to the rationale for resisting online theological distance education. However, it is the willingness of mission-minded believers throughout history to embrace all forms of media to communicate the love of Christ that has been instrumental in the spread of the gospel.

Finally, although Africa is less well-positioned to embrace e-learning than other continents, it is a matter of time before technology-mediated theological education triumphs here too. If African institutions wish to embrace ODEL approaches now, they will need to work within the limitations of the technology that is accessible to their students. However, this is a rapidly changing space. The number of potential students who have connectivity is rising steadily, and 5 or 10 years from now the current barriers will be a distant memory. However, it is imperative to start now and build the future in mind because it takes a few years to put a quality ODEL offering in place.

Conclusion

As theological training is vital for the health of the church, the rapid growth of Christianity in Africa multiplies the need for affordable, accessible, effective and efficient theological education. Many theological educators worldwide continue to harbour doubts about ODEL as a means of training pastoral leaders. Their concerns mostly emerge from two dubious premises: (1) the seminary should be its students' primary community and (2) spiritual formation happens most effectively in campus-based communities. The available data dispel both assumptions as faulty. Firstly, seminaries are their students' intellectual community; however, the church remains their spiritual family. Secondly, as a result, graduates from online theological education programmes routinely report better spiritual and ministry formation than those from traditional programmes.

It seems beyond dispute that online theological distance education will soon be the dominant mode of theological education worldwide. Africa faces a few challenges that other continents do not. They will temporarily slow down the uptake of e-learning programmes, but they will not thwart it. In the short term, other forms of ODEL can provide effective and cost-efficient training options. In the medium-to-long term, e-learning will prevail. Kaunda (2016:123) proved to have been a prophet when he said, '[t]he future is online'!

Section C

Ministerial Formation Needs versus Theological Education Challenges

Chapter 11

Theological education and sustainable development in Zimbabwe: Towards a transformative praxis in doing theology

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Abstract

Theological colleges in Zimbabwe have been run on curricula that are mostly alien and eccentric to the socio-economic and political circumstances of the country. The curricula pursued in theological institutions in Zimbabwe were designed in either European or American settings under the auspices of missionaries who initiated those colleges. Typical of the maxim 'he who pays the piper calls the tune', the curricula of theological colleges have espoused foreign theo-ideologies that are not in sync with real-life situations facing the

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Zimbabwean community. Theological education in Africa, in general, and in Zimbabwe, in particular, has not addressed the holistic needs of the continent (Chitando 2013; Mugambi 2013). It is now high time that a new African theological education curriculum be designed that entrenches sustainable socio-economic and political development initiatives (Chitando 2010b; Phiri 2009). This chapter investigates the appropriateness or relevance of the current theological education curricula of 22 theological colleges in Zimbabwe. The main thesis of this chapter is that theological education in Africa, in particular Zimbabwe, can go beyond meeting the spiritual needs of the people to spearhead sustainable development initiatives for the economic survival of the country (Magezi & Banda 2017). Deficiencies and efficiencies of theological education curricula in Zimbabwe were discussed in this chapter with the view of establishing a contextually relevant and robust curriculum. At the end of the chapter, recommendations are made on pertinent topics for integration into a down-to-earth curriculum for theological education. This chapter advocates for the development of a theological curriculum that focuses on theology as a key agent and driver for socio-economic and political change.

Introduction

This chapter draws its information from both primary and secondary sources. As a consultant with the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, I recently carried out research studies at 22 theological colleges in Zimbabwe to determine the extent to which theological institutions in the country have espoused integral mission concepts in their curricula. Some of the outcomes of that research were used in this work as a springboard for sustainable development advocacy in theological education. An analytical study on the curricula of the 22 colleges has been undertaken for determining whether the curricula in their current state espouse a transformational framework for sustainable development. Much of the information used in this work has been accessed through the Association of Colleges with Theological Education in Zimbabwe (ACTEZ). Secondary sources have been used in this chapter in the form of available literature on the state of theological education in Zimbabwe.

A recent study carried out on the integration of non-spiritual, practical, and holistic disciplines in theological education in Zimbabwe revealed that the curricula of most theological institutions are oblivious to the challenges and vicissitudes of life in postcolonial Zimbabwe (Chabata 2020:5). There is a dire need for a holistic approach to theological education in Zimbabwe, particularly one that seeks balance between the affective, behavioural and cognitive domains of education (Shaw 2006:53). Theological colleges in Africa, particularly Zimbabwe, have a mammoth task to produce competent leaders who exude balance in action, sagacity and skills for fundamental transformation to take place in the direction of sustainable development. This chapter

proposes that a multidimensional and holistic approach to theological curricula development is necessary if theological colleges in Zimbabwe are to elude anachronism and being vainly super-cognitive.

The state of theological education in Zimbabwe

Theological education in Zimbabwe desperately needs to adopt an existential learning model that focuses on the whole of the student's experiences in everyday life. An existential learning approach is one that enables the learner to focus on the whole experiences unfolding in their immediate environment or community and uses these experiences to form religious concepts (Grimmitt 1973:52). The current state of theological education in Zimbabwe renders institutions of religious training alien to the needs of the communities in which they operate. The content of theological education in Zimbabwe has not only excelled in preparing converts for a blissful life in heaven but also has created a 'Thessalonian syndrome' in the local churches. 'Thessalonian syndrome' refers to the biblical Church of Thessalonica's pitfall of neglecting and abandoning productive life in anticipation of the imminent return of Jesus Christ to take away the believers. A theological curriculum that is heavily skewed in favour of spiritual aspects of faith at the expense of productive and sustainable life deserves a serious review. The New Testament scholar, Bultmann (1941), suggested that the New Testament text be demythologised in order to make it acceptable and relevant to the modern thinker. Bultmann's argument was that the mystical and mythological elements of the Scriptures, which do not address or cater for the good of humanity, needed to be removed. Putting aside the barrage of scholarly rebuttals of Bultmannian views, which are not worth mentioning in this discourse, I borrow Bultmann's perception and categorically posit that the theological education curricula in Zimbabwe need to be rid of abstractions that are vainly irrelevant to the existential concerns of the country.

Mungazi (1985:196) argued that Zimbabwe's theological education cannot be engaged apart from the country's history of liberation from the colonial rule. Zimbabwe's first Minister of Education and Culture at independence, Dzingai Barnabas Mutumbuka, emphasised in a speech at the conclusion of the historic 1979 Lancaster House Conference on the future of Zimbabwe that a new system of education designed to produce a new man richer in self-consciousness is needed. The ideological framework undergirding Minister Mutumbuka's sentiment was a realisation that the educational systems prevailing in the country at the time were designed to produce an acquiescent, docile, condescending and non-assertive employee who would not pose any threat to the colonial hegemonic establishment. Theological education was not immune to the manipulation of imperial propaganda either. Building on

Freire's (1983:62) quest for an educational approach that advocates for self-consciousness as an essential part of education for self-fulfilment and national advancement, Mungazi (1985) argued that theological education in Zimbabwe should craft a pedagogy of the hungry, a pedagogy of the abused women and children, a pedagogy of the marginalised and a pedagogy of the disenfranchised. In essence, theological education curricula in Zimbabwe should speak to the exigencies of human experience with the view of eradicating abusive governance and leadership systems, patriarchal abuses, penury, gender-based violence, child molestation and conditions of poverty.

Pobee (1992:127) argued that an appropriate theological education for Africa is one that does not just concentrate on equipping the clergy but should include all the leadership of the church, whether ministers, theologians, lay or ordained. Pobee further states that the training of church leaders should be in the context of the leader's real given circumstances. Pobee's views come against the background of theological education curricula that are designed in Europe or America for implementation in Africa. Zimbabwe's theological institutions were mostly founded or established by either European- or American-based missions. The theological education curricula are generally crafted for elitist cliques or professional classes to the exclusion of ordinary church members. Pobee (1992:128) argued that a theological curriculum relevant for Africa should cater for the education of the whole people of God. Kanu (1993:2) argued that curriculum and pedagogy in colonial Zimbabwe were calculated to be powerful weapons of psychological subordination of indigenous populations. The theological education curriculum was designed in such a way that the subject matter taught was foreign and had no relevance or bearing on students' lived experiences. The pedagogical methods did not allow for critical thinking and creativity. The teaching style in theological institutions was a monological process with emphasis on unquestioning loyalty.

Golby (1995:130) argued that when missionaries established mission stations in Zimbabwe, they introduced a theological curriculum that aimed at removing from an African, the shackles of outmoded traditional norms and values. The curriculum introduced was ambivalent to indigenous cultural epistemologies and was designed to alienate the learners as well as show them that their culture was not only inferior but also both barbaric and hollow. The theological education curriculum in Zimbabwe has not yet been completely exorcised of ethnocentric biases and prejudices that were introduced by the missionaries. It is only in recent times that calls for the Africanisation of theological education curricula have been made with vigour. Mashabela (2017) argued that the Africanisation of theological education curriculum aims to liberate the continent from the shackles of oppressive education, socio-economic oppression, poverty, racism, political oppression and gender injustice.

Theological education in Zimbabwe is largely out of touch with realities on the ground. As Makgoba (2005:15) argued, theological education curricula in Africa ought to draw inspiration from its environment as an indigenous tree growing from a seed that is planted and nurtured in African soil. Mavhunga (2006:440) argued that attempts to reform curricula in Zimbabwe's tertiary learning institutions merely tinkered with the colonial curricula and left colonial fundamentals intact. It should also be noted that as the Zimbabwean government pursued radical curriculum reforms in the educational system after independence, the theological sector was not included in the reforms. Until recently, albeit at a piecemeal, infinitesimal and negligible level, an attempt to review the theological education curriculum was made under the Standardisation and Quality Assurance Department at the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development. Amanze (2008:4) observed that the colonial theological system was crafted in such a way that religious ministry was seen as a mere sacrificial act based on ascetic values without preparing participants for political and economic life. As observed by Matikiti (2009:154), theological education in Zimbabwe has remained highly theoretical without sufficient entrepreneurial grounding. Pastors and theologians churned out of theological colleges in Zimbabwe have barely made an impact in the communities they lead. Instead of the pastors designing strategies that promote economic development and social transformation, they impoverish communities by peddling narcissistic homilies, which benefit no one else but themselves.

Pastors in Zimbabwe have been initiated into accepting poor living standards as evidence of having received a divine calling. Chitando (2010:204) argued that theological education in Zimbabwe has remained trapped into focusing on abstract and historical issues with little or no relevance to contemporary socio-economic and political situations. Chitando (2010:204) further contended that theological training in Zimbabwe is detached from community involvement, lacks contextual relevance and has failed to percolate to the marketplace. According to Chitando (2010:205), Zimbabwe's theological training has not addressed poverty alleviation and people empowerment needs of the nation. Chitando (2010:205) lamented that theological education in Zimbabwe is not entrepreneurially grounded, and hence, it fails to equip poor Zimbabweans to realise their economic potentials. Christian theology in the country has to be transformative and relevant to the lived struggles of the people of Zimbabwe. Jansen (2011:74) lamented that Zimbabwe faces serious challenges in curriculum development. The current curricula in both secular and theological institutions do not predispose school-leavers to contribute to sustainable development and be active citizens who participate in nation building and economic development. Jansen (2011:74) argued that in their present forms, curricula in educational institutions in Zimbabwe hardly benefit the communities, society and the nation. Theological curricula in Zimbabwe have a homogenising elitist model of the colonial period, which cuts out the

larger sections of society, such as ordinary believers and members of African independent churches. It is quite apparent that theological education curricula do not respond to the existing diversity and dynamic socio-cultural context of Zimbabwe.

In a study on the remuneration of the clergy in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, Gondongwe (2011:1–28) observed that the pastors were often barred from undertaking personal businesses for supplementing their incomes. Gondongwe (2011:1–28) noted that a number of Wesleyan clergies often went for many years without receiving a stipend. The college training received by members of the clergy has prepared the ministers for evangelistic purpose and not for a holistic life that includes economic participation and engagement. Because of the ill-equipment of the clergy in grappling with conditions of poverty affecting believers, the clergy do not offer any economic advice to congregants. Gondongwe (2011:1–28) observed that the clergy often preach about money, wealth and economic issues; however, they lack an in-depth understanding of economic fundamentals.

Chitando (2013:95–112) argued that pastors preach about dominion provided to man over creation in Genesis 1:28, but never realise the entrepreneurial implications imposed by this command upon them. Wahl (2013:266–293) made a pertinent observation that theological education in Africa, and indeed, most particularly in Zimbabwe, has failed to attract students from African independent churches. Chitando, Taringa and Mapuranga (2014:173) argued that theology and religious studies in Zimbabwe have tended to be abstract disciplines, which hardly address the lived realities of the locals. Chitando et al. (2014) observed that theology and religious studies curricula in Zimbabwe have skirted pressing and important issues, particularly governance, land reform, economic mismanagement, political crisis and social injustice. Theological education in Zimbabwe has produced religious leaders who compromise the truth to gain favours from the state and political parties. Chitando et al. (2014) provided an example of the late Rev. Banana who was co-opted in the government of the late Robert Mugabe and made frantic efforts to force socialist ideas on the church in pursuit of the ruling ZANU P.F. party's political ideology. Chitando et al. (2014) argued that Canaan Banana was guided by the late President's vilification of churches that did not support his policies as 'settler churches', the jab he particularly aimed at the Roman Catholic Church that opposed his regime's human rights abuses. The effect of state muzzling of the church's prophetic voice has been the aloofness of corridors of theology from political and economic spaces. Theological education in Zimbabwe has not stood up to challenge historical structures that are evil, exploitative and politically alienating.

Banda (2016:157) stated that theological education in Zimbabwe has birthed a type of prosperity Pentecostalism, which attributes poverty to

'spiritual forces in a way that undermines and overlooks the socio-political and economic context'. Banda (2016) argued that the:

> [*D*]e-economised approach to economic survival and prosperity translates into a theological education system that seriously cripples the potential of the Christian minister to be a meaningful channel of economic survival. (p. 158)

The Christian ministers in Zimbabwe lack the basic tools needed for them to tackle the socio-economic situation and politics that foster poverty. Banda (2016:159) regretted that theological education in Zimbabwe has instilled an ethos of ecclesiological commodification whereby church leaders own the church and are not accountable to anyone. A theological education curriculum that teaches decommodification of the church is needed where religious leaders can be accountable to the people they lead.

Muzambi (2017:86) quoted an 1883 speech by Jules Jenkins, the then Governor of Kinshasa, who encouraged the first group of missionaries to the Congo to prioritise and be inspired in their preaching by the interest of the Belgian State. Jules Jenkins specified that the missionaries were supposed to ensure that the (Chiwenga 2011):

> [*S*]avages be not interested in the riches that their soil possesses, in order that they will not want them, thus they be not in murderous competition with us and dream to live a luxurious lifestyle. (n.p.)

The missionaries were encouraged to concentrate on Bible verses that would make the natives love poverty, such as 'the beatitudes', 'blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom', and 'it's hard for the rich to enter into the kingdom of heaven'. A gospel of pacifism and acquiescence had to be emphasised. It was to be emphasised in the homilies that heaven was for the poor and that those who endure hardships in a humble and non-reactionary manner would make it to heaven. In Zimbabwe, the London Missionary Society and the Jesuits adopted the same method of 'Erastianism', whereby the state uses the church for its own interests (Muzambi 2017:87). Theological education curricula designed by missionaries were, therefore, tailored to produce ministers who advanced the gospel of endurance, suffering and tolerance. A breed of ministers without any interest in economic development came out of theological colleges. Muzambi (2017:97) argued that missionary institutions in Zimbabwe became potters used by colonial powers to produce an African who would be subservient to the needs of the coloniser.

Deke (2019) contended that theological education in Zimbabwe is solely concerned with the study of religious experience and expression within the context of philosophy; that it emphasises the careful reading of theology's primary texts, preferably in the original languages. Deke (2019) argued that the theological education curriculum in Zimbabwe has failed to appeal to prospective students at higher learning levels. Deke (2019) further observed that theological education curricula in Zimbabwe do not sync with the transformative thrust

required for religious education in contemporary times. The curricula of theology have failed to realise that religion is at the centre of global issues and cultural conflict. A curriculum that addresses issues of development and conflict management and resolution is lacking, and this has made theological education both irrelevant and unattractive. Deke (2019) argued that the influx of the philosophy of miracle money and other unorthodox means of prosperity in the church exposes a deficiency in the corridors of theological education. Deke (2019) pointed out that the current curriculum of theological education was shaped by the context, politics and situations of colonialism and should now conform to the prevailing circumstances on the African continent. Deke's view corroborates the argument of Muzambi (2017:86) that colonialism introduced biblical interpretation strategies that promoted the interests of the colonial power.

Deke (2019) suggested that whilst reviewing the curricula of theological education in Zimbabwe, the following six pertinent questions ought to be asked:

- Is the theology graduate produced by the curriculum fit for the context?
- Is the graduate fit for the purpose?
- Does the college produce theologians for the society?
- Does the society find satisfaction with the training the students have received?
- Is the quality of the curriculum transformative?
- What difference will the theology graduate student make in the life of the nation?

Sibanda and Young (2020:50) argued that an analysis of postcolonial curricula in the Zimbabwean education system reveals that there are some enduring elements of colonialism that are present in postcolonial curricula. Such elements of colonialism include an ascetic theological worldview, which inculcates an ethos of acquiescence in the face of oppression and distasteful living conditions. Most theological training institutions seek to produce a clergy that seeks and pursues peace with governments even when political leadership is trampling on and trashing the citizenry's human rights and civil liberties. Sibanda and Young (2020:51) contended that Western knowledge systems still exist in Zimbabwe, which were designed to be instruments of domination, oppression, subjugation and exploitation for reproducing social, political and inequalities in the society. Sibanda and Young (2020:62), in a literature review on educational curriculum changes in Zimbabwe, observed that the majority of scholarship on the subject has confirmed that the postcolonial subject content has failed to incorporate indigenous knowledge systems to make it context specific, relevant, pedagogically sensitive, and inclusive. Theological education curricula in Zimbabwe have largely remained Eurocentric and far removed from the students' context and realities (Baine & Mwamwenda 1994; Jansen 1991; Kanu 2007; Masaka & Chingombe 2013; Mavhunga 2006; Shizha 2013).

Some positive trends in theological education in Zimbabwe

On a positive note, Matikiti (2009:157) argued that theological education in Zimbabwe has to some extent, although not sufficiently, raised consciousness for social and political justice. Chitando (2013:95) also opined that theological education in Zimbabwe has, to some extent, enlightened members of the clergy on the need to decolonise Africa, fight gender inequality and the scourge of HIV. Muzambi (2017:97) also observed that theological institutions have played a positive role by providing health facilities and education boarding facilities. To some extent, theological institutions have produced ministers who have called the postcolonial government in Zimbabwe in check by issuing pastoral letters denouncing human rights abuses. The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference and its service arm, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, have produced a number of reports condemning people abuses by both the first and second republics of Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe and Emmerson Mnangagwa, respectively. In this connection, it is reasonable to state that Zimbabwean theological institutions have produced some theologians who are free thinkers and bulwarks against excesses of the state (Muzambi 2017:97). Despite the fact that missionary education produced some of the brightest political minds that led during the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe, there still remains a great need for the curricula of theological colleges in Zimbabwe to speak of everyday life issues. According to Muzambi (2017:98), theology that 'bakes bread' is what Zimbabwe needs now and in the future.

Transformative praxis and sustainable development in theological education curricula in Zimbabwe

This section of the chapter isolates for close scrutiny the curricula of 22 colleges in Zimbabwe, namely, Apostolic Faith Mission Theological Seminary, Africa Multination for Christ College, Domboshawa Theological College, Harare Theological College, Transform Your World Leadership Institute, Living Waters Theological Seminary, More Than a Mile-Deep Zimbabwe, Mutare School of Preaching, Heartfelt International Ministry, Salvation Army Officer Training Centre, Theological College of Zimbabwe, Pan Africa Christian College, United Theological College, Zimbabwe Theological Seminary, Becomers Bible College, Ebenezer Bible College and Seminary, Evangel Bible College, Faith World Bible Institute, Goshen International Bible College, Great Commission Bible Institute, Soul Travailing Bible Institute and Nehemiah Bible Institute. Seventeen of the colleges are either associate or permanent members of the ACTEZ, whilst five of the colleges are independent members. The five colleges that are not members of ACTEZ include Apostolic

Faith Mission Theological Seminary, Becomers School of Ministry, Ebenezer Bible College, Soul Travailing Bible Institute and More Than a Mile-Deep Zimbabwe.

Transformative praxis in theological education

In this chapter, the term 'transformative praxis' refers to a systemic approach and practice of doing theology, which is informed by a critical consciousness of the need for change in people's socio-economic and political and religious circumstances for the better. Embedded in the notion of 'transformative praxis' are ideas of paradigm shift, transformational passion, innovativeness and creativity, contextualisation, decolonisation and Africanisation. A practical and pragmatic approach to theological education, which emphasises community engagement and involvement in the theological enterprise, constitutes the transformative praxis, which assures us of the change that is desperately needed in Zimbabwe and the rest of Africa. Maseko (2018:86) stated that 'transformative praxis' is a 'product of multidimensional critical consciousness which is informed by the notion of education as a practice of freedom and praxis'. In theological education curricula in Zimbabwe, transformative praxis should cry for and demand for social transformation through economic empowerment of the theological student, who, in turn, empowers the community through a holistic ministry of the gospel. The philosophy that undergirds the transformative praxis idea in this work is that theological education curricula in Zimbabwe should produce alumni who reflect on what is happening in and around them in order to act on those situations and transform the world for the good of posterity. Thus, transformative praxis in this chapter embraces the notion of the integral mission of the gospel. The concept of 'integral mission' in theological education was recently introduced through a joint initiative involving Tearfund Zimbabwe, a non-governmental organisation, and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, an ecumenical religious umbrella body in Zimbabwe. The integral mission is a clarion call for whole-life transformation for individuals, communities, and society at large (Conradie 2016). Theological education curricula are expected to espouse and integrate non-spiritual, non-eschatological and non-theological subjects so that theology responds to the needs of the community, society and nation. In a research study recently conducted under the auspices of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe in association with Tearfund Zimbabwe, consultant and researcher, Chabata (2020:8) observes that a scrutiny of the curricula of theological institutions shows theological discourses that overlook real issues that cause humanity insomnia and nausea, such as issues of poverty, social injustice, moral decay, environmental damage, and broken relationships.

Sustainable development in theological education

Stuerzenhofecker, O'Loughlin and Smith (2010:144) stated that a sustainability-related theological curriculum is one that prepares students for critical engagement with contemporary social and ethical issues. Theological education for sustainable development is one that articulates the role of humanity in relation to creation. A theology curriculum that addresses sustainable development unpacks the complex interconnections between ecology, society and economics; the question of the dignity and worth of persons in conflict; and the needs and aspirations of other people and the environment. Education for sustainable development in theology proffers holistic alternative visions for the future that inspire transformative action at personal, grassroot and institutional levels. Issues that fall within the scope of sustainable development in theological education include, *inter alia,* intergenerational and intragenerational equity; individual responses to uncertainty; threats to wellbeing; future-oriented ethics; media responses to climate change; the need to understand the way other people outside their own contexts think and act; gender studies with a particular focus on the empowerment of women, children, and youth development; and the nexus between theology and the natural and social sciences. Gerd Muller, the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development in Germany, summarised key issues in the theological sustainable development agenda as the 'five P's', namely, planet, people, prosperity, peace and partnership (Mauthe-Kater 2016:5). A theological education that connects hermeneutical dots between the planet, its people, prosperity, the quest for peace and broad human relations answers the pertinent questions of sustainable development. Hiagbe (2015) argued that a theological education curriculum that promotes sustainable development in Africa:

> [*S*]hould find ways of appropriately interpreting and integrating the traditional African understanding of selfhood, the sacred groves, forests and water bodies, the ritual inauguration of virgin lands, rites of passage, and political systems as endogamous models of development. (p. 165)

The student produced by a theological institute should be a member of a community, predisposed and packaged to contribute to the development of their community.

Ngome (2015:10) argued that a theology of sustainable development is one that does not destroy or undermine the ecological, economic or social basis on which continued development depends. Sustainable development is one that lasts meeting the needs of the current generation without compromising the prospects of future generations in the process of meeting their own needs. Ngome (2015:14) further argued that a robust sustainable development theological agenda equips people to work towards economic stability for

both the present and future generations. Cafferky (2015) defines sustainable development as a:

> [*P*]rocess of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations. (p. 40)

Cafferky (2015:43) linked the theological education sustainable development agenda to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development Goals 2030 in a way that graphically shows that theological education can be the most powerful tool for socio-economic, political and ecological transformation. Tracing the role ascribed to humanity in order to sustainably manage the earth and its endowments since creation, Cafferky (2015:44) showed that the 17-point Sustainable Development Goal can all be achieved through a pragmatic theological education curriculum that correctly interprets the stewardship conferred on mankind. Scourges that trouble the globe, like poverty, food insecurity, diseases, global warming, energy shortages, economic recessions, war and strife, climate change, land degradation and desertification can all be redressed if theological education curricula can espouse integral mission and sustainable development programmes.

Reviewing some theological institutions in Zimbabwe

In this section, I examine the curricula of 22 theological colleges in Zimbabwe, obtaining the information used from desk analysis of the curricula of the theological colleges, as well as from interviews carried out at the institutions with principals, lecturers and students. Courses that relate to the integral mission and sustainable development at each college are identified. Thereafter, the colleges' espousal of a transformative praxis and sustainable development agenda is evaluated.

AFM Theological Seminary

AFM Theological Seminary is a ministry of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe, a member of Apostolic Faith Mission International with its head office in South Africa, Centurion Park, Pretoria. The Apostolic Faith Mission International boasts of its presence in 54 countries globally.

AFMTS offers three programmes that are accredited with the Ministry of Higher Education, namely, Diploma in Theology and Religious Studies, Diploma in Ministry and Pastoral Studies and Diploma in Leadership and Governance. Courses that are inclined towards sustainable development include Church Governance and Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Political Theology, Theology, Gender and Development. Other courses taught that are not strictly theological

include Administration and Financial Management, Psychology of Education, Sociology of Education, African Traditional Religion and Contextual Theologies. The head of the college feels that although the college offers the aforementioned courses, they are taught at a purely academic level without much to write home in terms of the practical application of the concepts thereof. The lecturers at the institution feel that the students do not take non-theological subjects seriously because they come from a church tradition that emphasises spiritual phenomena. The head of the institution and the lecturers recommend the introduction of courses, such as Environmental Theology, and Food Security and Health. The students at the institution recommended the introduction of courses, which include Introduction to Communal Relations, Peace and Conflict Resolution, Women and Youth Empowerment, Relief and Social Support, Poverty Alleviation Strategies, and Constitution and Human Rights. Students feel that they can impact the Zimbabwean community through offering free counselling sessions in the high-density areas in the city of Harare, carrying out cleaning campaigns to maintain a clean environment, and visiting the vulnerable members of the community, including orphanages, old age homes, prisoners and disaster-prone areas. The students feel that the college should not take an aloof stance in matters of national development. The students further recommended that the church and the college ought to partner with the government in developing the economy of the country. There was also a strong recommendation that the college should evolve into an intellectual hub that many stakeholders, including governmental and non-governmental organisations, can count on for expert advice in matters of governance and leadership.

Africa Multination for Christ Bible College

Africa Multination for Christ Bible College is a ministry of the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA) – Forward in Faith Church, with its head office in Zimbabwe but proudly active in 102 countries worldwide.

Africa Multination for Christ Bible College offers a Diploma in Pastoral Studies, with the traditional theological courses being offered in the broad categories of Systematic Theology, Practical Theology, Biblical Languages, Church History, Old Testament, New Testament, and Church Administration. The head of the institution feels that the Talents programme that was introduced by the Archbishop of the church and is adhered to by the college staff and learners fits into the integral mission vision. The Talents programme is a project for every member of ZAOGA – Forward in Faith, whereby members trade with talent money to generate funds for development projects. The principal pointed out that students and lecturers participate in the Talents project to raise funds for the construction of church buildings in rural communities. The principal stated that although the curriculum of Africa Multination for Christ College (AMFCC) does not directly offer courses aligned

to the integral mission and sustainable development, the philosophy of poverty eradication is embedded in the ZAOGA church's missionary thrust. The head of the institution finds that more still needs to be done for the institution to link with the community around it. He recommends that the college can enhance its visibility in the Zimbabwean community by introducing vocational courses in craftsmanship, engineering and embroidery. The principal's sentiments were echoed by a senior lecturer at the institution who indicated that the process of curriculum review requires approval from the Archbishop's Episcopal Council. According to the lecturer, courses that should be introduced include Theology and Development, Economics and Theology, Politics and Theology, and Health and Food Security studies. The students at AMFCC feel that they should be trained in courses, such as Human Resources Management, in order to enable them to deal with people issues competently when they are in ministry. The students felt that sustainable development and transformative praxis can be introduced by mainstreaming current courses with aspects that address situations in the community, such as New Testament and Development Studies, Biblical Doctrines and Political Science, New Testament and Social Work, and Old Testament and Social Justice. Furthermore, the students feel that as direct beneficiaries of curriculum review, they should be active participants in the crafting of a home-grown curriculum for the institution.

Becomers Bible College

Becomers Bible College is a ministry of Becomers Tabernacle Church, an African-initiated ministry with a head office in Harare, Zimbabwe. Becomers Bible College offers four academic programmes: Certificate in Ministry and Theology, Diploma in Ministry and Leadership, Associate degree in Christian Education, and Associate degree in Pastoral Ministry. Courses with some elements of integral mission and sustainable development offered at BBC include Progressive Leadership, Personal Development, Transitional Leadership and Medical Ethics, Church in Society, and Pastor in the 21st century. The principal feels that the institution still needs to adopt more practical ways of executing ministry. He laments that at the present moment the college's approach is more theoretical and cocooned in church dogmatics. The lecturers echoed the sentiments of the principal and emphasised that the students should be equipped in the area of participating in practical exigencies of human existence such as how to protect and preserve the environment and the climate. The lecturers felt that there is a need to introduce in the college curriculum the study of Human Rights; Economics and Theology; Politics and Theology; Theology and Social Change; and Theology, Health and Food Security. The lecturers felt that the college would need to acquire a farm where practical lessons in farming can be offered.

Domboshawa Theological College

Domboshawa Theological College is an ecumenical institution that operates under a Board of Directors whose members are picked from different churches who supply students at the college. Domboshawa Theological College offers a Diploma in Theology and Pastoral Studies, a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies in association with Zimbabwe Open University and a Master of Arts in Religious Studies in association with Africa University. Domboshawa Theological College comes out strong with the Church and Society course, which broadly engages integral mission issues, such as Community Survey and Needs, Church Mission and Social Doctrine, Church and Human Work, Church and Economic Life in Society, Church and Political Community, Church and Community Sensitiveness, The Church and Environmental Care, The Church and Peace in Society, and The Church and Social Action. The outline of Domboshawa Theological College's Church and Society course is unjustly overloaded for a single course as its content can be split into more than four separate courses. The principal expresses great interest in integral mission and issues of sustainable development. The principal is excited that the institution's five-year curriculum review that took place in 2020 affords him an opportunity to integrate sustainable development and integral mission-related courses into the curriculum. The principal feels that the other new courses to be included in the new curriculum are Parish and Pastoral Work, Computer Skills, Modern and Contextual Theology, and Religion and Gender. The principal feels that apart from stand-alone integral mission courses, there is a need for mainstreaming integral mission and sustainable development components with current courses. Other key aspects of the integral mission are already shallowly covered in such courses as Administration and Leadership and Gender Studies. The principal pointed out that the conscious and formal approach to sustainable development and integral mission subjects is what is required at his college; otherwise, the desire and conviction in the concept are already in place. The principal feels that Health and Food Security is one of the new courses he would want to introduce at Domboshawa Theological College (DTC). Theology and development will be made a compulsory course by the fall of 2020. Entrepreneurship training also has to be introduced at DTC to instil skills of self-sustenance in the students. A senior lecturer at the college pointed out that the college can still do more to be a community-based entity by creating college and community programmes, such as Field Ministry attachments, partnering with local authorities in rehabilitating road infrastructure and other public amenities. He recommended that the college can work on self-help projects in selected poor communities. The same view on the need for improving community engagement was also echoed by the college principal.

Evangel Bible College

Evangel Bible College offers a Diploma in Theology. The Transformational Development course, which is intended to cover how students should be geared

for balancing public, ministry and private life, is largely theoretical in scope, with little implementation follow-up from the college. Lecturers feel that the curriculum should be augmented with vocational skills. The students feel contented with the curriculum as it is at the moment wishing, however, that more practicals be added in some subjects. They emphasised the need to be taught how they can be involved in politics yet retaining their Christian ethics and character. The students recommended integral mission and sustainable development related courses, such as Projects Design and Management, Entrepreneurship, Economic Development and Management, Community Development Studies, Political Science, and Theology. The students also proposed that an internship programme be introduced to expose them to the real world of communal life during the tenure of their studies.

Ebenezer Bible College and Seminary

Ebenezer Bible College and Seminary offers two programmes: Diploma in Theology and Certificate in General Leadership. The head of the college feels that there is a need to balance spiritual courses and training, which prepares students to contribute towards the physical needs of society. The lecturers felt that the students should be involved in practical programmes of poverty alleviation in the community, such as joint ventures with social groups in poultry farming and horticulture projects. There was consensus between the principal and the lecturers that integral mission be introduced as a compulsory programme at Ebenezer Bible College and Seminary (EBCS). They both expressed the need for guidance from the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe on the content of the Integral Mission programme so that the programme can be launched. The principal and the lecturers unanimously agreed that the students should carry out studies in Environmental Preservation, Food Security, Human Rights and Social Justice. The students of EBCS felt that their curriculum should be reviewed immediately so that it caters for the practical needs of the Zimbabwean community. They emphasised that the current curriculum does not prepare the pastor to give to the community but, instead, creates a pastor who only expects to receive from the community. They recommended that they be taught how to start and run business projects. They also stated that they should be trained in how to participate in politics without compromising their Christian principles and pastoral ethics. The students recommended that as students they should be attached to some communities where they can, in addition to preaching the gospel, partner with community leaders in rural development projects in association with non-governmental organisations.

Faith World Bible Institute

Faith World Bible Institute offers two programmes: a Certificate in Christian Leadership and a Diploma in Pastoral Ministry. The principal observed that at

the present moment, all courses taught at the college are spiritually oriented. The lecturers also stated that the curriculum emphasises the spiritual and charismatic elements of the gospel. The principal suggested the introduction of new courses, such as Organisational Communication, Human Resources Management, Information Communication Technology, Entrepreneurship and Public Speaking Skills. The lecturers added Financial Management and Human Relations to the courses that can be introduced in a new curriculum. The students were more vociferous on the need for the curriculum to speak to the context of pastoral ministry. They argued that the college has to introduce Social Science subjects, Poverty Alleviation Strategies, Community Engagement Approaches, Farming Skills, Environmental Studies, Social Welfare, Heritage Studies and Development Studies. The students feel strongly that there tends to be excessive rhetoricisation of the gospel message at the expense of handling life issues head-on.

Great Commission Bible Institute

Great Commission Bible Institute offers a Diploma in Theology and Pastoral Ministry. The principal and the lecturers observe that at the present moment the curriculum is virtually silent on integral mission and sustainability disciplines. The principal suggests the introduction of courses, such as Entrepreneurship, Agriculture, Economic Empowerment, Food Security, and Sound Governance. The lecturers also suggest integration of social science subjects, which should be taught by qualified lecturers who are not necessarily pastors. The lecturers feel that there tends to be over spiritualising of issues even where practical life sustaining skills are needed. The students would like to introduce the following into the curriculum: Business Projects Management, Social Work, Horticulture, Development Studies, Psychological Counselling, Health and Food Security, Self-sustaining Projects and Human Relations. They also feel that at the church level, more programmes should be introduced in the area of infrastructure development, construction of hospitals, schools, sinking of boreholes, and participation in government-initiated programmes to safeguard people living in disaster-ravaged communities.

Goshen International Bible College

Goshen International Bible College offers a Diploma in Theology. Both the principal and lecturers observe that the curriculum of the institution is by and large theological and spiritual, and does not cater for any life sustaining programmes. The principal states that, so far, the college does not have any practical courses. He says little effort had been made to introduce computer studies but without success. Entrepreneurship is only mentioned in passing but no substantive course in income-generating activities exist. The principal and the lecturers suggest that their curriculum incorporates subjects, such as

Human Rights Law, Social Change, Social Justice, Poverty Alleviation, Women and Youth Empowerment Studies, Health Care & Food and Income Generating Projects. The students feel that the college is lagging behind in terms of assimilating the realities of everyday life into the curriculum. They recommend that the college authorities design a curriculum that introduces topical issues of modern-day Zimbabwe, such as poverty alleviation, giving to the needy, property holding, asset management, anti-corruption, and peace-building initiatives. The students further recommend introduction of programmes such as college participation in infrastructure development, road repair and maintenance, and visits to orphanages and old age homes. The students observed that at the church level, there is a programme called Operation Hope through which aid is extended to the less privileged and the sick. The students feel that as college students they should be trained to be more proactive and pragmatic about social crises.

Heartfelt Institute of Ministry

Heartfelt Institute of Ministry offers a Diploma in Theology and Ministerial Studies. The college also offers courses in Stewardship and Economic Development, Prosperity Theology, Strategic Management, Religion and Gender, Church and Society, Levitical Agriculture, Project Planning and Events Management, Conflict Resolution and Peace Education, Theology and Ecology, and Law and Leadership Principles. The college leadership, however, feels that there is a need to make the courses more practical and applicable to the issues of everyday experiences in Zimbabwe. The students recommend the introduction of Sociology, Psychology and Introduction to Accounting.

Harare Theological College

Harare Theological College offers a Foundational Certificate in Theology, A Foundational Certificate in Biblical Studies, and a Diploma in Theology. Courses offered at HTC include Ministry Challenges in Zimbabwe, Church Life and Ministry, and Pastoral Care and Counselling. The rest of the courses are the usual biblical and systematic theological subjects. The head of the college feels that a more rigorous approach to integral mission and sustainable development has to be embarked upon. The lecturers feel that because of the close proximity of the college to the University of Zimbabwe and the advantage of access to literature and lecturer resources, they could introduce a degree in integral mission and sustainable development. The students echoed the view of the head of the college by emphasising that out-of-the-classroom projects which enable them to interact with the community should be introduced. The students recommend the introduction of the following topics into the curriculum: Social Relations, Social Work, Social Change, Health and Food Security, Income Generating Projects Management, Environmental Theology and Political Science.

Living Waters Theological Seminary

Living Waters Theological Seminary offers a National Diploma in Theology and Religious Studies and an Executive Diploma in Christian Ministry and Leadership. Courses offered include HIV in the context of Ministry, Human Resources Management, Entrepreneurship, Contextual Theologies, Political Theology, Peace and Conflict Resolution, Transformational Leadership, Stewardship and Economic Development, Environmental Theology, Church and Social Transformation, Governance and Leadership, and Information Communication Technology. The principal feels that there is a need for introducing Health and Food Security, as well as Church and Globalisation, as separate modules. The lecturers also recommended that Law and Theology be added as a special module. The students recommended Media and Computer Applications, Common Law, Corporate Law, Inheritance Law and Women in Ministry. The students feel that although the Living Waters Theological Seminary (LWTS) covers a large number of integral mission-related courses, there is a need for a more aggressive and practical approach to the application of the concepts of integral mission and sustainable development.

More Than a Mile-Deep Zimbabwe

The More Than a Mile-Deep Zimbabwe (MMDZ) curriculum was designed in such a way that it speaks about the various situations of life that the student has to grapple with. The training is thus not based on traditional theoretical knowledge but is a situationally driven curriculum. The training approach places emphasis on the identification of real-life situations, and the student is then guided on how to address the situations. The curriculum is pivoted on four roles of a spiritual leader in Africa: leadership, counselling, discipleship and preaching. Dexterities are developed in tackling defined and ill-defined intricacies in the course of leading, counselling, discipling and preaching. The syllabus deals with real ministry setups as opposed to conventional theological discoursing, which might not even feature in the student's ministry practice. The MMDZ curriculum responds to situations on the African continent and gets to be country specific in its modus operandi. Because of the endemic poverty scourge on the African continent, courses are designed to prepare the students for fighting poverty in the communities they will minister in. Such courses include Generating Sustainable Income, Financial Systems and Managing Services, Developing Business as a Mission, Integrity and Managing Finance, Resolving Poverty and Divisive Ethnicity, and Developing and Managing Community Projects. The courses also deal with strife, fragility and turbulence issues that are rife on the continent, such as Counselling an African Convert, Loving as a Christian and Transformation of Communities Through Engagement. The courses also cover health and general standards of living, gender issues, and empowerment of women and the underprivileged. Such are realities of any African nation.

The curriculum specifically outlines competencies that must be attained at every level of training. The competencies ascribed to each level of training encourage the students to initiate and develop programmes for integral mission in their communities and preach biblically based and contextually relevant sermons. The focus is thus on the gospel mission, adding value to everyday life issues. Programmes, such as Environmental Stewardship and the Bachelor of Integral Mission degree, make the church a solid partner with other progressive players in society.

Mutare School of Preaching

Mutare School of Preaching offers a Certificate in Information and Communication Technology, a Certificate in Horticulture and Entrepreneurship, and a Diploma in Theology and Pastoral Studies. Other courses offered include Community Development, Horticulture and Entrepreneurship. The principal feels that there is a need for placing more priority on family food security, self-supporting projects, small business projects and general entrepreneurship. The lecturers feel that the students need to be interned in the communities around Mutare and be assigned community-based projects that are integral to their final course grades. The school runs a lucrative horticulture project that supplies vegetables, tomatoes and onions to the local markets. A borehole that supplies water both to the school and to the surrounding Dangamvura community was sunk on the premises of the college. The students recommend additional courses be added to the curriculum, which include Peace Studies, Reconciliation, Human Rights and Social Justice, Human Development, and Rural and Community Development. There was agreement amongst the academic staff and students that qualified lecturers would be needed if subjects such as Political Theology, Law, Justice, Social Change, Health and Food Security, Gender Studies and Environmental Theology are introduced. The students have attempted to impact their immediate community through participation in the state-initiated clean-up exercise, visiting the nearby Dangamvura clinic to counsel and pray with sick patients, and through engagements with other institutions in and around the town of Mutare.

Nehemiah Bible Institute

Nehemiah Bible Institute offers a three modular Diploma in Theology under the auspices of the University of Pretoria's Centre for Contextual Ministry, with the diploma comprising 15 courses. The first module focuses on the basics of church leadership, whilst the second module focuses on the context of church leadership. The role of women in the church is addressed in the second module, however, under an Israelite contextual set-up. The second module seeks to mobilise the church and community to deal with challenges of the HIV pandemic. The students are taught how to relate with the infected and

the affected, as well as handling questions on the issue and initiating ministry to all who are affected or infected. The third module deals with the application of church leadership. Special attention is placed on building happy marriages and the sharing of resources in the family. Learners are motivated to get their churches involved in dealing with the needs of their communities in terms of Christian values. There is emphasis on applying principles of the kingdom of God to every part of community life. The students are also taught how to deal with conflict at the personal, church and community levels. The third module also deals with the important subject of religious tolerance, teaching the students the need to accept people from other religious persuasions. The Nehemiah Bible Institute has attempted to respond to the issues of common interest to both the church and the community. The programme is also designed in such a way that the students inevitably engage the communities in which they minister. The programme of training is hands on, allowing interaction between the institute and the communities surrounding it.

Pan Africa Christian College

Pan Africa Christian College offers a Diploma in Ministerial Studies. The principal noted that the PACC has to start conscientiously offering integral mission- and sustainable development related programmes as currently only theological subjects are on offer. Only one course, Current Social Issues, is linked to the integral mission concept. The principal undertakes to introduce courses in Human Rights, Law, Social Justice, Environmental Studies, National Strategic Studies, Political Theology, Gender Studies, and Health and Food Security. The lecturers feel that there is a need for adding a strong social sciences component to the curriculum in order to prepare students adequately for the challenges of ministry.

Salvation Army Officer Training College

The Salvation Army Officer Training College runs a Diploma in Religious Studies and a Diploma in Pastoral Studies. Other than a Leadership and Management course, which is strictly tuned to the doctrine of the Salvation Army, there are no courses that redress the everyday life needs of the larger community beyond the church. The principal and the lecturers feel that they ready to take on board courses that promote community development, human rights and social justice. At the church level, the Salvation Army sinks boreholes in remote areas to provide safe drinking water in marginalised places. However, as a college, they want to start introducing subjects like Gender Studies, Basic Law Principles, Children and Human Rights, Peace and Justice, and Environmental Studies. The principal made an undertaking to sell the integral mission idea to the leadership of the Salvation Army in Zimbabwe. The students at the college are eager to engage in sustainable development

initiatives, especially activities that will see them working in rural communities as part of an internship. They recommend the introduction of courses, such as Theology and Agriculture, Theology and Politics, Entrepreneurship, Vocational Skills Training, Small Business Projects, Community Relations and Theology of Development.

Soul Travailing Bible Institute

Soul Travailing Bible Institute (STBI) offers a Diploma in Theology. Courses offered at STBI include Children and Youth Ministry, Sociology of Marriage and Family, Stress Management, Ministerial Guide for HIV, Crisis Counselling and Missiology. The principal pointed out that the Institute still has to get more enlightenment on the concepts of integral mission and sustainable development. At the present moment, only some piecemeal attention is being given to aspects of human rights, justice and equality. There is a need for the introduction of stand-alone courses to cover Human Rights, Law, Peace, Justice and Peace, Social Change and Transformational Leadership, and Health and Food Security. The principal further stressed the need for introducing Gender Studies as a course on its own. The lecturers felt that integral mission should be introduced as a diploma programme at the Institute. They recommend that disciplines, such as agriculture, carpentry, income generating projects and project management, be introduced under an Integral Mission Diploma. Students at the Institute feel that the current curriculum isolates them from the life of the community around the college, especially in social, economic and political spaces. The students want to be taught economics, political science, human rights law, social justice, poverty alleviation strategies, ecotheology and agriculture.

Theological College of Zimbabwe

Theological College of Zimbabwe offers four programmes: Advanced Diploma in Theology, Certificate in Women's Ministry, Bachelor of Arts in Theology and Bachelor of Arts Special Honours. Holistic training programmes offered at the institution include a Certificate in Women Ministry, Development, Peace and Justice, Information Communication Technology, and HIV Management. There are fragments of integral mission concepts in some courses, such as Political Theology and Contextual Leadership. The principal of the college accedes that there is a need for a more aggressive approach to the integral mission idea. Lecturers recommend that the College's curriculum be indigenised so that it speaks to the social needs of the Zimbabwean community. They recommend integration of Human Rights Law, Entrepreneurship, Community Relations and Organisational Change. There is a strong feeling that the organisational culture at Theological College of Zimbabwe (TCZ) should respond to contemporary local trends in politics and social dynamics. Students

at TCZ feel that there is a need to contextualise the courses at the college. They also noted that there tends to be more theory than practical relevance of the material covered in most courses. The students recommend the introduction of Law, Local Development Studies, Theology and Ecology, Theology and Economics, Psychology, Economics and Sociology.

Transform Your World Leadership Institute

Transform Your World Leadership Institute offers a Certificate in International Leadership based on John Maxwell's leadership toolkit and a Diploma in Christian Ministry and Leadership. The principal feels that an integral mission approach to theological education is what their institute stands for. Their focus is to transform the world by producing leaders reputable for integrity, transparency, honesty, and righteousness. The Institute's current programmes are designed to equip all leaders in His Presence Ministries with leadership skills on the basis of John Maxwell's principles of leadership. The programme is thus church-based and liturgical in nature.

United Theological College of Zimbabwe

United Theological College of Zimbabwe (UTCZ) offers a Diploma in Religious Studies as well as a Diploma in Theology. Courses taught at UTCZ include Religion, Democracy and Governance, Gender and Theology, and Theology and Development. The principal feels that there is a need to add Race Relations and Theology of Disabilities as courses. The principal posits that the introduction of Law and Human Rights, and Health and Food Security will be a welcome development. Other important courses taught include Politics, Justice and Equality; Social Change; and Environment and Climate Change. Both the principal and the lecturers agree that there is a need for the college to introduce separate, intrinsic courses in politics, justice, social change and poverty alleviation. The students felt that there is a need to review the college curriculum so that it speaks to the dynamism of social, political and economic life of modern communities. They argue that the subject of Human Rights should be introduced where the contentious matter of sexual rights can be discussed in the wake of lesbians' and gays' fight for recognition. The students also feel that the level at which the teaching is carried out at UTCZ is too high for the diploma level. The students expressed gratitude for the introduction of courses, such as Contextual Theology and Liberation Theology, which cover practical issues of life in the Zimbabwean context.

Zimbabwe Theological Seminary

Zimbabwe Theological Seminary offers a Diploma in Theology and a Diploma in Religious Studies. Courses aligned towards sustainable

development taught at ZTS include Gender and Theology, Women and Theology, and Religion and Politics. The principal undertakes to introduce integral mission at diploma level as soon as there is consensus on the curriculum content. The lecturers concurred with the principal that Human Rights, Health and Food Security, Environment and Climate Change, Theology and Development, Peace and Conflict Resolution, as well as Church and Society should be introduced. Students feel that courses that should be introduced include Theology and Development; Theology, Peace, Conflict and Development; Church and Society; HIV and Church; Theology and Disabled People Ministry; Corporate Governance, Community Development, Youth and Women Empowerment; Prison Ministry; and Church Planting and Development. The students also recommend that the courses taught at ZTS should be contextually applicable to the African and, in particular, the Zimbabwean context.

Contextual analysis

In this part of the chapter, the curriculum of each theological college is subjected to analysis to determine the extent to which the colleges have assimilated transformative praxis and sustainable development.

Criteria used to assess sustainable development

The assessment of the incorporation of transformative praxis and a sustainable development agenda in the curricula of theological colleges in Zimbabwe is based on the following criteria:

- number of courses on human welfare
- number of courses on community mobilisation and development
- number of courses that combine theology and social sciences
- number of courses that combine theology and natural sciences
- number of courses that combine theology and ecology or environment
- number of courses that combine theology and African epistemologies.

Acronyms/Abbreviations for the colleges

The acronyms or abbreviations that are used to represent the colleges in Table 11.1 are:

- AFMTS – AFM Theological Seminary
- AMFCC – Africa Multination for Christ College
- BBC – Becomers Bible College
- DTC – Domboshawa Theological College
- EBC – Evangel Bible College
- EBCS – Ebenezer Bible College and Seminary

- FWBI – Faith World Bible Institute
- GCBI – Great Commission Bible Institute
- GIBC – Goshen International Bible College
- HIM – Heartfelt International Ministry
- HTC – Harare Theological College
- LWTS – Living Waters Theological Seminary
- MMDZ – More Than a Mile-Deep Zimbabwe
- MSOP – Mutare School of Preaching
- NBI – Nehemiah Bible Institute
- OTC – Officer Training College
- PACC – Pan Africa Christian College
- STBI – Soul Travailing Bible Institute
- TCZ – Theological College of Zimbabwe
- TYWLI – Transform Your World Leadership Institute

TABLE 11.1: Colleges' transformative praxis and sustainable development evaluation.

Name of the College	Number of courses on human welfare	Number of courses on community development or mobilisation	Number of theology and social sciences combination	Number of theology and natural sciences combination	Number of theology and ecology or environment combinations	Number of theo and African context	Ranking
AFMTS	1	1	2	0	0	1	Very low
AMFCC	0	1	1	0	0	1	Very low
BBC	2	1	0	0	0	1	Very low
DTC	3	2	2	0	1	3	Average
EBC	1	1	1	0	0	1	Very low
EBCS	1	0	1	0	0	1	Very low
FWBI	1	1	0	0	0	1	Very low
GCBI	1	0	1	0	0	0	Very low
GIBC	1	0	1	0	0	1	Very low
HIM	3	2	1	2	1	1	Average
HTC	2	1	1	0	0	1	Very low
LWTS	2	2	4	0	1	1	Average
MMDZ	3	3	2	1	1	4	Average
MSOP	3	1	0	0	0	1	Very low
NBI	1	2	2	1		3	Low
OTC	1	2	1	0	0	2	Low
PACC	2	1	2	0	0	2	Low
STBI	1	2	1	0	0	1	Very low
TCZ	2	1	2	0	1	2	Low
TYWLI	1	2	1	0	0	1	Very low
UTC	2	2	2	0	1	2	Low
ZTS	1	2	2	0	1	2	Low

AFMTS, AFM Theological Seminary; AMFCC, Africa Multination for Christ College; BBC, Becomers Bible College; DTC, Domboshawa Theological College; EBC, Evangel Bible College; EBCS, Ebenezer Bible College and Seminary; FWBI, Faith World Bible Institute; GCBI, Great Commission Bible Institute; GIBC, Goshen International Bible College; HIM, Heartfelt International Ministry; HTC, Harare Theological College; LWTS, Living Waters Theological Seminary; MMDZ, More Than a Mile-Deep Zimbabwe; MSOP, Mutare School of Preaching; NBI, Nehemiah Bible Institute; OTC, Officer Training College; PACC, Pan Africa Christian College; STBI, Soul Travailing Bible Institute; TCZ, Theological College of Zimbabwe; TYWLI, Transform Your World Leadership Institute; UTC, United Theological College; ZTS, Zimbabwe Theological Seminary

- UTC – United Theological College
- ZTS – Zimbabwe Theological Seminary.

Key ranking criteria

The key ranking criteria for the colleges' incorporation of sustainable development in curricula are as follows:

- 0–5 Sustainable Development Related Courses: very low
- 6–9 Sustainable Development Related Courses: low
- 10–14 Sustainable Development Related Courses: average
- 15–20 Sustainable Development Related Courses: above average
- 21+ Sustainable Development Related Courses: excellent.

Sustainable development course categories

The sustainable development course categories are presented below:

- Courses on human welfare include all courses that deal with food security, social security, training and development, employment creation, human rights, agriculture, economics, trade, commerce and entrepreneurship.
- Courses on community development and mobilisation include Church and Society, Poverty Alleviation, Economic Planning and Development, Community Relations, Gender Studies, Politics, Population Studies, Rural Development, church and community mobilisation programmes, and Infrastructure Development.
- Theology and social sciences combinations include mainstreamed courses that combine biblical subjects and behavioural disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, leadership, governance, conflict and crisis management, peace studies, philosophy and politics, history and international relations.
- Theology and natural sciences combinations include courses such as Theology and Energy, Theology and Aquatic Studies, Theology of Land and Resettlement, Theology and Natural Resources, and Theology and Mining.
- Theology and environmental or ecology combinations include courses such as Environmental Theology, Theology and Climate Change, Theology and Global Warming, Theology and Desertification, Theology and Forestry Studies, Theology and Endangered Species, and Flora and Fauna.
- Theology and the African context include all courses that contextualise phenomena, Afrocentric biblical hermeneutics, African development goals, transformational initiatives and continental studies.

The analysis of the above data is presented in Table 11.2.

TABLE 11.2: Analysis of data.

Category	Ranking	Number of colleges	Percentage
0–5 sustainable development courses	Very low	12 out of 22	54.5
6–9 sustainable development courses	Low	6 out of 22	27.2
10–14 sustainable development courses	Average	4 out of 22	18.1
15–20 sustainable development courses	Above average	Nil	0
21 + sustainable development courses	Excellent	Nil	0

Summary of results

A summary of the results is presented below:

- 54.5% of theological colleges sampled for the study show a very low transformative praxis towards sustainable development.
- 27.2% of the sampled colleges show a low transformative praxis towards sustainable development.
- 18.1% of the sampled colleges show an average transformative praxis towards sustainable development.

Conclusion

The study has shown that the largest number of theological colleges in Zimbabwe are very low on transformative praxis. If theological education in Zimbabwe is to contribute towards meaningful change for the betterment of the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans, there is a dire need for theological institutions to design a curriculum that responds to the social realities of the country (Bloomquist & Sinaga 2010:661; Makgoba 2005:15; Mugambi 2013:117). Theological education in Zimbabwe can only attain credibility and relevance if it produces students who will be agents of social transformation that will challenge discriminatory and oppressive systems that relegate minority groups, the poor and women to the margins of development programmes (Chitando 2010:248; Nadar 2010:136). A curriculum that will revive and revitalise theological education in Zimbabwe ought to cover the following six broad areas of sustainable development:

- Human welfare, which includes all courses that deal with food security, social security, training and development, employment creation, human rights, agriculture, economics, trade, commerce and entrepreneurship.
- Community development and mobilisation, which include church and society, poverty alleviation, economic planning and development, community relations, gender studies, politics, population studies, rural development, church and community mobilisation programmes and infrastructure development.
- Theology and social sciences combinations, which include mainstreamed courses that combine biblical subjects and behavioural disciplines, such as

sociology, psychology, leadership, governance, conflict and crises management, peace studies, philosophy and politics, history and international relations.

- Theology and natural sciences combinations, which include courses such as Theology and Energy, Theology and Aquatic Studies, Theology of Land and Resettlement, Theology and Natural Resources, and Theology and Mining.
- Theology and environmental or ecology combinations, which include courses such as Environmental Theology, Theology and Climate Change, Theology and Global Warming, Theology and Desertification, Theology and Forestry Studies, Theology and Endangered Species, and Flora and Fauna.
- Theology and the African context, which includes all courses that contextualise phenomena, Afrocentric biblical hermeneutics, African development goals, transformational initiatives and continental studies.

Chapter 12

Theological education in Africa: denominational engagement, theological education and training

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Abstract

This chapter is written from a postcolonial perspective and intends to critically analyse the engagement of the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola (ECCA) with regard to education and theological formation. The biblical text of the Great Commission (Mt 28:18–20) is used as a basic text in order to provide a critical view of the church's mission. The chapter discusses church engagement from the missionary era to this day.

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Introduction

Since antiquity, the Angolan people have believed in the existence of a supreme being who created the world and everything in it, and this supreme being was called by various names according to their tribes, some called him 'Suku', others 'Zami', others 'Jambi', others 'Kalunga', etc. Although they called him by different names, the thought was unique: 'the creator of all things'. This clearly demonstrates that they understood and believed in the existence of God; however, they did not worship him, praise him, venerate him, pray to him nor did they built temples for him. Rather, they feared him, believing that he was angry, fearful, holy, thinking that God was far away, and in place of God they put human spirits of the deceased from their families. When there was a lack of rain or certain blessings, they went to places called 'Akokoto', that is, cemeteries, 'places where they buried their ancestors', to ask for rain or other blessings. They said that we cannot speak to God who is holy and we are unclean. However, from an early age, the Angolan people always valued the education of people, although it was not performed as seen today; however, they did it in places called *onjango* instead of classrooms. Furthermore, priority was given to men, and one of the concerns was to prepare them for life; techniques were taught on how to deal with nature, how to provide for the family and how to defend themselves against the challenges that nature imposed on them. Additionally, cultural values were preserved through oral transmission at these meetings. There was no lack of knowledge about God amongst Angolans and education was done, despite the fact that orality was one of the means by which it was done. It was not a concern, however, to announce, preach or teach about God, that is, to fulfil the Great Commission, because each people or tribe conceived of God in a different way from the other and each people passed on their cultural values in a different way. There was no systematic way in the teaching–learning process.

This chapter discusses the denominational engagement, theological education and training carried out by ECCA since its foundation up to this day, which will be discussed using the Great Commission (Mt 28:16–20) from the perspective of a postcolonial hermeneutic. Such a hermeneutic is one of the ways the church puts itself in the gap between theology and church and requires addressing those people who have been placed on the margin. People on the margin include those who are denied the possibility of studying because of the lack of financial possibilities, and also women, who have been put on the margins with regard to decision making, theological education and pastoral training. A postcolonial hermeneutic using the Great Commission requires that these issues be addressed.

This chapter is discussed in four parts: exegesis and postcolonial interpretation of the Great Commission in the Angolan context; analysis of theological education and formation during the missionary era; analysis of

theological education and training during the civil war; finally, it will make the analysis of theological education and formation during the current time.

Background

The fulfilment of the Great Commission to 'go into the whole world and preach the gospel' (Mt 28:18–20) makes the church an agent whose essence is focused on missionary action. Promoting education, in general, as well as Christian or theological education, has always been closely linked to the mission of the church, as it has always sought and still seeks to offer holistic training to men and women. Several churches in Angola, and the Evangelical Congregational Church, in particular, intend to minimise illiteracy by founding more schools at the level of basic education up to HE at both the secular and theological levels. In a specific way, the focus of this research study was on the engagement of the Evangelical Congregational Church in academic and theological education from its foundation to the present day.

Matos (cited in Marcola 2014:10) stated that education is an activity of vital importance for Christianity. Without education, the Christian faith could not preserve its identity and expand over time. John Hughes (cited in Marcola 2014) argues that:

> [*T*]he highest objective of education must, then, be to help human beings in the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that contribute so that they can better glorify and please God. (p. 4)

Education must train citizens who are able to live in a complex society and respect cultural, religious and political diversity. Educating consists of contributing so that people acquire more and more rational, emotional and operational autonomy, that is, that they learn to know, to feel correctly and to be able to do more. More than ever, it is necessary to learn to respect, to dialogue, to cooperate and to live together (Diretrizes curriculares para o ensino religioso no Estado de Goiás 2009:17).

During the period of colonisation, the churches in Angola played a very important role in terms of education, in general, as well as in the area of theological formation. The church was based primarily on two pillars during its implantation and expansion: the Bible and school. The Evangelical Congregational Church was the first to open a school in Huambo province, even before the Portuguese Government (Henderson 1990:171). Whilst Catholic schools were seminaries founded to stimulate and awaken vocations, promoting formation in the sense of priesthood, Protestant schools had as their main goal teaching to read and write, so that most Christians could read the Scriptures and participate in the life of local congregations led by lay men and women (Henderson 1990:172).

During the period of the civil war, there was a standstill because people were dispersed, mission centres were destroyed and many perished. As

Tertullian stated, '[t]he blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church', and so the remnant after the civil war restarted educational and training activity.

The churches today continue to make their contribution in the area of theological education and training. In almost every church, there is a school for members and the surrounding community. It should be noted that our denomination has a seminary founded in 1947 and has already trained more than 300 pastors, and in the next academic year, if conditions are in our favour, the University of Dondi will begin – the first time our denomination has been able to offer university-level education. Also, a church-operated Language Institute has been in operation for three years.

According to the Gospel of Matthew 28:18–20, teaching is part of the church's mission, and we hold that both general and theological education are major concerns in order to help men and women have a holistic view. William Carey states that the 'Great Commission plays a crucial role in almost all Christian meetings, making people remember the meaning of mission and evangelism' (as cited in Chung 2015:n.p.). In fact, 'this passage functions as a support, even a command, allowing Christians to pursue almost any type of missionary work that is consistent with the way of Christ, in order to convince non-Christians to become modern disciples of Jesus' (Carey, cited in Chung 2015:n.p.).

Ferdinand Hahn states that 'the gospel of Matthew is of the greatest importance for the question of mission at the beginning of Christianity'. And Bosch (1991) says that 'our first Gospel is essentially a missionary text'. The Gospel of Matthew culminates with the missionary commissioning of 28:16–20 (cited in Bauer 2019:242).

It is clear that in the Great Commission, the responsibility of sharing the gospel is given to all who become disciples of Jesus Christ without exception. As Paul says in Galatians 3:28, '[in] Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, man or woman, we are all one'. Teaching should not be denied to anyone, regardless of limitations. This is an area where Congregationalism has a great positive impact on communities:

Mission is the specific task or purpose which a person or group seeks to accomplish, involving various modes of movement, be it sending or being sent, coming and going, ascending and descending, gathering and calling others to follow (Köstenberger 1998:41).

Exegesis and postcolonial interpretation of the Great Commission in the Angolan context

In this section, I exegete the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18–20. Using postcolonial hermeneutics, I discuss the text in order to apply it to the Angolan context.

The Christian tradition considers the Gospel of Matthew to be the 'Ecclesial Gospel' because it is a gospel through which the doctrine of the Church was elaborated for instructing the faithful about Christ. Matthew begins his account with the genealogy of Jesus by showing that Jesus is heir to David, the predicted Messiah (Mt 1:23; Is 2:1–6; Mt 2:1–6), and ends his account with the resurrection of Jesus and the final instructions, and with the assurance given by Jesus when he said, '[b]ehold, I am with you every day [...]' (Mt 28:18–20) (Campos, Pereira & Silva 2020:29–36).

The Great Commission consists of the declaration on the authority of Jesus, the order to make disciples, and the promise of the permanent presence of Christ until the fullness of the kingdom of God comes. Matthew summarises his Gospel in three themes: (1) the supreme and universal authority was given to Jesus by the heavenly Father, (2) the disciples must share discipleship with all nations and pass on Jesus' teachings, and (3) the promise of Jesus' continued presence alongside the disciples and their successors fulfils the meaning of the name 'Emmanuel' (God with us) in Matthew 1:23 (Bergant & Karris 1989:43–44).

This mandate is explicitly urgent and inclusive. For all those who are called by our Lord Jesus Christ, they must have the transforming role. What we learn from this text, which is the call to service, comes from the obedience to the vision of the risen Christ. Trust must be in the power of Christ and not in us (*Bíblia* 1997).

According to a commentary by Blair, the Great Commission is 'the key passage of this gospel', and he adds, 'here many phases of the book' are understood. He mentions the totality of Jesus' power, 'his derivative character, the order to evangelise the whole world, the nature of discipleship and the certainty of Jesus' presence'. In verse 19, 'teach' means 'to make disciples', a word that has a completely different meaning from 'secular' teaching. In verse 20, 'every day' means no matter what days we may have – good or bad, joyful or sad. Jesus promised that he would be with us until the consummation of the era. Blair rightly observes, '[t]he statement on Jesus' lips at the end of the gospel, "all the power in heaven and on earth is given to me," simply encompasses the substance of the whole story' (Earle, Sanner & Childers 2006).

Chapter 28:1–20 represents the limits of Roman power. After Jesus was resurrected, he charged the women to proclaim this message to his male disciples and give instructions to meet Jesus in Galilee. The women meet Jesus who repeat his directions (Mt 28:1–10). The postcolonial perspective of the Gospel of Matthew notes the paradox that the gospel imitates what it resists, that is, the domination of the Roman Empire, and replicates it in the proclamation of the victorious establishment of the empire of God that dominates Rome and its allies. This victory is demonstrated in the resurrection of Jesus. In a critical inversion, however, 'the Gospel resists the societal

experience of the Roman Empire marked by hierarchy, patriarchy, and exclusion' (Carter 2009:95).

Howard (1976) stated that for the disciples to fulfil the Great Commission, they must go to all nations; it is an order that cannot be ignored; however, as they go, they must make disciples of all tribes and languages (cited in Wolde 2011:7–13). Making disciples is more than any meeting in a church service. It requires total dedication to the master, to teach and follow them as much as possible on a regular basis. The purpose of the Great Commission is to make it easier for the whole world (nations) to be saved in Christ Jesus so that the entire nations can come under the umbrella of Christ's leadership. The Great Commission accommodates evangelism and discipleship. The true meaning of the Great Commission is related to the presentation of the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fullness so that the nations can become true worshipers or disciples of Jesus Christ.

Reading the Great Commission as a foundational text and applying it to the Angolan context, I would like to emphasise that the Congregational Church during the missionary period was unable to expand to the whole country because of the limitations imposed by the Portuguese colonial rule. Our of the churches was only allowed to reach a few tribes and regions of the country, making it mostly a denomination of the Ovimbundu. The Congregational Church at that time (and other denominations in other areas) was not able to break the colonial rule, as the early church came to win and break the dominion of the Roman Empire. However, during the period of civil war, with broad dispersion of the people, the Great Commission became an imperative, thus causing Congregationalism to reach the entire extension of the Angolan territory. In this period, evangelisation and discipleship were an imperative task, making Christ known and adored in all tribes and languages.

Another barrier that the Great Commission must overcome in the Angolan context is that efforts must be made in the sense that more women can become part of the same work, as Jesus did not restrict his warrant to men. It was the women who first saw Jesus after the resurrection and went to announce to the other disciples the upcoming encounter on Mount Galilee. In greater or lesser numbers, women were always present. With regard to everything concerning the ministry or pastoral vocation, the Congregational Church needs to make an effort to ensure that more women are called and challenged to be part of the fulfilment of the Great Commission. As Angola is a nation where the patriarchal system is predominant, the Gospel, when being preached, needs to take this aspect into account in order to have a gender balance in the fulfilment of this mission.

I would not like to ignore the current context that the world is experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic. Angola is not exempt. The responsibility for fulfilling the Great Commission becomes increasingly imperative in the sense that the

Gospel breaks any and all barriers and dominions, thus reaching men and women for Christ the Saviour of all humanity. Teaching and making disciples in all nations at all times and in different contexts are and should be everyone's task and responsibility.

Analysis of theological education and formation during the missionary era

In critically analysing how education, in general, and theological formation were carried out during the missionary era, I will do so taking into account the central message of the Great Commission (Mt 28:18–20), which includes teaching and making disciples in all nations.

Howard (1976) stated that in order for the disciples to fulfil the Great Commission, they must go to all nations, that is, move from one place to another, with the goal of saving all by Jesus Christ (cited in Wolde 2011:7–13). Therefore, the Great Commission accommodates evangelism and discipleship during the whole process of presenting the Good News of Jesus Christ. The question I would like to ask is how would it be possible to put the Bible, which is the Word of God, in the hands of those who cannot read or write? Would it be enough for the people to just memorise and not be able to read for themselves?

When the missionaries arrived in Angola in 1880 to fulfil the Great Commission, they soon began to teach the people to read and write. They knew that for the people to understand the Word of God, they needed to be able to read and write, so that they could read for themselves, and know the truth of the Word of God and undo the lies of men or women. As a result, education and training became the main areas for which missionaries worked towards the multifaceted formation of humans. For this reason, one of the great concerns was to found schools and hospitals.

The first school was started on 01 January 1882 in the village of Chilume, municipality of Bailundo, Huambo province. Dr Miller, one of the first three Protestant missionaries, was the first teacher who taught the first students. There were a total of 22 students originally, of whom only three were willing to attend consistently, and the others fled the school. Many times, it was necessary to make a fuss to attract students to attend school. In order to teach arithmetic, the teacher had to pay *jinguba* to any student who distinguished himself or herself in arithmetic calculations; this method encouraged students to make an effort to think and attend schools.

Angolans were increasingly looking for better opportunities to educate themselves, and the Protestant community responded positively to that desire. There were teachers who individually opened private schools. The Methodist and Congregational missions obtained authorisation to teach

secondary education courses in Quessua and Dôndi. Rural and domestic schools were also opened (Henderson 1990:182).

The gospel resists the experience of any empire or domination system and all kinds of social exclusion (Carter 2009:94–95). In referencing Carter, I want to agree with him when mentioning social exclusion, as the Angolan context during the colonial era did not allow poor people to attend school because of required fees. Exploitation, not education, was a concern for the settler Portuguese. I agree again with Carter in saying that just like the gospel was able to overcome the patriarchal system observed during the Roman Empire, in Angola there is no escape from the reality where the system is patriarchal, in the sense that during the era of colonialism, above all, women were less able to study. It should be noted that during the missionary era, several schools were founded and several courses were given, and all of this was carried out with a view of making better disciples, and that these, in turn, could contribute to evangelisation in the spirit of the Great Commission.

Education, in general, was divided into three branches for boys: the academic branch, the biblical branch and the industrial branch. Firstly, Portuguese history, geography, science and mathematics were studied. It was mandatory to study the Bible at every level of school. In the industrial branch, in addition to agriculture, carpentry, masonry and tailoring were all taught at the Currie Institute in Dôndi and other missionary-led schools. All students had to attend agriculture. There was also a pastoral formation course at the Currie Institute, so all who completed the course had to serve the church in different activities, such as catechist, deacon and even pastor. Girls had the academic field, the Bible and manual arts. After they finished primary school, they were allowed to attend the 'Means' school where they progressed in all the arts that the Angolan woman was engaged in, such as taking care of the house, cooking, sewing, taking care of children and farming for the family. As in all schools, the Currie Institute and the Means school served to implant the church and to promote its growth at the same time (Henderson 1990:173–177).

With regard to theological education, the Evangelical Congregational Church went through two main moments, starting with the Itinerant school where the training was performed in modules and continuing up to the Theological school itself, with progression from 1929 to 1946. Regarding the school curriculum, in addition to the theological classes, the students performed other extra school activities, such as lectures, sports, agricultural work, pastoral practices and others. Discipleship during the missionary era was very consistent in the sense of making Christians trained in all aspects and making them also part of evangelisation within the country. One aspect, however, should be noted, namely, the challenge of preparing women for the ministerial vocation or 'formation as a pastor', because, as mentioned above,

one of the purposes of the foundation of the Means school was to prepare women for marriage and 'to take care of the home', and not for the evangelising mission. This contradicts the inclusive purpose of the Great Commission where women and men are called for this mission.

Analysis of theological education and formation during the period of the civil war

In this part, I intend to correlate the central objective of the Great Commission according to the context in which it was written and its implementation in the Angolan context during the period of the civil war. I also enter into a dialogue with the Great Commission, looking at its educational aspect, and above all, the priority given to education in Angola during the period under analysis.

Matos (2008) stated that education is an activity of vital importance for Christianity (Marcola 2014:109). Without it, the Christian faith could not preserve its identity and expand over time. Therefore, we cannot talk about education either in the general or in the theological context, without mentioning teaching as its main activity, as noted in Matthew 28:19, 'Go and teach'. Teaching, baptising and making disciples are the three main actions included in the evangelising mission, the Great Commission, as described by Matthew in Chapter 28, verses 18–20.

I have mentioned throughout this chapter that the task of the Great Commission is to save the world by presenting the good news of the gospel of Christ. Without ignoring the context in which this mission will have to be accomplished, the imperative remains. Looking at the political, economic and social context in which the Gospel of Matthew was written, we realise that the Gospel resisted the experience of the Roman Empire marked by hierarchy, patriarchy and exclusion (Carter 2009:94–95), the gospel has the power to overcome any domain as long as the true gospel is taught.

It was exactly in a context of Portuguese colonial domination in Angola that three missionaries from America and Canada on 11 November 1880 arrived in the country with the purpose of fulfilling the three pillars of the Great Commission that I want to call 'preach, teach and make disciples'. For the context in which the country was at that time, it would be not easy to implement the Great Commission in its liberating aspect, as in the colonial era, Angolans were classified as either 'indigenous' or 'assimilated'. Indigenous people were forced to work for 15, 30 or more days in ports, loading or unloading ships, on coffee or ash farms, opening roads and railways with the pickaxe, or working in the homes of assimilated people without a salary. The only remuneration was manioc, dried fish and palm oil that they received in the evening to maintain their strength and be able to work the next day. They were also obliged to pay tribute called *elisimu* in

Umbundu language. However, the taxes paid by the indigenous people to the Portuguese government had nothing to do with the income that was earned; in other words, even if one worked without being paid, the tax was mandatory for anyone who was male and estimated to be over 16 years old.

As for the people who were part of the assimilated class, they were tolerated by the Portuguese settlers in some restricted circles of the urban environment where they were known. It was not always in the whole colony but mainly in more remote places. In order to be assimilated, it was necessary to apply for Portuguese citizenship with the help of an assimilated godfather. The administrator of the Council travelled personally to the home of the applicant who was assimilated to verify whether the applicant lived in a decent house, if he had a bed with a mattress, if he ate at the table with his family using cutlery, and if he and his wife and children spoke the Portuguese language. After that, the indigenous received the title of Portuguese citizen granted by the central governor of Lisbon with the right to be able to possess the respective Identity Card.

It was in such a difficult and challenging environment of so much injustice and humiliation, dominance and oppression that the Great Commission had to be implemented in Angola by the Protestant missionaries. They strove not to leave out some cultural habits and customs of the population itself. The power of the gospel always triumphs despite the challenges that those who commit to preach it have to face.

Marcola (2014) said that education should train citizens who are able to live in a complex society and respect cultural, religious and political diversity. Educating consists of contributing so that people acquire more and more rational, emotional and operational autonomy, that is, they learn to know, to feel correctly and to be able to do more. This view was not the same as that of the Portuguese at that time in relation to Angola. Now, let us see the way education was carried out at that time for the progression of the students:

- pre-primary
- late first class
- early first class
- late second class
- early second class
- second elementary class.

The only way to escape from marginalisation was to study up to at least the first grade of primary education (the third class). Nobody could study officially beyond the second grade (the fourth class) of general primary education without being 'assimilated'. There was neither high school nor university, except a high school of agriculture in Chivinguiro, Huila province, and Chianga Agronomical College, Huambo province. All this was performed so that Angolans would not wake up early to their oppression and because teaching

for the liberation of people, as presented by Matthew, was not part of the colonial ideals (Anastácio 2013).

Regarding education and theological formation, in order to carry out HE, the missionaries had to receive approval for some Angolans to study in Portugal or the United States of America, and for high school of theology, they went to the Emanuel Seminary of Dôndi. These students, however, include only men, and the privileged were only those who had studied at the evangelical centres, missions and the Cúrrie Institute of Dondi. These people were appointed by the opinion leaders of the churches, provided that they had good behaviour. In this way, education, in general, as well as Christian education put some people on the margins, that is, they were disadvantaged because of the context of the country. On this point, I corroborate with Streck and Wachs (Rodrigues 2007:21) when they define *Christian education* as 'the formative task that the church performs with its members in order to enable them to participate in the life and commitments of their respective community'. Again, Marcola (2014:11) mentioned that the aim of Christian education is to form a generation of renewed minds, and that it should reflect directly on the development of the church.

I have mentioned that the Great Commission focuses on teaching as one of the pillars, as I have called it, so the mission of evangelisation does not leave out the art of education, as this Christian education liberates. As the Apostle Paul said, '[y]ou were called for freedom' (Gl 5:13). Freedom was denied to many Angolans during the period in question. I want to emphasise here that this denial was not only made in education, in general, but also in terms of theological education. Whilst men were trained to be pastors for Congregational churches, women were only trained to be Christian educators, meaning that they were not ordained as pastors. In Mathew 28, we find the inclusive factor that differs from the pragmatic context, the Angolan reality, during the colonial period.

Let us just look at the fact that since the 11 November 1880, when the Congregational Church was founded, it took 94 years for the first indigenous female pastor to be ordained, Reverend Ilda Valério (Samacumbi 2013:37), who had to face several barriers as the church at the time did not ordain women. The church had established a principle that women had to take the theology course for a period of three years to be a Christian educator, and men studied for four years, and after that, they were ordained as pastors.

However, as the gospel breaks down barriers and all kinds of exclusion, and taking into account that women are also called for discipleship women, the time had arrived for the ordination of the first female pastor. Two groups were formed: the first one belonged to the body of teachers of Emanuel Seminary of Dôndi, who supported the ordination, and the second group who said it would be good to give up because there were many oppositions, and the church was

doubting having a female pastor. As God calls all – men and women – to his holy ministry, the church began from that moment to ordain women to the holy ministry, 94 years after the arrival of the missionaries, thus making the realisation of the Great Commission in Angola, even though it was in limited numbers.

Analysis of theological education and formation in the present time

I have been mentioning throughout this chapter that teaching is one of the pillars in fulfilling the Great Commission, as it is through this that people converted to the gospel become mature disciples with the ability of searching the Scriptures for themselves. As we read in Acts 17:11–13, '[...] the Christians of Berea searched the Scriptures [...]', promoting education through multifaceted teaching is the mission of the church.

The ECCA has always been guided by education, both general and theological, with the aim of forming men and women in a holistic way, despite the different contexts in which the country has been influenced either positively or negatively. The mission was always to make the gospel find space amongst the people and contribute at the same time to liberation, whether from a spiritual, social, economic or political point of view. The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (Rm 1:16), and how will they believe in him if they have not heard of him (Rm 10:13–15)? In order to answer this question, Matthew 28:18–20 elucidates that we must teach the Word of God. The Evangelical Congregational Church, as in the past, continues to teach. Currently, Angola has reached a very high level compared with the past. If in the past it was difficult to have access to education, today the reality is different, many people are already able to study, without making a distinction between men and women. If yesterday it was thought that women should not have the same possibilities as men in terms of training, today this is completely different. Additionally, if yesterday the higher levels had to be completed only outside the country, today in Angola there are already many universities, but they still do not satisfy the demand. Currently, there are still people outside the education system. Not prioritising education is an attitude that must be corrected because when people are not taught, they are unlikely to awaken and are exploited and dominated, which contradicts what the Great Commission proposes to achieve, that is, liberating people against all types of domains and social exclusion.

In the field of theological formation, currently, there are also great advances as many people have felt called. They have vocation to the holy ministry, and in this context, they have been undergoing training for a period of four years, as well as a year of internship before their ordination to be pastors for the Evangelical Congregational Church. They are then sent to different parts of the country to serve God, and in this way, they take part in the fulfilment of the

Great Commission. It should, however, be noted that amongst those currently who have vocation, meaning, those who have decided to attend theological school, most are still men. I believe that efforts should be made in order that more women feel the same call and challenge to be trained as pastors, since looking at the Great Commission the call is inclusive.

It is also important to note that today theological formation for the Evangelical Congregational Church needs to fulfil their dream that has been hindered and postponed since the year 1940. That was when American missionaries had the desire to implement a university of theology in the mission of Dôndi. Despite the constant obstacles that have been raised, there is 'a little cloud [...] rising' (1 Ki 14:44). In other words, there is hope because efforts have been made so that in a short period it may come to fruition. It is also necessary to look for and use modern technologies to adapt theological teaching to the new realities that the current context presents to us, in ways that are not seen as obstacles in the fulfilment of what is the mission of the church today.

Conclusion

Providing that education and theological formation is one of the essential tasks of the church, as the church is missionary in essence, its responsibility is to announce the gospel of salvation to all humanity. The church in its evangelising mission, that is, in fulfilling the Great Commission, seeks to make disciples, which is only possible through teaching. There have been various difficulties encountered in fulfilling the Great Commission, both by the missionaries and by the natives after the conversion, because of the contexts that the country went through. It is a truth that theological education and training in Angola had to face several challenges of a cultural, social, political and economic nature, and that men have always been the most privileged to the detriment of women. However, as the gospel breaks through barriers, Matthew 28:18–20 reminds us of the inclusive factor in fulfilling the Great Commission. Progress has been made by the church in this arduous teaching task. The same has happened in terms of the number of schools that have been built mostly on the increase of trained people both in general and theologically. That is why today the Evangelical Congregational Church has pastors serving God in all the provinces of Angola. It is also true that effort still needs to be made to ensure that there are more women who are vocationally and theologically trained so that they can continue to serve God. Finally, the church must adapt to the use of new information technologies, so that it does not come to be limited in what is, and has been, its evangelising mission through the teaching-learning process.

Chapter 13

Church and community transformation and the implications for theological education in Africa: An NGO perspective

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Abstract

Theological education in Africa is at a crossroads. Many church and theological leaders indicate that theological education and training in Africa have to change to become more relevant to the needs of communities. Tearfund is a Christian relief and development organisation that developed various approaches to help churches meet the needs in their communities, resulting in a transformation in their communities. Since 2003, Tearfund has been working with theological institutions in Africa to integrate church and

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community transformation (CCT) perspectives into their curricula. This chapter explores CCT as a theological and developmental approach in Africa based on an understanding of integral mission and the contextual needs in Africa. The chapter also provides examples of how this approach is already being used in theological education and reflects on the implications of theological education in Africa, in general, and South Africa, in particular. The author recommends that theological institutions should consider integrating CCT principles into their curriculum, as well as providing practical CCT training.

Introduction

Theological education in Africa is at a crossroads, where many church and theological leaders indicate that theological education and training in Africa have to change to become more relevant to the needs of communities. There is a feeling that pastors are not properly equipped to engage their congregations in transforming their communities holistically. Church leaders in Africa, therefore, call for theological education and training to be more contextual and the curriculum of theological institutions to be more relevant to address the needs of communities in Africa. Dr Antoine Rutayisere argues in his doctoral dissertation that theological institutions need to equip pastors who are 'able to exegete the community and plan for its transformation whilst at the same time equipping the church membership to be agents of change' (Rutayisire 2015:202).[41]

Similar to Rutayisire's argument, Tearfund, a Christian relief and development organisation (Tearfund n.d.f), has been intentionally working since 2003 with theological institutions and networks of theological institutions. The aim of this engagement was to equip pastors in Africa to transform their communities by integrating integral mission into the curriculum of theological institutions in Africa. This approach is an outflow of Tearfund understanding of the gospel as good news to the poor, combining caring for their physical and spiritual needs (Tearfund n.d.a). In order to achieve this vision, Tearfund has been collaborating with churches. Tearfund believes that the local church, as the Body of Christ in a community, is God's instrument of change in communities. The church is called to go out into communities, restore brokenness, and engage with the needs of individuals and communities whether it is physical, spiritual, emotional, economic, environmental and/or social (Tearfund n.d.b). Tearfund is, therefore, strongly committed to support churches at local and national levels to see mission as integral or holistic and to carry out its calling to serve those living in poverty.

41. I draw much from Rutayisire's (2015) dissertation that explores a leadership development model to equip pastors of the Anglican Church of Rwanda to missionally engage their context.

This contribution reviews how an understanding of and approach to integral mission might impact theological education in Africa, in general, and South Africa, in particular.

The African context

Rutayisire (2015:ii) summarised the context of the church in Africa when he reflects on 'the African dilemma of fast growing churches in broken nations', as being often blamed 'on wrong political choices and flawed missional practices in the churches'. The growth of Christianity in Africa had been one of the major trends in global Christianity in the 20th century. The number of Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa grew from 134 235 000 or 47.5% of the population in 1970 to 564 536 000 or 58.7% of the population in 2015 (Johnson et al. 2017). However, the numerical growth of Christianity in Africa has not resulted in shaping the life of African societies, as is clear from the ongoing socio-economic poverty on the continent. I agree with Jesse Mugambi (1995:151) that if the church's engagement in Africa does not help Africans in the social reconstruction of their environment, these initiatives and processes are like salt that has lost its taste (Mt 5:13–16).

Although there are improvements, all indicators show persistent poverty and social challenges in Africa[42]:

- Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest percentage of people living in multidimensional poverty[43] according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative 2017). A total of 521 million, that is, on average, 60% of people living in Sub-Saharan Africa are multidimensionally poor.
- Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest human development[44] of all the regions of the world according to the Human Development report 2016 (Jahan 2016a). Thirty-five countries of the 42 countries with low human development and 19 out of the 20 countries with the lowest human development are in Africa.
- The average Gross National Income per capita of $3383 in Africa is the lowest of global regions (United Nations Development Programme 2017).

42. The COVID-19 pandemic will increase poverty levels in Africa. Dabalen and Paci (2020) indicated that 50 million people in Africa will fall into poverty, whilst according to Kharas (2020), 6 out of the 10 countries with the largest increase in extreme poverty as a result of the pandemic in Africa.

43. Multidimensional poverty combines several factors that constitute poor people's experience of deprivation (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative 2017), which include poor health, lack of education, inadequate living standard, lack of income, disempowerment, poor quality of work and threat from violence.

44. Human development is improving the lives of people through building human capabilities and enabling their active participation in the processes that shape their lives (Jahan 2016a:2). The composite Human Development Index (HDI) integrates life expectancy at birth, years of schooling and gross national income per capita (Jahan 2016a:3]).

- In 2017, 10 of the 15 most fragile states in the world were African countries (Messner 2017) with high levels of insecurity, conflict, collapse of state services and extreme poverty.
- Corruption remains a serious problem, with Sub-Saharan Africa being the region with the highest perceptions of corruption (Transparency International 2016). Illicit financial flows (money illegally earned, transferred or used) weaken governance, and reduce consumption, investment and social spending (Jahan 2016b).

There is, therefore, a call from within Africa for a focus on holistic mission and reconstruction that goes beyond the human and social development theories and agenda. Oduyoye (2017:466) said that 'Christianity has not made much impact on the economy in Africa, except the negative factor of its association with those who came to exploit, steal and to kill'. According to Esther Mombo (2017:378), the task of the church is to proclaim the gospel of Christ, and by doing so generate a fellowship or community that provides the blueprint for the society of God. The fellowship continues with the work of God through acts of justice and compassion whereby people are liberated here and now from the immediate physical hardships or injustices pressing upon them. Mugambi (1995) emphasised that:

> The enhancement of the quality of life should be the priority of all evangelization, bearing in mind that such enhancement is measurable in quantitative terms such as adequate food, adequate shelter, satisfactory health, and so on. (p. 151)

This also has implications for theological education. Phiri and Werner (2013:xxviii), therefore, argued that theological education in its varied forms is absolutely vital for the social and political witness of Christians and churches in Africa.

Any theological and developmental approach in Africa should, therefore, deal with the socio-economic and political exploitation of the continent in the past and present. A transformational but contextual theology and theological education are needed that can transform communities in Africa. I would argue that integral mission provides the theological perspective that is foundational to community transformation.

Integral mission as foundational for church and community transformation in Africa

Mission as integral

The *Cape Town Commitment* (The Lausanne Movement 2011) mentioned that:

> Integral mission means discerning, proclaiming, and living out, the biblical truth that the gospel is God's good news, through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for individual persons, *and* for society, *and* for creation. All three are broken and suffering because of sin; all three are included in the redeeming love and mission of God; all three must be part of the comprehensive mission of God's people. (p. 12)

In the Cape Town, Commitment leaders commit themselves to the integral and dynamic inclusion of all dimensions of mission to which God calls his Church (The Lausanne Movement 2011:18). These dimensions include evangelism, bearing witness to the truth, discipling, peace-making, social engagement, ethical transformation, caring for creation, overcoming evil powers, casting out demonic spirits, healing the sick, suffering and enduring under persecution (The Lausanne Movement 2011:10).

Mission is more than just verbal evangelism plus social action (sometimes this is called *diakonia*[45]). Mission is participation in God's mission to redeem and restore the world, seeking the kingdom and its justice in all spheres of life. Christians are called to show the love of God and the good news that Jesus promised through every aspect of our lives. This can also be called 'whole-life transformation'. However, this transformation should be facilitated through the church as God's instrument for integral mission.

Centrality of the church – A missional ecclesiology

Whilst God is working through government, civil society and business, only the church can bring about restored relationships in full, as only the church as restored community of believers can bring the love and knowledge of Christ and influence government, business and civil society more intentionally. The local churches as the local manifestation of the body of Christ and inheritor of his mission continue with the *missio Dei* as they care for the whole person and whole community (ed. Fileta 2017). The Cape Town Commitment therefore calls the church the most vivid present expression of the kingdom of God and community of the reconciled who no longer live for themselves, but for their Saviour who loved them and gave himself for them (The Lausanne Movement 2011:27). Therefore, the primary means through which God fulfils his mission is through the local church. It is essential that local churches understand and participate in God's integral mission. In this way the church embodies whole-life transformation within the world, bearing witness to the kingdom.

The primary means, therefore, through which God fulfils his mission is through the local church. It is essential that local churches understand and participate in God's integral mission. In this way, the church embodies whole-life transformation within the world, bearing witness to the kingdom.

The true local church is, therefore, as a sign of the kingdom of God, a transforming society with a transformational agenda of being God's people in the world. This understanding of church is also reflected in the understanding of the Dutch Reformed Church where congregations or local churches are

45. Diakonia can also describe social action or social engagement. See for example Dowsett et al. (eds. 2015) but I do not want to go too deep into a discussion between the differences between diakonia and integral mission. Jurgensen (2015) concludes that evangelism and diakonia or social engagement should be kept together as integral components of the church's mission task.

described as missional from within their very being and nature (General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church 2013:10). A missional congregation is 'a congregation that is focused on the world and that is formed through its participation in God's mission' (General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church 2013:10). A missional congregation is called to repair relationships in a broken world and to live according to the plan God has for his creation. Integral mission should, therefore, be at the heart of a missional church or missional, which has implications for theological education.

Integral mission should, therefore, be at the heart of a missional church. This, then, has implications for theological education.

Community transformation and integral mission as transformational theology

A holistic approach to community transformation that seeks to integrate the various dimensions of development (social, economic, political, environmental as well as spiritual) and improve the wellbeing of people and communities is at the heart of Tearfund's approach to integral mission (Tearfund 2012):

> The mission of the church is one of reconciliation to restore relationships. The outworking of this we call integral mission, believing the church's approach must be holistic, just as poverty is holistic, dealing with the whole needs of the whole person: physical, spiritual, emotional, economic, environmental and social, without dividing these into separate areas. This was the work of Jesus Christ and it is the work of the church. As integral mission is outworked, we see relationships restored. We call these results transformation, recognising that this process will not reach its final end result until Jesus Christ returns and ushers in the life of wholeness once more. A restoration of these relationships leads us to a position of human flourishing. (p. 3)

Tearfund is not the only organisation or group that emphasises the transformational nature of church and mission. Transformation has become a focus in mission, especially since the Wheaton Statement of 1983 (Padilla 2003). Since then, transformation has become a significant way of speaking not only about development but also about mission. Missiologists, such as Chris Sugden and Vinay Samuel, played a significant role in the thinking around transformation as mission focus and paradigm (Samuel & Sugden 2009). Transformation indicates changes that have to take place in many societies if poor people are to enjoy their rightful heritage in creation (Samuel & Sugden 2009). Vinay Samuel went further when he says that (Sugden 2000):

> [*T*]ransformation is to enable God's vision of society to be actualised in all relationships, social, economic and spiritual, so that God's will be reflected in human society and his love be experienced by all communities, especially the poor. (p. vii)

Scholars, such as Pillay (2016), assert that the New Testament Church was a grassroots movement with a vision for the transformation of society, whilst Hendriks (2004) describes theology as being about 'transformative action'. A missional praxis, according to Hendriks (2004:33), focuses first on local and particular issues with the purpose of doing something about the reality and problems that confront the faith community and society. This transformational nature of mission is echoed by The *Cape Town Commitment* when it declares that the gospel is God's life-transforming power at work in the world (The Lausanne Movement 2011:18). The terms 'transformational development' and 'transformational theology' have increasingly been used to describe the practical engagement of Christians with global poverty and injustice in an authentically evangelical way, and is seen by some as the same approach (Plant & Weiss 2015). In other words, transformational development, transformational theology and integral mission are the same.[46]

Practical approaches to facilitate community transformation through churches

Tearfund developed various approaches for churches to facilitate the transformation of their communities. These approaches, called 'church and community transformation' approaches (Tearfund 2017), integrate integral mission into the theology and life of churches, and envision churches to work in or with communities to see the restoration of relationships with self, others, the environment and God. Based on a theology of restoring broken relationships (Ling, Swithinbank & Boyd 2019), poverty is reduced holistically and sustainably.

Envision for integral mission

This approach helps to develop or strengthen a local church or denomination's vision for integral mission (Tearfund n.d.d). Envisioning might take the form of running workshops on integral mission (IM), awareness-raising research, organising learning visits, supporting champions and hosting national conversations on IM. Envisioning is performed in a way that churches and denominations are able to understand for themselves more deeply God's call to transform communities.

Church mobilisation

The local church identifies and responds to needs around it, showing God's love in practical ways (Tearfund n.d.e). The church responds to the need either through service provision (such as shelter in a disaster, medical care, care for

46. Sugden (2020) mentioned a new identity in Christ, the kingdom of God, good news to the poor people, and stewardship of creation as four pillars of such a transformational theology.

orphans or food distribution), empowerment (such as savings groups and preventative training for child protection or domestic violence), or through addressing taboo issues (such as peace building and dealing with sexual and gender-based violence). These activities benefit whole communities, but the communities do not get involved in leading the initiatives or mobilising their resources.

Church involvement

Christian organisations involve local churches in their work and activities; however, the organisation leads the activity, identifies the need and jointly interacts with the participants. The church is a partner, playing a role, but doesn't own or lead the process. This is working through the church, not with it.

Church and community mobilisation

Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM) enables communities to address their needs through the local church as a facilitating body (Tearfund n.d.e). The church and community mobilisation process (CCMP) is the process through which the local church works with its local community to identify and respond to their needs together (ed. Gaw 2017).[47] The local church acts as a facilitator in mobilising the community, working with the community, not for the community. There are many different CCM approaches, including Umoja, self-help groups and others. Through Bible Studies and interactive activities, CCM enthuses and empowers the church to go into the community and help people to identify and address their needs with their own resources. This process is in line with the theology of reconstruction as explained by Mugambi (1995:225): 'Parishes can become a viable reference points [*sic*] for social transformation, with the parish priest as the facilitator of social transformation'.

Issue-focused approaches

These are CCT tools and approaches that may be used in more than one of the above contexts (Tearfund n.d.h). They include churches and disasters (Tearfund n.d.c), peace building, environmental and economic sustainable development, churches and advocacy, churches and technical issues, such as livelihoods, etcetera. These approaches are used where a particular issue needs to be addressed or supported and it is thought unlikely that this will be identified and

47. This booklet is available from https://learn.tearfund.org/~/media/files/tilz/churches/ccm/2017-tearfund-ccm-in-africa-en.pdf?la=en.

worked on by the church or community themselves without external facilitators facilitating engagement in the issue.

The following principles are included in the various CCT approaches:

1. driven by biblical theology and dependence on God
2. intentionally seeks the restoration of all four broken relationships
3. mobilises the Church to become an agent of holistic change
4. employs facilitated Bible reflection to bring about mindset and behaviour change
5. relies on inclusive, participatory processes to bring about ownership and sustainable change
6. mobilises local resources, releases potential and increases agency.

Tearfund's experience in CCT in Africa confirms Emmanuel Chemengich's (2015:217) view that African churches have an opportunity to impact society through leadership that is creative, biblical, contextually relevant and thoroughly informed by a transforming vision of God's purpose in and for the world. Such an approach should therefore be integrated into theological education in Africa.

Church and community transformation as a theological and developmental approach in Africa

An understanding of integral mission and transformational theology with the church as a catalyst and facilitator for transformational development fits into the direction of Africa as a continent, in general, and the church in Africa, in particular.

Community transformation as a key theme in Agenda 2063

'Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want' (African Union Commission 2015) that had been approved by the African Union in 2013 is a framework for African countries to learn the lessons of the past; build on the progress being made and strategically utilise opportunities in the short, medium and long term to ensure positive socio-economic transformation by 2063. This will enable Africa to establish flourishing, inclusive and prosperous communities. The aspirations for African development are to be people driven, relying on the potential of Africa's people. Leaders of African faith-based organisations supported Agenda 2063 in November 2014 (ed. All Africa Conference of Churches 2014) as a blueprint for Africa's development and transformation. They acknowledged the critical role faith-based organisations have to play in achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The leaders committed themselves

to mobilise their constituents to intentionally work towards realising what is set out in Agenda 2063. In essence, it means that churches on the continent have to play a significant role in transforming their communities to achieve the aspirations of Agenda 2063.

Transformation as a key theme in African Christian networks

Most Christian networks in Africa have an emphasis on transforming communities:

1. **One of the principles of All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)** is discernment for positive transformation (AACC, n.d.). Churches in Africa should read the signs of the times, prevent conflicts and facilitate social transformation.
2. **The Organisation of African Instituted Churches (OAIC)** enables African Independent and Instituted Churches (AICs) to minister effectively to the needs of their members and their communities (OAIC, n.d.). The vision of the OAIC is for people in Africa to be transformed by the good news of Jesus Christ, and as a result live an abundant life in community. The vision of the OAIC is a society in Africa in which all can enjoy wellbeing.
3. **The Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA)** states that its members should join in common concern to live and proclaim the good news of Jesus amongst all nations and peoples, seeking holiness, justice and transformation of individuals, families, communities and culture (AEA n.d.). The AEA's vision is of evangelicals in Africa united in biblical theology and transformative mission for the expansion of God's kingdom. The AEA, therefore, mobilises and empowers the church in Africa for the holistic transformation of communities and societies.

Theology

Church and community transformation is reflected in the African theology of reconstruction and Pentecostal theology:

1. The theology of reconstruction has its foundation in the reconstruction in the post-exilic period when those who returned from Babylon had to reconstruct what was destroyed in Judea. Mugambi (1995) argued that this is similar to Africa in the postcolonial period. He contends that the 21st century should be a century of reconstruction in Africa with churches as the catalysts of spiritual, social and economic reconstruction.
2. Reconstruction theology challenges theologians, churches and communities in Africa to work towards building new communities characterised by justice. In this way, the church would make a critical contribution to the development of the continent (Chitando 2009:39). Alongside black and

liberation theology, the theology of reconstruction must equip churches to benefit the poor and guide the church in Africa to defeat poverty (Chitando 2009:137).

3. Reconstruction theology could be similarly understood as transformational theology that aims at the transformation that communities facilitate through the integral mission of the local church. Rutayisire (2015:201) argued that the renewal in the church and transformation in the community should be the aim of the missional engagement of the church.
4. Church and community transformation has developed a strong focus in Pentecostal theology. Pentecostal church leaders have a holistic focus on the whole person and facilitate change socially and economically, as well as spiritually. They instil a belief that it is possible to change a person's and community's socio-economic situation. This transformation is facilitated through personal transformation and the empowerment of the individual, a shift in values, and a radical reconstruction of the social and economic relationships in families and communities. Pentecostal churches are seen as exceptionally effective in facilitating sustained social and economic transformation (Freeman 2015:117).

Implications for theological education in Africa

A theological focus on community transformation, transformational theology and integral mission at the heart of a missional ecclesiology has implications for theological education in Africa. As Rutayisire (2015:155) argues, '[c]lassical theology has failed to equip pastors with skills to deal with local realities and must be replaced with contextual applied theology'. This has implications for theological education.

An African contextual theological framework for theological education

Stamoolis (n.d.) emphasises the importance of a theological framework based on the questions on God that people in a specific context try to answer. In the Western World, the question commonly asked is '[h]ow can I be made right with God?' The theological focus, and therefore, of theological education is thus based on the means of justification through faith. The focus is on the individual's relationship with God and how that relationship is lived out. Church ministers are equipped to help people understand and grow in a right relationship with God.

However, in his book *Africa's social and religious quest: A comprehensive survey and analysis of the African situation,* Ijatuyi-Morphé (2011) argued that the main question for Africans is how they can experience wholeness (Ijatuyi-Morphé 2011:4) and live in harmony with the living, ancestors, nature, spirits

and the Supreme Being (Ijatuyi-Morphé 2011:238). People in Africa try to balance their understanding of and interaction with natural and spiritual forces in a way that enhances human life and brings harmony between the living, ancestors, nature, spirits, and the Supreme Being. African customs and ceremonies are used to achieve and maintain the order, harmony and rhythm of the cosmos itself (Ijatuyi-Morphé 2011:601).

This, then, provides a framework for daily social, political, cultural and economic living, and relationships. Ijatuyi-Morphé (2011:605) concluded that the 'African socio-religious landscape reveals a dominant interest in achieving the good life' or more specifically the 'good things in life during one's *human* existence'. For Christianity to flourish in Africa, the issues that define Africa's quest for life, including freedom from spiritual forces, should be addressed. This focus goes beyond the traditional Western theological framework of living in the right relationship with God.

An African theological framework based on harmonious living must, therefore, be the foundation of theological education in Africa in order to bring holistic transformation to communities in Africa.

Outward and community focus of theological education

De Gruchy (2010:42) calls for theological education in Africa to have an outward orientation. The priority for theological education should be to develop leaders that could equip congregations to act as agents of transformation in local communities (Hendriks 2004:12). A shift in focus is needed from only the church and its leadership to the community and the kingdom of God (Rutayisire 2015:204). Theological education approaches should be more focused on context-oriented outcomes through a process where the academic is in constant conversation with the community and the faculty is in partnership with practitioners in the local church (Rutayisire 2015:101). A partnership between the church, the theological school and the community in leadership development is therefore essential.

Focus on the contextual content in theological education

A focus on the community and its transformation has a direct consequence on the content in the curriculum of theological institutions. The content will have to be aligned to the mission of the church in the specific communities served by the theological students. The courses in the curriculum and the methods of delivery would need to address the specific context of the communities (Rutayisire 2015:96). The curriculum should develop leaders and empower

local congregations with a vision and methodology to address their contextual issues, including HIV and poverty (Hendriks 2004:12).

Houston (2010:717) emphasised that in Africa, there is a specific challenge to train pastors who will adequately prepare them to work in the context of African realities and provide them with the needed competencies to be effective ministers in communities often characterised by broken relationships and poverty. Issues, such as HIV, climate change, gender-based violence, food security and others, are the present issues of life and death in communities. Theological education falls short of its goal if it does not prepare students for providing leadership to the people of God in their response to the *missio Dei* in this context (De Gruchy 2010:44). Amos (2010) mentioned the challenge of 'inadequately or inappropriately trained priests' in the Anglican Communion where priests struggle to relate theological and biblical understandings to their practical contexts and ministry.

Rutayisire (2015:152) summarised this focus on the contextual content of theological education when he says that the curriculum of theological institutions should equip pastors to exegete the Bible and their communities and plan interventions that will lead to the transformation of these communities.

Holistic theological education

The challenge for African theological institutions is, therefore, to prepare church leaders so that these leaders can pursue a holistic, integrated approach to mission that will transform the totality of people in community with others (Quarshie 2015:266). Or as Mugambi (1995:225) argued that the social transformation facilitated by parish priests will require 'new approaches to ministerial formation for future generations of priests and other church personnel'. The method of theological education might also have to change as Africans, similar to most of the non-Western world, tend towards holism and networked thinking instead of the tight specificity of information gathering in Western academia (Shaw 2014:238).

Greater focus should be placed on the character formation of theological students, which can result in social transformation (Rutayisire 2015:101). The evaluation of success will be less about the knowledge and skills exhibited by the learners in the learning environment but will be more about the transformation that has happened in them and the target community as a result of learning. Community transformation will drive everything in the learning event, from the choice of the learners, the content of the courses to be taught, the delivery system and even the final evaluation of success. Theological students will, therefore, engage in theological education with a purpose that is beyond themselves and even beyond their churches. They are trained to be kingdom builders and community transformation agents.

Integrating church and community transformation approaches into theological education

I argued, in this chapter, that the context in Africa requires a transformational theology based on integral mission that can transform communities. This focus should also be included in theological education. Tearfund's experience shows that CCT approaches, and especially CCMP, are practical responses of local churches in engaging their communities in issues, such as HIV and AIDS, climate change, gender-based violence and food security. Tearfund works with various theological institutions and networks of theological institutions to integrate integral mission and the various CCT approaches into the curriculum of theological institutions. In 2020, Tearfund organised a number of webinars in collaboration with networks of theological institutions in Africa to explore transformational theology and theological education in Africa (Conradie 2021). There are various examples of theological curricula that integrate CCT approaches in the process:

1. Tearfund had been working with the Council for Theological Institutions in Francophone Africa to develop an integral mission curriculum that theological institutions can use to train pastors in Francophone Africa. The intention is that this curriculum will become compulsory at various levels of theological education in Francophone Africa. The curriculum includes eight main modules, namely:
   - definition and biblical and theological basis of integral or 'holistic' development
   - partnerships with the local church
   - project management, work and entrepreneurship
   - environment and sustainable development
   - law, justice, peace, advocacy and integral development
   - leadership and integral development
   - community health and integral development
   - family and integral development.
2. CCMP Training:
   - ECWA Theological Seminary Bayara in Bauchi State teaches CCMP as a 4-year course called Church and Community Mobilisation Studies. Ninety-two students are being trained at the school, where students work with a church in implementing the CCMP process. They receive a professional degree in Church and Community Mobilisation Studies at the end. The course is taught in four modules that include Church and Community Mobilisation, Church and Community Description, Information Gathering and Analysis and Decision Making. Seventeen more theological institutions in Nigeria are interested in providing CCMP facilitator training.

- Msalato Theological College in Tanzania developed a CCMP Church and Community Mobilisation study curriculum that is recognised by the Christian Council of Tanzania, which is a separate course for experienced church pastors. They receive the training after they finished their theological studies and are placed in congregations or parishes.
- Other theological institutions in Africa that provide some form of CCMP training include Emmanuel Seminary in Angola, WINGS of Eagles in Malawi and Baptist Theological Seminary in Liberia.
- The Eagles Relief and Development Programme (Eagles 2020a) in Malawi developed an online certified basic course to equip church leaders to mobilise their churches to work with their communities to achieve holistic change and facilitate transformation in these communities. A follow-up course (Eagles 2020b) focuses on specific areas of church-based community engagement such as caring for the environment and working with vulnerable groups of people in the community.

3. Tearfund is working with theological institutions in Zimbabwe to integrate integral mission into the curriculum of theological institutions in the country. This process is not yet finalised; however, a draft proposal (Musasiwa 2020) has been recommended:
   - A compulsory integral mission course at theological institutions that offers critical theological reflection on the purpose and nature of the church in society accompanied by practical action focused on integral mission (Musasiwa 2020:4).
   - The course should highlight the transformative power of the local church as salt and light in helping the community to understand their potential.
   - The course should recover the concept of holistic mission involving the restoration of broken relationships with God, self, others and the environment. Its particular focus is on the CCT process.
   - The course should set the basis for a wide variety of fields to address the whole of human need – spiritual, physical, material, intellectual, emotional and social.
   - The course would equip students to design ministry programmes that address practical issues in the community by conceptualising a problem in context, designing a plan to address the problem and identify possible deterrents to the successful implementation of the plan.
4. The Transformational Compassion Network developed a Certificate in Theology and Sustainable Community Development taught through the Kenya Highlands University. The course was designed to address the problem of profound human need and interrelationship between the physical, spiritual, social and mental. Church leaders are challenged to engage in healing relationships with others and to better steward the creation, practice biblical ethics in doing business and economic empowerment, adopt better ways of farming, care for the vulnerable, be the voice of the voiceless, tackle

emerging issues in the society whilst engaging in discipleship, evangelism and mission. The training places special emphasis on the transformation of the mind and presents the biblical worldview as the key to social and cultural transformation. The transformation of the students and the impact on communities are quite remarkable (Conradie 2018). By the time of writing this chapter, 215 students would have completed the course, with 60 more involved in training. Other theological institutions in Africa and even in the Pacific are interested in teaching the course at their institutions.

Conclusion

During a 2019 consultation on grassroots theological education in Africa, one of the speakers remarked that we have overtrained but simultaneously inappropriately trained church leaders in Africa. I had to confess that I am one of them. My 14 years of theological education at the University of Pretoria (BA Theology, MDiv, DD) did not prepare me for ministry in the inner city of Pretoria, the informal settlements of Alexandra township or the rural areas of Namibia. It was only after I took a Certificate in People Centred Community Development at the University of South Africa that I gained the needed understanding of and skills to serve in contexts that are similar to what the majority of people in South Africa live. But why did I need to do a secular certificate to obtain the necessary understanding and skills? That kind of training should have been part of my theological training. For me, this remains the challenge – how can we equip church leaders theologically and practically to minister in the spiritual and socio-economic context of South Africa? I know great strides have been made to change theological education in South Africa since the days of my theological education.

To conclude, from the experience that Tearfund gained in its work with churches and specifically the CCT approaches, I would suggest that:

1. Theological education in (South) Africa should equip future church leaders theologically and practically to exegete both the Bible and communities, as well as plan for the transformation of communities, whilst equip church membership to be agents of change. If not, theological education in South Africa will become increasingly irrelevant.
2. Theological education in (South) Africa should have a kingdom of God and outward focus and not only be focused on the congregations where the theological students might serve.
3. Theological education in (South) Africa should be contextual so that the theological students are properly prepared for the context of the communities where they will serve. As all communities experience various forms of poverty, the students would have to be equipped to serve churches in that context, even if the churches where they might become ministers are financially better off.

4. The theological framework of theological education in (South) Africa should be transformational theology that includes holistic theology and the theology of reconstruction, as proposed by Mugambi and others.
5. Theological institutions should consider how they could integrate the CCT principles into the curriculum of their institutions.
6. All theological institutions in South Africa should consider providing some form of training in CCT. Gwaivangmin (2015) recommended that the Church of Christ in Nations in Nigeria should consider including CCMP in the curriculum of all theological colleges and seminaries as a strategy because of CCMP's holistic approach. I would suggest the same for theological institutions in South Africa.
7. Spiritual formation, especially discipleship as living a lifestyle of transformational theology, should be at the heart of theological education.[48]

48. *Live Justly – Global Edition*, edited by Fileta (ed. 2017), is a very good discipleship resource that can help especially young adults live a lifestyle of justice. This book is available from the Tearfund Learn website at https://learn.tearfund.org/en/themes/advocacy/global_mobilisation_advocacy/live_justly_-_global_edition/.

Chapter 14

Transformational impact of facilitation over lecturing

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Abstract

The Evangelical Church Winning All was birth out of the then Sudan Interior Missions now known as Serving in Missions. The focus of the denomination and its theological schools, colleges and seminaries has been missions and evangelism. During its early days, there was a vibrant pursuit of missions, which led to the establishment of its first theological Seminary in 1941 at Igbaja Kwara state and the Evangelical Missionary Society in 1948. The teaching method then was student-centred and those who were taught at that time lived out the life that was expected of them as Christian leaders. Courses were taught out of love, care and a deliberate intention for the students to make sense of their learning. However, along the line, the lecturing pattern of the university system infiltrated the theological seminary (because many seminary teachers went to secular universities to obtain their second and

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third degrees instead of from a seminary and theological college). On their return, they could not help but transfer to seminary students what was done to them and the value of facilitation was watered down. The lecturing system now compels students to cram the lecturer's notes word for word for examination. Therefore, most seminary students no longer read for understanding but for getting good grades, even if after the 'good grade' the students do not remember anything or imbibe a transformed lifestyle that the subject intends. The way forward is a return back to the facilitation of effective learning in theological institutions. Seminary teachers must know that their work is a calling; they must be willing to embrace facilitation of learning (which comes with a great commitment) over lecturing (which is easy and not demanding) and be willing to implement it.

Introduction

Theological education in Africa did not spring from an African philosophical point of view. It was rather imported and was embraced hook, line and sinker without cultural and geographical substantiation to fit into our context. Wilhelm (2003:155) further emphasised that in Africa, the academic approach to theological education cannot be afforded by all who desire it, and the expected impact it should have on the community is not felt either. Unfortunately, the study is not carried out with the intention of addressing the core needs of Africans. Thus, African theology for many years reflected a Western perspective and approach to theologising. From a South African perspective, Wilhelm (2003:121) opined that the African educational system spans throughout the lifetime of the people with several dimensions. These dimensions are a reflection of the African heritage, which projects how Africans are engaged in effective learning which is their pedagogy.

He (Wilhelm) was, indeed, right because the theology that does not address the post-apathy hatred in South Africa, the continual war in Congo, the corruption in Nigeria, the self-imposed 'democratic' presidency in Uganda, to mention but a few, is not a useful theology at all.

The current debate on the need for revisiting the methods and/or curriculum of African theological education calls for a deeper need to ask in the first place, what was the purpose of theological education when it started. It does matter that we establish if theological education was meant to exclusively train the 'clergy' for ministry work or to equip the whole church both gathered and scattered or to educate a selected population of scholars who will later become Christian religious philosophers in the order of the Jewish Pharisees – 'experts of the law'. Patton, in addressing the question of what theology is, postulated the following: in a simple term, the word theology means the study of 'God'. It is a derivative of two words in Greek, *theos* which means God and *logos*, which means 'word'. Therefore,

in common sense, the word theology refers to 'the study about God'. However, on a general note, the word can be viewed as 'philosophy' or 'worldview'. This perspective is commonly used in secular settings. On many occasions though, it is used specifically referring only to God and that is called 'theology proper'. However, considering this in general terms, theology is a belief system that has to do with the intellectual and emotional commitments about God and man (Patton 2005:n.p.).

Many Christians who do not have this understanding and who also have no interest to ever study theology behind the four walls of an academic institution have written themselves off of ever knowing God. However, knowing God is the prerogative of every human being and every human being is a theologian in his or her own right.

With this in mind, it is evident that Jesus Christ imbibed an educational philosophy that he lived and taught during his lifetime. He anchored it on the principle of discipleship also known as *paideia.* Discipleship was the superior schooling system that Jesus exemplified, and at his departure when all the disciples were gathered on the Mount of Olives, he gave a timeless speech with an instruction to remind his followers that 'making disciples' is a non-negotiable principle that they must carry out if the Christian message and lifestyle are to reach the ends of the earth. Christianity is thus not a religion but a transformational relationship based on Christ's revelation in the life of people who believe in the risen Saviour (Wilhelm 2003).

We can see that the three and a half years of ministry engagement between Jesus and his disciples was not a formal schooling programme. Christian education (discipleship), as exemplified and instructed by Jesus, is achieved mostly through a non-formal learning system (Wilhelm 2003). However, a formal, well-structured, certificated learning system was not primarily the approach for Christian education. It can, to some degree, be said that a formal approach to learning is counter-Christian education. The major reason being that every student in a formal setting of education is motivated by the expected certificate, whilst the Christian calling is motivated by a transformed character that occurs in the believer's life.

Furthermore, a 'certificated' course has a curriculum that must be followed with some being prerequisites to others. Usually, there is that sense of accomplishment of a task when a curriculum is outlined for a learner. The learning process is structured in such a way so as to make the learners feel that they are moving from a lower level of knowledge to a higher one, and thus, returning to a piece of previous knowledge is most of the times considered a demotion or repetition. However, on the contrary, a non-curricular theological education enculturates a back-and-forth interaction seeking to properly ground the individual in the learning process. Doing

things over and over again excites the learners rather than discourages them in the case of formal education.

Brief history of facilitation in theological education

Education in a broader sense is not limited to formal learning within a recognised institution. Marbaniang (2018:2) observed that during the Apostolic Era, there were no historical records of existing formal theological education like the schools and seminaries which we have today. However, that does not also mean that they never existed in other forms, such as non-formal and informal. For example, we read in the Bible about the schools of Hillel and Shammai in Acts 22:3.

The earlier institutions that were saddled with the training of Christian leaders had several designations, such as Bible school, ministerial seminaries, theological schools and divinity schools (Ward 2016:10). When these formal schools began to spring up, their primary purpose was to equip ministers for effective service to their local churches.

Education as a means of transmitting effective learning can be categorised into three types of learning, namely:

- ***Formal Learning***: This type of learning is characterised by features such as having an accredited certification at the end of the studies, siting a location for the institution with good infrastructures suitable for academic learning and having a time frame for deferent degree programmes that is well structured and goal oriented (Marbaniang 2018:1).
- ***Non-formal Learning***: This type of learning does not require a set up like an institution, and the certification is not accredited. However, the content is in a manual that has a systematic layout with a time frame for completing the course of studies (Marbaniang 2018:1).
- ***Informal Learning***: This learning process completely does not have a certification in view, it happens as life passes by at home, in school, at work, and everywhere the teachers and learners meet. The outcome leads to life transformation, even though it has no structure or curriculum (Marbaniang 2018:1). Jesus used many of these informal methods and a bit of the non-formal learning in discipling the 12 and the 72.

Each of these categories of learning has their merits and demerits, as observed by Wilhelm (2003:153), which are summarised in Box 1.

The analysis of Wilhelm shows that Jesus' approach in discipling the 12 and, by extension, the 72, was largely the non-formal method of learning.

These three forms of learning have been used by the church in different degrees to produce spirit-filled teachers who were effective in building the

BOX 14.1: Merits and demerits of the categories of learning.

Formal learning	Non-formal learning	Informal learning
Merits	Merits	Merits
It is well structured with curriculum that grades the students through assessment and the courses are taken in a systematic order. It has a recognised and accepted accreditation	It is designed to meet contextual need of participants. Flexible in nature and approach and the outcome is for learners to have a practical experience. Many people are able to participate because it is not expensive	- Wide access - Inexpensive - Practical
Demerits	Demerits	Demerits
It is readily available to a wide range of participants. Focused on transformation of participants at the end of interaction	Usually no societal recognition – Criticised for a lack of theory	The learning process has no structure, and so cannot be measured at the end of the process. The theory volume is very low and learning accountability is weak.
Dominant paradigm	Popular paradigm	Traditional paradigm
Emphasises knowing	Emphasises knowing–being–doing	Emphasises doing

Source: Wilhelm (2003:153).

early church. Furthermore, the gift of teaching was clearly understood to be a gift from the Holy Spirit and not what is to be acquired in the centre of learning, as rightly stated by Marbaniang (2018:4) when he said, during the Apostolic Era, a teacher is someone who is gifted by the Holy Spirit not for personal benefit but for the growth of the church as presented in Ephesians 4:11.

Moving away from the Apostolic Era, the Catechetical School of Alexandria is believed to be the first theological school with the debated founder to be either the apostle Mark or Bishop Demetrius (Marbaniang 2018:3). The institution, however, grew and became famous under the leadership of Origen (Marbaniang 2018). Between 292 and 348, Pachomios championed the formation of the community of monks, which over time moved increasingly away from their practice of denial to associate with the things of the world, relationship with each other, and commitment to fellowship with God to theological and philosophical reflections.

Teaching or facilitation during this era was Scripture based, and a few qualities of a good facilitator of learning can be seen in the following verses of Scripture: Titus 1:9 says that teachers are people who have been taught and equipped to teach others. In 2 Thessalonians 2:15, it refers to them as those people who are holding unswervingly to the truth that was committed to them by words or by letter. In the book of Colossians 2:7, Paul described teachers to be people who are rooted in the word of God. Again, the author of Hebrews says a good teacher is one that is mature and able to differentiate good

from evil. In the Gospel of Luke 6:40, the author said that teachers need to be well trained in order to be like their masters. In addition, the Apostle Paul writing to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:24 pointed out that teachers need patience, and finally, in Mathew's gospel (Mt 11:30), teachers do not ask their students to do what they cannot do (Marbaniang 2018:4).

The philosophy of learning

Two key learning philosophies set the path for theological institutions as a means of pedagogy (teaching skills) in the early days of Christianity. According to Brock and Brock (1993:2), Kelsey coded these two philosophies as 'Athens' and 'Berlin'. In his definitions, 'Athens' stands for a type of schooling for which paideia (a process of 'culturing' the soul, schooling as 'character formation') is the heart of education. Whilst 'Berlin' is a type of education that is bipolar: it stresses the interconnected importance of two quite different enterprises, which are an orderly, disciplined critical research and a professional education for ministry.

The key elements in facilitating effective learning

So far, I have discussed a step-by-step progress of how knowledge is passed from a teacher to a student beginning from the informal to the non-formal and finally to the formal. Next, I proceed to address the key elements that underpin effective learning by a facilitator, which is the central theme of this chapter, because through lecturing this is hardly achievable.

From his research that spans over three decades, Race (2014) developed seven key elements that underpin effective learning. He emphasised that during curriculum development, a good facilitator of learning must understand that learners will only come to the full knowledge of a subject when the LOs are well structured to guide their learning experience in the following areas: An intrinsic desire that pushes the learner to want to learn, an extrinsic pressure or circumstance that compels the leaner to need to learn, a continual trial of doing things over and over again by the learner until they get it right, a growing confidence by the learner through feedbacks they get from others, a conscious effort to repeat and speak out what was learned to self and others, and an opportunity to evaluate or grade another learners (Race 2014:57).

Firstly, a facilitator of learning is expected to develop his or her LOs in a manner that will provoke the student to 'want to learn' more about the topic or subject. This is when the 'wow factor' appeals to the learners. This intrinsic desire motivates the learners to persevere through the process of learning when things are tough (Race 2014:57).

Secondly, the LOs should lead the learners to foresee the benefit(s) of the knowledge they are getting when it is finally acquired. This factor reinforces

the learner's determination to face every obstacle that may hinder or challenge the learning experience (Race 2014:57).

Thirdly, the LOs should instruct relevant activities that the learners will need to perform to master the topic or subject. This factor encourages trial and error and promotes practice and or repetition, which leads to perfection (Race 2014:57).

Fourthly, a timely feedback system should be implemented through the learning process. The learners will want to know if they are on track at every point during their studies. Effective feedback is thus not given at the end of the study experience but provided at intervals during their studies to keep the student on track (Race 2014:57).

Fifthly, LOs should target helping the learners to make sense of what they are learning. Every effective learning process is expected to migrate from information heard to information used and owned. This factor is focused on the transformational impact of the topic or subject in the life of the learner (Race 2014:57).

Sixthly, the syllabus should be structured in a way that encourages and engages learners to verbalise what they have learned to their fellow learners through breakout sessions in small groups. This will reinforce their confidence and mastery of the subject. It, therefore, goes without objection that a person is good at what he or she does, but better at what he or she shares or teaches (Race 2014:57).

Finally, effective learning can happen not only from receiving information but also from assessing a piece of the given information, that is, when LOs are enshrined with self-assessment and peer-assessment tasks. This enables a high level of critical analysis in the learners. This factor promotes the quest for exploration of the topic or the subject (Race 2014:57).

How facilitation in the seminaries turned to lecturing

Christians from the beginning have used *paideia* as a philosophy of learning because it fully embraces the approach of facilitation. According to Brock and Brock (1993:6), believers in Christ living within the Hellenistic culture already have conceptualised and accepted Christianity as a form of *paideia* because it is a kind of learning approach that results in the transformation of the person. Furthermore, they affirmed that as Christianity has taken the form of *paideia* from time immemorial, it is, therefore, the accurate theological education approach that provides a person the right understanding of who God is and results in a changed life (Brock & Brock 1993:9).

The emergence of the universities introduced an entirely different approach to learning through a scholarship that was anchored on academic research.

Brock and Brock (1993:9) observed that the primary focus and purpose of the university were to carry out research and teaching the students to do the same. Its drive is to produce those who can be masters in the skill of investigating the truth on any subject of studies. With this development, the university graduates and certification gained more credence in comparison with other schools, colleges, and seminaries. Thus, several colleges and seminaries began to apply to either affiliate some of their courses with a university or, better still, upgrade their curriculum and structure to become one themselves.

This move by most seminaries to become a university did not take place without opposition and was resisted by many university scholars. One of the concrete reasons for this opposition was that theology for a long time is a belief that hangs on the revelation of God to man and possesses the power beyond natural things, so that trying to examine it as an educational discipline will be an unproductive effort (Brock & Brock 1993:11). Brock was, indeed, right because the knowledge of God, which brings character transformation in the lives of men or women, cannot be achieved by empirical analysis outside faith in Christ Jesus. Furthermore, Wilhelm (2003:108) asserted that when we look for the truth through hypothetical means instead of the reality of life, our purpose of theology will be defeated. However, the intention of Schleiermacher's study is to equate theology-as-message with theology-as-science. However, we must resist it and validate the supremacy of biblical truth in life.

Despite all these oppositions, however, seminaries eventually scaled through and many got some of their courses affiliated with universities, whilst others were themselves upgraded to theological or Christian universities through a thorough curriculum restructuring, introduction of new non-theological courses and many more standards to meet up with the accreditation requirements. This rather unfortunate victory for the seminaries became a movement that spread like wildfire across the globe, and Africa was not exempt.

It was rather unfortunate that the seminary facilitators failed to see the brighter side of how similar they were like Jesus in the eyes of the church and the world. The Bible says '[...] [w]hen Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowd were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law' (Mt 7:28–29 NIV). The teachers of the law just speak without power, they even say what they do not practice. However, Jesus is different, he had authority in his words and in his life. And this was exactly the kind of authority the seminary facilitators possessed in their words and life until they turned it over to quest for equivalence with the universities.

Another influence that impacted negatively on the seminary educational system was that theologians who earned their master's and or doctoral

degrees from the university and later returned to lecture in the seminary claimed superiority of scholarship over those who got their degrees from the seminary system. Over time, the disparity grew, which sparked a massive move by many seminary teachers to acquire their master's and or doctoral degrees from universities instead of seminaries.

The acquisition of university-based degrees would have been superb if it had built the migrated seminary professors intellectually, and also retained in them the principle of *paideia.* But that was lost in the process because no sooner than they returned the cultural *paideia,* which was based on revelation in the seminary, was it replaced by a passion for critical research. In the words of Brock and Brock (1993:26), the goal of teaching theology in university education is the same broad goal that teaching any other subject has: to cultivate human intellectual capacities without regard to their utility, simply because they are valuable in themselves. This was the tragedy that befell the seminaries because as he (Brock) captures it when he said, 'cultivating the capacities of reason will not in itself develop moral virtue'. Therefore, it did not matter if the course had a transformational impact on the life of the student, as long as they could demonstrate good scholarship in research, they were fit to be conferred with a degree in theology. This affirms what Stott (2020) said, 'probably the greatest tragedy of the church throughout its long history has been its constant tendency to conform to the prevailing culture instead of developing a Christian counter-culture'.

The negative impact of lecturing to the church

With time, the impact of drifting towards intellectual engagement instead of character formation manifests in the church. There was an increase in the number of local church pastors who could teach the Scriptures well – with great intelligence and eloquence – however unfortunately, they lacked the moral character needed to lead a congregation. For instance, cases of marital unfaithfulness, church fund misappropriation and domestic violence abound amongst pulpit ministers. Wilhelm (2003:155) referred to this as the arena where theoretical knowledge supersedes practical application. By implication, a considerable amount of time and resources is put into training leaders, but when they go to the field there is no reflection of what was learnt.

Not only did we found a negative change in the attitudes of some seminary professors but also this shift opened a back door that would alter and affect both the seminaries and the church for a long time. Until now, Christian theology was exclusively for adherents of the Christian faith. However, the surrendering of our faith that is based on revelation to the empirical test of philosophical science permitted non-Christians to study theology and even become professors in the playing field (Wilhelm 2003). And of course, they watered down the sacredness and inerrancy of the Christian Scriptures.

I was at a consultation forum in Nigeria on 14 March 2020, when Bishop Ilechukwu in his lecture narrated the following pathetic incident between him and his seminary professor many years ago:

> I have a professor in the seminary who taught us about the miracles of Jesus in the gospel of John. After the class out of excitement I met him and sought to find out more of the greatness of Christ. He willingly fixed an appointment with me and over lunch I needed him to tell me more about the power behind the miracles but to my dismay he laughed and asked if I believe in the miracles. Yes, I do, I replied to him, and he said he doesn't. Then why do you teach it, I replied, and his answer was: 'I do this to get my pay'. (C. Ilechukwu pers. comm., 14 March 2020)

You can imagine the negative turnaround that would have happened to Ilechukwu if he was not a faithful believer in Christ. The unfortunate amalgamation of spiritual formation and intellectual expression of theology as philosophy has and will continue to deteriorate the value of the Christian faith, until we deliberately engage only faithful adherents of the Christian faith to teach Christian believers in seminaries and churches.

As the seminary professors changed from *paideia* to research, the assessment method of students also changed. Instead of an assessment that has a direct relation to the spiritual formation of the students, assessments now relate to the intellectual capacity of the student. Good grades in examinations superseded good character formation. When this was realised by the students, they also compromised by aligning to the lure of getting good grades through whatever means without necessarily having an interest in knowing the subject.

Wilhelm (2003) remarked that the assessment of students in theological seminary should not be teacher-centric. Seminary institutions in the past assessed their students' performance with a ratio of 70% for practical experience and 30% for academic engagement. However, with the interference of the university philosophy of learning, 30% is now assigned for practical assessment and 70% for academic examination.

What about the other spiritual gifts?

Paul, writing to the church in Ephesus, noted the following: 'So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelist, the pastors and teachers, to quip the people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up…' (Eph 4:11–12; [NIV]). These verses point out the five ministerial offices that are saddled with the responsibility to equip the saints as they step out into the labour field of the Lord. It was only logical then that with the emergence of the theological schools, all of these offices were to be empowered to function well.

The pastor is only one of the five ministerial offices mentioned above. If the pastor is the 'clergy' and only 'clergies' are trained in the seminary, then

what happens to the rest of the offices? In this case, we have categorised the ministerial offices of the apostles, evangelists, prophets, teachers, and the saints as 'laity'. However, if the above assumption is wrong and all the five ministerial offices are the ones technically referred to as 'clergy' and the saints are 'laity', how come in the church setting only the pastors are ordained for ministry? There is no special ordination and/or regalia for the apostle, prophet, evangelist and teacher.

The denominational church is confused because they introduced a dichotomy that was not scriptural, and so it is hard to fit it into the church model that Jesus established. The Lord Jesus called us to be disciples and to remain so for as long as we live, and to engage in making more disciples of all nations. When we maintain the discipleship structure as did the disciples of the first century, what we will have today will look like this: the seminary disciples (facilitators) will be equipping the church leadership disciples (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers). Then, in turn, the church leadership disciples will be equipping the saints (frontline disciples in the labour field). These saints, who are located and involved in all fields of life (the marketplace), use their workspace and make more disciples for the kingdom.

The church gathered plays a pivotal role in this call to educate the saints by facilitation rather than by lecturing. Every local assembly needs to model a discipleship structure where the leadership who have been equipped are also in active discipleship relationship with the saints (members). Here, I do not mean a Sunday-to-Sunday engagement during the homely (which represents another form of lecturing that is centred on the presenter or pastor). Nor am I referring to a 30 min or less bi-monthly visit by the pastor to fulfil the righteousness of showing care to everyone. No! an effective discipleship engagement is one that the pastor deliberately disciples leaders who, in turn, find it as their responsibility to disciple others both within and outside their local church. This was what Paul was asking his spiritual son Timothy to do, as the pastor of the church in Ephesus, '[y]ou then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others' (2 Tm 2:1–2 NIV).

Who should study theology?

The way that theological institutions are structured in Africa is such that it paints a picture that not every believer qualifies to apply. It seems to be the place that those who want to become or have a higher calling as 'clergy' go to in order to qualify for the post of pastoring a congregation. However, for the rest of the church who are 'non-clergy' inclined, or better still, do not have a higher calling – 'the laity' – they are to wait to be taught by the clergy. The theological institution, therefore, is not a common ground for spiritual formation meant for the entire body of Christ.

It is important that theological institutions in African rethink their purpose of equipping the body of Christ as a whole. For example, it is the same institution that equips medical doctors that also equips the nurses, the lab scientists and the pharmacists. All these professions are in the business of healing people in the hospital. Yes, the doctor heads the team but he or she is not everything. When a patient goes to the hospital, the examination, tentative diagnosis and drug prescription are carried out by doctors, whilst definitive diagnosis and drug sensitivity tests are carried out by the lab scientists; production and dispensing of the drugs are carried out by the pharmacists and the bedside treatment and care are carried out by the nurses.

Let us assume that only the medical doctors are admitted and trained in the medical school where they receive a major instruction in their own discipline and partly instructed in the disciplines listed above (laboratory science, pharmacy and nursing). Then, after med-school, the doctors are required to train the lab scientists, pharmacists and nurses back in the hospital. Do you think that the other three disciplines will be effective in comparison if they also have special training just like the doctor? My answer is that when each discipline is given access to good professional training, they function better than if they were left at the mercies of a dominant expert.

We find Jesus demonstrating this unique approach to theological education with his disciples. He did not select three Pharisees, three Sadducees, three priests, and three members of the Sanhedrin to equip and then release to go and impact the other Jews in the temple and/or synagogue. Rather, his theological institution was open from day 1 to fishermen, tax collectors, farmers, teachers of the law, members of the Sanhedrin, the Pharisees and so on.

The seminaries in Africa have to open up their gates to courses that can make the Christian carpenters, teachers, lawyers, engineers and all professionals to be desirous to go in and study how to be effective ministers in the marketplace. This is the need of the hour because, like in the days of Jesus when the Pharisees and teachers of the law lorded over their followers through manipulation and putting heavy yokes on them, history is repeating itself as trained pastors who are supposed to equip the saints are now in the business of amassing wealth to buy private jets, build massive cathedrals, drive the most expensive cars and pull the largest church sitting capacity.

There is a great disparity now from what the pastors are taught in the seminary and what they teach the people back in the building. However, the one institution that can open up and challenge this false movement is the seminary.

Conclusion

Theological education in Africa needs to have an African approach to fit with the needs of the people. South Africa had suffered apathy for many years,

how is our theology addressing that? The Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan have been in war, how is our theology interpreting that? Corruption in governance is blatant. Those involved bear Christian names and frequently visit churches, but in what way has our theology addressed corruption? Learning with an approach that does not directly impact the society or allows the learner to become relevant in his or her community is not learning at all. It is time that we adopt what will work for us and not import what had worked elsewhere. As Einstein (2020) succinctly stated, '[w]e cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them'.

This chapter pointed out the need for theological institutions across Africa to begin a rethink of returning the learning ethos to a *paideia* approach, where the facilitator of learning focuses on a teaching approach that is student-centred rather than teacher-centred.

There will be a huge difference if African theological institutions cautiously select who comes in to both study and facilitate within their walls. Courses such as Pastoral Education or Studies should strictly be for pastors who are already in the pastorate. They have spent some years in the ministry and gathered sufficient experience in leading a congregation. Similarly, facilitators in the seminary must be adherents of the faith who love the Lord and are willing to impact the same change that has happened in their lives in the lives of others and allow the entire church to find their placement in the seminaries.

Even though it felt like a good thing to do when theological institutions craved to be on par in terms of accreditation with the universities, that move stole a valuable attribute that theological education must reclaim. A theologian who can demonstrate great scholarship but shows no character is no theologian at all. The Bible says, '[i]n a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use ...' (2 Tm 2:20). What God seeks of believers, whether we are theologians, or doctors, or business people, or whatever else, is that we should become noble people for his use. Wilhelm (2003:15) aptly stated that boxing our lives into doing things that are sacred and things that are secular by both church members and the clergy is a grave mistake that has the tendency to render our ministry fruitless.

Section D

Critical reflection on elective models and methods: A South African perspective

Chapter 15

#WesternTheological EducationMustFall: The impact of Western theological training on Africa

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Abstract

Western influences continue to dominate theological education globally, despite continuous calls for the decolonisation and Africanisation of our education system. Where Western achievements are characterised by isolation, individualism and competition, latent in the African approach is a rich sense of communalism. With such divergence, the inhibition posed by Western models of theological formation on the African is apparent. Authentic

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African theological formation must be directed by Africans, devoid of the entrenched distortion that flows from the colonial paradigm. A holistic approach that equips students for believing, knowing, doing and being is proposed in response to Western models that focus predominantly on the acquisition of academic knowledge. Flowing from the proposals made by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1981) regarding the decolonisation of the mind, this chapter builds on the latter works of Bunting, Maluleke, Dladla, Mbembe, Mashau, Ramoupi and Naidoo. Contrary to the prevalent Western approach that often views African theological instruction as inferior, this chapter offers a counterpoint to that refrain, charting a new score boldly proclaiming that 'Western theological education must fall!'

Introduction

This chapter results from a presentation that was delivered at a conference on curriculum integration.[49] One of the sub-categories of the conference dealt with the impact of Western theological education on African training. My presentation promoted authentic African theological formation, directed by Africans, devoid of distortions that flow from the colonial paradigm. African theological instruction can no longer be belittled as inferior. In order to develop integrated and holistic theological education on the African continent, Western theological education must fall![50]

Despite calls for the decolonisation and Africanisation of our education system, Western education models continue to dominate theological education globally. It 'remains captive to a Western model of theologising, reflecting the tension between African communal culture and the tendencies to isolation, individualism, and competition characteristic of Western culture' (Naidoo 2013:1). An integrated approach is needed that develops the whole person through the combination of faith, study and tradition (Mbembe 2016:32). Kraft (2011:273) said that education is much more than the accumulation of information. He points out that the words *teaching* and *doctrine* in Scripture are connected more with behaviour inculcated than with information assimilated. Paul warns people not to fight over words, because 'it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen' (2 Tm 2:14). In contrast, Western education models generally focus on the correctness of words and concepts, rather than on learning to 'live, behave, and use knowledge in effective,

49. Conference theme: 'Integrative Theological Education in Africa'. Funded by: African Theological Advance Grant, USA. Organiser: Professor Marilyn Naidoo, UNISA. Place: Baptist Theological College, Randburg, South Africa. Date: 19–20 February 2020.

50. The author selected 'Western theological education must fall' in analogy with recent #fallist movements in South Africa, like #FeesMustFall, #RhodesMustFall, #OpenStellenbosch, #ReformPuk and #BlackFirstLandFirst. These follow Fanon philosophy and attacks the power of white people and the disadvantages of black people (Du Rand, Vorster & Vorster 2017:23)

profitable, and (in the case of Christians), Christ-glorifying ways' (Kraft 2011:273).

In Western education, individuals are responsible for their own achievements. They fail or succeed, based on their individual efforts. Africans, however, depend on others in society and support them in return. The victory of one is a victory for all, and a community victory is also a victory for the individual. These contrasting worldviews highlight a deep-rooted psychological orientation towards learning that influences how people learn and what they focus on in the learning process. That is why it is not enough, and even a shame, that former white universities simply add an African perspective to their unchanged curriculums and then call it *indigenisation* or *inculturation* (Mbembe 2016:32; Naidoo 2014:50; Ramoupi 2014:270). Instead of recognising the African character of all citizens, this approach just separates black Africans from white Africans again and depicts African theology as inferior to Western theology. Jansen (in Venter & Tolmie 2012:15) calls this curriculum mimicry: '[t]he outside signs of change are there, but the deeper more meaningful change, emotionally and intellectually, simply does not happen'. What is needed is an African perspective on the Bible and theology (Naidoo 2014:52) similar to the 'Black Theology' movement of the early 1970s that wanted to instil a sense of social justice, liberation and human dignity to people oppressed by apartheid (Naidoo 2014:52).

Methodology

This chapter calls for the impact of Western theological education on African training to be reversed so that authentic African theological formation can take place, directed by Africans, devoid of distortions that flow from the colonial paradigm.

In order to achieve this, an integrative literature review was used as a research model,[51] taking the following into consideration:

- Key concepts that were used to search the literature included the legacy of colonialism, the need for Africanisation, and the role that the church and theological training institutions can play in the process. The key search terms included colonisation, coloniality, imperialist, decolonisation, Africanisation and apartheid.
- The reviewed literature focused on publications by African scholars in recent decades.

51. 'The integrative literature review is a distinctive form of research that generates new knowledge about a topic by reviewing, critiquing, and synthesizing representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated' (Torraco 2016:62).

- The author takes a strong anti-colonial, anti-apartheid stance, acknowledging that coming from a privileged position as a white Afrikaner, he must deal with the literature cautiously, allowing black African scholars to speak.
- The findings are synthesised with the author's struggle with his own *Dasein* or *Geworfenheid* as a white South African citizen, from foreign decent, in the black continent of Africa.
- Finally, the analysis and synthesis of the findings are presented in a way that poses new questions and propositions for future research (Torraco 2016:66), and encourages Africans to seek what was lost and to plot their own journey to future self-determination.

Delimitations and definition of terms

Western education models

In this chapter, the above concept refers to the overarching Western-dominated education standards and principles that were introduced in Africa under colonialism (Naidoo 2016a:1). It is used as an umbrella term, focusing on the overarching ideals of Western education and not on the detailed building blocks, like the curriculum. One of the glaring disadvantages of Western education is that it is seen as superior to any other approach and is elevated to the pinnacle of achievement: it communicated the message to Africans that to succeed, they need to master the way of the colony (Kraft 2011:273; Maluleke 2007:521).

Curriculum

This research study is restricted to the broad, conceptual foundations of the decolonisation and Africanisation of education (specifically of theological education) in South Africa. It lies outside the scope of this research to conduct a detailed analysis of the curriculum and how it is dominated by a Western mindset (Duncan 2000:27–28). Future research studies could focus on the practicalities of Africanising the colonial curricula.

West, Western theology and Western theological training

The author does not expound concepts, such as the West, Western theology and Western theological training, in detail. In the context of this chapter, the terms function as broad, alternating concepts, highlighting the overarching ideal of how the Western mindset dominates education in Africa (Mamdani 1996:16–18). These are foreign concepts to Africa, which were forcefully introduced under colonialism, dictating how and what Africans must learn (Ngugi 1981:13).

Africanisation

The author believes that no homogenous African worldview exists, and that is not what he implies with the term Africanisation. The focus is on the general, overarching differences between Western and African worldviews. The Western mindset and the approach to education were transplanted from Europe and are foreign to African epistemology (Naidoo 2016a:2). When referring to Africanisation, the author uses the term in a broad sense, reflecting on common African identities, relevant to the African context (Makgoba 1998:50; Naidoo 2014:52). The advantage of Africanisation is that it questions the imposed colonial models and allows Africans to speak with an African tongue from the African context (Bunting 2002:40; Mbembe 2016:32; Ramoupi 2014:271).

The legacy of colonialism

Theological education in Africa in the 21st century is not only practised in a postcolonial, global context but also has a 'legacy of colonial forms of theological education that remained in place decades after political decolonisation' (Naidoo 2016a:1). Imbedded in the term 'postcolonial' is the word *colonial,* which is a reminder that it is a continuance of the same colonial Christian mission that many Africans have been subjected to since the 15th century (Maluleke 2007:521). The Bible became a colonising document and Christianity became entangled in the colonial conquest. Missionaries were fully committed to the ideals of colonialism: extending civilisation, establishing Christianity and bringing progress (Maluleke 2007:521). As bearers of Good News (and civilisation), it was unthinkable for them that dialogue with Africans could lead to a positive outcome; the only option was to convert Africans from savagery to civilisation.

The colonisers were proud of their mother country and wanted to transplant its glory to the colony with as little change as possible. In the education of the *native,* no attention was given to the African's 'identity, language, historical contribution, culture and perspective' (Dladla 2011:3). Ngugi (1981:13) pointed out the misfortune of this approach as, '[l]anguage, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture'. With language as a carrier of culture, the colonisers forced their cultures and languages down on their subjects (Ngugi 1981):

> Berlin of 1884[52] was affected through the sword and the bullet. But the night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the blackboard. The physical violence of the battlefield was followed by the psychological violence of the classroom. (p. 9)

52. This refers to the gathering in Germany to divide the continent of Africa amongst the European superpowers of the day.

Colonisation was established not only by force and violence but also by colonising peoples' minds (cf. Mamdani 1996:16–18).

Worldview and epistemology are connected to one's mother tongue. Demoralising people by forbidding their language and forcing them to adopt another take away their identity and self-image (Ngugi 1981):

> Colonialism imposes its control of the social production of wealth through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship. But its most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonised, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship with others. (p. 16)

What is referred to as theological education in Africa, has for too long been nothing more than European theology in Africa. This is, therefore, an alienating curriculum, where the intellectual efforts do not correlate with the experience of most Africans (Naidoo 2016a:2). These Eurocentric educational models not only prescribe the content but also the way in which knowledge is acquired and taught. Afrikaans and English universities from the past served their own communities, and their worldview dictated institutional and curriculum design. 'These six [Afrikaans] universities were run by executives and councils which have strong support to the apartheid government' (Bunting 2002:40). To think that we can use the same curriculum today and simply present it in another way is nonsensical.

Despite structural and political changes, people's hearts remain imprisoned by the old colonial and apartheid attitudes, and there has been resistance and low levels of subscription to these changes by many individuals and groups (Cross & Naidoo 2012:228). Jansen (2009:5) called this 'bitter knowledge … how people remember and enact the past'. In the transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa, all the energy was invested in fighting the institutional bastions of an oppressive regime. Abolishing apartheid was emphasised at the cost of envisaging an alternative reality.

With this one-sided focus on displacing the powers of the colonial past, we neglect to deal with our memories of past experiences. Every South African citizen has emotions and memories of apartheid – either first-hand or handed down from previous generations. It is convenient to ignore the history and these memories because nobody wants to acknowledge that they participated in the evils of apartheid (Mashau 2018:5). This denial hinders reconciliation and the creation of new possibilities for all.

In order to understand the challenges we face, one needs to distinguish between *colonialism* and *coloniality*. The former refers to political structures

and power, and the latter refers to an attitude of the heart. Coloniality is an evil that feeds on the abuse of the oppressed, and it is fitting to say that the heart of colonialism lies in the coloniality of the heart: it is the source of racial tension. Mashau (2018) not only welcomed the interest of academics worldwide but also warned their push for decoloniality:

> [*R*]uns the risk of being an elitist project. For this project to succeed, it must be unshackled from the chains of academic scholars and allow the voices of those in the margins of our communities to be heard. (p. 2)

Coloniality in South Africa becomes evident in 'racism, xenophobia, sexism and economic inequality' (Theuns 2017:1–2); people are still driven by racial stereotypes. Verwey and Quayle (2012:552) referred to 'backstage talk of white, middle-class Afrikaners about blacks'. This kind of talk is reserved for fellow white people or Afrikaners only, and allows one 'to talk badly about other races, based on stereotypes' (Mashau 2018:1). Mashau further points out that 'backstage talk is not only limited to white people but takes place among black people as well. These talks are characterised by the polarisation between "us" and "them"'. Such attitudes dehumanise black people by stereotypically classifying them as 'lazy, crooks, violent, rapists, illiterate and half-human or less human' (Mashau 2018:3). This leads to an inferiority complex and destroys their self-confidence (Mashau 2018):

> Indeed, the majority of white people conveniently refer to themselves as Africans when it suits them, but in the main, they associate themselves with Europe, and therefore refer to themselves as Western. (p. 3)

In the public sphere, it has become 'difficult to talk about race issues without evoking the "us" and "them" divides' (Mashau 2018:2). Yet, he (Mashau 2018:2) stresses the need for 'open conversation between the coloniser and the colonised' as a much-needed conversation, because all citizens share common colonial experiences. Because of our divisive past, we live in suspicion and fear of the *other*. Through enculturation and propaganda, we are conditioned to believe certain things about the other, whether true. With the dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994, the 'rainbow nation' was born, promoted by the then President, Nelson Mandela. Now the rainbow nation is failing, with increasing levels of racial divisions, polarisation and tensions (Mashau 2018:1). Van Wyngaard (2014:6) warned against merely accepting the *other* by tolerating their existence; an attitude that still implies superiority and control over the *other*. Instead, we need to focus on what we have in common, our shared humanity (Naidoo 2019:171).

The ongoing and growing racial intolerance and the absence of a consolidated identity are a worrying South African reality (Naidoo 2019:168). Andraos (2012:5) reminded us that 'cultural colonisation [...], which involves

colonised minds and education systems [...], is a deeper and long-lasting form of colonial power'. This is a subtle power, which is not immediately evident, and it takes effort to identify and address it (Naidoo 2019):

> [*W*]e also have to acknowledge that we live in a society where suspicion, fear and racism shape us every day. As individuals we are thoroughly enculturated and shaped by social and cultural influences. Because of the pressures for social distance, establishing relational bonds can be a challenge. (p. 2)

People on both sides of the spectrum blame the *other*: the colonised blame their oppressors for enslaving them, and the oppressor accuses Africans for not doing something to improve themselves. Stereotypes that were engraved on the hearts of people over centuries must be confronted and exposed (Kujawa-Holbrook 2002:146). It should be challenged by one's own racial stereotypes that create opportunities to deconstruct the past and its injustices. In the field of education, Reddie (2010:97) suggested that white students must be made aware of the privileges and opportunities they have, simply because they are white. Both black and white students must confront the realities of the past, their memories of the past and their prejudice to find common ground and to forge a new future (Naidoo 2016b):

> [*T*]hrough Biblical hermeneutics and Black theological reflection, a critical re-reading of African histories together with the notion of Black self-determination, students can work through the psychological chains of mental slavery. (p. 171)

White resistance to racial justice, and thus the preservation of whiteness, is driven by fear of reverse victimisation. Steyn (2007) stated that:

> [*W*]hiteness in the new South Africa is characterised by a sense of vulnerability, by the belief that the spaces of whiteness are being infiltrated by strangers, by profound feelings of displacement, victimisation, withdrawal, and desire to escape. (p. 422)

According to Green, Sonn and Matsebula (2007:398), 'white South Africans continue to "think white" [...], believing that "whiteness *ought* to be the norm"'. Naidoo (2016b:173) does not support this view but offers a valuable alternative when she points out that the motive for social justice 'is not rooted in revenge, but in equal access to human needs and rights'.

Theology can help people to address their whiteness and to recognise the power of whiteness. Its power must be analysed critically and '[*w*]hiteness needs to work through its Christian heritage that is associated with imperialism, conquest and colonialism that fed racism' (Mashau 2018:5). The purpose is not to annihilate white people; on the contrary, it is critically important for Western theology to play a part in Africanisation and decoloniality movements. The challenge is how theology, which was shaped by imperialism and colonialism, can contribute meaningfully to this task. For a start, it cannot continue along the same colonial lines (Mashau 2018):

> [*A*]ccording to the decolonial scholar, Frantz Fanon, every generation must discover its mission and fulfil it. It is upon this generation, in line with the mandatory generational responsibility expressed by Fanon, to take up the challenge of the decoloniality project and make Africa and the rest of the world a home for all who live in it. (p. 6)

The West, that is used to lead the discussion, needs to step down from its pedestal and allow Africa to lead the way. Theology has an important role to play in bringing reconciliation between opposing partners in the South African context (Mashau 2018):

> African concepts of *ubuntu* should be embraced to enhance the communality of our human race and to advance true reconciliation and unity of our highly polarised rainbow nation. As all of humanity, irrespective of race, is created in the image of God (*Imago Dei*), we should treat one another as equals. According to Vorster (2010:210), the biblical concept of *imago Dei*, as used in the reformed tradition, is essential to any approach to humanness and human relationships. (p. 7)

Theology that takes the *imago Dei* seriously will help people to view themselves and others as valuable in God's eyes.

Africanisation

Africanisation entails more than systemic changes to a learning model (Naidoo 2016a:5). It involves a worldview, affecting the whole person in a specific context. How people live is how they learn and their *horizon-of-being* is the substructure underlying the process. For theology to make a meaningful contribution to the move from Western-dominated to Africanised theological education, it must engage with the context that it finds itself in (Naidoo 2016a:1); it must not only focus on the content and form of the curriculum but also on the poor in a society (Duncan 2000:27–28). This will result in an Africanised curriculum that is not based on Western epistemology (Letsekha 2013:8). For an Africanised curriculum to take shape, adding black scholars to staff and including black or African theology in the curriculum is not enough (Maluleke 2006:69; Ramoupi 2014:271). The process must involve scholarship and research by Africans (Naidoo 2016a:2); the core focus should always be on Africa and to restore what was taken from Africa. Naidoo (2016a:3) rightly states that 'Africanisation is a conscious and deliberate assertion of nothing more or less than the right to be African'.

The status quo of Western education is so entrenched in our minds and institutions that no alternative appears to be viable. Add to this the view that Western education models are the pinnacle of excellence, and you are ready to close the door to Africanisation (Naidoo 2016a):

> [*T*]heological educators remain largely unconvinced of Africanisation. The need for Africanisation is not commonly felt or shared. Africanisation is seen as too complex, controversial and ideological, even though every position within theology points to a particular ideology. (p. 5)

Similar to the colonial attitude of superiority in wanting to civilise the 'dark' continent of Africa, Maluleke (2010:372) drew attention to resistance against Christianity being Africanised because it is assumed that this will pull Christian standards down to the level of Africa.

Contrary to this belief, Maluleke (1997) pointed out that:

> [*T*]he phenomena of African Christianity and African theology are so closely related that the two terms may be used interchangeably. African theologies exist because of African Christianities, and without African theologies we would not have any sustainable African Christianities. African Christianities are therefore expressions of African theology. (p. 6)

Instead of comparing African Christianity with Western expressions of Christianity and trying to elevate African Christianities to the same level (as though they were inferior), one should carry out introspection of the evils hiding within your own faith expression.

The schism between Africa and the West feeds on the reciprocal prejudice, propaganda and historical injustices, which is not a fertile ground for dialogue and collaboration. The 'internalization of apartheid stereotypes, structures and beliefs has resulted in degrees of resistance and rigidity and low levels of adaptability of the individual or groups to the changing South African environment and its new value system' (Cross & Naidoo 2012:228). After stating my case at the above-mentioned conference for Africans to take the lead in Africanisation, someone asked if it was really necessary to reinvent the wheel again. My immediate thought was, '[d]o we need a wheel simply because Western education has one'? What is disconcerting is that it was not a Westerner who posed the question in defence of Western education but a black scholar from a neighbouring African country. We are so conditioned that Western education is superior that we will slavishly continue to support it, even at the risk of never knowing what Africanised education could offer.

Postcolonial racism and new identity

Racism is defined by Du Rand et al. (2017:60) as '… an attitude of prejudice, bias and intolerance between various racial groups which can lead to structural discrimination and social stratifications'. It divides societies into *us* and *them*, where *us* is better than *them* and *us* is idolised and *them* demonised. 'In order to attain this "ideal" environment, the identity of "us" was venerated and solidarity against "them" developed. "They" were regarded as opponents and even enemies' (Du Rand et al. 2017:67).

The ideal is not a monocultural society because there is a great value in celebrating cultural diversity. Kraft (2011:30) pointed out that most people view their own culture as 'correct, sacred, and often even absolute'.

The Hebrews believed that their culture was given to them by Yahweh and (Kraft 2011):

> [*C*]onsidered it obligatory to obey these sacred customs to express their commitment to God [...] even though it can be proven historically that most of it was in place before God made His covenant with Abraham. (p. 30)

Likewise, Westerners often have this attitude about other cultures and people by referring to them as *primitive* or *underdeveloped*. It is important to note that all cultures are equal. Although one aspect of a culture could seem to be superior, it might be the opposite with other aspects, and therefore, anthropologists do not grade cultures from inferior to superior (Naidoo 2019):

> [*W*]e know that the gospel is not captive to any one cultural style, aesthetic, generation, social class, cultural or racial group. At the same time, however, the gospel comes alive for people most frequently when it is expressed in the clarity of *their* culture. (p. 2)

This is an important contribution by Naidoo, pointing out that we should create space for one another and learn about ourselves and others through our cultural encounters, rather than alienating people who are different to us.

Biko (1987) articulated this clearly:

> Whereas Christianity had gone through rigorous cultural adaptation from ancient Judea through Rome, through London, through Brussels and Lisbon, somehow when it landed in the Cape, it was made to look fairly rigid. Christianity was made the central point of a culture which brought with it new styles of clothing, new customs, new forms of etiquette, new medical approaches, and perhaps new armaments. The people among whom Christianity was spread had to cast away their indigenous clothing, their customs, and their beliefs which were all described as pagan and barbaric. (p. 56)

This is an unfortunate attitude displayed by those who consider themselves as superior to others. They will do anything in their power to maintain their superiority. Imperialists want to maintain the status quo – what can be more right than your own epistemology? That is also why the oppressed resist colonialism – what can be more wrong than another's epistemology being forced upon you? What theology can offer is the freedom for people to think, learn and express themselves in ways that are their own (Ngugi 1981):

> Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. How people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their politics and at the social production of wealth, at their entire relationship to nature and to other beings. Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world. (p. 16)

The role of the church

Although South Africa today is a much more integrated society with segregation laws abolished, people across racial divides are as far apart as before. In order to rectify this, one must be exposed to, and engage with other cultures and worldviews, with an attitude of understanding and mutual respect. The church is an important catalyst in this undertaking and should facilitate opportunities for its members to share their experiences with one another. More than two-thirds of South African citizens consider themselves as Christians, making the church the most suitable vehicle to bring about the change they need, especially as Christians are known to be agents of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18). In the church, the oppressors and the oppressed can recline at the same table and share their lives. Where a common history and experiences are shared, a common identity is formed (Naidoo 2019:2).

In his chapter titled, *Advocates for Change*, Kraft (2011:398–413) identified three agents of change: advocates, acceptors and implementers. Outsiders cannot implement changes within a society; they can at the most make recommendations. This is also true in postcolonial South Africa: it is not my place as a white Afrikaner, privileged by apartheid, to decolonise the curriculum, or to even claim that I can contribute to Africanise it. Black Africans need to stand up, find their voices, get to know who they are and rise to the task of presenting African epistemology to the world. The church will do well to involve advocates, acceptors and implementers from all backgrounds and races to facilitate the much-needed change.

What cripples the church's contribution is that 'religion was used to justify oppression, colonialism and apartheid' (Naidoo 2017:6). As a political theology, religion helped to shape 'the social order, making possible certain types of institutional arrangements and not others', in the 'process producing or redirecting culture' (Goldberg 2009:534). The church must deal with this legacy from the past and has two options for the future: continue to defend the status quo or play a part in the restoration and transformation of faith and education in Africa (Naidoo 2019):

> [I]n our context, [*in South Africa*] theological education will need to create human and humane teaching-learning communities with a commitment to social justice […] respect for human dignity and an urgent need for transparency and honesty, reciprocal teachability and inclusion of the marginalized. (p. 173)

The biblical concept of equality of all humankind and the call to consider others higher than oneself must serve as a framework for theological reflection on the way forward (Lv 19:33–34; Ac 10:34–35; Glatians 3:26–29; Eph 2:11–22; Phlp 2:3–4; Col 3:11).

The future of universities

Unlike the continued racial segregation that persists in many churches, we need to create theological learning communities that are committed to social justice and reform. Historically, theology faculties at South African universities have contributed to the marginalisation and oppression of Africans, and it is time to right these wrongs and empower African Christians (Maluleke 2000). An honest learning space, where people become aware of their own privilege, bias or shortcoming, is a productive space (Christerson, Edwards & Emerson 2005:161–162; Naidoo 2016b:173; Reddie 2010:101).

Since 1994, little has changed in the identity of South African universities, except for admission policies. The impact of colonial conquest portrayed Africans as inferior to human beings, incapable of producing any knowledge. Does the university still support the stance that there is nothing to gain from Africans and Africa? 'All the intellectual movements on the continent, the depth of culture, philosophy, science and other indigenous knowledge systems are largely ignored by universities in South Africa' (Dladla 2011:4). It would be true to state that we do not have African universities in South Africa, but simply universities in Africa (Dladla 2011:5; Mbembe 2016:32). Graduates of these universities do not have the knowledge or understanding to address the realities of our country. Ramoupi (2014) bemoaned the fact that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission did not call on universities to give an account of their brutal part in apartheid in prohibiting the

> [*A*]frican and black majority from studying; where they were permitted, they could only learn in certain fields intended to prepare them for servitude; and in other professions like engineering, 'there was no space for the Bantu', to quote H. F. Verwoerd (Minister of Native Affairs at the time, and considered the 'architect of apartheid'). (p. 270)

One of the reasons that political change was not replicated in universities is that the colonial 'hierarchy of systems and sources of knowledge' that places 'the Western perspective at the top of the pyramid' still exist. Hierarchy of systems and sources of knowledge that considers Western education as the highest form of education still exist (Naidoo 2016a:5). Another reason why African universities find it hard to compete with scholars from elsewhere is because Africans were subjugated to the supremacy of English (and later Afrikaans) as scientific languages, which marginalised African languages (Mbembe 2016:36; Nkoane 2006:62–63). A third reason for the persistence of colonially oppressive education is that 'persons who "come from different places" and "think from different locations," that is, from different worldviews, are not interacting mutually' (Mignolo 2007:490–492). Nkoane (2006:66) believed that if universities remain conduits of foreign influence and are not Africanised, they play an exiling role. In order to counter this status quo, Naidoo (2016a:5) suggested intercultural learning, where mutual respect and the engagement of other cultural perspectives are facilitated (Andraos 2012:7).

Credit must go to many theological education institutions and churches that have already opened education to a multicultural student body (Dreyer 2012:504) (Ngugi 1981):

> Imperialism in its colonial and neo-colonial phases continuously press-gangs the African hand to the plough to turn the soil over and putting blinkers on him to make him view the path ahead only as determined for him by the master armed with the Bible and the sword. In other words, imperialism continues to control the economy, politics, and cultures of Africa. But on the other hand, and pitted against it, are the ceaseless struggles of African people to liberate their economy, politics, and culture from that Euro-American-based stranglehold to usher a new era of true communal self-regulation and self-determination. It is an ever-continuing struggle to seize back their creative initiative in history through a real control of all the means of communal self-definition in time and space. (p. 4)

In striving to build truly African universities, Makgoba (1998:50) urged us not to imitate the so-called great nations but to harmonise the various perceptions and paradigms of African communities. Africa has the capacity to do this: It produced knowledge before any other continent and was the first continent with a school system. The scribes of ancient Egypt already wrote on papyrus, philosophised, and did calculus (Ki-Zerbo 1990:15). Just look at the sophisticated calculations that presuppose the construction of the pyramids of Africa. Ancient trade and business ventures also existed in Africa (Nkoane 2006:60). There is no need of Africans to feel inferior; they must be reminded of their knowledge production capabilities; they must produce knowledge that is relevant to Africa and its context.

Imperialists took this self-belief away from Africans in imposing their own culture and language on the colonised. English became the measure of intelligence, '*the* main determinant of a child's progress up the ladder of formal education … to colonial elitedom' (Ngugi 1981:11–12). This foreign language separated Africans from their culture, from the world and from themselves (Ngugi 1981):

> In Kenya, English became more than a language: it was *the* language, and all the others had to bow before it in deference. Thus, one of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikuyu in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment – three to five stroked of the cane on bare buttocks – or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUDIP or I AM A DONKEY … The attitude to English was the exact opposite: any achievement in spoken or written English was highly rewarded; prizes, prestige, applause, the ticker to higher realms. (pp. 11–12)

In his article on Steve Biko, Maluleke (2008) made the following statement:

> Biko was unflinching in his conviction that as long as black people looked for and accepted white leadership in all spheres, including religion, they were not yet ready to take their future in their own hands. This called into question whether the so-called black churches were really black … black churches were white led in terms of their ethos, practice and outlook. (p. 118)

This is one of the remains of colonial brainwashing, that is, the Westerner is superior, and to match him or her, you must live up to his or her standards. In his article about xenophobia in South Africa, Maluleke (2016) accused black South Africans of treating the *amakwerekwere* in the same way that the white people treated the black people under apartheid. He asks if it is justified to reject white oppression, whilst resorting to the same tactics in dealing with those who are at your mercy. The only way in which Africanisation will be achieved is when Africans stand up and lead themselves to the promised land. For too long, they have been wandering in the desert under white oppression. It is high time for Africans to find their own identity and to forge a future that is existentially African.

Conclusion

Resulting from the integrative literature review research, the following matters deserve mention:

- The history of theological education in Africa is marked by segregation and bias, an injustice that led to great loss and disadvantage. In making restitution for this, theological education must play its part in assisting students to deal with the past by learning from its mistakes, discovering what was lost and building towards a better future (Naidoo 2016b:172).
- Theology must acknowledge and value the contribution that Africans can make and enhance the agency of African Christians. Because of continued coloniality, Africans are still marginalised on cultural, religious and economic levels (Maluleke 2000:22).
- Colonial forms of theological education have separated students from their communities. It is imperative that these students are brought into contact with their poor and struggling communities that still face oppression and other challenges (Mashabela 2017:4).
- A new Africanised theological education will not only benefit Africans, but it will also expose the privileged to the oppressed. This encounter will open their eyes not only to the suffering of the oppressed but also to see themselves in a new way (Naidoo 2019:173).
- When this new form of theological education confronts the colonial system and constructs a new reality, students will discover and develop their own identities and grow in their self-awareness (Naidoo 2019:173). There is no more room for the colonial mentality in theological education; it needs to be annulled and Africans must take up their rightful place as generators of knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:338).

We conclude with a caution by Naidoo (2016a:6) that not everything in the colonial curriculum has to go, but we need to open the conversation to other voices. There is a need for all to become part of the collective, affirming our connectedness with people around us and accepting people who are different (Naidoo 2016a:6). '[…] through intercultural learning students can bring different knowledge from their respective traditions' (Naidoo 2016a:5).

Chapter 16

Influence of hermeneutics on theological education: A case study at North-West University

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Abstract

North-West University was initially a theological school established by the RCSA for the training of its prospective ministers. Later, the church set up a college for training teachers, and it eventually led to the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PU for CHE). In 2004, an amalgamation between three institutions led to NWU as part of the government's transformation of HE. North-West University kept on providing training for prospective ministers of the RCSA. In 2011, the NWU and the AFMSA signed an agreement that led to the development and presentation of paradigm-specific training for Pentecostal

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students, including prospective candidates for ministry in the AFM. How the Bible is viewed and read (hermeneutics) function at the heart of all theological endeavours. NWU's agreements with two institutions that represented two traditions implied that two distinctive hermeneutical angles would function side by side within the faculty of theology. The thesis of this study is that the divergent hermeneutical angles represented at NWU would probably lead to a degree of tension and challenges among theological students and lecturers and may even be averse to the theological forming of prospective Pentecostal pastors studying at the faculty. The thesis is tested at the hand of results of empirical research completed in 2020 among theological students and lecturers at NWU's Faculty of Theology. An undercurrent in the quantitative research results shows that the different hermeneutical models play a significant role in the experience and perception of theological students and lecturers. With one exception, all lecturers participating in the research represented Reformed hermeneutics whilst most students came from Pentecostal groups. The case study provides a unique opportunity for studying the effects that divergent ecumenical angles play in the interpretation of the Bible and theological literature, underlining the importance that theological training should be provided in a context of mutual acknowledgement and respect for another's hermeneutics.[53]

Introduction

Pentecostals did not attach much importance to theological training; they considered an acquaintance with the Bible and the anointing of the Spirit more important and valuable than knowledge gained from studying theological tomes (Burger 1987:181). This is in stark contrast with the Reformed tradition, especially the RCSA, that since its inception emphasised thorough theological equipment for its pastors, fostering an influential theological climate in the church, testified to by the many publications of the faculty of theology. The climate in the Pentecostal movement changed during the past 50 years and more value was attached to proper theological training, also in the AFMSA. The church at first established Bible schools with the Bible as nearly the only textbook, then theological colleges, and finally, seminaries, based on the theological model followed in programmes of theological faculties. In signing an agreement with NWU in 2011 to present theological education for prospective ministry candidates, the AFM realised its ideal for sound training. However, the church also realised that the current composition of staff at the Faculty of Theology consisted nearly exclusively of lecturers from a Reformed background, and that it might present challenges in ensuring that Pentecostal students would receive a sympathetic and balanced treatment of the

53. The author thanks the National Research Foundation of South Africa (NRF) for providing funding for this study. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the view of the NRF.

alternative paradigm added to existing modules where the paradigm-specific content was needed. They accepted that lecturers would adequately accommodate their different theological viewpoints. This study asks the question, to what extent has this ideal been realised during the past 9 years by analysing some of the results of a quantitative survey completed by students and lecturers of the Faculty of Theology? The supposition is that one's hermeneutic functions at the heart of one's theological endeavours and is a critical factor in the formation of theological students to ensure that they identify with the ethos of their church tradition.

Two partners

North-West University and reformed churches of South Africa

The Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU started as a theological school of the RCSA, founded on 29 November 1869 in Burgersdorp, Cape province.[54] The Reformed Churches, since 1859 called the 'Doppers'[55] and consisting of conservative puritan Dutch families that mixed with French and German families after the British occupation of the Cape in 1795, were united in their rejection of British culture and view of life, as well as many facets of the Enlightenment that found its way into church life and doctrine. Many of them joined the Great Trek when families since 1836 left the British-run Cape Colony that trekked northward and eastward by wagon train into the interior of the country to escape British oppression. The origins of the church in 1859 are also related to division of the mother church in the Netherlands, with the Christian Separated Reformed Church leaving the Reformed Church, motivated as a return to the reformed teaching and discipline of the Synod of Dordrecht (1618–1619) (Van der Schyff 2003:4).

The RCSA originated as a reaction to what was perceived as the unscripturality of the hymn book that was used alongside the traditional Reformed musical processing of the biblical psalms, the novelty of prayer meetings, some ministers' sermons without a strong biblical basis, the role of the confessions and restrictions on civil and ecclesiastical freedom that resulted because of the influence of the 'Hervormde' Church on the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republic (ZAR) that existed in what is today the northern

54. The seminal works of Van der Schyff (2003) and Van Eeden (ed. 2005), as well as the book by Gouws (2018), proved to be useful in this section.

55. There are several theories as to the origins of the nickname 'Doppers', of which the most popular is that its early members tried to 'dim the light' ('domp die lig' in Afrikaans) of renewal that was brought into the church by some pietist elements and the Keswick movement.

provinces of South Africa (Van der Schyff 2003:4–5). The new church reacted to what it perceived as liberal influences that had infiltrated the church.

The Reverend Dirk Postma was sent by the Christian Separated Reformed Church in the Netherlands to determine the spiritual condition of the church in the ZAR (Van der Schyff 2003:4). When the general synod of the 'Hervormde' Church decided to enforce the hymn book in all their congregations, 15 objectors left the church under the leadership of Postma. He was elected as their spiritual leader at a meeting on 10 and 11 February 1859 in Rustenburg. The initiative of Postma led to the establishment of Reformed Churches all over the ZAR, as well as in the Republic of the Orange Free State and the Cape Colony.

One of the first challenges of the young church was to find enough pastors for their growing churches. They called on the church in the Netherlands, the Christian Separated Reformed Church with their theological school at Kampen, but only one pastor was made available (Van der Schyff 2003:5). At their first synod, in March 1862 at Reddersburg, it was decided to raise funds for the establishment of a theological facility of their own. In the meantime, the two pastors who were working in South Africa, Postma and J. Beijer, were authorised to help prospective students with their theological studies. The final examinations and admission of candidates to the ministry were facilitated by the synod. In this informal manner, six pastors were made available for the ministry in the period from 1863 to 1869 (Van der Schyff 2003:6).

In the Cape Colony, HE was in English due to the British occupation of the Cape. When the synod of 1869, held in Potchefstroom, decided to set up a theological school, the national and Calvinist character of the school was carefully defined and English as the medium of communication was ruled out. The first two professors were Postma and Jan Louis Cachet, both originally from the Netherlands. The founders intended to also establish education for prospective schoolteachers, although their dream was only realised in 1876 with the establishment of a literary department (Gouws 2018:157).

The Second Anglo-Boer War of Independence between the young republics and British invaders (1899–1902) led to widespread financial challenges (Van der Schyff 2003:68) and eventually the relocation in 1905 of the Theological School to Potchefstroom in today's North-West, but then in the Transvaal Colony (Van der Schyff 2003:86). On 23 July 1919, the Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education came into existence as a college of the University of South Africa (UNISA). It operated separately and independently from the church, although the University also had a department that trained ministers for the church (Van der Schyff 2003:190). In 1930, the Faculty of Theology was founded (Theological School n.d.). The RCSA cooperated in the appointment of professors who were paid partly by the church. The Christian substructure of the institute was highlighted by its

motto, 'In your light' ('do we see the light'), words from Psalm 36:9. In 1921, the state forced the Potchefstroom University College to relinquish 'for Christian Higher Education' as part of the institution's name (Van der Schyff 2003:215). In 1932, the Council of the University filed a private bill in the South African House of Assembly that was accepted in 1933 to once more use the full name (Van der Schyff 2003:367). On 25 April 1950, the Senate of the Government of South Africa accepted a bill after the House of Assembly recognised it a month earlier that established the autonomy of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PU for CHE). Previously, it functioned as a college of UNISA (Van der Schyff 2003:599). In 1971, the PU for CHE signed an agreement with the city councils of Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark, Meyerton and Sasolburg, which led to the establishment of the Vaal River branch with 79 students in the first year and the eventual development of the Vaal Triangle Campus in Vanderbijlpark (De Klerk & Möller 2005:446). In 2004, as a result of the new democratic government's transformation of HE, the NWU was established as a public university with the merger of the Vaal Triangle and Potchefstroom campuses of the PU for CHE with the NWU (formerly, the University of Bophuthatswana) and the Sebokeng campus of another mainly black university, Vista, whose staff and students were incorporated. The merger made it the university with the second largest student population providing full-time and distance education (North-West University 2020).

Apostolic faith mission of South Africa

The AFM is a classical Pentecostal denomination that was established by John G. Lake and Thomas Hezmalhalch, two American missionaries from the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in 1908. Their message was the 'full gospel' message that Jesus is the Saviour, Healer, Sanctifier, coming King and Baptiser in the Holy Spirit (Erasmus 1996:2). The baptism in the Holy Spirit was accompanied by tongue speaking (*glossolalia*) as the initial sign. It is currently the biggest classical Pentecostal denomination in South Africa, with an estimated membership of 1.4 million, established at present in 29 countries of the world (The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa n.d.).

Early Pentecostals saw themselves as a mission to restore the faith that the apostles of New Testament times practised in Christianity and the world, including the gifts of the Spirit (*charismata*). They viewed the New Testament as the source of their lifestyle, as far as it is possible to deduce it from the account of the early church in the New Testament. Initially, they did not intend to establish churches. However, their message was not accepted by traditional churches, forcing them to establish a home for believers (Burger & Nel 2008:55). Furthermore, they did not refer to themselves as a 'church' but rather as a mission.

Everyone who was anointed with the Spirit was invited to minister in their worship services. Those who served with distinction as elders and deacons

were awarded with certificates as 'evangelists' and 'workers' who acknowledged their gifting (Langerman 1983:125). No one was expected to be theologically trained; on the contrary, the early AFM looked with suspicion on theologians, mainly because of the animosity they experienced from the established churches and society. They did not use any titles, except that all members called each other 'brother' and 'sister' (Nel & Janse van Rensburg 2016:2). Members believed and trusted that the Holy Spirit would guide and lead them in all truth. Their training was through personal experiences, the Bible, sermons of their leaders, conferences, and a new magazine called The Comforter and Messenger of Hope, and since 1974, The Pentecostal Herald (Putter 2009:195).

At first, people of all races attended the meetings in English with an interpreter for black attendees (Chandomba 2007:20; Reidt 1989:40). After 5 years, the AFM organised itself along racial lines as reflected in the South African reality, which consisted of separate neighbourhoods, schools and churches (Pillay 1994:190).

Early Pentecostals were mostly illiterate or theologically illiterate (Anderson 1979:77). Poor people, artisans, and labourers were attracted (Hunter 2013:2–3; Nel & Janse van Rensburg 2016:1). They did not find much use for any kind of professional theological training (Hayford 2006:16); early Pentecostals argued that the formalism and 'deadliness' in established churches were the results of scholarship. Pentecostals argued that they only needed the Spirit's guidance (Letson 2007:115), justifying their anti-intellectualist stance. Theological knowledge was viewed in the early AFM not only as unnecessary (Erasmus 1996:13) but also as possibly harmful for a Spirit-filled Christian. Their reaction can partly be explained as a result of the way some of the existing denominations, especially the traditional Afrikaans 'sister churches', treated them in a dismissive way by marginalising and even reviling them (Rance 2008:14). They hid their feelings of inferiority behind their perceived superiority as a result of the work of the Spirit amongst them (Armstrong 2014:276).

In time, their lack of theological training closed many doors for them; they could not be elected as marriage officials or participate in religious broadcasts on state radio (Putter 2010:1). This led to the affirmative action of establishing Bible schools. The AFM established its first Bible schools some 15 years after its founding, with a white school with Scott Moffatt in Cape Town and a black school with Elias Letwaba (1870–1959) in Mokopane (Potgietersrus) as principals (Erasmus 1996:25–42). The curriculum consisted of basic knowledge of biblical data and its application in the practice of daily ministry. The white Bible school had to close for economic reasons during the Depression of the 1930s and many South Africans were plunged into poverty, only Letwaba's Patmos Bible School remained in operation (Erasmus 1996:14). In June 1940, Charles Bennett was appointed as principal of a newly established white Bible school in Johannesburg (Burger & Nel 2008:217).

After the Second World War, a part of the white division of the AFM, in their attempt to become acceptable and respectable, accepted a more formalist worship order, professional pastorate, proper church buildings in the style of established churches, and an Evangelical hermeneutic (Anderson 1979:xi).[56] This led to widespread dissatisfaction amongst white members and eventually a schism in the church with the formation of the Pentecostal Protestant Church in 1958 (Burger & Nel 2008:146). Gradually, a paradigm shift in perspective occurred from the early idea that the empowerment of the Spirit is all that was needed to minister effectively to the realisation that solid theological training was a condition for effective ministry (Menzies 2013:129). Not all accepted the shift, which led to tension amongst members and leaders, between academic training and the Spirit's work that remained until present times (Cronjé 1979:46). The fear was real that theological knowledge might serve as a substitute for the Spirit's work when theological training became compulsory (Fee 1991:84).

Only after 70 years, the first theological college was established. By 1996, when the AFM united its four racially divided sections, it had two official theological institutes, namely, the Apostolic Faith Mission South African Theological Institute (AFMSATI) in Soshanguwe, Pretoria and the Apostolic Faith Mission Theological College (AFMTC) in Auckland Park, Johannesburg. AFMTC had an agreement of cooperation with the former Rand Afrikaans University (now called the University of Johannesburg [UJ]).[57] AFMSATI was strengthened by the unification of the former Central Bible College, Sarepta Theological College (STC) and the Covenant Bible College (CBC) in 1995 (Erasmus 1996:75). However, it became clear that the unification did not function well as STC and CBC continued to operate separately, although they were supposed to form part of the newly formed AFMSATI. Attempts to unite AFMSATI and AFMTC failed when AFMTC withdrew from the negotiations at a late stage due to the diversity represented by the two institutions. Students and staff of AFMTC consisted of predominantly white Afrikaners, whilst students and staff of AFMSATI were mostly Africans, and the staff and students of STC were mainly 'mixed-race' people (Burger & Nel 2008:402–403).

Although the AFM entered the new millennium as a structurally united church, its training of prospective candidates for the ministry was still racially divided. The colleges of the AFM were open to all races; however, the culture

56. The AFM developed historically into four divisions, called black, 'coloured', Indian, and white divisions. All other divisions were compelled to accept the arrangement that white missionaries served as their leaders (Burger & Nel 2008:198).

57. AFMTC changed its operational name to Auckland Park Theological Seminary (ATS) in 2001 and in compliance with new Government legislation formed an article 21 Company. UJ terminated its contract with ATS in 2008 after 17 years because, as a secular university, it decided that a Christian theological institution could not be accommodated as part of their vision and mission. ATS then signed an agreement with NWU in 2010 that qualifying ATS alumni could register for post-graduate studies (Putter 2009:197).

of each college was mainly racially determined. The perpetuation of a racially divided church was stimulated by the fact that its leaders followed distinctly different curricula and the colleges were managed by racially determined principles.

In order to address the problem, the AFM established the Pentecostal Theological Seminary in 2008 with a 5-year agreement with the distance learning institute, Global University of the Assemblies of God in the USA, to use their syllabuses. ATS decided not to become a part of the newly established college, and a long legal battle between ATS and the AFM ensued.

Eventually, in 2011 the AFM signed an agreement with the NWU of Potchefstroom to provide training for students who wished to enter the ordained ministry in the AFM with a Bachelor of Theology and Bachelor of Arts (Honours) (AFMETD 2011; Faculty of Theology 2015:37). The church cooperated with the NWU in writing paradigm-specific contributions to disciplines such as Practical Theology, Systematic Theology, and Ecclesiology, leaving the generic subjects such as Old and New Testament Studies and Missiology intact.

Two hermeneutical angles

It matters how the Bible is read because it is at the heart of theological education. The various methods used in hermeneutics are based on certain assumptions and presuppositions. At NWU, students represent two traditions – the Reformed and Pentecostal traditions – manifested by the presence of the RCSA and AFM, respectively, whilst lecturers, with one exception, represent the Reformed paradigm and hermeneutic. In their academic programmes, a distinction is made between the two paradigms where applicable. In this section, the hermeneutics of these two denominations will be examined before the influence of the two hermeneutical angles will be discussed in terms of the experience of theological students and staff of the Faculty who participated in the 2020 survey.

Reformed hermeneutic of the Reformed Churches of South Africa

The RCSA function within the context of Reformed presuppositions such as that God reveals God self through creation and the written word, the word of God is divinely inspired (2 Tm 3:16–17; 2 Pt 1:20–21), authoritative (Belgic Confession [BC] art. 5), sufficient (BC art. 7), progressive, functions as a unity because it was inspired by the Spirit (Grönum 2008:61), with everything written in the Bible inspired by the same Holy Spirit, never contradicting itself, is clear (*perspicuitas*), and that Christ is the centre of God's revelation. God still and exclusively speaks through the word; the canon is closed. The total

depravity of all humankind, because of the Fall (Gn 3), implies that humans are unable to understand the Scripture correctly. The Bible can only be understood when Christ enlightens their minds, and the Holy Spirit guides them to understand God's revelation.[58]

That the Bible is the Word of God (BC art. 3) implies that it is God speaking in and through the Bible. Biblical hermeneutics is concerned with understanding what God is saying in the Bible. In speaking to humankind in the Bible, God reveals God self and God's will to humankind, and the way to salvation is included in this revelation (BC art. 2). God's revelation is an objective truth because it is eternal, always valid and with irrefutable authority, implying that the Bible is also eternal, always valid and with irrefutable authority (BC art. 7; Grönum 2008:61). The implications of the revelation are far-reaching, and what God reveals falls outside the human world of experience and fallen humankind's comprehension. To understand Scripture, it is necessary that God first gives the reader the gift of saving faith as a result of being elected but also the gift of the Holy Spirit that enlightens the reason of the reader to understand the biblical text (Ralston & Ralston 2019:12). The Holy Spirit is the real author of the Bible (BC art. 3) because God inspired the Bible through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit as a primary author is also always involved and alive in the exegetical process, necessitating the exegete to create the context in which the Spirit can work during the process.

When God revealed God self to humankind, God did it through human beings who wrote it down (BC art. 3). The product of their labour was inspired by the Spirit by way of organic inspiration, implying that God did not transcend the human contribution to the product (as the theory of mechanical inspiration asserts) but the resultant text reflects the human authors' personalities and writing styles as well as the historical contexts and situations in which they and their first readers/hearers lived. That human labour contributed under the inspiration of the Spirit to the Bible does not mean that some parts of the Bible are human, and others are divine (Jordaan, Van Rensburg & Breed 2011:229). The Bible in its entirety is completely the word of God, written down under the inspiration of the Spirit. The Bible as the word of God implies that both the historical and the human aspects in the Bible are to be discounted. It is important to distinguish between the Bible in the formal and the material sense because not all words in the Bible were spoken by God. However, every word in the Bible is in a formal sense a word of God because it is God's revelation to humankind.

58. This part relies primarily on the work of three prominent theological professors at the theological school of the RCSA at NWU and leaders of the RCSA: Jorrie Jordaan, Fika Janse van Rensburg and Douw Breed (Breed, Van Rensburg & Jordaan 2011; Jordaan et al. 2011). Prof. Fika Janse van Rensburg, former Dean of the NWU Faculty of Theology and Deputy Vice Chancellor of the Potchefstroom campus, provided suggestions and more information about the relationship between NWU and the RCSA, as well as the RCSA hermeneutic.

To say that the Bible is eternal and always valid (1 Pt 1:25) implies that the Bible presents God's intention to reveal God's words to humans of all times, places and situations. The hermeneut should consider both the historical setting-oriented way in which the Bible came into existence and the scopus of the revelation (Coetzee, De Klerk & Floor 1980:24–33). In the first place, the fact that the Bible is eternal does not imply that it stands outside time. God did not speak in a vacuum but to people in the concrete circumstances of their times, reflecting the challenges and historical issues they faced. However, the Bible did not originate from these circumstances; the Bible as the revealed word of God is intended to throw the light of God on these very circumstances. The intention of the Bible is also not primarily to change structures existing in a society but to change people's hearts; hearts changed by the word of God then change the structures in a society in conformity with God's will.

Although the Bible originated in a temporally oriented way, the Bible is not time bound (Jordaan, Van Rensburg & Breed 2011:242). The authors used the language of their culture, the styles of argumentation found in their world, and the literary genres and idioms of their day. God oriented God's word of revelation to their situation and existential circumstances; however, the Bible was not confined to the world of the first readers or hearers. The Spirit reaches beyond that world to speak to people of all times. As the languages used in the Bible need to be translated to reach people in contemporary times, so the historical situation also needs to be 'translated'. The second translation, *hermeneusis*, requires meticulous care to ensure that God's revelation is unmodified when being brought over to contemporary people, just as great circumspection is needed to translate the Bible to ensure that the message in the target language reflects the message in the source language.

Secondly, that the Bible is eternal and always valid also implies that the theocentric scopus of the revelation should be considered. The scopus is relational; it is concerned with the relation between God, human beings and the earth (Vorster 2004:608). Within the relation, several themes forming the message of the Bible can be discerned, such as human beings as the image of God related to humans' ability to stand in relationship with God, the covenant that forms the framework for the relation of God towards humans and the kingdom that is concerned with the dynamic character of God's reign on earth. In the Bible, God reveals what God is and does, the way God works salvation, and the way God wants to be honoured and served. The Bible does not provide simplistic one-on-one answers to all the questions contemporary times pose it and should not be abused by reading meanings into the text that were not given to the first readers. The Bible should rather be read in terms of the mutual revelation-historical coherence or metanarrative found in the Bible, and a distinction should be made between what the Bible says and one's own interpretation. To do so require as points of departure that the exegete should use well-grounded principles of exegesis whilst realising that scholars had

been interpreting the Bible for many centuries with the enlightenment provided by the Spirit and discounting all exegesis that exists within this tradition. Exegetes should also humbly realise their dependence on the guidance of the Holy Spirit because of their lack of insight. Own presuppositions, determined by the reader's psychological makeup, theory of science and theological tradition, should be acknowledged and stated in a logical manner (Vorster 2004:606–607), whilst the dependence on their own theological tradition (*in casu*) and the influence of their own personality, culture and personal and societal challenges should be taken into account.

The RCSA endorse the approach of grammatical-historical exegesis with consideration of the languages, styles and idioms, or the grammatical aspects, and the historical situations and socio-cultural circumstances in which different parts of the Bible originated. It includes several principles for the exposition of Scripture, such as text-critical control, grammatical analysis, and the discounting of the textual context of the text, as well as the determination of the revelation-historical space, location and focus of the historical context of a passage (Janse van Rensburg 2000:564–582).

There are various points of departure for *hermeneusis* that aim to bring the Bible message to contemporary people by presenting the results of the exegesis and applying it in the present context. Here, the guidance of the Spirit is also conditional to the success of the process (Jordaan et al. 2011:244). Other points of departure include distinguishing between the facts of salvation (indicative) and the exhortations (imperative) and between main and secondary issues, as well as recognising the temporally oriented essence of the Bible. It is also important that each passage should be read within the context of the revelation-historical themes of the Bible, and that Scripture should be compared with Scripture when distinguishing between indicative and imperative, defining the rhetorical, cultural-historical, and revelation-historical contexts, and determining the focal point of a passage.

The aim of *hermeneusis* is realised when the intention of the author is established, and the message is defined in a theological synthesis. What it requires from the exegete is the ability to discern between salvation fact and exhortation, and between focal point and matters of lesser importance, as well as to discount the contemporary context in a valid way in the *hermeneusis.* This discernment is something that only the Spirit can give (*donum interpretationis*) to the believing reader. It is also critical that the theological synthesis should attend to all the components of a passage in order not to relay the focal point of the passage to something that is not written in the text or that is marginal. It is the condition to answer the question, what does God reveal in this passage to the church? Lastly, *hermeneusis* can never only be the result of the mechanical application of hermeneutical principles and rules but necessitates the gift of application (*donum applicationis*) that only the Spirit can grant. It is a gift that should be practised repeatedly to change the activity

into an exercise that ends in the ability to communicate the contents of God's revelation in and through the word accurately and succinctly.

Pentecostal hermeneutic of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa

Pentecostal hermeneutics, as reflected in the AFM, developed alongside and in conjunction with its theological training. Early Pentecostal spirituality was charismatic and eschatologically flavoured (Land 1993:3). Pentecostals recounted their daily encounters with the supernatural and lived in and from the eschatological (or apocalyptic) presence of God (Archer 1996:64; Pluess 1993:189). Their Bible reading method was informed by the confession that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and they used Francis Bacon's principles of careful observation and classification of facts, wedded to Thomas Reid's 'common sense', which affirms the ability to apprehend the facts clearly ('Scottish common-sense realism'; Grönum 2008:29; Marsden 2006:12–13).[59] They used dictionaries to find biblical texts related to a theme and harmonised them; the Bible served as their only textbook used for interpreting what was happening in their day. It was also viewed as the only manual necessary for developing faith and doctrine. In many cases, they did not consider the historical distance that exists between the world of contemporary believers and the text, whilst many texts ventriloquised what they wanted to hear when they were interpreted as typology and allegory. What was important for them was to 'hear' the 'word of God' in the text, and their emphasis was on immediate meaning that was applied to their own context (Spittler 1985:75–77). What was important was to have an encounter with God; from the experiential perspectives, they eventually formulated the words (theology) to describe the content of their faith (Pluess 1993:191). They theologised mainly in the testimonies that formed an integral part of their worship services and their evangelistic endeavours, and they used biblical concepts and images to inform their discourse. They employed a positivistic understanding of history uncritically (Pluess 1993:192), and read the Bible as literally as possible (Archer 1996:65) and at face value (Archer 1996:66). They used the scopus in interpretation of the four- or fivefold full gospel preunderstanding of Jesus at the centre of their charismatic life (Menzies 1985:14; Tomberlin 2010:35–53). They theologised in an oral manner, allowing even the most uneducated believer to participate in the interpretation process (Ellington 1996:26), a practice that is still found in the Two-Thirds World where Pentecostalism experiences an explosion in terms of growth (Asamoah-Gyadu 2015:75–77). Their epistemology was relational and not merely informational (Ellington 1996:26).

59. Grönum (2008:30) described 'Scottish common-sense realism' in terms of a c*ommon sense* or foundation for science, a *direct realist* approach of direct access to reality and a Baconian inductive method.

Whereas Pentecostals were initially reviled and rejected by the society and the established church, after the Second World War they attempted to gain acceptance and improve their social status. In order to establish their movement as a church, as described above, some Pentecostals accepted a conservative biblicist-fundamentalist hermeneutic. In the USA, Pentecostals aligned with evangelicals to form the National Association of the Evangelicals (Jacobsen 1999:91). The AFM's Bible Schools trained prospective pastors in a fundamentalist way of reading the Bible (Lewis 2016:4), accepting conservative evangelicals' literalism and inerrancy of Scripture (Lewis 2016:5; Synan 1988:324–327). Fundamentalism is the view that the Bible is the Word of God per se (Vorster 2004:595), using a verbal theory of inspiration that asserts that although biblical authors applied their own style, their words were breathed by God, and therefore, infallible and flawless. The key epistemological presupposition was that objectivity can be realised and brought into service of a historicist view of meaning (Cargal 1993:163–187). From the 1950s, most AFM pastors and members in strong anti-intellectualist terms rejected the historical-critical study of the Bible that was interpreted as a liberal threat to true faith and the church (Satyavrata 1999:208, 219). Instead of countering the objective categories with the supranatural reality that they believed they experienced, they shared uncritically the positivistic epistemology of modernism (Jacobsen 1999:100; Robeck 1988:635).

A next era arrived when Pentecostal scholarship developed after the 1970s, leading to the establishment of theological colleges and seminaries. Eventually, this led to the formulation of a distinctive hermeneutic since the 1990s amongst a smaller group of theological scholars who showed some affinities with the Bible reading methods of the early Pentecostals, resulting in a growing divergence between pastors and theologians (Cargal 1993:179; Lewis 2016:10).

Early Pentecostals did not base the authority they accorded to Scripture on the doctrine of inerrancy or infallibility of the Bible but rather on their personal experiences of encountering God, as argued by Ellington (1996:17). The direction of the hermeneutical process differs from the Protestant hermeneutic. The direction is from the charismatic experiences of believers that are utilised in reading and interpreting the Bible in a prayer-filled and worshipping context, 'hearing' from the Spirit what the text 'means', which is then applied to the current situation. Although they accept the Scripture as the norm for faith and practice, their doctrine is not built on the interpretation of the Bible that tradition handed down, but rather on their own repeated observations of the ways in which God acts in conformity with the experience of people in the Bible. They utilise the Bible in an interactive way (Ellington 1996:21); the Bible becomes God's word for them when the Spirit ministers and applies its meaning to their situation (Land 1993:100). Pentecostal scholars today place the Spirit's authority to inspire the interpretation of the Bible for

the contemporary reader before the authority accorded to the Bible (Land 1993:106; Welker 1996:76), although it admits that it might lead to the risk of subjectivism. Pentecostals do not distinguish between 'inspiration' of the original text and 'illumination' in the interpretation of the text by the Spirit like the Reformed tradition does (Henry 1979:500). Spirit-filled believers live from a 'deep sense of expectation and an openness to surprise', leaving room for the unexpected (Smith 2010:33) as the early church also experienced because it was through the working of the same Spirit and accompanied by the same charismatic phenomenology (Ervin 1981:22).

Pentecostal Bible reading concentrates on biblical narratives to partly define their theology and praxis, something the Reformed tradition views as a flaw. In Reformed circles, narrative texts are not viewed as fit to form theological conclusions but only use didactic texts (Stott 1976:21–22). The purpose of their 'subjectivising' hermeneutic is to experience the re-enactment of the events of salvation (Olson 1999:491), including the baptism with the Spirit, the *charismata,* divine interventions, healing, and miracles (implying continuationism in contrast to Reformed hard or soft cessationism) (Keener 2016:54–56). Their immediately experienced and non-systematic tradition contrasts with the systematising tradition found in Aquinas and most Protestants (Campos 1989:1, 4–5).

According to Moore (1987:12–13), the Pentecostal hermeneutical approach can be explained in terms of four aspects. Firstly, the Spirit communicates with believers in terms of the Bible in ways that surpass human reason, and that primarily interprets the believer, making the Bible more than an object that believers interpret. Secondly, the aim of interpretation is a relational epistemology based on encounters with God as informed by the Bible. The result is not the attainment of intellectual knowledge about God but life transformation. Thirdly, the priesthood and prophethood of all believers imply that everyone can freely read and interpret the Bible and in theory contribute to its interpretation; it happens in testimonies of members and in house churches. Finally, the community of faith endowed with the gift of the 'discernment of spirits' (1 Cor 12:10) serves as corrective to prevent individual interpretation that might result in heretical teachings and to counter dangerous subjectivistic impressions.

Archer (1996:78–79, 2009:212–253) emphasised the relation and interaction between the community of faith, the activity of the Spirit, and the Bible in hermeneutics, and the necessity for dialogue between these elements. Pentecostals believe that the Spirit will show the community of believers what biblical passages are relevant for the life context of a specific church, as the practice of the early church in Acts 15 demonstrates. It takes the significant role of the Bible reader seriously, leaving room for different levels of meaning in a text and various interpretations when different readers interpret the text in

diverse ways because they apply it to their personal experience (Cargal 1993:186–187). It is important because Bible reading happens within a Pentecostal *Weltanschauung,* with the core of truth found in an encounter with God leading to life transformation and an apocalyptic view of God's direct involvement with the human world (Martin 2013:59–60). The Bible serves as the fixed reference point when evaluating and describing one's encounters with God; it is these experiences that form the core of Pentecostal identity.

The diversity in Pentecostal biblical interpretation should also be acknowledged (Becker 2004:34), consisting of the significance of the Holy Spirit in inspiring, enlightening and illuminating authors and readers; the significance of the community of faith and a combination of historical-grammatical exegesis with newer hermeneutical approaches that emphasise the role of the reader.

Comparing the hermeneutics in the Reformed Churches of South Africa and Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa

Whilst there are several interfaces between the hermeneutics in the RCSA and AFM, respectively, like the consideration of the Bible as the word of God and the importance of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in interpretation and application (emphasised strongly by John Calvin), there are also significant differences. These include, *inter alia,* the different directions of reading, the view of the canon as closed, the basis for the consideration of the authority of the Bible, the possibility of contemporary extra-biblical revelation, the emphasis on the importance and use of the experiential views in the reading process, the contents of the scopus, the practical involvement of all members in the interpretation process, the difference in views about knowledge of God as a result of biblical interpretation, the different distinctions between inspiration and illumination in the interpretation process, the different roles of biblical narratives and didactic material in formulating doctrine, the purpose of the hermeneutical process, the differences between continuationism and cessationism and the role of reason in interpretation and the concept of truth.

It can be accepted that the widely divergent hermeneutics may provide tension amongst students and lecturers at NWU. Next, the results of empirical research completed at NWU will be scrutinised to consider whether this was the case in 2020, the period when the empirical research was conducted.

Research results

A few colleagues of the Faculty of Theology registered an ethical project in 2019 and completed a survey, in which all theological lecturers and staff of the

Faculty of Theology at the three campuses (Mahikeng, Vaal Triangle and Potchefstroom) were invited to participate during the first semester of 2020. Sixteen, of a total of 35 academic staff, participated in completing the questionnaire of the quantitative research. Of the staff participants, 12 were male participants, 2 were female participants, 14 held doctorates, 15 were deployed at the Potchefstroom campus, and one respondent was from the Vaal Triangle campus. The racial profile of the staff participants was as follows: 13 (81%) white staff members, 1 (6%) black staff member and 2 (13%) staff members did not indicate their race. Furthermore, 13 of the respondents had three or more years of experience, whilst three had less than 3 years of experience. Thirteen were on the post level of professor; three were appointed as lecturers; three were employed only to lecture for graduate students; whilst the rest were involved in both graduate and postgraduate studies. Thirteen (81.3%) associated with the Reformed tradition, one (6.3%) with the Pentecostal tradition, one (6.3%) indicated that she or he is a rational scientist, and one (6.3%) did not answer the question.

Attention now shifts to the student participants. Fifty-five theological students participated in the research study. Of these, 22 were female and 33 were male participants. The racial profile of the student participants was as follows: 40 (72.7%) were black students, nine (16.4%) were white students, four (7.3%) were mixed-race students, and one (1.8%) was an Asian. Of the student participants, 28 (50.9%) were in the age group of 36–50, 12 (21.8%) were older than 50 and 14 (25.4%) were younger than the age group 36. The reason for the high percentage of older students is that most theological students were registered for contact studies; many Pentecostal students who registered were already in a form of ministry or completing their studies part-time because of another profession. For that reason, 26 (47.3%) students indicated that they were permanently employed, nine (16.4%) were self-employed, 16 (29%) were unemployed and four (7.3%) were temporarily employed. Fourteen (25.5%) of the students already held a bachelor's degree, whilst 17 (30.9%) had completed matric as their highest qualification. Forty-three (78.2%) of the respondents were registered as distance students – it should be kept in mind that all students registered for contact classes were indicated as students of the Potchefstroom campus; nine (16.4%) were from the Vaal Triangle and two (3.6%) were from Mahikeng. Thirty-seven (67.3%) participants indicated that they belonged to Pentecostal denominations, one (1.8%) participant belonged to the neo-Pentecostal group and the remaining 16 (29.1%) were in Reformed denominations. Of the total, 27 (49%) were in the AFM and 5 (9%) in the RCSA. The rest were from other denominations, such as Dutch Reformed, Methodist, Anglican, etc.

By comparison, a total of 489 graduate students registered in 2020 at the faculty, of which 66 (13.5%) indicated that they associated with the AFM; 37 (7.6%) indicated that they belonged to Pentecostal denominations other than

the AFM; 40 (8.2%) were members of the RCSA and 44 (9%) were from other Reformed denominations. The rest of the students (187 or 38.2%) were from other traditions, such as the Church of England, New Apostolic Church, and Roman Catholic Church, or indicated their church affiliation only as 'Christian' (67 or 13.7%) or 'not applicable' (48 or 9.8%).[60]

It is clear that a discrepancy exists between the religious traditions of lecturers and students. More than 80% of the lecturers who participated in the research study were from the RCSA and only one lecturer (6.3%) from a Pentecostal denomination, whilst less than 10% of the student respondents were from the RCSA and nearly 50% of the students were from the AFM, and a further 18% of the student respondents were from other Pentecostal denominations.

The question asked in this study is to what extent the lecturers from mainly the Reformed tradition were able to effectively present both hermeneutical models and angles represented by the students in a balanced and sympathetic form. In an attempt to answer the question, by the information provided, the students' perceptions of theological training at NWU were investigated.

A first issue is concerned with the distance mode of class presentation. Initially, lecturers at the faculty were appointed to teach intramurally, with all students attending their classes. Contact classes only became necessary after the agreement between NWU and the AFM in 2011, causing extra work for lecturers because of the accompanying burden of preparing written study material and presenting electronic classes for distance students as well. It seems that not all participating lecturers were satisfied with the distance studies.[61] From the research study, it became clear that 15 (93.8%) lecturers believed that face-to-face teaching with such students would have been preferable. In comparison, 28 (50.9%) students agreed that face-to-face teaching would be preferable, whilst 49.1% disagree. Seven (43.7%) lecturers would prefer that distance education should be self-directed and without any lecturer facilitation, whilst only 16 (29.1%) students agree that distance education should be self-directed without any lecturer facilitation, whilst 70.9% disagree. It might be that the negative attitude experienced by some lecturers might have influenced the way they presented distance learning.

An interesting statistic is that nine lecturers (56.3%) defined leadership in terms of a position of power, whilst eight (50%) lecturers defined it as having authority in the community to tell people what to do. The inference might be

60. Antoinett Moerdyk, faculty administrator, generated the statistics from the administrative system of NWU.

61. One of the respondents in answering the question what other skills they would prefer to teach in their modules made the remark, '[d]on't force lecturers to become online teaching experts and teach and do research. Set priorities and stick to it'.

made that such lecturers might view their teaching ministry in the same terms that might disqualify students from participating in differing opinions. Another important feature is concerned with the question whether one's church has a strong healing ministry. Because 'healing ministry' was not further qualified, it might be deduced that participants might have been using different definitions. For Pentecostals, the ministries of healing and deliverance are a regular and continuous part of church life. As can be expected, 12 (75.1%) respondents of the academic staff revealed that in their churches there was no healing ministry, whilst 41 (72.7%) students associated with churches with a strong healing ministry. A last feature that requires commenting is that seven (43.8%) staff respondents thought that the current theological curriculum was characterised by practical applicability; the same number was 'neutral' about the issue and only two (12.5%) were negative. Three students (5.4%) were negative, whilst 39 (70.9%) students were positive that the curriculum was practically applicable. At the same time in commenting on the curriculum and its delivery, a remark made by several students is noteworthy. They were of the opinion that a better balance between theory and practice should be created by lecturers.

The COVID-19 pandemic that hit South Africa in the second half of March 2020 made several demands on NWU, requiring, *inter alia,* that all graduate classes be presented online. The challenges facing many African students included Internet availability and connectivity because many of them live in rural areas, and connectivity was also curtailed by financial constraints. At the faculty of theology, however, only 10.9% of the respondents indicated that they had problems in accessing the electronic study material and online classes. However, a more worrying statistic is that 13 (23.6%) respondents indicated that they considered leaving their studies before completion of their qualification. At the same time, 6 (10.9%) indicated that they were negative about church ministry as a career, whilst 11 (20%) respondents indicated that they were neutral about the issue. Furthermore, 44 (80%) students indicated that they considered following an additional career alongside ministry, and 34 (61.8%) believed that it would be a good idea to include non-theological subjects to develop secondary career skills to support them in ministry. However, only 13 (23.7%) respondents opined that it was a good idea to change the current curriculum into a selection of short courses that could then be completed over approximately 6 years.

In commenting on the present curriculum and its delivery by lecturers, a few remarks from students catch the eye. One of the perceptions is that although the modules and lecturers differed from each other, at times it was perceived that lecturers' current support of distance students was not enough to ensure students that they were ready for the examinations. Another remark criticises the current system of contact sessions because lecturers were not always ready to answer students' questions and queries. Although it was clear

that students opined that such lecturers were knowledgeable about the content of the modules, they seemed unable to adequately respond to all the students' concerns. The last issue is concerned with the AFM's system of facilitators appointed by the church, especially to help students in realising the differences between the Reformed and Pentecostal paradigms, whilst all NWU lecturers, with one exception, represented the first paradigm. Extra classes at AFM venues in Gauteng and the Western Cape were arranged on some Saturdays. A student remarked that a gap clearly existed between the resident lecturers and the church's facilitators.

Conclusion

Despite several significant agreements between the Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical angles that were described, some critical differences were also identified. The question was posed to what extent the lecturers were able to facilitate both hermeneutical models in a fair and representative way. In the analysis of lecturers' and students' responses in the quantitative research, it became clear that nearly all lecturers were from the RCSA and other Reformed denominations, whilst two-thirds of the students were from Pentecostal churches. Nearly all lecturers were white, a figure reflected in part in comparison with the total academic staff employed by the Faculty of Theology, whilst most students were from the black community. The majority of students were registered for distance studies, although it became necessary to present online classes to on-campus students since March 2020, because of the effects of COVID-19 and the government's requirements for social distancing. Not all lecturers were positive about the burden that distance students placed on them and most of them would have preferred students to attend their classes on campus, whilst half of all responding students disagreed. In the case of distance studies, nearly half of the lecturers would have preferred to be involved only in providing the study material to the students, whilst a minority of students agreed. It seems that negativity about distance studies might be a factor in considering the issue of divergent hermeneutical models as nearly all distance students were from the Pentecostal tradition.

That more than half of the lecturers defined leadership in terms of a position of power and authority where the leader's responsibility is to convey people what to do might be significant and it might probably be reflected in the way they defined their employment as lecturers and treated students differing from their theological paradigm.

The difference between the two hermeneutical models is demonstrated by the differences between the lecturers' and students' response to the question of whether their churches supported a healing ministry. In their hermeneutic, Pentecostals support continuationism *contra* the Reformed paradigm's hard

or soft cessationism, and healing and deliverance influenced the Pentecostal perception of the mission and practice of the local church.

In their remarks, students refer to the problem that the two paradigms presented by the faculty caused several problems where lecturers did not always understand the concerns of their distance students, whilst cooperation between lecturers and church facilitators was not always healthy and that conflicts at times hampered a better agreement.[62]

If hermeneutics forms the key to theological training and serves as the most significant and essential element in one's theological formation in service of the paradigm in which one's church functions, it seems that the Faculty of Theology's training of Pentecostal students may be subject to certain challenges. Even though the AFM was initially and still is involved in curriculum design, it seems that the perception of academic staff members and students implies that a measure of tension was experienced because of the difference in hermeneutical angles of lecturers and students.

62. It is recognised that the opposite probably would have been true as well, if a majority of lecturers represented a Pentecostal hermeneutical paradigm and the majority of students a Reformed paradigm.

Chapter 17

Reflective perspectives on theological education in Africa

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Abstract

In this concluding chapter, we, the editors, offer a number of reflective perspectives on theological education in Africa based on the foregoing chapters. We first argue that the stakeholders in theological education in Africa should be reminded that God is active, not just in the church but also in education, as theological education belongs to him. Hence, theological

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educators and institutions in Africa need to align themselves with the *missio Dei* to experience the life-giving presence of the resurrected Jesus who made himself known in communion with the first Christians. We also argue that theological education in Africa needs to take the realities of Africa to heart. Africa represents a complex context that calls for contextualisation that is intent on contextual exegesis, whilst being cognisant of its global citizenship so that theology in Africa shines a light not only for Africa but also for the rest of the world. Finally, we argue that theological education must heed the reality of the church. The church in Africa has many challenges, the least of which is largely uneducated ministerial corps. The Christian church is also growing in the Global South, necessitating good education. Only with these realities in mind, the editors believe, theological education in Africa will be able to supply the growing demand for training men and women for ministry.

Introduction

Collective works such as this usually develop according to a unique dynamic that yields outcomes that could not be predicted beforehand. Whilst protagonists of a central and unified theme may feel this to be a shortcoming, diverse voices and viewpoints in collective undertakings can also be a benefit as it reflects the reality of fragmented communities and provides some indication of the multifaceted challenges that confront us in any particular area. It thus tends to be authentic in its reflection of reality.

The task before us, in this chapter, is to reflect on the diverse voices that were raised in the foregoing contributions. The main question that steered our thinking is related to the question of what these voices were saying, or did not say, which can take the issue of theological education in Africa forward. Our attempts in this regard will in no way be offered as definitive as we acknowledge our own 'situatedness' in theological education. Working at public universities in South Africa already influenced how we think and react to opinions about the theme under investigation, and therefore, also on the heuristic activity attempted here. It will not reflect each of the perspectives offered by the contributors, but will rather reflect on the realities mentioned. Nevertheless, we trust that we will succeed to articulate, to some extent, the collective contribution of these chapters, identifying what we perceive from these writings as imperative for the way forward.

The contributions received for this book were arranged according to the four main themes:

- historical and current perspectives on theological education in Africa
- some paradigm shifts in theological education in Africa
- ministerial formation needs vs. theological education challenges
- critical reflection on a selection of models and methods

The significance of these themes lies in the fact that the editors did not give any specific brief to contributors, except that they were invited to take part in a book project on theological education in Africa. Although a meeting with all potential authors was planned to take place in Kenya in early 2020, the reality of coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) struck before it could happen, and the contributors, receiving the planned outline of the book, took their own initiative in writing. Apart from the fact that these topics could be divided into four distinguishable themes, it reflected the individual issues the authors deemed to be important for theological education in Africa, either from the perspective of their own teaching context or from the position of a partner in theological education. In some instances, it voiced deep-rooted concerns, and in others, it suggested alternatives to what is currently the accepted norm for theological education in certain parts of Africa.

In the ensuing reflection, we attend to at least the following realities that transpired in this work: firstly, the reality that the church, and therefore, theological education, belongs to God; secondly, the reality of the church, its history and its future; and thirdly, some of the realities of Africa that begs the attention of theological educators.

Theological education in Africa belongs to God

In a reflection about Christianity and subsequent theological education in Africa, one is struck by the rich Christian heritage of the continent. Africans hold dear the fact that the parents of Jesus sought refuge with their infant in Egypt during their Judean flight (Mt 2:12–23). Also, that Africa had Christians 'from Pentecost on' (Oden 2007:16), and that Alexandria played host to the first theological school established by St. Mark (see ch. 1). These developments should not only be recognised as God's merciful engagement with Africa, not passing her by in the incarnation of the Good News, but also positioning Africa to nurture and cultivate the Christian message – as, indeed, the gospel was also entrusted to Africans (1 Th 2:4).

In studying theological education in Africa from a missional perspective, one discovers the presence of God in the history of the church and Africa. However, when we are talking about the future of theological education in Africa, we talk and plan as if we are the main actors in this reality. Taking the *missio Dei* serious, we must recognise that the Trinitarian God is the main actor in theological education, as it is a part of his mission, and we as church, as believers and academics, have the privilege to participate in what God is doing with his church in Africa. Unfortunately, this is not the way we act and think about theological education, we act as if God is working in the church and we in academia. Rooted in modernistic thinking, we tend to believe that

God is only active in the church. If we, however, accept that God is active in all spheres of life, continuing the *missio Dei,* we should also create space for this in HE and merely participate in God's actions in academia. Then it does not matter where theological education takes place, whether at institutions of HE, private institutions or Bible schools, we will recognise the reality of the risen Lord and perceive our activities as an extension of God's actions in the world.

However, this exciting action of God's entrusting of the gospel to the African continent in the past, and especially now in the 21st century, does not play out in some divine vacuum, protecting it from human interference, but is in fact immersed in social history as Knoetze explained in Chapter 1. The Christian church in Africa and its endeavours to educate the custodians of the Christian message, therefore, had to endure many challenges that transpired through centuries of history, physically and intellectually. If and when theological education in Africa focuses on the education of the 'custodians of the Christian message', it is of essence to realise that this does not only reflect on the keeping of the Christian traditions but, more importantly, it must prepare spiritual leaders and a church that will be faithful to the future church that God is gathering in the 21st century in Africa and in the world. The true Christian church was not only the church in the time of Jesus but also the church that the Trinitarian God has gathered and is still busy gathering to present him and participate in his mission today till the end of time.

For Africa in particular, being in the world meant being the convergence point of numerous colonial quests, with each new coloniser bringing along its own set of values – and alas – its own understanding of God. For European invaders, it meant equating a European interpretation to civilisation itself (Saayman 2007). With each period of colonisation, this meant inhibiting local development of an authentic African theology. It can be argued that this effectively paused the flourishing of an authentic African theology for different periods of history. In a certain sense, this caused an enduring thirst and longing for an 'own' theology that resonates with Christians doing theology in Africa until this day. Such a thirst is evident in a number of chapters in this collective work.

Thinking from a missional hermeneutics perspective, this thirst will never be quenched as long as we focus theological education on training custodians of the Christian traditions, without training them to be custodians of the Christian church of the 21st century in Africa. A remark by Keifert (2007:58) helped us to grasp this. He wrote on the liturgy of the Holy Communion of the Greek Orthodox church and how they rejected the liturgy of the Western church as a repetition of the last supper between Jesus and his disciples the night before he was crucified. Instead, they chose to focus on the meal the resurrected Jesus had with the travellers on their way to Emmaus. The church is rather seen in these two disillusioned and confused persons on their way to continue their everyday life after the resurrection of Christ. There is a space

between the resurrection and the fulfilment of the promises of Christ, and it is within this space that they meet a stranger that reveals to them the Scriptures. The crux is that they only discover that this stranger is the risen Lord after they invited Him to join them at the table. It is in the hospitality to a stranger that Christ reveals himself to his church as the risen Lord. It is also this community with strangers, which is a foretaste of the heavenly meal with the Lamb, that makes the promises of the Lord and the actions of the Trinitarian God a reality in this time and age.

Theological educators in Africa need to realise that we are the custodians not only of the history but also of the future church. Theological education needs to help those who are called to discern where and how the Trinitarian God is currently at work in the church in Africa, but also on the continent of Africa and globally. As such, theological education needs to educate students to use the Bible not only as a textbook, not only as *sola Scriptura,* but also as God's engagement with and revelation to his creation. It also needs to educate students to use Bible as God's story with us, living here and now.

If we, however, learnt nothing else during the compilation of this work, it is that God is actively present in this world, and that his church has the privilege of journeying with him and participating in his mission throughout the history of theological education in Africa. And at times, it may even seem that God is working in strange ways, but that he *is* working and keeping his church (2 Tm 1:12) will be hard to deny. In all four corners of Africa, it was shown that theological institutions are developing – and even thriving – and that many are doing so through resilience and creativity, even in war-torn and violence-infested areas of the continent (see ch. 2).

The reality of Africa

Very few, if any, will disagree that Africa is a troubled continent in almost all aspects of life, whether it is political, sociological, economical, spiritual or physically. However, it is also true that Africa has the greatest potential to overcome all these troublesome realities. Within these realities of Africa, the expectations of the church and its ministers have changed. Previously, in the West, the church was viewed as a spiritual institution that has to take care of the spiritual wellbeing of people, whilst the state or the politicians took care of the physical wellbeing of people. This worked well within the Western worldview with the dualism between spirituality and physicality. This is clearly seen in all the historical documents on the relation between the church and the state. Within the African holistic worldview, a 'new' ecclesiological understanding, where the church is viewed as a change agent in a society, asks theological education to deliver students that are both spiritual leaders, entrepreneurs and change agents in local societies (Knoetze 2020:2).

The African context, like any other context, is influenced by globalisation, which is a complicated concept at best. South Africa, for example, is home to the so-called 'rainbow nation' in recognition of the many global ethnicities and cultures that live here. This multicultural identity is not limited to Southern Africa, but is, indeed, engrained in the rest of Africa and true of the rest of the globe. The idea of *the* African context hence lost its generic appeal. At best, we should start thinking about a particular African context or even African contexts (plural), depending on which part or parts of Africa or the world is at stake. Just think for a moment of a concept like 'African American' used in the USA. What does this mean? Would it in this sense be possible to use the concept of an American African, for example, for those who studied and lived in America for so many years that they lived with a different or global worldview? How does this relate to Africa and theological education in Africa? Must it relate to theological education in Africa? Is this part of the 'estranged, un-contextual, colonised' theology of Africa? This varied character of African contexts also left us wondering if the acute drive for mentioned revolutionary '-sations' (Africanisation, indigenisation, to name a few) are in the best interest of contemporary HE in Africa. Whilst we note Labuschagne's contention that Western approaches to theological education in Africa 'must fall' (see Chapter 15), we are rather sceptic of the idea that there can only be one knowledge system in one particular place in a globalised world with its multicultural character.

Reading through the chapters in this volume it becomes clear that theological education in Africa is *enculturated* by the West in ways it ought not to be, and not *inculturated* in ways it ought to be. It may, however, be even more complex. Taking cognisance that the epicentre of world Christianity has moved to the South, we also need to think globally about theological education. Whilst the church in Europe and America is dying from a lack of effective evangelism, or enculturation, the church in Africa and the rest of the majority world struggle because of a lack of resources and inculturation (Moon 2017:3). As such, theological education in Africa needs to be careful of a monocultural approach of Africanisation, or decolonisation that might lead to enculturation that wipes out the church. Rather, we need a valid inculturation that theological education needs in every era and every distinctive community (Hastings 2012:38). A monocultural approach is the main reason for the so called 'irrelevant theology' that is taught in Africa.

In this regard, we heed the notion of Nigerian academic, Denis Epko (Galloway 2017):

> Whilst the champions of decolonisation and Africanisation are sincerely fighting to free Africa and the mind of the African from unwanted legacies of the colonial past and for the right to articulate an indigenous African code of knowledge, they could be unconsciously working towards results that could be harmful to Africa [...] a dogmatic vision of Fanon no longer helps Africa [...]. (n.p.)

Subsequently, Epko's idea of 'post-Africanism' seems to resonate well with the harsh and enduring postcolonial realities of Africa, even after it has been liberated for many years. According to him (Galloway 2017), post-Africanism is:

> [*A*] new philosophy that believes for the African mind to reach its best creative potential it needs to free Africa from Fanonian anti-colonial paranoia and Afrocentric nativist narcissism with a view to opening the continent fully to its universal human vocation. It's about finding new strategies of thinking. (n.p.)

The matter of aiming the academic offer of theological education more accurately on the African mind and the context in which they will eventually minister have been repeatedly engaged in this work, albeit from different perspectives. There, however, seems to be consensus that Western knowledge is still being perpetuated in current approaches to African theological education to a degree that is perceived to be misaligned with the African context.

In this framework, our own idea of contextualisation finds a home; to make theology (*Theos, logos*, our words about God) relevant in different African contexts. Understanding theological education first and foremost as God's engagement within a contextual paradigm means taking the local context and all knowledge(s) present seriously. Therefore, contextual exegesis should come before curriculum design and delivery method. We need to ask God questions in the context of Africa. Instead of asking what is happening in Africa or within a specific context in Africa, thinking it is the work of the politicians or governments, or even evil spiritual forces, we must ask: what is happening? What is God busy doing within Africa, or within this specific context, and what theological education and understanding do we need to participate in his mission here and now? To put it different, who are the strangers we need to invite to our communion to be custodians of the gospel? Whilst we understand that this presents an arduous challenge for theological education in Africa, we also believe that this is a prerequisite of an authentic African theological education, that is, an education that will prepare women and men to pastor Africa, whilst contributing to the global village of which it is part.

The reality of the church

As theological education is aimed at the church, it must be aware of the realities of the church in Africa. Knoetze (2021:7) reminds us that a mere 15% of all pastors in African churches have any formal theological education, whilst 85% of all church leaders have no formal theological education. We may ask: is the African church one of the strangers that theological education needs to invite to the table to have communion with? Together, we will maybe receive a clearer revelation of the risen Lord and his activities that can lead to a more engaged and focused participation.

Be that as it may, we received valuable inputs that can start to lead us to more such focused participation. In Chapter 14, Gaga, for example, mentioned two key learning philosophies setting the path for theological institutions, namely, 'Athens' and 'Berlin'. 'Athens' indicates a type of *paideia* schooling as the heart of education; this includes a process of 'culturing' the soul, schooling as 'character formation'. Whilst 'Berlin' indicates an education that is bipolar, it stresses the interconnected importance of two quite different enterprises, namely, an orderly, disciplined, critical research and a professional education for ministry. This seems to correspond with the two proposed methods of theological education: online and face-to-face. Although we believe that it is possible to do spiritual formation online, we contend that it is achieved best when combining the online teaching from institutions and ministerial formation from churches through partnerships, as suggested in Chapter 2.

One can also argue that theological education is not merely about teaching theory and skills but also about making disciples (Mt 28:19). 'Discipleship is about challenging idolatries that try to replace the sovereignty of God with human power and money. It is about turning the world upside down' (Coorilos 2018:315).

Theological education as discipleship is an important aspect of the *missio Dei*. It is serious about the spiritual development of students, about which contributors to this volume raised concerns. In this regard, Chabata, in Chapter 11, states:

> Theological education content in Zimbabwe has excelled in preparing converts for blissful life in heaven but has created a 'Thessalonian syndrome' in the local churches. 'Thessalonian syndrome' refers to the biblical Church of Thessalonica's pitfall of neglecting and abandoning productive life in anticipation of the imminent return of Jesus Christ to take away the believers. (ch. 11, in this book)

Knoetze (2020:5) argued that theological education as Christ-connected discipleship will, in the footsteps of Jesus, participate in changing the social ills and disparities in this world. Hastings (2012) helped with the following understandings:

> [*E*]*enculturation,* which has sociological roots, to describe the process whereby an existent, prevailing culture influences an individual or community (e.g. the church) to imbibe its accepted norms and values so the individual or community is pressured to find acceptance within the society of that culture. *Inculturation* however, is a missiological term which refers to ways to adapt the communication of the gospel for a specific culture being evangelized. (p. 38)

Theological education in Africa must realise that the church is now here, in Africa, *enculturated* and *inculturated*, right or wrong? There are many concerns and many transformational plans. There are many theories and views, called 'postcolonisation', 'postmodernism', etc., and '-sations', for example, 'Africanisation', decolonisation', etc. Talking about theological education in Africa, we use all this hyperbolic language; however, we mean that all the

'post-' and '-sation' language does not really help us. What we believe will help us is becoming serious about the reality of the church in Africa. The church in Africa is part of a global and a local (glocal) context, and the church is challenged with new questions, different questions to the church in North America and the West. God has called and is gathering a church in Africa to participate in his mission in Africa. He is preparing and sending his church to new and different situations, and we may participate and must educate and train those called to be custodians of these new endeavours.

A further distinction is between theological education and ministerial formation. Theological education deals with important theological concepts that are globally accepted, or by which Christians are challenged, for example, understandings of God, love, life, death, sin and being human, whilst theological education also researches the beliefs of other religions on these concepts. As such, Christianity and biblical teachings provide Africans a new compass to chart the course of their life within an African context. However, a compass is useless if you do not know where you are and where you want to go. Turaki (2012) made this important remark:

> That is why it is important for African Christians who want to be authentic and relevant to have a thorough knowledge of the African terrain. [...] Unless we know what it is that we need to renew and transform, we cannot make progress in the transformation. (p. 9)

Whilst making use of this knowledge (theological education), ministerial formation (training or mentorship) deals with the symptoms of, for example, sin in this world, like poverty, racism and so on, within a specific context. In this work, much is made of the need for training in development, sustainability, transformation, etc., and for the inclusion of this in the theological curriculum. What is essential is to determine what is meant by development and transformation. 'Transformation' and 'development' mean different things to different people in different contexts. *Development* can be theologically defined (Knoetze 2018) as:

> [*T*]he goal to engage people to discover their true identity as created in the image of God and discover their vocation as productive stewards who care for creation and all the people in it. (p. 484)

or it can be economically defined as 'simply having more things' (Myers 2015:3). When theologically defined I believe it is included in the curriculum, but when only economically defined, it is not in the curriculum of theological education. However, it can be included in skills development, for example, entrepreneurship, when ministerial formation is happening within a specific context.

It is clear that there are many issues, symptoms that need to be addressed by the church in Africa, which are very contextual to Africa. Gaga in his chapter asks the important question of 'what the purpose of theological education was when it started'. As indicated in Chapter 1, theological education has the following as its purpose: firstly, research (including research on other religions);

secondly, establishing a system of theological studies (not a hit-and-run-curriculum); thirdly, to resist the heresies of the time. Although theological education and ministerial formation come together, there is also a distinction between theological education and ministerial formation, or theological *training*. Theological education needs to be globally contextual, whilst ministerial formation needs to be locally contextual. Such theological education can best be carried out at institutions of HE where theology can influence and be influenced by different academic disciplines, as well as global theological insights from scholars of different denominations and networks, being salt and light in the academic world. Whilst ministerial formation must happen in and from the church within a specific local context, against the background of the global theological context, thus there needs to be a well-established partnership between the church and the institution for HE (Chabata; Nel).

Conclusion

It is non-negotiable that theological education in Africa needs to respond to the new challenges that God reveals to us, with one such challenge being COVID-19. So far, we have seen that the education sector responded with good success and in creative ways to this challenge. Acknowledging that there are many subsequent challenges, the point is that there was an immediate response. This helps Africa in its engagement with the Fourth Industrial Revolution as Africa is slowly but surely tapping into some of the resources afforded by technological developments, making online education and education by extension possible.

However, of concern is, theological education does not always respond as quickly and effectively to the challenges of the church in Africa. Just to mention a few of these challenges needing serious attention: poverty, HIV, and child and gender abuse. All of the time, however, Africa is growing her own theology, yielding new theologians and servants to serve Christianity on the continent. Building forth on the grace shown by the Lord on this continent, we want to propose a more moderate approach for the way forward. In the spirit of appreciative enquiry, we would rather want to distinguish what is good from the past in order to combine it with what is novel and dynamic in the present to address the many burning issues challenging Africa and the rest of the global village. This call becomes even more important in light of the growth of Christianity in the Global South. This is a growth that is unfortunately often offset by the emergence of many dubious churches and even more dubious 'spiritual leaders', exacerbating the need for good theology in Africa.

Appendix A

Cohérence et pertinence des curricula des Institutions de formation théologiques en Afrique francophone[63]

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Résumé

Le curriculum se trouve au centre de tout système de formation et d'éducation. Il se révèle comme l'outil politico-pédagogique incontournable pour les sociétés et leur système éducatif.

À l'instar de la société en générale, l'église en Afrique, qui se veut à la fois canal de salut spirituel et aussi de salut social, économique, politique, etc. des

63. This appendix is the original French version of Chapter 8 (within this book), written by Roger Y. N'Dri. The chapter was originally written in French, and was translated into English to be published as Chapter 8, but has been presented here as well for readers interested in reading the original French text.

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peuples, se dote de structures de formation de ses leaders. Cependant, aux regards des contingences socioculturelles africaines en proie à des mutations constantes, l'on se demande si les curricula de formation des différentes institutions de formation théologiques et bibliques en Afrique sont en adéquation avec les attentes théologiques et les réalités socioculturelles en vogue sur le continent.

Pour faire face à cette préoccupation, les institutions membres du Conseil des Institutions Théologiques d'Afrique Francophone (CITAF) ont, depuis 1994, travaillé à mettre en place un programme minimum commun (PMC) qui se présente comme un ensemble intégré d'actions d'enseignements planifiés en vue d'assurer une formation biblique et théologique, valable, homogène et adaptée au système d'éducation et de formation théologique en Afrique francophone.

La présente contribution intitulée *Cohérence et pertinence des curricula des Institutions de formation théologique en Afrique francophone* se fixe pour objectif de réfléchir sur ce programme minimum commun des institutions membres du CITAF, plus d'une décennie après son adoption officielle. Plus spécifiquement, il est question d'analyser sa pertinence et sa cohérence au regard d'un contexte social, politique, économique, culturel africain en constante mutation.

Pour ce faire, la contribution s'articule autour certains axes principaux, tels que la connaissance du CITAF et de sa mission, une présentation du PMC comme standard d'accréditation des enseignements des institutions membres du CITAF. S'ensuit une évaluation de la cohérence et de la pertinence du PMC du CITAF au regard des réalités contextuelles africaines en constante mutation. Des propositions pour un PMC actualisé, utilitaire et pertinent sont enfin émises. Car, si tant il est vrai que la société est le but principal de toute éducation, l'Église africaine est amenée à reformuler et redéfinir les curricula de formation de ses serviteurs de Dieu en les rendant plus cohérents et plus pertinents à répondre aux besoins du développement de l'humain et des communautés.

Introduction

Le curriculum se trouve au centre de tout système de formation et d'éducation. En effet, selon le Centre d'Étude et de Défense de l'École Publique (CEDEP), la mission principale et primordiale de l'école et de tout système de formation est de:

> Former des citoyens et des citoyennes, bien dans leur tête et dans leur corps, épanouis, prêts à voir leur avenir avec confiance et détermination et maitrisant un certain nombre de concepts, de savoirs et de méthodes de travail. Des citoyens capables de construire cette société que nous voulons plus juste et plus solidaire. Des citoyens libres, autonomes, émancipés (CEDEP sd).

Cette déclaration du CEDEP place l'école et les systèmes de formation au centre des sociétés qui se veulent prospères et émancipées, avec des citoyens socialisés, qualifiés, compétents et conscients de leurs missions sociétales. Mais pour mieux accomplir cette mission, l'école et les systèmes de formation doivent se doter d'instrument de formation et d'éducation conséquents. Ici, le curriculum se révèle comme l'outil politico-pédagogique incontournable à cet effet, car il permettra de répondre aux questions fondamentales suivantes : Que faut-il enseigner ? Comment l'enseigner? Et comment organiser la progression des apprentissages ? Pour atteindre quels objectifs?

À l'instar de la société en générale, l'église en Afrique, qui se veut non seulement canal de salut spirituel des peuples, mais aussi canal de salut social, économique, politique se munit de structures de formation de ses leaders. Pour faire face à cette nécessité, les institutions membres du Conseil des Institutions Théologiques d'Afrique Francophone (CITAF) ont, depuis 1994, travaillé à mettre en place un Programme Minimum Commun (PMC) qui se présente comme un ensemble intégré d'actions d'enseignements planifiés en vue d'assurer une formation biblique et théologique, valable, homogène et adaptée au système d'éducation et de formation théologique en Afrique francophone.

Cependant, au regard des contingences socioculturelles africaines en proie à des mutations constantes, l'on se demande si ce PMC, curriculum de formation des différentes institutions de formation théologiques et bibliques en Afrique, est et demeure en adéquation avec les attentes théologiques et les réalités socioculturelles en vogue sur le continent. Il s'agit plus spécifiquement d'analyser les questions suivantes:

Quelle théorie a sous-tendu la conception curriculaire du CITAF ? Quelle évaluation peut-on faire de ce curriculum en rapport aux critères de cohérence et de pertinence ? Et enfin, comment rendre ce curriculum cohérent et pertinent pour l'église et la société africaine ?

Ces interrogations conduisent à réfléchir à la réalité curriculaire dans les institutions membres du Conseil des Institutions Théologiques d'Afrique Francophone (CITAF). Il s'agit donc pour la présente contribution de se fixer pour objectif principal la présentation des éléments constitutifs du PMC et d'évaluer leur cohérence et leur pertinence, plus d'une décennie après son adoption officielle. Ainsi, "*Cohérence et pertinence des curricula des Institutions de formation théologique en Afrique francophone*" est le thème que nous nous évertuerons à analyser ici.

Pour une meilleure intelligence de cette thématique, nous organisons la démarche autour de trois angles spécifiques, à savoir: d'abord faire la connaissance du CITAF et de son PMC, ensuite analyser le PMC au regard des critères de cohérence et de pertinence, et enfin, réfléchir à un curriculum plus utilitaire dans une perspective transformationnelle au regard d'un contexte social, politique, économique, culturel… africain en constante mutation.

Le CITAF et son PMC

Bref historique du CITAF

Dans le but d'offrir aux établissements bibliques et théologiques une plate-forme de réflexion, de partage et d'échange pour une formation qui prend en compte les réalités africaines, la FATEB[64] a initié dès 1994 une série de rencontres des établissements de formation théologique et biblique de l'Afrique francophone. La première rencontre formelle qui donnera naissance au CITAF se tint à Bangui du 11 au 13 septembre 1997 sur les questions relatives aux programmes, à la contextualisation, à la méthodologie d'enseignement et à la bibliothèque. La rencontre de Lomé en 2005 consacre officiellement la naissance d'une plate-forme dénommée Conseil des Institutions Théologiques d'Afrique Francophone (CITAF). Sa mission est de servir de cadre de concertation et de réflexions théologiques, d'homologation, de collaboration et de suivi des institutions de formation biblique et théologique d'Afrique francophone. Les dernières rencontres de l'assemblée dénérale et l'École de gouvernance du CITAF qui se sont tenues du 29 juillet au 04 août 2018 à Yaoundé au Cameroun ont mobilisé plus d'une quarantaine d'institutions actives, membres. Ces institutions proviennent principalement de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Bénin, Guinée Togo, Mali, Niger, etc.) et de l'Afrique centrale (Tchad, Cameroun, RDC, RCA, Gabon, etc.). Une institution de l'Afrique du Nord et certaines de Madagascar sont inscrites au nombre des membres du CITAF.

Le PMC, un standard d'accréditation des enseignements des institutions membres du CITAF

Conception d'un programme minimum commun (PMC)

Une des missions principales assignées au CITAF dès sa création consistait à l'élaboration d'un Programme Minimum Commun (PMC) pour servir à la standardisation des programmes d'études dans les différents établissements d'enseignement biblique et théologique d'Afrique francophone. Ainsi, dès la rencontre de Bangui (RCA) en 1997, les participants ont demandé avec vif intérêt à la FATEB de proposer aux autres institutions un Programme Minimum Commun. Une proposition de nomenclature des cours se trouvera donc au menu de la rencontre de Bangui les 10-12 septembre 1998. La première ébauche du descriptif des cours retenus pour constituer l'architecture du PMC est élaborée et adoptée à la rencontre de Bouaké (Côte d'Ivoire) les 23-28 août 1999. En juillet 2001 à Bangui, le PMC est remis à l'ordre du jour. Le quantum horaire annuel des cours est défini, aussi bien que la durée de

64. FATEB : Faculté de Théologie évangélique de Bangui

formation par niveau et la qualification requise des enseignants pour chaque niveau.

Le PMC proposé a fait l'objet d'amélioration au fil des années et a été définitivement adopté à la consultation de juillet 2005 à Lomé (Togo). Ce document, selon Isaac Zokoué, est déjà en soi un standard d'accréditation des enseignements des institutions membres. Il s'agit d'une création unique dans le domaine de l'éducation théologique en Afrique. (cf. eds. Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005:6).

Les objectifs assignés au PMC étaient donc de décrire les cours, de déterminer la prestation des enseignements et la qualification des enseignants.

Bref aperçu du contenu du Programme Minimum Commun

Le programme minimum commun dont s'est doté le CITAF consiste en sa grande partie en une nomenclature et en un descriptif des cours pour les différents ordres d'enseignements ,dans les établissements membres. Les différents ordres ou niveaux d'enseignements pris en compte par le PMC sont les suivants :

Le Niveau I

Les institutions du niveau I concernent celles qui dispensent les formations bibliques dans les langues africaines. Les grands axes d'enseignement de ce niveau, tels que prescrits par le PMC (eds. Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005:17–29) sont les suivants :

La connaissance de la Bible

- Survol de l'AT
- Survol du NT
- Aperçu du monde de la Bible
- Analyse de livres de la Bible
- etc.

Doctrine

Histoire
Mission
Les religions et les sectes contemporaines

Cours Pratiques

- Homilétique
- Liturgie et musicologie
- Église et développement
- Ministère pastoral
- etc.

Disciplines générales

- Littérature orale africaine
- Français
- etc.

Ces différents enseignements sont répartis sur une période de trois ans pendant au moins1.840 heures d'enseignement.

☐ *Le Niveau II*

Les institutions de cet ordre concernent celles dont le niveau de recrutement des apprenants est compris entre les classes de la 6ème à la 3ème des collèges sans le diplôme de BEPC[65]. Les grands axes d'enseignement de ce niveau comme prescrit par le PMC (cf. Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005 : 35-46) sont les suivants :

La connaissance de la Bible

- Survol des livres de la Bible
- Géographie biblique
- Analyse des livres Bibliques
- etc.

La doctrine

La Théologie pratique

- Homilétique
- Éducation chrétienne
- Discipolat
- Éthique chrétienne
- Église et développement

L'histoire

Sectes et religions

Mission et évangélisation
Les Disciplines générales

- Français
- Méthode de recherche

Ces différents enseignements s'étendent sur une période de trois ans pendant au moins 1.670 heures d'enseignement.

☐ *Le Niveau III*

Les institutions de ce niveau concernent les établissements qui recrutent leurs apprenants après les classes de 3ème des Lycées et collèges avec le BEPC, jusqu'aux classes des terminales sans le Baccalauréat. Les grands axes d'enseignement de ce niveau comme prescrit par le PMC (Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005, pp. 51-63) sont les suivants :

Connaissance de la Bible

- Introduction à l'AT et NT
- Grec Biblique
- Etc.

Théologie Biblique et systématique Théologie pratique

- Homilétique
- Église et développement
- Théologie pastorale
- Etc.

Histoire et religions

Disciplines Générales

- Français
- Anglais
- Méthode de recherche
- Etc.

65. Brevet d'Étude du Premier Cycle (BEPC).

Ces différents enseignements sont répartis sur une période de trois ans pendant un total d'au moins 1.575 heures d'enseignement.

◻ *Le Niveau IV*

Il s'agit ici des institutions de formation de niveau universitaire. En particulier, celles qui offrent un programme de cycle de Licence en théologie. Les grands axes d'enseignement de ce niveau (Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005 : 71–87) sont les suivants:

Disciplines Bibliques

- Introduction à l'AT et NT
- Langues Bibliques (Hébreu et/ou Grec)
- Théologie AT et NT
- Exégèse AT et NT

Théologie systématique

Théologie pratique

Missiologie

Disciplines historiques Disciplines générales

Ces différents enseignements sont répartis sur une période de trois ans pendant un total d'au moins 2.030 heures d'enseignement.

◻ *École des femmes*

Les grands axes d'enseignement de ce niveau (Ndjerareou & Koudougueret, pp. 91-92) sont les suivants :

Cours bibliques et du ministère

Cours de doctrine

Cours de santé

Cours pratiques

Cours généraux

◻ Le PMC comme standard d'accréditation des enseignements des institutions membres du CITAF

Le PMC ainsi mis en place est adopté par la quasi-totalité des institutions membres du CITAF. Il se présente dès lors pour celles-ci, non plus comme un simple référentiel de formation, mais plutôt comme un standard d'accréditation au sein du CITAF. C'est ce qu'avait affirmé très tôt Isaac Zokoué en disant: « le CITAF veut se doter d'instruments, dont la priorité est un service d'accréditation crédible, pour lui permettre d'accomplir sa mission. Le PMC est déjà en soi un standard d'accréditation. » (cf. Ndjerareou & Koudougueret 2005 : 10). Nous notifions que le concept d'accréditation est compris de manière générale dans les systèmes d'éducation et de formation comme une « procédure d'évaluation de la qualité qui vise à l'approbation d'un programme d'études par un organisme d'experts ou par une autorité dirigeante » (éd. DGQE 2018:5). Ainsi, le CITAF en tant qu'autorité coordinatrice des établissements de

formation bibliques et théologiques de l'Afrique francophone se nourrit du souci de la qualité des enseignements dispensés. Fort donc du PMC en tant que référentiel des offres de formation, le CITAF établit des normes d'évaluation des différents programmes d'enseignements des institutions membres. Cette procédure d'investigation, d'interrogation interne sur l'organisation des filières d'études dans les institutions membres vise à juger de l'harmonie et de la conformité minimale entre les offres de formations desdites institutions et les orientations prescrites par le PMC. C'est autour donc de ce noyau que tournoie l'ensemble du processus d'accréditation, d'homologation et de reconnaissance académique mise en place par le CITAF et rendu formel par l'assemblée générale du CITAF tenue à Yaoundé au Cameroun du 1-3 août 2018. La crédibilité, la qualité et la « normalité » d'une institution et de son programme de formation passent désormais par le PMC. Ainsi en tant que référentiel d'évaluation, de standardisation et d'accréditation, le PMC devra regrouper un ensemble de champs pertinents, d'éléments cohérents et contextuels. Ceux-ci devront concourir à la réalisation des attentes des institutions, des églises, des apprenants, des partenaires et de la société africaine dans son ensemble. D'où la nécessité de l'évaluation de la cohérence et de la pertinence de ce référentiel des offres de formation au sein du CITAF, et cela au regard des réalités contextuelles africaines en constante mutation.

En somme, tel qu'exposé plus haut, l'on constate que le PMC a été le fruit de longues concertations et consensus entre les acteurs majeurs de la formation biblique et théologique de l'espace géographique et linguistique sous l'autorité du CITAF. Plusieurs raisons que nous ne maitrisons pas toutes nécessairement ont de toute évidence présidé au choix et à l'organisation des différentes disciplines au niveau les différents ordres de formation. Mais après plus d'une quinzaine d'année de mise en œuvre du PMC comme base référentielle de formation de nombreux leaders ecclésiastiques et para-ecclésiastiques dans l'espace francophone africain, quelle évaluation peut-on se permettre de faire ? Plus spécifiquement, quelle appréciation peut-on faire de sa cohérence et de sa pertinence au regard d'un contexte social, politique, économique, culturel africain en constante mutation ?

Cohérence et pertinence du PMC du CITAF

La cohérence et la pertinence permettent de juger l'efficacité et utilité d'un curriculum donné. Car à quoi servirait un curriculum qui n'a aucune incidence ni sur les capacités et sur la capacitation des apprenants, ni sur les attentes de la communauté et de la société ? Cette préoccupation se trouve plus effarante dans le domaine de la formation théologique dont l'attente est orientée vers la transformation des peuples et des communautés. Tout en cherchant à comprendre les concepts de cohérence et de pertinence dans le

contexte de l'évaluation curriculaire, nous analyserons des éléments qui contribuent d'une part à la cohérence des curricula et d'autre part à leur pertinence. Ces éléments nous permettront de réfléchir sur l'état actuel du PMC en tant que curriculum compétent d'une part et d'autre part réfléchir sur le rapport entre cohérence et compétence des curricula et aux réalités contextuelles africaines.

Que comprendre des concepts de cohérence et de pertinence d'un curriculum?

Comprendre les notions de cohérence et de pertinence curriculaire

La cohérence dans les curricula

Le principe de cohérence se définit comme une union étroite, une adhérence des divers éléments d'un corps matériel. La cohérence témoigne de l'harmonie, de la logique et du rapport étroit entre les divers éléments d'un ensemble de faits, d'action ou d'idée. Elle dénote aussi de l'absence de contradiction au sein d'un ensemble donné.

Dans la gestion des curricula, l'absence de cohérence dans la structure du curriculum aussi bien que dans l'organisation des formations explique en partie l'échec des apprentissages. La cohérence dans ce domaine curriculaire consiste donc d'une part à ôter toute contradiction dans la conception du curriculum (cohérence interne) et d'autre part à juguler toute contradiction entre le curriculum, les objectifs qui lui sont assignés et les attentes de la société et du contexte (cohérence externe) [66].

Pertinence dans les curricula

La pertinence se définit généralement comme ce qui est approprié. C'est ce qui est à propos, bien fondé et convenant. La pertinence fait appel à l'adéquation et oriente vers l'efficacité. Dans le contexte de la gestion curriculaire, le terme pertinence, selon Nyagah (2014), « évoque un lien étroit entre le contenu du curriculum et les buts, qu'il doit servir à atteindre. En ce sens, le contenu n'est pertinent que s'il soutient les conséquences qu'il est censé promouvoir. » (Nyagah 2014:84). Il s'agit ici encore d'adéquation ou de cohérence entre le curriculum et les buts et objectifs qui lui sont assignés (cohérence externe). Mais en plus, la pertinence fait aussi allusion à l'adéquation du curriculum avec les besoins de ceux pour lesquels ce curriculum est conçu, leurs priorités, leurs politiques, leurs aspirations.

66. Voir aussi Jonnaert (2008:5) qui pense que la qualité d'un curriculum repose sur quatre axes au nombre desquels il fait mention des degrés de cohérence interne et externe.

Dans l'analyse de la pertinence curriculaire, il est possible de l'estimer par rapport aux différentes composantes du curriculum. On peut donc « estimer la pertinence des *objectifs*, de la *matière*, des *stratégies d'enseignement* et *d'apprentissage*, ainsi que des *ressources*. » (Nyagah 2014:136).

En somme dans l'approche des curricula, les concepts de cohérence et pertinence font appel à l'harmonie structurale interne du curriculum, ainsi qu'à son adéquation externe avec ses objectifs et les différents besoins sociétaux. Cohérence et pertinence sont donc des concepts qui adressent ensemble la question de cohérence interne et de cohérence externe des curricula.

Ainsi, un curriculum cohérent, d'une part dans l'équilibre de ses différents éléments constitutifs, et d'autre part avec les réalités socio-culturelles sera à même de produire des citoyens capables de construire une société plus juste et plus solidaire. Des apprenants libres, autonomes, émancipés en adéquation parfaite avec les défis existentiels contemporains.

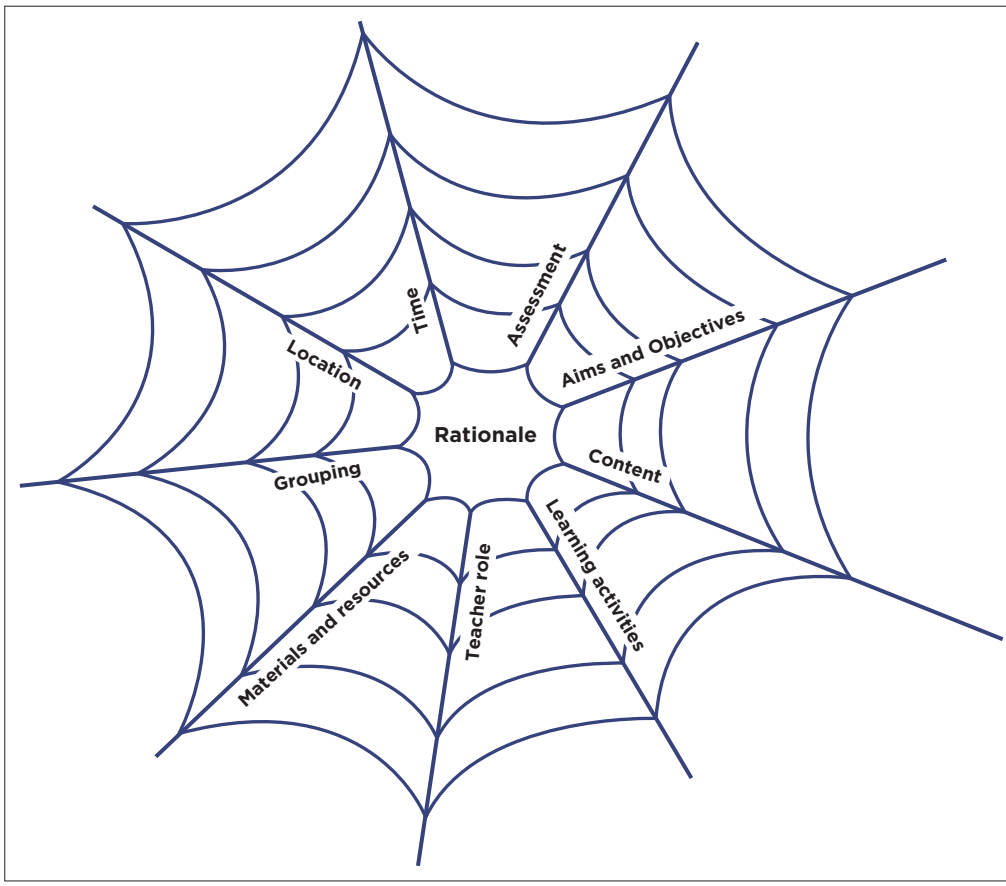
À la réflexion, ce principe de cohérence pose de nombreuses interrogations quant aux rapports entre cohérence et curriculum dans le domaine de la formation théologique en Afrique et plus spécifiquement dans le cadre du PMC en tant que conception curriculaire du CITAF.

En d'autres termes, existait-il un souci réel de recherche de cohérence tant interne qu'externe au niveau du PMC qui sous-tend la formation de nombreux leaders ecclésiastiques dans les différentes institutions de formations en Afrique francophone ?

Une vue évaluative de la cohérence et de la pertinence du PMC du CITAF

Il existe actuellement plusieurs approches théoriques disponibles pour mener les évaluations du dispositif éducatif. En la matière, la famille des approches théoriques est d'une taille plus que respectable et ne cesse de s'élargir (Daigneault 2011 : 2). Ainsi, dans le cadre de l'approche évaluative du PMC du CITAF, nous choisissons parmi tant d'autres possibilités de calquer notre démarche sur les éléments constitutifs fondamentaux de cohérence curriculaire proposés par Akker, Fasoglio & Mulder (2008).

En effet, selon Akker et al., (2008), les indicateurs de cohérence d'un curriculum reposent sur des éléments fondamentaux dont l'interrelation et l'interaction participent à la réussite de celui-ci. Ainsi, entre ces éléments fondamentaux, il est nécessaire de trouver un équilibre pour conserver la cohérence. Ces auteurs suscités (2008 : 9) établissent la cohérence des éléments constitutifs du curriculum par le biais d'un schéma qui non seulement laisse voir une parfaite interconnexion entre ces éléments, mais aussi souligne la fragilité de leur lien à l'image d'une toile d'araignée.



Source : "la toile curriculaire" de Akker, Jan van den, Fasoglio, Daniela, & Mulder, Hetty. *Perspectives curriculaires sur l'éducation plurilingue.* p.9

Akker et ses collègues dégagent ainsi neuf éléments fondamentaux du curriculum cohérent. Il s'agit du *contenu*, *des activités d'apprentissage*, du *rôle des enseignants*, des *matériels et ressources pédagogiques*, des *groupements*, des *lieux*, du *temps*, des *évaluations*, des *buts et des objectifs*. Ces neuf composantes sont liées entre elles et interconnectées autour d'une dixième dénommée *raison ou rationalité*. C'est dans ce même élan que Beacco et al. (2010) déclarent que :

> La recherche d'une meilleure cohérence suppose que soient examinés les contenus et les démarches pédagogiques des différents champs disciplinaires… pour identifier toutes les passerelles possibles, harmoniser les apports de chacun et organiser la chronologie de ces enseignements afin d'assurer une action pédagogique cohérente à la fois dans leurs dimensions verticales et horizontales. (Beacco et al., 2010 : 22).

Ces facteurs fondamentaux de la cohérence curriculaire tiennent aussi compte du fait que le contenu et les conséquences que le curriculum tente de provoquer doivent être en harmonie avec les réalités sociales et culturelles de l'époque

et du contexte. Ceci implique donc d'une part que le curriculum, qui sous-tend le projet d'éducation et de formation, doit être sensible aux conditions sociétales telles que l'économie, la culture, la société, la politique..., et d'autre part le curriculum doit établir des points de complémentarité entre la connaissance disponible dans la société et celle proposée dans ces objectifs pédagogiques et éducatifs.

Indicateurs de cohérence	Items	PMC CITAF	Observations
2. Raison	*Pourquoi apprend-on ? / ou raison d'être de l'apprentissage*	aucune raison d'être de la formation n'est spécifiée par le PMC.	
3. But et objectifs	*Quels sont les buts de l'apprentissage ?*	Absence d'objectif et de but généraux des différents niveaux de formation.	Présence d'objectif pour chaque cours.
4. Contenus	*Qu'apprend-on ?*	Le PMC expose clairement les différentes disciplines et les différentes matières qui constituent les contenus des formations selon les différents ordres d'enseignement.	
5. Activités d'apprentissage	*Comment apprend-on ?*	Activités d'apprentissage non précisées.	
6. Rôle de l'Enseignant	*Comment le l'enseignant peut-il faciliter l'apprentissage ?*	Le PMC ne donne aucune précision concernant le rôle de l'enseignant dans le processus d'apprentissage.	Seules les qualifications requises des enseignants sont mentionnées par le PMC.
7. Matériel et ressources	*Avec quoi apprend-on ?*	Aucun matériel et ressource n'est suggéré pour l'apprentissage. Aucune bibliographie indicative n'accompagne les contenus suggérés pour la formation.	
8. Regroupement	*Avec qui apprend-on ?*	Aucune indication n'est donnée à ce propos.	
9. Lieu	*Où apprennent-ils ?*	Aucune indication n'est donnée à ce propos.	
10. Temps	*Quand apprennent-ils ?*	Un quantum horaire est clairement défini pour les différents enseignements ainsi que pour les différents niveaux de formation.	Le PMC[67] dit que ce quantum horaire est défini à minima.
11. Évaluation	*Jusqu'où est allé cet apprentissage ?*	Aucune indication n'est donnée à ce propos.	
12. Sensibilité aux réalités sociétales	*Quelles sont les réalités sociétales prises en compte ?*	Le PMC comprend des enseignements qui prennent en compte certaines réalités africaines.	

67. Le manuel du CITAF attire à ce propos l'attention des Institutions membres que le PMC est un Programme minimum et qu'elles peuvent majorer et répartir le volume horaire... cependant les institutions ne peuvent pas aller en dessous du quantum horaire proposé sous peine de déprécier la qualité de la formation. (cf. eds. Ndjerareou, Kouassi & Pohor, sd : 108).

Fort de cette approche théorique des indicateurs de cohérence du curriculum, nous établissons une analyse évaluative du PMC selon le tableau analytique suivant:

À l'analyse du curriculum de ces institutions de formation bibliques et théologiques, un certain nombre d'indicateurs de cohérences ne semblent pas avoir été pris en compte. Il s'agit notamment :

- *De la raison d'être du PMC* : même si les textes fondateurs du CITAF (les procès-verbaux des différentes rencontres et Assemblées Générales du CITAF) laissent entrevoir la possibilité d'une raison d'être du PMC. Ce dernier lui-même n'en dit absolument rien.
- *Des buts et objectifs du PMC*: ce curriculum en tant que référentiel devant guider l'offre de formation de l'ensemble des institutions du CITAF n'expose aucun but ni objectif explicite.
- *De la nature des activités d'apprentissage* : la nature des activités semble être laissée à la seule discrétion des institutions de formation et de leurs enseignants dans le sens ou le PMC n'en fait aucunement mention.
- *Du rôle des enseignants dans le processus d'apprentissage* : le PMC se contente ici de mentionner la qualification des enseignants pour les différents niveaux de formation. Mais cette qualification requise est-elle suffisante pour déterminer que les enseignants devraient jouer dans la transmission du savoir ?
- *Du matériel et ressource d'apprentissage* : à ce niveau le PMC se contente de mentionner qu'au titre des outils et méthodes d'enseignement, « le CITAF sert de réseau et de plate-forme d'étude et de promotion d'outils et de méthodologies appropriées d'enseignement de qualité ». (eds. Ndjerareou, Kouassi & Pohor sd:15). Ainsi, à l'absence de matériel et de ressources désignés pour les différents enseignements, le PMC encourage plutôt les professeurs à proposer une bibliographie minimale de 10 ouvrages (cf. eds. Ndjerareou et al. sd : 108). Mais comment ces bibliographies disparates sont-elles censées assurer l'harmonie dans un curriculum qui se donne pour mission d'offrir une base commune de connaissance aux apprenants?
- *De la communauté d'apprentissage* : le PMC n'en fait nullement mention, cependant nous pensons que celle existant des institutions membres sont prise en compte.
- *Du lieu d'apprentissage*: le PMC n'en fait nullement mention, cependant nous pensons que ceux existant des institutions membres sont concernés.
- *Des outils d'évaluation de l'apprentissage*: le PMC n'en fait nullement mention, cependant nous pensons que les outils existant des institutions membres devraient être reconduits.

Par contre, le PMC a pris soin de signifier de manière bien précise d'autres indicateurs de cohérence, à savoir:

- *Le contenu des apprentissages*: à ce niveau, il convient de faire remarquer une interrelation et une interaction, voire une transversalité entre les différentes disciplines proposées à l'enseignement. Par exemple, les départements "Ancien Testament" et "Nouveau Testament" se trouvent complémentaires pour une compréhension des données bibliques. Le département de "Théologie Systématique" quant à lui met en exergue toutes les doctrines qui sous-tendent les textes bibliques de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament, etc. Les différentes disciplines qui constituent la matière d'apprentissage dénotent ainsi d'un certain degré de cohérence interne.
- *Le temps d'apprentissage* : le PMC définit de manière rigoureuse le quantum horaire des différents enseignements.
- *La sensibilité aux réalités sociétale s*: plusieurs débats menés autour du PMC sont constamment revenus sur la nécessité de la contextualisation de la formation et des apprentissages (cf. eds. Ndjerareou et al. sd :105, 108). Cependant même si le PMC semble présenter quelques sensibilités quant aux réalités sociétales africaines, plusieurs questions demeurent encore sans solutions explicites. En effet, certains acteurs et « consommateurs » des produits formés par le PMC se posent toujours la question de savoir la relation et la nature des rapports, par exemple, entre les réalités sociales de l'apprenant théologien d'avec les langues bibliques (Hébreu, Grec et Araméen) qui d'ailleurs sont caractérisées de langues mortes. Ou encore, comprendre la nature des rapports ou des relations que l'on peut établir entre la situation politique, économique ou sociale de l'apprenant et les disciplines de la théologie systématiques qui sont d'ailleurs caractérisées de sciences dogmatiques?

Somme toute, cette analyse du PMC a permis de comprendre que seuls trois critères de cohérence sur un ensemble de onze sont ici pris en compte. Ceci laisse dès lors déduire les insuffisances dues à l'absence de cohérence (interne et externe) que présente ce curriculum. D'ailleurs, les rédacteurs du PMC utilisent eux-mêmes le terme de nomenclature de cours pour désigner le contenu du PMC. (cf. eds. Ndjerareou & Koudougueret, 2005 : 15, 33, 49, 69; eds. Ndjerareou et al., sd : 23, 41, 57, 75). Or une simple nomenclature descriptive de cours est loin de constituer un référentiel pertinent et adéquat pour conduire une politique de formation et d'éducation. Même si la nomenclature peut désigner une liste ou une identité classifiée qui fait autorité et sert de référence dans le cadre d'une activité professionnelle ou d'une discipline donnée, celle-ci ne saurait porter la dénomination d'un curriculum, ni en avoir la fonction.

Pour un PMC cohérent et utilitaire pour les institutions de formation biblique et théologique de l'Afrique Francophone.

Nécessité d'un PMC cohérent et pertinent pour le CITAF

Après plus de 15 années de pratique du PMC du CITAF, les défis continentaux et particuliers aux institutions en matière de religion, de spiritualité, de société de culture, d'économie, de politique, d'environnement, etc. ont bien changé. Aussi « l'extase fiévreuse » qui a entouré l'avènement du PMC est aussi passée. Nécessité s'impose aux différents acteurs du système éducatif théologique de l'Afrique francophone de doter ses institutions d'un curriculum qui réponde aux normes de qualité en la matière.

Orientations pour un PMC cohérent et pertinent

Fort des indicateurs fondamentaux de curriculum cohérent que nous avons examiné, et au regard de la vue évaluative du PMC du CITAF, certaines orientations peuvent être suggérées afin de permettre la reconstruction d'un curriculum cohérent, pertinent et contextualisé pour les institutions membres du CITAF.

Redéfinir les axes fondamentaux du curriculum

Il s'agit ici de dégager les domaines de compétences du curriculum, puis de définir ses objectifs, les contenus de la formation, les méthodes pédagogiques, le matériel didactique et les modes d'évaluation des enseignants et apprenants (cf. N'Dri, 2017:188) :

- *Définir la finalité du PMC*

En général, les curricula se donnent deux principales finalités : les finalités institutionnelles et les finalités éducatives et/ou pédagogiques (cf. N'Dri, 2017 : 191 ; N'Dri, 2018).

La finalité ou l'objectif institutionnel est en effet un cadre prescriptif qui indique les missions principales que les décideurs assignent à l'éducation et à la formation. Ce cadre prescriptif indique aussi les compétences attendues des apprenants au terme du processus d'apprentissage.

La finalité éducative et/ou pédagogique quant à elle identifie, définit et structure le contenu éducatif et formatif en vue de la transmission des savoirs opérationnels transformationnels et susceptibles d'être soumis à évaluation.

Ces évaluations à leur tour permettront à l'apprenant de faire valoir socialement et professionnellement ses acquis et ses compétences :

- *Redéfinir les éléments exogènes qui peuvent influencer le PMC* (cf. N'Dri, 2017:188–189).

Aucune construction curriculaire ne peut surgir ex nihilo et évoluer de manière hermétique. En effet, les sciences bibliques et théologiques qui constituent le domaine de prédilection des institutions membres du CITAF sont soumises, certes, à des principes d'ordre général dans leurs thématiques. Cependant dans leurs applications, elles demeurent contextuelles, au mieux, elles demeurent situationnelles. Pour ainsi dire, elles sont à même de s'adapter aux réalités concrètes du milieu dans lequel le curriculum les déploie. Ainsi, certains éléments comme les contextes socioreligieux et sociopolitiques peuvent et doivent influencer le contenu des curricula et les apprentissages. En effet, la culture des peuples et leur vision du monde, leurs défis environnementaux, socio-économiques, etc. devraient être connus et analysés dans leur rapport avec les sciences bibliques et théologiques dans le contexte dans lequel elles seront appliquées. C'est dans ce sens que ces différents paramètres permettront dans une certaine mesure de déconstruire les modèles initiaux et génériques des "théologies héritées" ; et constituer le gage de la reconstruction de modèles de pensées théologiques qui donnent un sens aux réalités existentielles des apprenants, des communautés et des peuples.

☐ Réviser le contenu du PMC

Les contenus du curriculum sont les différentes articulations et les différents éléments autour desquels évolue l'ensemble des cours constitutifs de ce curriculum. Parler de contenu amène à dégager le fil conducteur et la teneur principale de l'enseignement. Il est vrai que les contenus des curricula peuvent être diversement orientés. En effet, ceux-ci peuvent être axés soit sur la matière, soit sur l'apprenant, soit en tronc commun (cf. N'Dri, 2017:195). Cependant, quel que soit l'axe sur lequel est construit le curriculum, son contenu devra faire face à des exigences de qualité et favoriser le développement des compétences. Ainsi, loin d'être une simple liste de « faits » ou d'informations à divulguer aux apprenants, le curriculum comprend des « contenus » de haute qualité, qui doivent être (cf. Stabback, 2016 : 16) :

- *À jour et pertinent*: La nature et l'étendue des connaissances humaines évoluent à un rythme rapide : les connaissances prévues dans le curriculum peuvent donc rapidement être remplacées, perdre leur caractère pertinent ou être réfutées (Stabback, 2016:18). Le PMC du CITAF date de plus de 15 années. Les défis religieux, socio-économiques, culturels et environnementaux n'ont-ils pas connu de changement en Afrique depuis lors ? Quel peut être par exemple la réponse que le PMC permettra aux apprenants d'avoir face aux phénomènes de migration en Afrique ? À la

pandémie de la COVID-19 ? Ainsi, hormis les contenus dits « spirituels » et religieux dans le PMC, un pan doit être ouvert pour examiner les questions propres à la société africaine. Il s'agit entre autres de réfléchir aux défis des peuples africains qui ne sont pas suffisamment traités dans les curricula occidentaux, dont plusieurs institutions théologiques du continent demeurent encore fortement débitrices. Il s'agirait notamment des questions en rapport avec :

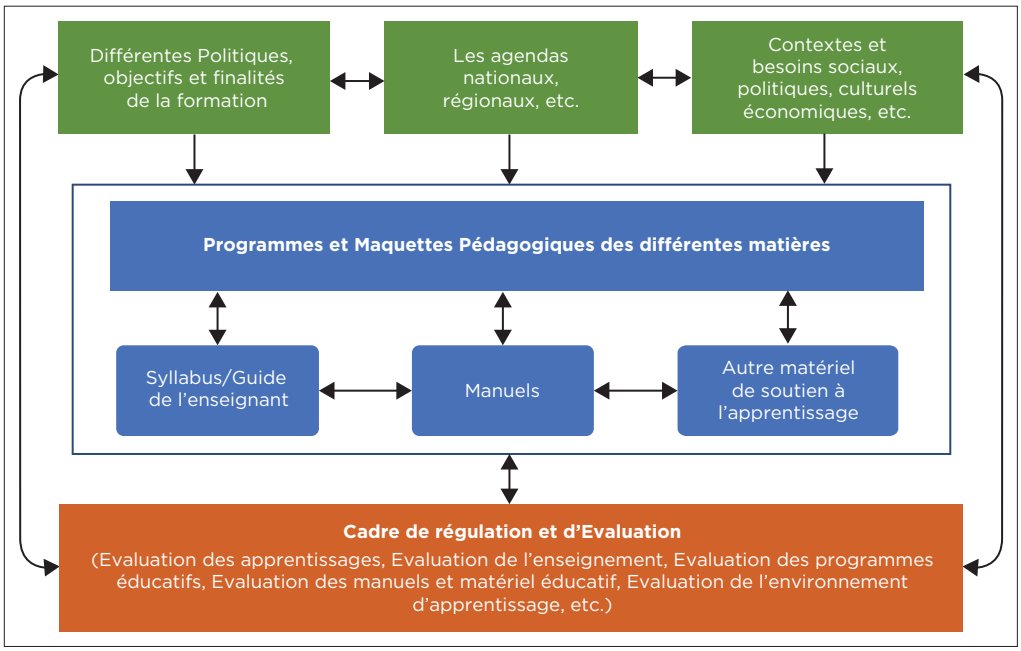
- o les problèmes de mariage : polygamie, dote, …
- o La corruption ;
- o La sorcellerie ;
- o Le sous-développement, la pauvreté, l'analphabétisme;
- o La politique, les guerres civiles, le terrorisme, le djihadiste;
- o La faim, la malnutrition;
- o La solidité clanique, l'ethnicisme, la question de genre, etc.

- *Suffisamment exigeant* : mettre en œuvre le mécanisme pour permettre au PMC de déployer les capacités des apprenants en favorisant l'acquisition de capacités de réflexion supérieures et en stimulant le développement de leur curiosité, de leur réflexion critique et de leur imagination (cf. Stabback, 2016:21) et par ricochet, de développer leur esprit d'adaptabilité.
- *Équilibré* : l'équilibre du contenu du PMC ici devra tenir compte tant des aspects théoriques que des aspects pratiques de la formation biblique et théologique. En effet, la formation biblique et théologique loin d'être un simple cumul de savoir théorique devra intégrer toutes les dimensions que vise tout processus d'apprentissage. La communication de la connaissance (savoir), de la compétence (savoir-faire) et des valeurs (savoir-être). Le contenu du PMC devra viser de manière équilibrée ce triple objectif de l'apprentissage et de la formation.

☐ Redéfinir le cadre curriculaire

Le PMC, dans son état actuel, pour répondre à sa vocation de curriculum, devra intégrer un cadre curriculaire global. L'existence de cadre curriculaire évitera au PMC de se présenter comme une simple nomenclature ou une simple liste descriptive de cours. Ce cadre doit réunir dans un ensemble intégré les déclarations sur les valeurs et les conceptions qui sous-tendent l'ensemble du projet de formation, les principaux buts, objectifs et missions de l'éducation, le développement de la culture et de la philosophie de la formation (cf. Stabback, 2016 : 25). Cet ensemble curriculaire intégré pourrait se schématiser comme suit:

Un tel cadre curriculaire a le mérite de servir de plan architectural de base qui permet de regrouper dans un ensemble intégré tous les ingrédients



Source: Y. Roger NDri, adapté de (Stabback, 2016:24; Jonnaert, 2015:35)

nécessaires à la construction d'un curriculum cohérent et pertinent. La partie supérieure du cadre, tout en établissant la raison d'être, les objectifs et la finalité du projet de formation, met celui en rapport avec les contingences exogènes pour établir la pertinence du curriculum. La partie médiane du cadre quant à elle s'occupe de l'aspect opérationnel du curriculum en mettant ensemble tous les plans d'action pédagogique, académique et administratif. La partie inférieure du cadre se charge de la politique d'évaluation de tous les aspects opérationnels du curriculum et assure la régulation informant la partie supérieure en vue d'éventuel ajustement et adaptation.

En somme, le CITAF, dans le souci d'être plus utile aux institutions membres. devra comprendre la nécessité de mettre en place un PMC cohérent, pertinent et utilitaire, mais encore plus il devra comprendre l'ensemble du mécanisme pour y parvenir.

Conclusion

Au terme de notre réflexion sur la thématique « *Cohérence et pertinence des curricula des Institutions de formation théologique en Afrique francophone* », nous disons que l'Église a une mission à la fois divine et humaine. Elle a pour mission d'adorer Dieu et de le servir. Mais le véritable service de Dieu ne se fait-il pas en étant au service des humains et de la société humaine ? Ainsi, si tant il est vrai que selon Halaoui (2003), la société est le but principal de toute

éducation, l'Église africaine sera amenée à reformuler, voire à redéfinir les curricula de formation de ses serviteurs de Dieu en les rendant plus cohérents et plus pertinents à répondre aux besoins du développement de l'humain et des communautés.

Il s'agira ainsi pour le CITAF, qui intervient au nom et compte des églises, d'établir une véritable adéquation entre le *''pourquoi de la formation des serviteurs de Dieu*", le "*comment de la formation*" et le "*pour quoi de la formation*", à savoir les réels besoins (spirituels, sociaux, économiques, politiques, environnementaux..) de la société.

Il s'agira ainsi pour le CITAF de créer un processus de formation réellement pertinente qui non seulement adresse les problèmes de la société, mais prend aussi en compte les réels besoins des apprenants. D'où la nécessité de revoir le type de curriculum qui semble le plus adéquat. Dans ce contexte africain, un curriculum à tronc commun ou dans le moindre cas celui axé sur l'apprenant ne serait-il pas préférable à celui axé sur la matière qui constitue l'armature principale de plusieurs de nos curricula, principalement ceux du PMC?

Il s'agira en somme d'avoir un curriculum capable de bouleverser les traditions et les appréhensions et d'amener une transformation holistique à la société africaine. Un curriculum calqué sur celui de Christ qui, en trois années de formation, a rendu les disciples capables de bouleverser le monde (Actes 17:6).

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Chapter 17

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The higher education landscape has arguably become one of the most arduous to traverse. More so in the African context, where a host of variables continuously challenge educators to reflect critically on their philosophies and practices as they engage an ever-changing audience. In this book, a critical engagement with theological education in Africa is offered. As the book originates from South Africa, it is presented as a South African perspective, although contributors are situated across the African continent and abroad. The common denominator is that all contributors are in some way invested in theological education in Africa. The main contribution of this collaborative work is to be sought in the insights it offers on four main areas of theological education: (1) A historical and current orientation on theological education in Africa, (2) some paradigm shifts in theological education in Africa, (3) ministerial formation needs versus theological education challenges, and (4) a critical reflection on elective models and methods. The book presents the original and innovative research of scholars for fellow scholars involved in theological higher education as it is grounded in the respective fields of interest of each contributor. It contributes to a better understanding of the complex African theological higher education landscape that is also mindful of post-COVID-19 realities. Methodologically, the work draws on a combination of methods, including literature studies, empirical work and, in some cases, sectional offerings from doctoral studies, as indicated in the various chapters.

What I appreciated in a particular way in this book is the analytical and even critical perspectives on theological education in Africa which can lead to finding helpful lessons for Christian education in South Africa. Such a possibility should never be ignored, diminished, or dismissed because it has the potential to cast a shadow not only on South African educational institutions of theology, but also on the future of countless people living across the African continent. Education has always been a vital matter for human societies, and this book brings this reality to the fore. Regardless of whether one deals with Africa in general, South Africa in particular, or any other region in the world for that matter, this book demonstrates that theological education is not just something which can be done by persons who profess their faith personally and communitarily. This aspect is indeed crucial, but what theological education in Africa really needs – and this need is a global problem – is persons who are well trained, seriously prone to teaching, and avidly dedicated to research in addition to being practicing Christians. In other words, this book shows that confession and competence should go hand in hand in theological education not only in Africa, but also anywhere else in the world.

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