

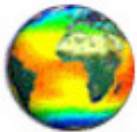
# Theological Education in World Christianity

## Joint Information Service of ETE/WCC & WOCATI

November 2009



**Theme of this issue: World Report on the Future of  
Theological Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century 2009**



**World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions**



**ETE/WCC Programme on Theological Education of the World  
Council of Churches**

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# **Challenges and Opportunities in Theological Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

## **Pointers for a new international debate on Theological Education**

*Full Version*

### **Edinburgh 2010 - International study group on Theological Education World Study Report 2009**

**Study Group Members:**

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### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

#### **PREFACE**

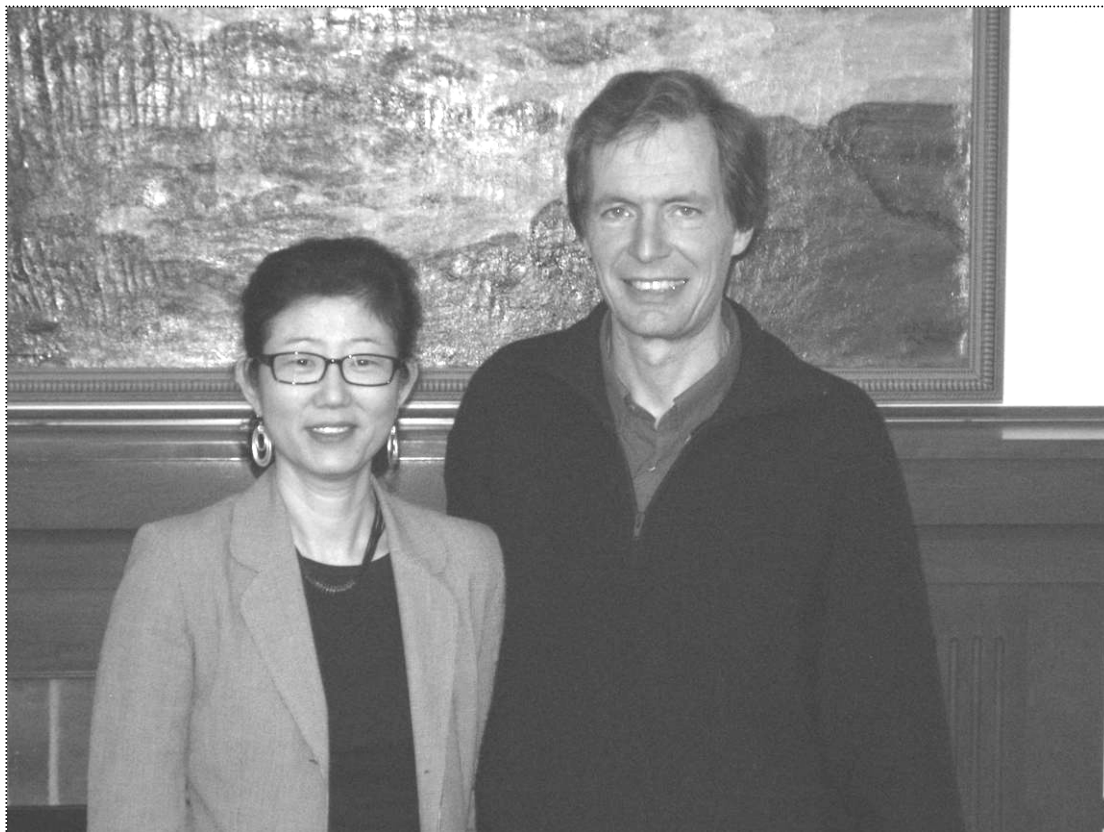
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Prof. Namsoon Kang, President of WOCATI  
Dr. Dietrich Werner, ETE/WCC Program Coordinator

### **LETTER FROM ETE/WCC STAFF** **Dietrich WERNER**

Dear colleagues in theological education!

This publication is about a new „World Report on Theological Education in the 21st century“ which is intended for circulation and discussion in regional associations of theological schools, in ecumenical theological teachers conferences, in boards of theological colleges and in church leadership circles interested in the future of theological education.

The world study report was developed as part of the Edinburgh 2010 study process which brought together an international study group on theological education (group 6 of the 2010 mission study themes). It included representatives from institutions of theological education from major churches represented in the Edinburgh 2001 process (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran,

Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, see members' list footnote 2). The group worked between November 2008 and August 2009 to produce this extended version of a world study on theological education.

ETE office is publishing this report in cooperation with the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) which is one of WCC's important partners working on issues of theological education on global scale.

Among many other issues the report highlights a conviction which has been a key element in the understanding of ecumenical theological education which informs the mandate and objectives of the ETE-Program in WCC from its very beginning:

“This study paper is convinced that theological education is the seedbed for the renewal of churches, their ministries and mission and their commitment to church unity in today's world. If theological education systems are neglected or not given their due prominence in church leadership, in theological reflection and in funding, consequences might not be visible immediately, but quite certainly will become manifest after one or two decades in terms of theological competence of church leadership, holistic nature of the churches mission, capacities for ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and for dialogue between churches and society. The transmission of the ecumenical memory and vision to future generations of pastors and church workers is a priority need in many WCC member Churches, its continuation is far from being secured at present. It has become clear meanwhile that proper ecumenical learning is not just the addition of elements of ecumenical theology into the curricula of theological schools and seminaries. But the question is whether and to what extent the basic orientation of theological education reflects the fundamental relational nature of being the church, its vocation to live as a true *koinonia* in relationship with God, with other Christian communities and with the wider human community and the world as God's creation.”

ETE staff hopes that this report will be followed up both by participants of the Edinburgh 2010 centenary conference in June 2010, the World Conference of Associations of Theological Schools and ecumenical partner organizations interested in theological education in the Southern and Northern hemisphere.

ETE is continuing its vital service in the WCC for its constituency also in 2010. After some financial and structural uncertainty in 2009 it is affirmed now that ETE will go ahead with further programmatic work in the next two years in close cooperation with the regions. As the WCC could not continue Ministerial Formation which has been the leading international journal on theological education for the past 30 years, ETE program is intending to continue publishing on key issues of theological education in the two remaining key journals of WCC, *International Review of Mission* and *Ecumenical Review*. An important issue on „Theological Education in Mission“ was published as IRM 388 (April 2009).

This publication comes out jointly with WOCATI. It is hoped that ETE will be able to continue with a joint information service of ETE and WOCATI once a year in future– subject to budget developments and availability of resources in the period ahead. ETE also is building up an electronic database for sending informations electronically. Please send your e-mail adress to ETE office if you are interested.

For participating in the international debate on the future of theological education in reference to this world study report there are different possibilities in the www in which you can join:

There is a chance to get access to further materials and to send comments on the Edinburgh 2010 website: <http://www.edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes.html>

Additional resources from the study process on theological education are available on WCC website:

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenical-formation/ecumenical-theological-education-ete/edinburgh-2010-international-study-group-on-theological-education.html>

There is also a workgroup created in Globethics.Net which provides space for additional articles and comments to be shared on this document. You need to register for free as a general user in Globethics.Net and then can get access to the workgroup on the study report on theological education in World Christianity and can send comments. The website is the following:

<http://www.globethics.net/web/guest/workgroups>

We are looking forward to be in touch with you and to collaborate for the advancement of theological education which is vital for the future of World Christianity.

Yours

Dietrich Werner  
ETE/World Council of Churches  
Global Program Coordinator

**Note from the President of WOCATI  
Namsoon KANG**

Thinking about theological education in the global context in the twenty-first century is extremely difficult due to the profound complexity of geopolitical, socio-cultural, and religious contexts in the world. Entering the twenty-first century would mean to acknowledge the epistemological paradigm shift in the construction of theological discourse and educational practice. This epistemological shift, from modern to postmodern and from colonial to postcolonial, requires a new educational framework, pedagogy, curriculum, consciousness, standard for academic excellence, or institutional structure, and so forth. The old binary of the global North versus the global South, the First World versus the Third World, or the West versus the East does not reflect the actual reality of the twenty-first century because of the interconnectivity and interlinkedness of these two seemingly different parts of the world. No longer can we take the old paradigm of the center-margin as the ubiquitous paradigm of domination and marginalization. Considering the extremely complex context of the contemporary era of globalization, there has been an urgent need for a global platform for the exchange of insights, networking, challenges, coalition among and between diverse theological schools, institutions, programs, or centers, across the borderline of regions, nations, cultures, or denomination in the world.

With this urgent need for a worldly platform for inter-continental and inter-national exchange in mind, WOCATI came into being in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in June 1989 at a consultation sponsored by the Programme for Theological Education (PTE) of the WCC, in which the representatives from the twenty associations of theological schools, institutions, programs, and centers from different regions of the world participated. Commemorating its twenty-years of existence, WOCATI undertook a revision of the WOCATI Constitution in March 2009 in order to sharpen and deepen its tasks and commitments, and to widen its constituency.

WOCATI and ETE/WCC have worked together from the inception of WOCATI, and will continue to mutually support one another for promoting the quality of theological education in the world, which is committed to the actualization of the Christian vision for the world of peace, justice, equality, and freedom of every individual human being. The joint publication of ETE/WCC and WOCATI of the report on theological education in the global context is timely and extremely significant. I do hope that this publication will become the seed for a more comprehensive study and research on the issues and themes in the theological education in different regions of the world in the future. It is, therefore, my great joy to see the feasible outcome of the study group's report on the theological education in a global context.

On behalf of WOCATI, I would like to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Dietrich Werner from ETE/WCC, whose tremendous effort has made the publication of this report possible.

Namsoon Kang  
President, WOCATI (World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions)  
Associate Professor, World Christianity and Religions  
Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, USA



## Preface

The following summary study report was developed as part of the Edinburgh 2010 study process which brought together an international study group on theological education (group 6 of the 2010 mission study themes).<sup>1</sup> It included representatives from institutions of theological education from major churches represented in the Edinburgh 2001 process (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal).<sup>2</sup> The group worked between November 2008 and August 2009 to produce this extended version of a world study on theological education. The document is meant to stimulate debate and common reflection in different communities of theological educators and associations of theological schools, to serve as a guide to contemporary challenges and developments in the area of theological education and to be followed up both by participants of the Edinburgh 2010 centenary conference, the World Conference of Associations of Theological Schools and ecumenical partner organizations interested in theological education in the Southern hemisphere.<sup>3</sup> A shortened version of this report will be included in the conference preparatory publication for the centenary conference in June 2010 in Edinburgh.<sup>4</sup>

## I) Foundations and Clarifications

### 1) Christianity as a religion committed to education – historical review of the missionary impulse for theological education in Edinburgh 1910 and beyond

Christianity is about remembering in gratitude and celebrating in community God's act in Jesus Christ in redeeming and renewing the whole of creation. From the inception of Christianity education has played a major role in enabling the tradition of the Christian faith to be remembered and celebrated. As Christianity emerged as a new faith within the Judeo-Palestinian tradition and had to survive amidst the Greco-Roman milieu, it embarked on appropriate education to ensure

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<sup>1</sup> See: "Edinburgh 2010 Study Process," *Edinburgh 2010* <http://www.edinburgh2010.org/en/study-themes.html>

<sup>2</sup> Group members (corresponding and participating) included: Clare Amos (Anglican Communion Office), Steven Bevans (Catholic Theological Union, Chicago) Nico Botha (UNISA), Rob Brynjolfson (International Missionary Training Network of the World Evangelical Alliance), Daniel Chiquete (Pentecostal Church Mexico), Jose Duque (UBL Costa Rica/Columbia), David Esterline (McCormick Theological Seminary/Institute for Cross-Cultural Theological Training), Tharcisse Gatwa (Rwanda Christian Council of Churches/Butare Theological Seminary), Jet den Hollander (WARC), Afrie Songco Joye (Union Theological Seminary Philippines), Pantelis Kalaitzides (Volos Academy Greece), (Namsoon Kang (Brite Divinity School, Texas), Atola Longkumer (Leonard Theological College Central India), Joshva Raja (Queens Foundation), Israel Selvanayagam (UTC Bangalore, India), Randolph Tuner (CWM), Douwe Visser (WARC), Des van der Water (CWM), Dietrich Werner (ETE/WCC), Henry Wilson (FTE). Group Conveners were Dr. Namsoon Kang and Dr. Dietrich Werner. The final text was copy-edited by Murdoch MacKenzie, Argyll Scotland.

<sup>3</sup> As readers will notice, the document can be studied in selective sections and also with different starting points: Those interested in historic backgrounds and key dimensions of theological education today can start with part I, those more interested in contemporary contexts and case studies can start with part II (chapter 12).

<sup>4</sup> The shorter version of this report of some 22 pages and several background articles which have contributed to the formulation of this paper of the international study group on theological education can be viewed online. "Edinburgh 2010 - International Study Group on Theological Education" *World Council of Churches*, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenical-formation/ecumenical-theological-education-ete/edinburgh-2010-international-study-group-on-theological-education.html>

that its faithful were soundly rooted in their faith and prepared to defend it when challenged by adversaries. Early Christianity, being deeply rooted in Judeo-Palestine tradition, thus had an intrinsic commitment to education from the very beginning.<sup>5</sup> As early as the Gospel of St. Luke it is pointed out that Christians had a high sense of responsibility for passing on the “tradition of the Apostles” to the next generation. Likewise in the Acts of the Apostles. (Acts 1,1-2 and Acts 2,42 ). From the very beginning Christianity was a learning and teaching religion, as the sources of Christian faith were not just inner emotional feelings of the individual but a complex tradition transmitted in narratives, in hymns, in liturgy and later in creeds common to a majority of Christians at different places which could be memorized and had to be re-appropriated anew in each generation. It is very significant in biblical tradition that Timothy for instance is exhorted “to continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you have learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ”(2 Tim. 3,14-15).

The concern for education has been expressed in different forms and ways in the various denominational streams of Christianity:

- For the Orthodox tradition the very early founding of the catechetical school of Alexandria in Egypt has marked and initiated a long history of deep commitment to education and promoting intellectual life within the Christian church. There were different concepts about what relationship should exist between the specific realm of Christian knowledge and tradition and pagan philosophy and general knowledge. But the decision in the West to see the study of the seven liberal arts as the best preparation (s) for higher studies in Christian theology as well as the best way to protect the church against non-Christian polemics and attacks from outside can be seen as a firm commitment not to disassociate Christian education from general education and philosophical knowledge as a whole.

- For the tradition of Luther's Reformation it was even more striking to what extent his whole movement can be seen as a revolution in terms of educational principles, because his understanding of the church as a community with the priesthood of all believers made him a strong opponent of any elitist understanding both of ministry and education in general. Martin Luther was a pioneer in launching educational reforms and demanding a better quality of schools and universities. As he believed that all members of the Christian congregation should understand their faith he developed the small catechism for children and the large catechism for adults as means of proper Christian education. The subsequent attempts of Melanchthon to develop the „Volksschule“ and later on John Amos Comenius (1592-1670) to pioneer an educational theory can all be seen as a result of the fundamental coalition between faith and critical reasoning or education which was very influential in the history of Protestantism and continues to be a mark of protestant churches up to the present.

- For the tradition of Reformed Churches it is also characteristic that the emphasis on theological education reaches back to roots in the Reformation well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Since also the Swiss Reformers insisted on the preaching of true Christian doctrine, they had to make sure that people were trained for the ministry of the word. Preachers needed to be familiar with the content and meaning of the Gospel. To establish the truth in Geneva, Calvin set an example by interpreting himself, in sermons and lectures, almost all the books of the Bible. But he also took the initiative in 1559 to found the Geneva Academy, a school to train pastors – to minister not only in Geneva but in other places as well. The *Académie* soon developed into an important centre of Reformed theology. It is interesting to note that Calvin promoted the idea of a special ministry of ‘teachers’ (*docteurs*). In his eyes four ministries are essential for the life and mission of the Church – the *pasteurs*, the *anciens*, the *diacres* and the *docteurs*. The function of the *docteurs* is to study and to interpret the Bible and Christian doctrine. While the pastors are involved in all kinds of daily duties, they should be free to devote their time entirely to study and teaching. In Reformed theology, especially in the period of Reformed orthodoxy, the value of the ministry of *docteur* was strongly affirmed. (Lukas Vischer)

- Also for the Roman Catholic tradition there is a strong component in terms of teaching and education, which is rooted in the role of monasteries and religious orders for deepening and broadening education and research – a

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<sup>5</sup> This summary study report paper while not claiming to be a comprehensive academic essay on theological education applies the principle of selected (not comprehensive) references on other sources, major research articles and related websites, in order to allow the interested reader to trace more background information on certain themes and issues.: On the issue of the history of Christian education comp. Art.:Eckard Reichert, *Education in the Early Church*, ed. Don S. Browning Hans Dieter Betz, Bernd Janowski and Eberhard Jüngel, 4th ed., 13 vols., vol. IV, Religion Past & Present: Encyclopedia of Theology and Religion (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008).318-ff.

tradition without which the enormous influence of a tradition like the Jesuits, the Dominicans or also some of the congregations of women, like the Ursulines (very active in education and research) would not have been possible.

- Both Pietism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as well as Movements of Awakening in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to a large extent can also be understood as renewal movements for the education of the masses, of marginalized groups, of neglected children (remember Franckes Schools for Children in Halle). Conversion to Christ, improvement of the social conditions and the education of humankind and human intellect always were seen as working hand in hand in these movements. It is important to mention this precious heritage because it is the spirit of pietism and awakening which has coined broad sections of protestant missionary movements outside Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century thereby planting the zeal and commitment for education also in many countries and churches in the South. Protestant missionary movements in most cases can be characterized as triangle movements which brought together an *evangelizing or church-planting dimension* (building and sustaining churches and congregations), an *educational dimension* (founding schools, colleges and later universities) and a *healing dimension* (founding hospitals and later primary health care movements and services) in their holistic understanding of mission work.

Seen from a historic perspective the commitment to education therefore is not a prerogative of Western Christianity or a late discovery within the missionary movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, though the missionary movement contributed to the spread of theological education tremendously. The concern for Christian education and more specifically for theological education (rather it) is an essential feature and inner vocation of Christian faith from its early beginnings.<sup>6</sup> It is therefore not surprising that the world mission conference in Edinburgh 1910, which can be seen as the culmination of the missionary spirit of western Christendom in the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>7</sup> was marked by a strong commitment to Christian education. This can be seen a) in the interest for a proper policy for *general education* of the people (at that time often called “moral education”), b) in a major concern for common approaches in higher *theological education of the missionaries* in particular and (c) a specific concern for the theological *training of indigenous church leaders* in vernacular languages:

a) It certainly was the still unchallenged assumption in Edinburgh 1910 that countries in the East and the South had to gradually adapt and be upgraded to the systems of civilization, Christianization and education which were developed in the “Christian West” in the context of colonialization (comp. the two different messages which were issued, one to the “Christian nations”, and one to the non-Christian nations).

It is interesting however that people present in Edinburgh 1910 had a sense already of the very ambivalent character of Christianization working hand in hand with modernization and westernization. There were voices warning of a one-sided and purely technical way of transmitting and exporting western achievements and standards to other countries of the world. It was against the dominant technological and culturally destructive side of westernization that participants of Edinburgh 1910 hoped for a counter movement consisting of what they called “*moral education of*

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<sup>6</sup> For an excellent survey on the historical developments of Christian education see: Robert W. Pazmiño, *Foundational Issues in Christian Education : An Introduction in Evangelical Perspective*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> In Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*, Studies in the History of Christian Missions (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2009), it is reminded that 1910 began being planned as “The Third Ecumenical Missionary Conference” and much of its findings continued what was in the air already during the earlier conferences. In the area of theological education it is worth mentioning that already the first “Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World”, in London, June 1888 devoted a section to ‘The Place of Education in Missionary Work’. Stanley comments that the 1910 Commission III in many respects “simply confirmed the existing direction in which Protestant missionary education had been moving for quite some time” (199). It should also be noted that the Student Christian Movement, which paved the way for 1910 in many ways, was closely related to the international Sunday School Movement in which the concern for interdenominational forms of Christian education was articulated as well at an early stage (then continued in the World Council for Christian Education until its integration into WCC in 1971).

*the people of the South*". By moral education reference was made to the religious and spiritual education of the masses in the South which only by education could be safeguarded against the negative side-effects of the encounter with western modernization and technological revolution. Inspired by the tradition of liberal theology and an understanding of gradual progress as an inherent dynamic in all the world's developments there was a tremendous hope that religious education could play a crucial role (for) in counterbalancing the negative side-effects of western modernization in countries of the South<sup>8</sup>. "One of the striking phenomena of the present hour is the worldwide recognition of the necessity of the moral, if not the religious, element in education – a recognition by no means confined to Christian nations, but found also among the Hindus of India, the Confucianists in China, and the statesmen and educators in Japan trained in the precepts of Bushido...With due recognition of the many elements of truth and value in the non-Christian systems of religion and ethics, we should nevertheless be faithless...if we did not at this time reaffirm our conviction that the education of the world demands for its highest and best developments of those elements of truth which are the peculiar contribution of Christianity to the world's thought and life."<sup>9</sup> Or also: "The impact of western civilization upon the peoples of Africa, with the disintegrating and often demoralizing influences that seem to accompany it, imposes on Christian nations, who have accepted responsibilities in relation to the native races, a binding obligation to provide a new, moral and religious foundation for social life in place of the old sanctions which have been destroyed."<sup>10</sup>

The ideological framework of valuing the relevance and importance of general Christian education certainly was the concept of a Christendom mission, with all of the inherited paternalistic attitudes, assumptions of cultural superiority and un-critical self-affirmation of the Christian West, which marked the outgoing 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary spirit.

b) But Edinburgh 1910 also dealt with theological or missionary education in a more specific sense arising out of serious needs to re-consider methods, places and principles of the *theological preparation of missionaries*. Commission V in the Edinburgh 1910 world mission conference had to deal with questions of the "preparations of the missionaries". Until Edinburgh 1910 the majority of missionaries were trained at seminary level, and only in exceptional cases (like the Danish-Hallesche Mission in the 18th. Century) missionaries were they also trained at an academic level. In reviewing existing mission seminaries and facilities for training, Edinburgh 1910 came to the conclusion that the education of missionaries needed to be drastically improved in terms of both a) language studies, b) history of religions and sociology of mission territories and c) in general principles of missionary work. Interdenominational cooperation of mission agencies for common training programmes for missionaries was seen as the priority for the future in Edinburgh 1910. Missionary training programmes were recommended to be upgraded academically to post-graduate levels and to take place mainly in "central missionary colleges" (not as before just in regional

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<sup>8</sup> As a note on the terminology used it should be stated here that this paper is aware of the difficulties in referring to "the North" or "the South" as the realities of churches in the "two thirds world" or "majority world" which cannot be described any more in purely geographical terms. Lifestyles and patterns of church life shaped by the realities of marginalized and poor populations can be found both in the geographical South as well as in geographical North. Social realities of affluent and consumerist lifestyles can be found also in the center of the Southern hemisphere. The paper, though, is avoiding the terms "global North" and "global South" as these suggest a connotation with the globalization project which is colonial and/or neocolonial in its political presuppositions. The simple terms "North" and/or "South" therefore refer to the realities of different forms Christianity predominantly (but not exclusively) in the Northern and in the Southern hemisphere

<sup>9</sup> Edinburgh World Mission Conference 1910, (Edinburgh 1910 Full Conference Report) Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life, Report of Commission III, London 1910, 368.

<sup>10</sup> Edinburgh World Mission Conference 1910, Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life, Report of Commission III, London 1910, 379.

denominational mission seminaries) which were to be foreseen in places like Shanghai, Madras, Calcutta, Beirut and Cairo and should be open to missionaries of all Christian denominations. These plans were visionary and revolutionary in their understanding of Christian education and theological education in particular. Without using the terminology yet this can be seen as the hour of birth for a new concern

- for theological education of missionaries outside the traditional centers of the West,
- for a globally coordinated policy and development of theological education in the South,
- for centralized and interdenominational key institutions of theological education in the churches of the South,
- for theological education on an advanced academic level.

c) It is thirdly remarkable to realize that Edinburgh 1910 – in taking up demands from the earlier world mission conferences – made a strong plea for missionary education to focus on the *development of indigenous leadership in the Younger Churches*: “The Report of commission III concluded: “We wish to lay it down that we believe that the primary purpose to be served by the educational work of missionaries is that of training of the native Church to bear its own proper witness. And inasmuch as the only way in which the native Church can bear its own proper witness, and move forward to the position of independence and self-government in which it ought to stand, is through native leaders, teachers and officers, we believe that the most important of all ends which missionary education ought to set itself to serve, is that of training those who are to be spiritual leaders and teachers of their own.”<sup>11</sup> In the same chapter one of the far-sighted and provocative recommendations of Edinburgh 1910, which still pertains and has relevance today, refers to the urgent need to develop models and materials of theological education beyond the colonial languages:

“In the work of training the native Christian Churches, and in particular those who are to be leaders of the Churches, the greatest possible care will have to be taken to avoid the risk of denationalizing those who are being trained. In particular, we desire to lay the greatest emphasis on the importance of giving religious teaching, not only of the elementary kind, but as far as possible throughout all levels, in the vernacular. We feel certain that those of our witnesses are right to believe that religion can only really be acclimatized in the heart of the natives of any country if it finds expression in their native language – the language of their homes.”<sup>12</sup>

Although terms like “indigenization” or “contextualization” were not yet used Edinburgh 1910 paved the way for the later agenda for contextualized and ecumenical perspectives in theological education. The concern for theological education in indigenous languages, which remains a crucial issue still today, was clearly foreshadowed and began to loom large, although the reality was that it would fall behind for decades. Edinburgh 1910 thus launched a concern for advanced, indigenous and interdenominational forms of theological education long before the established churches in the West were ready to consider this paradigm change in their own theological training programmes.

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<sup>11</sup> Edinburgh World Mission Conference 1910, Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life, Report of Commission III, London 1910, 371-ff.; David A Kerr and Kenneth R Ross, eds., *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now* (Pasadena: William Carey International University Press, 2009), 85-ff.

<sup>12</sup> Edinburgh World Mission Conference 1910, Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life, Report of Commission III, London 1910, p. 373.

It was in missionary situations “on the field” that the up-and-coming new needs and challenges for protestant theological education<sup>13</sup> first became evident and were explicitly acknowledged.

It is an unprecedented development that the past hundred years of missionary work have given birth to a new spectrum of some 3000-4000 theological schools which probably (no exact counting available until now) exist in global Christianity today. The International Directory of Theological Schools (1997)<sup>14</sup> lists some 2600 theological colleges and schools around the world and some 50 regional associations of theological schools. While most of the established theological faculties in Western Europe were founded between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century (Prague 1348; Heidelberg 1386; Oxford 1423; Cambridge King's College 1441; Wittenberg 1502; Marburg 1527; Geneva 1559; Edinburgh 1582; Heidelberg 1583; Erlangen 1743; New York 1784; Pittsburgh 1794; Princeton 1918; Hussite Faculty Prague 1919)<sup>15</sup> it is due to the early commitment of the missionary movement for theological education that in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century a number of important pioneering institutions of theological colleges, particularly a certain number of United Theological Colleges were founded in the countries of the South:

In **Asia** the very first theological college is **Serampore College** which was founded in **1818** by the English missionaries William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward known as the Serampore Trio. Their aim was to give an education in arts and sciences to students of every "caste, colour or country" and to train people for ministry in the growing church in India. King Frederick VI of Denmark originally granted a Royal Charter giving Serampore College the status of a university to confer degrees in arts and theology. The Royal Charter of Incorporation was issued on February 23, 1827, in Copenhagen, Denmark (Charter, 1, Charter, 2, Charter, 3) in response to Joshua Marshman's visit to King Frederick in August 1826. With the later establishment of the University of Calcutta in 1857 the arts, science and commerce parts of Serampore College were affiliated to the University of Calcutta. However, Serampore College still today continues to enjoy the privilege of conferring its own degrees in theology under the power vested by the **Charter and Act of Serampore College** which were confirmed by the Bengal Government Act IV of 1918. William Carey, Joshua Marshman and John Clark Marshman (Joshua's son) were designated as members of the first council. At its opening, the Serampore Trio released a prospectus which proposed "*A College for the instruction of Asiatic Christian and other Youth in Eastern Literature and European Science.*" The college was open to all people of any caste or creed, and the founders ensured that no denominational test would apply to faculty members. The status accorded by the Danish charter has since been reaffirmed for the study of theology and now forms the basis for degrees of all levels conferred by many theological colleges throughout India and is administered by the Senate of Serampore College. Today more than 50 theological colleges and seminaries all over India including Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are affiliated to the Senate of Serampore College (University).

One of the oldest of these affiliated theological colleges is the **United Theological College in Bangalore** which was inaugurated in **July 1910** – at that time under the name „The United Theological College of South India and Ceylon“ and presented as a “Christian College where students may obtain a sound theological education” (until now offered there in the English language). It was established through the co-operation of the London Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, the United Free Church of Scotland, the Arcot Mission of the Reformed Church in America and the Trustees of the Jaffna College Funds and the SPCK in Scotland in this ecumenical institution. (Only in 1969 followed the first theological college in India to train theological students in one of the native languages: Tamilnadu Theological College Madurai, which was formed 1969 by the joining together of its two forerunners teaching in Tamil namely Tirumariyur and the Lutheran College.

In **Chung Chi College in Hongkong**, the traditions of theological education from the mainland churches and thirteen Christian colleges of Mainland China have been preserved and developed. The historical roots of the Divinity School of Chung Chi College go back as far as **1864** when the Training School of Canton Presbyterian Mission was established at Fati, Guangdong. In **1914**, this School joined with the Anglican Church and the Methodist Church to form **Canton Union Theological College**. During the War, this College had, at various times, affiliated with the University of Central China and with Lingnam University. After the War, the Anglican Church, Wei Li Kung Hui, and

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<sup>13</sup> This paper is aware of the fact that the history of orthodox theological education and Roman Catholic theological education which by far precedes protestant theological education would need a solid survey on its own which cannot be fully developed here. A comprehensive world history of theological education still needs to be written.

<sup>14</sup> Alec Gilmore, ed. *An International Directory of Theological Colleges* (London Geneva: SCM Press; WCC/ETE Publications, 1997)... Another list which includes also Bible Schools from Fuller Theological Seminary includes some 6000 theological schools

<sup>15</sup> Art. Theologische Fakultäten, EKL Bd. 4, Göttingen 1996, 856-ff.

Christian Mission to Buddhists joined together to establish **Hong Kong Union Theological College**. The Church of Christ in China and the Chinese Methodist Church supported Trinity Theological College in Singapore. Chung Chi College had been having religious education and theological training as part of the academic program since 1957. Before joining The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1963, the theological training was separately provided by Chung Chi Theological Seminary, with the Hong Kong Theological Institute of the Church of Christ in China as the nucleus. Dr. Chi Tung YUNG, the head of Chung Chi College, was the first President of the Chung Chi Theological Seminary.

Also one of the oldest institutions in theological education in Asia is **Tainan Theological College and Seminary** which was established in **1876** by Dr. Thomas Barclay, only eleven years after the first British Presbyterian missionaries and Fukienese evangelists arrived in Taiwan. It is also the oldest theological school on the island. For most of its history it was small but highly regarded. After World War II the faculty and student body grew and the school developed an international reputation in undergraduate and graduate theological education. When Dr. Shoki Coe was appointed president in 1949 contextuality became a central concern. The institution continues to promote research into indigenous forms of theological reflection and creative explorations of Taiwanese and Asian expressions of worship and music.

**Trinity Theological College in Singapore** was opened only in **October 1948**, at No. 7 Mount Sophia, as a union institution sponsored by the Methodist, Anglican and Presbyterian churches. Remarkably enough the idea for such an institution developed out of conversations among church leaders interned in Changi Prison during the Second World War who felt the need to establish an institution to train pastors and church workers.

**Jakarta Theological Seminary** is the oldest seminary in Indonesia and was founded in **1934** to provide to the needs of local pastors and to prepare the independence of local churches which at that time still were really depending on pastors sent from the Netherlands.

In the **Philippines**, **Union Theological Seminary** is the oldest ecumenical theological seminary, founded in 1907 after mergers between Presbyterians' Ellinwood Bible School and Methodist' Florence Nicholson Seminary, later joined also by United Brethren Church, Disciples of Christ and Congregationalists. Its alumni played a significant role both in the eventual birth of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (1948), in the leadership of Christian Conference of Asia (established in 1957) and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (1963) and later the foundation of Philippine Christian University (1976) – thereby posing a prominent example for the fruitful interaction between ecumenical theological education and the strengthening of ecumenical institutions in Asia.

In **Africa** one of the first and prominent institutions of theological education is **St Paul's United Theological College**, now St. Paul's University in Nairobi which is now a registered University in Kenya. The history of St Paul's goes back to **1903** when it opened its doors as a Church Missions Institution, training Anglicans for ordained ministry, particularly intended to teach newly freed slaves.<sup>16</sup> Later, in 1955, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, the Methodist Church of Kenya, Reformed Church of East Africa and the National Council of Churches of Kenya joined at different times to establish an ecumenical partnership thereby forming St. Paul's United Theological College in Limuru, Kenya on the Kenya Highlands near Nairobi. The college is currently the only ecumenical seminary in East Africa and trains students from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Madagascar, Zambia and Malawi. St. Paul's UT College has made an exceptional impact on the African Independent Churches by training their pastors in theology since 1955.

In **South Africa** the history of **Stellenbosch University** was beginning with the establishment of the Theological Seminary of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1859, to be followed by the establishment of a Gymnasium in 1874 which in 1887 was transformed into the Victoria College of Stellenbosch and 1918 into the University of Stellenbosch which at that time opened its doors for some 500 students and 39 lecturers. The sad part of this development has been that the institution at that time was exclusively for white South Africans, notably long before the political system of apartheid emerged in 1948. The University of Stellenbosch has since then grown into the internationally recognised institution of excellence it is today with more than 24 000 students, 800 lecturers and some 50 research and service bodies, but only after 1994 gradually also black students and lecturers were admitted.

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<sup>16</sup>Emily Onyango, ed. *For God and Humanity: 100 Years of St. Paul's United Theological College* (Eldoret, Kenya: Zapf Chancery, 2003). See also "St. Paul's University Limuru Homepage" <http://www.stpaulslimuru.ac.ke/>

In **1912** the **Umphumulo Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS)** was founded by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa in Kwa Zuklu Natal which later was consolidated with the Lutheran House of Studies in Pietermaritzburg (Luthos) in January 2003 in constituting Lutheran Theological Institute. Today the LTS does not only accommodate ELCSA and UELCSA theology students from South Africa but also international post-graduate students from the rest of Africa, from Europe, Asia and the Americas.

In the **Middle East** there also is a long history of theological education which began even before 1910 and has led to the creation of the **NEST in Beirut**: The Near East School of Theology, was officially formed in 1932 by the merger of the School for Religious Workers in Beirut and the School of Religion in Athens, but it is built upon a history of evangelical theological education in the Near East which goes back to **1835**. In that year, Rev. William Thompson, later the author of *The Land and the Book*, founded in Beirut the first Protestant Seminary in the area. In 1843 the Seminary moved to Abey, in the mountain not far south of Beirut, under the leadership of Dr. Cornelius Van Dyck, translator of the Bible into Arabic. It offered classes in both theology and general education. Out of the Abey Seminary grew, in 1866, the Syrian Protestant College, now the American University of Beirut. With the founding of that College, it was decided that the seminary pursue only theological studies, while the College be responsible for general studies. The Seminary had several locations in the subsequent years and, in 1905, moved back to Beirut. In 1912, under Principal F. E. Hoskins, Colton Hall was constructed on a piece of land near the center of the city and became the home of the N.E.S.T. until 1971 when it moved to its present premises in Ras Beirut. In 1930, missionaries in the Near East, seeking to strengthen theological education in the area, proposed to unite the theological institutions in Athens and Beirut. In the spring of that year (1930), after a period of negotiations between the Syria Mission (Presbyterian) and the Near East Mission (Congregational), an agreement was reached for the two schools to merge and form the new Near East School of Theology in Beirut.

In **Egypt** protestant theological education started with Presbyterian missionaries who began work in Egypt around 1855 and sailed up the Nile in houseboats to reach the areas of El Minya and Assiut, where they had the most success and where the houseboats served as first seminary space before other facilities were available. The first class of theological students graduated in 1863 and since that time the seminary has been graduating leaders for Egypt and the Arab world. The main building of the current seminary was constructed in 1926 when it moved from Asyuit to Cairo.

In the **Caribbean** there is the fascinating story of Codrington Theological College in Barbados, built on land donated to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel by Christopher Codrington III, who had been Governor of the Leeward Islands. Codrington's will requested that a college should be established for the teaching of medicine, surgery and divinity. Initially this was carried out through the establishment of a grammar (secondary) school in 1745 largely teaching sons of the local gentry. However in 1830 this changed into a tertiary college mainly training candidates for Anglican ordination. Codrington Theological College is therefore one of the first theological colleges in the Anglican Communion, certainly pre-dating any theological college established in England. From 1875 it was affiliated with the University of Durham, and the College was able to offer Durham degrees in theology (and classics). Following the establishment of the University of the West Indies in 1955 Codrington Theological College affiliated to the university in 1965 and now its undergraduate degrees are normally validated by the University of the West Indies.

In **Latin America** one of the oldest institutions of protestant theological education is ISEDET in Buenos Aires which began in 1889. Five years earlier the Waldensian Church and the Methodist Church started to cooperate in the indigenous theological training of their pastors in Uruguay which then was transferred to Buenos Aires. Shortly afterwards the Disciples of Christ, the Presbyterian Church, and the Reformed Churches of Argentina joined in this reformed theological college, which in 1955 received a Lutheran theological faculty responsible for the training of the Lutheran pastors of the IERP. In 1969 this was merged with the existing reformed faculty thereby forming the Institute for Superior Theological Studies (Spanish: Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos, ISEDET).

While these institutions in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were some of the few positive exceptions it was realized very soon in the International Missionary Council (IMC) that theological education of pastors as well as general theological education of lay people and church workers was one of the most urgent priorities and neglected tasks necessary for promoting the self-hood of churches in the South. Therefore the IMC during the Tambaram Conference (1938) “drew attention to the shocking neglect of ministerial training in the ‘younger churches’ which were now the growing counterparts of the missions”. There was the realization that previous IMC conferences had given



scant attention to the development of theological education.<sup>17</sup> One of the key recommendations to emerge from Tambaram was the call for the development of theological education in vernacular languages rather than in English – an echo of an earlier plea from Edinburgh 1910.

For Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, the former General Secretary of IMC and Bishop of the Church of South India, the development of theological education in local/indigenous languages and utilizing the local resources/models for the sake of addressing to the local ministerial needs and missionary challenges, languages was one of the most strategic and fundamental tasks for the training of indigenous leadership and church ministers, because to develop an Indian theology needs theological training in an Indian tongue.<sup>18</sup>

The intervention of the Second World War delayed the IMC from developing and implementing the Tambaram recommendations on theological education. This was to some extent rectified at the IMC Accra Conference (1958) when the **Theological Education Fund (TEF)** was launched, supported by a number of American and British mission agencies and a major grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.<sup>19</sup> It was particularly Charles Ranson, the former British Methodist Indian missionary and later General Secretary of the IMC, who had developed a strong conviction that it would be essential for the future of the younger churches to train indigenous persons for ministries and teaching positions. He was the one who initiated the first important study on the situation of theological education in churches of the South which then was received by the Ghana Assembly of IMC in 1958. The Ghana Assembly created the so-called TEF as a major global fund to promote theological excellency (at this time still understood in terms of promoting Western standards) and to develop creative indigenous leadership in the churches of the South. The three decisive marks of TEF's concern for theological education in the South were specified as

- *Quality* combining intellectual rigor, spiritual maturity and commitment
- *authenticity* involving critical encounter with each cultural context in the design, purpose and shape of theological education
- *creativity*, understood as promoting new approaches of the churches obedience in mission.

In its three Mandate periods TEF has promoted different goals all related to the major aim of an indigenous or contextualized theological education in the churches of the South. While in its first period TEF was falling short of the aim to follow the recommendations of Tambaram to focus on theological education in *indigenous* languages and restricted support to *English* medium theological institutions, it later reviewed its policies and asked explicitly for contextualization of theological education both in terms of content and languages used for instruction:

Major emphases during its three mandated periods were as follows:

- Mandate period 1958-1965: emphasis on indigenous and interdenominational places and institutions for theological education in the South
- Mandate period 1965-1970: emphasis on new curricula developments for the churches of the South and new teaching materials written by leading theologians from the South

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<sup>17</sup> J.E. Lesslie Newbigin, "Theological Education in a World Perspective," *Churchman* 93, no. 2 (1979): 105.

<sup>18</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *Theological Education in World Perspective*, reprinted in the Jubilee Issue of MF, Vol. 110, April 2008, p. 18ff; for the whole issue of languages in theological education comp.: Mark Laing, *Recovering Missional Ecclesiology in Theological Education*, IRM Vol. 388, April 2009, p. 11ff

<sup>19</sup> Charles W. Ranson, "The Theological Education Fund," *International Review of Mission* 47, no. 4 (1958), Christine Lienemann-Perrin, *Training for a Relevant Ministry : A Study of the Contribution of the Theological Education Fund* (Madras & Geneva: Christian Literature Society & Programme on Theological Education, WCC, 1981).

- Mandate period 1970 to 1977: critique over against western concepts of theological education and major calls for contextualization of both forms of ministry and forms of theological education in the South.

The program on Theological Education (PTE since 1977, ETE since 1992) in the World Council of Churches has continued to fulfill the Mandate of the TEF in the following decades (particularly with the journal on Ministerial Formation and several important regional and global consultations) though it can be stated, that “the tasks for which PTE has been set up have neither been fully accomplished nor made irrelevant by changing circumstances.”<sup>20</sup>

In conclusion of this necessarily brief historical survey it can be stated:

- that the concern for the promotion of theological education has been and should remain to be a priority area of joint witness and cooperation within the global missionary movement. Since Edinburgh 1910 some remarkable progress has been achieved in terms of strengthening and building up institutions of theological education in the Southern hemisphere. At the same time the task for providing accessible and contextually relevant forms of theological education for each part of the worldwide fellowship of Christian churches is far from being accomplished. On the contrary, at the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century we are facing a new urgency and increasing demand to cope with the huge challenges, crisis symptoms and fundamental changes of theological education which are caused by the dramatic changes in the landscape of world Christianity (see later chapt 12) and demand for a new coalition of the all to work for the required paradigm changes.

- that the missionary movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century while initiating and demanding (for) several indigenous models of theological education in its beginnings has predominantly globalized a western pattern, methodology and framework of theological education which only gradually (and partially) became challenged and critically enlarged (or replaced) by contextualized patterns of theological education after the 70s and 80s in the last century;

- that the protestant missionary movement indirectly (but primarily) promoted English language and English forms of teaching and learning as the new dominant educational model (replacing Latin as the lingua franca of the Middle Ages and Roman Catholic Christianity) and in much of World Christianity the need to culturally and linguistically diversify teaching programmes and theological textbooks for theological education for non-western cultures still has not yet been dealt with sufficiently.

- despite all efforts on contextualization some theological seminaries in the regions of the South, especially those who are using English as a medium of instruction, in the post- independent era have become a kind of elite institutions producing local leaders for management of church structures and church institutions maintaining the \*status quo\*, instead of continuing to create mission impulses in the community and benefiting the whole of the people of God in a specific context. In most cases the curriculum models they follow are still the ones from their respective mission institutions introduced to them by western missions. Where the theological seminaries are located in the urban areas, one of the problems in addition today is that the ministerial candidates become urbanized (in the matter of their three or four years of their stay and study) with subsequent consequences and difficulties for relocating them in rural areas. Thus in several regions

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<sup>20</sup> J. S. Pobee and World Council of Churches, *Towards Viable Theological Education: Ecumenical Imperative, Catalyst of Renewal* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997). 159.

of the South, new patterns of broad-based theological education, especially to prepare evangelists, catechists, lay preachers etc who will cater to the needs of the village congregations and give missionary leadership in rural areas, are both needed and being implemented.

## 2) Theological education and ministerial formation – clarification of terms

A number of key convictions have emerged in the past decades of dialogue on theological education in the global Christian family which corresponds to key terms used in this paper. We offer the following definitions, bearing in mind that many terms have overlapping meanings or connotations and that their use varies between different ecclesial and cultural contexts.

- There is widespread consensus that every member of the people of God has the right to understand Christian faith and tradition in their fullness and should have access to basic education, faith nurture, and empowerment for mission. Therefore *Christian education* in most Christian traditions is known as a general umbrella term which refers to all kinds of educational endeavors and institutions trying to contribute to processes by which individuals and groups are nurtured and sustained in their being or becoming Christian. "Christian education" in North American usage refers to lay education for children and adults, but not to formal seminary or university programs. The area of Christian education includes everything from family-based religious education to church-owned kindergarten and from Sunday School programmes to religious education in schools. This paper does not attempt to deal with general Christian education, though we are certainly aware of its scope and significance.

- There is also a common conviction that there is no contradiction between immersing oneself into the mystery and personal reality of Christian faith and deepening a critical reflection on its meaning, its foundations, and inner rationality. *Theological education* is another broad term, including in its meaning the reflection on Christian faith and praxis (*fides quaerens intellectum*). In some contexts (like North America) the term "theological education" is used almost exclusively for ministerial formation, often referring to graduate level degree programs designed to prepare people for ministry of one form or another. Theological education in a broader understanding (as in the discourse of PTE/ETE/WCC), however, is not the prerogative only for those becoming ordained ministers and priests but a fundamental right of each Christian adult. Theological education in this broad understanding aims at developing reflective Christian identity and practice, an informed and spiritually enriched access to Biblical tradition, and empowering people for participating in the mission of God in this world. It enables people to reflect critically on the relation between their own Christian identity, their church tradition and other Christian traditions, their relation to the world, and the tasks of God's mission today.

- All churches need to prepare some of their members for ordered forms of ministry, whether this be full-time ordained ministry or part-time ministry, for an ordained sacramental ministry or for educational ministry as lay catechists. The term *ministerial formation* (in some contexts used identically with theological education) as a more narrow notion therefore refers to graduate level degree programmes and institutions which on a more formal basis offer courses and training programmes for different kinds of ordained or non-ordained church ministries in mission, in community and parish life, in diaconal services or in education. It aims at fully equipping people theologically, liturgically, pastorally and catechetically to cope with the demands of a professional form of a church-related ministry. Ministerial formation however does not need to take place exclusively within residential patterns and some churches have courses on regional ministerial formation programmes which work on non-residential, part-time and de-centralized patterns.

- Many churches have special *lay formation* programmes which focus on theological training for lay people, thus making explicitly clear that theology can never be regarded as the prerequisite or exclusive property of ordained ministers alone. The term lay formation defines theological education in terms of a particular target group, but there is some overlapping between the general term theological education and the special term (theological) lay formation.

- Many churches have also realized that theological education in residential schools and centralized institutions is not viable as the only dominant model of theological education in their context. Therefore the term *theological education by extension* (TEE) has become a common key term which refers to new forms of alternative lay theological training programmes which are not based in a residential school, but would allow for a high degree of involvement in the local context while at the same time studying theology in evening classes, regional working groups and distant learning courses in order to be equipped for the ongoing mission and social ministries of the church.

It has become clear in the global debate that all these forms and dimensions of theological education are closely interrelated. A church cannot invest exclusively in ministerial formation without at the same time looking into lay formation as well. It cannot invest only in regional TEE-programmes for lay people without at the same time also equipping those who should become leaders and enablers of training courses for these regional and local catechists and lay preachers. Where do churches set their priorities? In what do churches invest in their diverse theological education programmes and why do they invest where? To what extent does a sense of ownership and support exist on the side of the churches for their institutions of theological education? And to what extent are existing institutions of theological education reflecting interdenominational perspectives and the concerns of the global ecumenical movement? How are curricular concepts taking account of burning issues from the ongoing global ecumenical movement? These are some of the critical questions which arise when considering different understandings, concepts and terms at work within the dialogue on the future of theological education.

Some churches or Christian World Communions have explicit and major reference documents on how they define and set priorities for theological education (such as the Roman Catholic Church<sup>21</sup>, the Anglican Church in its “Signposts for Theological Education”<sup>22</sup> or in the important study-guide “Presence and Prophecy”<sup>23</sup>). To some extent there are also major documents on theological education emanating from the LWF<sup>24</sup> and there is a remarkable foundational document on

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<sup>21</sup> Part II of the Ecumenical Directory, issued in 1970 by the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, is devoted entirely to the issues of ecumenism in higher education and offers special guidelines for introducing the ecumenical dimension into programmes of religious and theological education. Couldn't find guidelines for citing this.

<sup>22</sup> For more information consult the following “Theological Education - TEAC - Ministry Grids” *Anglican Communion Office*. <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/teac/grids/index.cfm>; “Theological Education - TEAC – Rationale,” *Anglican Communion Office*. <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/teac/rationale.cfm>; “Theological Education - Signposts,” *Anglican Communion Office*. <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/signposts/english.cfm>; “Formation for Ministry: Documents” *Church of England*. <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/lifeevents/ministry/ffm/documents/index.html>

<sup>23</sup> Church of England. Mission Theological Advisory Group. and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland., *Presence and Prophecy: A Heart for Mission in Theological Education* (London: Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> Paul E. Hoffman, Lutheran World Federation. Dept. of Theology., and Lutheran Theological College (Makumira Tanzania), *Theological Education in Today's Africa ; the Theological Faculty Conference for Africa Sponsored by the Dept. Of Theology of the Lutheran World Federation at Lutheran Theological College Makumira, Tanzania, July 15-*

theological education in the United Methodist Churches which is called: “Foundation Document – A Wesleyan Vision for Theological Education and Leadership Formation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century”<sup>25</sup> In other churches there doesn’t seem to be a common reference document available at all on the understanding, major goals and missionary or interdenominational perspectives of theological education.

This study is aware of the fact that there is an intimate relation between the way theological education (in its broadest understanding) is shaped or structured and the historical and political contexts which inform and influence various types of Christianity within the changing landscape of World Christianity today.

Edward Farley has made an important distinction between four different historical types of TE<sup>26</sup>:

- 1) the “life wisdom” or “habitus” model of TE (realized as the most early model of theological education existing in the monastic movement)
- 2) the “scientific” model of TE in which theology is perceived as science (emerging already in the early philosophical schools in Alexandria and then later developed in the Middle Ages)
- 3) the “university” model of TE, where theology becomes the work of theological faculties (which often were the first faculties around which universities grew and often - until well back in the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century – were regarded as the “crown of science”)
- 4) the “professional” training model, in which TE is concerned with the inner ecclesial needs of the Christian community in terms of ministerial formation

Today most TE is organized according to *five different types and different institutional environments*:

- 1) Non-residential, extension types of church-based theological education in Bible Schools, Catechetical Courses and regional de-centralized training programs
- 2) Residential types of church-based, academic theological education and ministerial formation programs in theological seminaries or theological colleges of denominational or inter-denominational background
- 3) Academic models of theological education in theological faculties or Divinity Schools which are part of publicly funded, secular universities (TE in terms of curriculum and teaching staffing still church-related)
- 4) Academic models of theological education in theological faculties or Divinity Schools which are part of privately funded Christian Universities

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22, 1969 (Geneva,; Lutheran World Federation, 1969).; Global Lutheran World Federation Consultation on Theological Education, meeting in Rome, Italy from 23 to 27 August, 1999,

<sup>25</sup> Foundation Document A Wesleyan Vision For Theological Education and Leadership – Formation For the 21st Century Revised Draft, July 2003.

<sup>26</sup> Edward Farley, *Theologia : The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

5) Academic models of theological education in Departments of the Study of Religions which are part of publicly funded State Universities (TE independent from church-related and church-controlled influences)

While it is probably true to say that the majority of TE institutions in churches of the South today are reflecting type 1, 2 and in some countries 3 of this scheme while the majority of TE institutions in Europe and partly North America traditionally is shaped according to type 3 and 5, the picture becomes more complex by realizing that there is a growing number of Christian Universities in Africa and Asia (many of which from evangelical or Roman Catholic backgrounds) which favor models of TE according to type 4 and also there is a growing trend in some African countries to move towards type 5.<sup>27</sup>

Questions like

a) what types of TE will be most appropriate for a given context? Or

b) what structural environments are most favorable and desirable for the enhancement of Christian mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

are one of the most urgent issues to be dealt with by ecumenical bodies and missionary networks engaged in the Edinburgh 2010 process. (This issue will be taken up again later on in II. 1. and III. 1.).

Any form of theological education has to deal with the question of how to balance and to relate to each other the different basic forms of theology in its own working processes and curriculum developments, which reflect the different and equally legitimate fundamental needs for theological reflection within the Christian church, namely

- “wisdom theology” (consisting of proverbs; religious narratives; symbols, gestures and commonly-used religious expressions) which is sometimes also called “people’s theology” as it reflects the daily faith experience of people at the grassroots;
- “priestly theology” or “pastoral theology” as critical reflection on the practice of church and ministry (consisting of pastoral and ecclesial knowledge, skills and regulations which inspire different forms of Christian ministries; theological education as ministerial formation);
- “prophetic or public theology” (consisting of a critical reflection on Christian witness and service in society and public witness of denouncing or announcing key values in society which are in consonance or dissonance with the Kingdom of God, with human dignity, justice, peace and the integrity of creation);
- and “theology as theoria” or critical dialogue between theology and other disciplines of science (consisting of cognitive attempts to formulate the inner logic and nature of Christian self-identity and the Christian belief system, defending and reformulating Christian truth in the area of knowledge and science today and/or to express Christian identity and learning in the context of interfaith issues).

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<sup>27</sup>Joel Carpenter, *New Evangelical Universities: Cogs in a World System of Players in a New Game?*, in: ed. Ogbu Kalu and Elaine M. Low, *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity : Global Processes and Local Identities* (Studies in the History of Christian Missions) (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008). 151.

Each of these four dimensions have a legitimate role to play in theological education, each of them has academic and scientific value and theological education should not fall prey to any reductionism in downplaying any one of them.

### **3) Theological education empowering and informing Christian mission – Biblical and missiological insights**

There is a widespread consensus nowadays that theological education does not only have Christian mission as one of its primary objects and elements of the theological curriculum, but theological education itself is part of the holistic mission of the Christian church and therefore is missionary in its character. There is plenty of material, reference texts and major studies from recent years affirming the missionary nature of theological education and the need of theological education to be more orientated towards the missionary tasks of the whole Christian Church.<sup>28</sup> To put it in a phrase expressed by the last global conference on theological education enabled by WCC/ETE in Oslo 1996:

“There is consensus among us on the holistic character of theological education and ministerial formation, which is grounded in worship, and combines and inter-relates spirituality, academic excellence, mission and evangelism, justice and peace, pastoral sensitivity and competence, and the formation of character. For it brings together education of:

the ear to hear God’s word and the cry of God’s people;

the heart to heed and respond to the suffering;

the tongue to speak to both the weary and the arrogant;

the hands to work with the lowly;

the mind to reflect on the good news of the gospel;

the will to respond to God’s call;

the spirit to wait on God in prayer, to struggle and wrestle with God, to be silent in penitence and humility and to intercede for the church and the world;

the body to be the temple of the Holy Spirit”<sup>29</sup>

Missiology, however, was marginalized for a long time within the concept of theological education and the understanding of theology as a discipline. It has been argued that much of Western theological formation was shaped historically in a situation when Christendom in Europe did not feel or realized the need for Christian mission because its self-knowledge was limited only to itself and was very insular and isolated from other parts of the world. Such a condition resulted in an ecclesiology which did not know much about missiology, and a theological education

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<sup>28</sup> Church of England. Mission Theological Advisory Group. and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland., *Presence and Prophecy*.; Bernhard Ott, *Beyond Fragmentation : Integrating Mission and Theological Education ; a Critical Assessment of Some Recent Developments in Evangelical Theological Education*, Regnum Studies in Mission. (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2001).; Max L. Stackhouse, *Apologia : Contextualization, Globalization, and Mission in Theological Education* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988).; J Keum, "International Review of Mission Vol. 98 No. 388, April 2009: Theological Education in Mission," *International Review of Mission* 98, no. 1 (2009).; Tormod Engelsen, *Mission to the World : Communicating the Gospel in the 21st Century : Essays in Honour of Knud Jorgensen* (England: Regnum Books Ltd, 2008). 391; Robert J. Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education : Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1999).; "Mission Studies as Intercultural Theology and Its Relationship to Religious Studies ", *Reference Paper of the German Association for Mission Studies* (2005).; Dokumentation der von der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Missionarische Dienste (AMD) und der EKD veranstalteten Konsultation zum Thema: Die Ausbildung der Pfarrerinnen und Pfarrer angesichts der missionarischen Herausforderung der Kirche vom 18.-20 Oktober 2002 in Halle, in: epd-Dokumentation Nr. 14, Frankfurt a. M. 2003.

<sup>29</sup> Pobee and Churches, *Towards Viable Theological Education*. 1.

program which did not have a missiological perspective. “A missionless church saw no necessity for the inclusion of missiology in the theological curriculum”.<sup>30</sup> The Protestant missionary movement exported this reductionist understanding of theology and made a pattern of theological education normative worldwide which usually would consist of only four disciplines: The study of theology as an academic discipline was pursued as a) biblical text, b) church history, c) systematic theology and d) practical theology. Only Schleiermacher appended missiology to practical theology. Thus missiology was *incorporated* into a pre-existent curriculum, without making the missionary perspective the overarching dimension of theological education as a whole. Thus, quite early on, David Bosch had lamented in an essay from 1982: “If mission was studied at all, it was usually as part of practical theology, as if it were largely a matter of technique or practical application; or it was offered as a totally separate subject, as if it had little to do with the other ‘streams’, or it was an optional subject, competing with preaching, pastoral counseling, or liturgics for the learners attention, ”<sup>31</sup> though there were cases already at some places in which mission enjoyed a more prominent attention though within a different discipline (for instance in New College in Edinburgh an excellent course on ‘Missions’ was taught Prof Alex Cheyne already in 1963 within the Church History lectures).

The rediscovery of the missionary nature of the church in both the conciliar ecumenical movement in the 60s, the evangelical renewal of the Lausanne movement in the 70s and the post-Vatican II encyclicals on the missionary nature of the church have had a profound impact on redefining the missionary task and perspectives of theological education.<sup>32</sup> Many have confirmed David Bosch’s proposal from 1982, that missiology needs to be both *dimensional* (that is integrated into, and in close dialogue with Biblical studies, church history, systematic theology, and practical theology) and *intentional* in terms of maintaining a critical distance from the other disciplines, bringing its own distinctive perspectives to bear on the theological task.<sup>33</sup> Some Latin American theologians meeting early in the 1960s even went further asking for “ a drastic revision of the curriculum of theological institutions patterned after the Anglo-Saxon system” allowing it to be shaped by a “rediscovery of the missionary nature of the church.”<sup>34</sup>

While there is a variety in interpretation on how to understand this “missionary nature of the church” many voices stress an emphasis on a reign of God-centered understanding of Christian mission which for theological education would lead to more openness to interdisciplinary dialogue. Some, though not all, Asian voices emphasize also overcoming a too narrow church-centered concept of a missionary understanding in theological education:

“Mission is not saving and nurturing souls for the world of spirits as many have traditionally thought, but mending creation, which includes transforming lives and reconciling communities. The mission is God’s and we are called to participate in it in continuation of the life of the ‘People

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<sup>30</sup> Mark Laing, "Recovering Missional Ecclesiology in Theological Education," *International Review of Mission* 388, no. 98 (2009).

<sup>31</sup> David Bosch, "Theological Education in Missionary Perspective," *Missiology: An International Review Pasadena, Cal.* 10, no. 1 (1982)., 17-19; Micah McCoy, "Restoring Mission to the Heart of Theological Education a South African Perspective," WCC (2005).

<sup>32</sup> Church of England. Mission Theological Advisory Group. and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland., *Presence and Prophecy*.

<sup>33</sup> McCoy, "Restoring Mission to the Heart of Theological Education a South African Perspective."

<sup>34</sup> Paul Everett Pierson et al., *Missiological Education for the Twenty-First Century : The Book, the Circle, and the Sandals : Essays in Honor of Paul E. Pierson*, American Society of Missiology Series No. 23 (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1996).108



of God' with an acute awareness of living in the midst of the 'Peoples of God'. Theological education and ministerial training is meant for equipping all 'God's People' to engage in mission in their concrete context. It is a local act with global vision. The primary purpose of theological education and ministerial training is not the creating of standard shepherds for tending the sheep, but leading the sheep to fight with the 'beasts' that dominate and destroy God's world. Then, picking up the necessary skills with a view to perform with 'decency and order' the rituals set by particular denominations, and comforting and counseling the people almost as a supplement to a health care service, becomes secondary in the training of a candidate for ministry. Her training should be geared to make her creative, imaginative and communicative in God's mission with and through members of their congregations under their care, with a global outlook and local engagement in their living and working contexts."<sup>35</sup>

In summarizing a broad and multifaceted debate on mission and theological education from recent years, today it can be affirmed among many other factors -

- that theological education as a whole participates in the task of equipping people for participating in God's mission in today's world;
- that all theological education is contextual in its nature and no particular context (or special western inheritance) should continue to exercise any dominant influence over the church and theological education in other parts of the world;
- that a missionary ecclesiology demands a central place for the teaching of a broad-based concept of missiology, intercultural theology and ecumenics (or world Christianity) in theological seminaries and faculties;
- that students and theological teachers should be encouraged to have certain periods of exposure to different social and political realities in other parts of the World Church in order to be introduced to key questions relating to the mission of the Church today.<sup>36</sup>

#### **4) Theological education and the church in partnership – a relationship of service, ownership and critical distance**

There are a number of important studies in different parts of World Christianity on the relation between theological education and the church. CEVAA recently published major study papers on the issue "La tension entre la rigueur académique et la fidélité ecclésiale dans les différents contextes de l'enseignement théologique au Nord et au Sud"<sup>37</sup>. The EKD Churches in Germany have issued a major study on "The Relevance of academic theology for church, university and society".<sup>38</sup> The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) with its Commission on Accreditation has published a major study on "Theological Schools and the Church".<sup>39</sup> The Anglican Church in England in 2003 produced a major study on the relation

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<sup>35</sup> Selvanayagam, Israel, "Theological Education and Participation in Global Mission"

<http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p5/ete/TheologicalEducationandParticipationinGlobalMission-IsarelSelvanayagam.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> Simon Oxley, "Theological Education as Mission," in *Mission in Theological Education Conference* (International Baptist Theological Seminary, Prague: World Council of Churches (WCC), 2005).; Neufeld Verlag Schwarzenfeld, Germany

<sup>37</sup> La tension entre la rigueur académique et la fidélité ecclésiale dans les différents contextes de l'enseignement théologique au Nord et au Sud, published (?) (see: <http://www.cevaa.org/>)

<sup>38</sup> Die Bedeutung der wissenschaftlichen Theologie für Kirche, Hochschule und Gesellschaft Dokumentation der XIV. Konsultation „Kirchenleitung und wissenschaftliche Theologie“, EKD-Texte 90, 2007

<sup>39</sup> "Theological Schools and the Church," *Theological Education* 44, no. 1 (2008).

between theological education and the needs for varied forms of ministries within the church, the Hind-Report.<sup>40</sup>

Although the rich debate on the relation between theological education and the church cannot be completely represented here, the following main points can be summarized as common key convictions which might prove helpful for the way ahead:

a) There is no fundamental contradiction between the principles of academic learning or intellectual discipline on the one hand and a church-related faith commitment on the other, although sometimes there can be tension between the two. It is the task of theological education to strengthen the commitment to Christian faith and to develop a proper understanding and practice of it, which can include liberating Christian faith from narrow-minded and wrongly informed concepts and/or unbiblical practices;

b) Therefore, secondly, theological education has a critical and liberating role and function over against the existing church; referring both to Biblical tradition as well as Church tradition theological education can remind the existing churches of its proper tasks and key mandates;

c) But the church also has a critical and alerting function over against theological education and forms of cultural captivity and blindness in which theological education might find itself due to its particular environment and internal value systems and/or external career pressures. There are serious complaints from some senior scholars that the theological academia in the West has profoundly lost its world-wide and ecumenical perspective and missionary impact and is not sufficiently cognizant of emerging shifts in World Christianity today.<sup>41</sup>

d) Theological education therefore needs both close contacts with the existing realities of church life, involvement and close touch with the challenges of mission, ministry and life witness of churches today, but also some critical distance and a certain degree of autonomy from the daily pressures of church work and/or from the direct governing processes and vested interests of church institutions;

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<sup>40</sup> "The Formation for Ministry within a Learning Church (The Hind Report)," *Church of England*. <http://cofe.anglican.org/lifeevents/ministry/workofmindiv/tetc/safwp/index.html/>. April 2003.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Walls from the Edinburgh Center for the Study of Non-Western Christianity has argued in a major lecture that the situation of university-based theological academy in the West is deplorable: "And here again, an aged Western academic is forced to admit with sorrow that the Western theological academy is not yet equipped to give theological leadership to the world of the 21st century. For one thing, it is profoundly ignorant about the church of the 21st century and the processes by which it has come into being. It has been largely isolated from those processes by its concerns with its own traditions and the problems of the West. Its syllabuses and curricula are tied to a selection of topics that come out of the experience of the West. What passes in the West for church history gives usually a very skewed view of global Christianity. When the Western academy studies what it calls the Early Church, it usually means the Church in the Roman Empire, so it gives the early history of African and Asian Christianity no proper weight. As for the modern history of Africa, or for that matter Asia, that's completely it. That vast amount of research that has been completed over the past forty years still remains in unpublished dissertations or forgotten journal articles, not yet synthesized or followed up. I've been in despair to see tired old subtopics emerge time and again as PhD projects dressed up in fancy language with fashionable theory, but the same old topics nonetheless, when there's so much exciting new work to be done by people prepared to break new ground, learn new languages, develop new skills." Andrew Walls, "Address by Professor Andrew Walls of Edinburgh on Christian Scholarship in a Global Church in Nairobi," *Institute for the Study of African Realities (ISAR)* (2007).6.

e) Theological institutions and churches have constantly faced the challenge of meeting each others' expectations. On the one hand theological institutions expect churches to send the most qualified seminarians. Primary qualifications include dedication, academic competence and good character. On the other hand, churches expect theological institutions to produce dynamic preachers with wholesome values who have both administrative and managerial as well as spiritual strengths and pastoral counseling skills. A creative tension here exists in many contexts. Theological institutions and churches need to be faithful to fulfil their vision and mission. At the same time they need to equip seminarians and pastors to develop the necessary skills for competence in leadership. One of the key questions which is hotly debated and controversially interpreted today is the issue of standards and criteria applicable for selection processes which are acceptable to the churches, either before entering theological studies or after having finished theological training, in terms of finding the best candidates both for studies and for ministry. To what extent are criteria and procedures of selection in accordance with the core goals of theological education and ministerial formation? To what extent are selection processes reflecting a broad-based understanding of various types of ministries within the church or is one type of (academically shaped full-time ministry) setting the tone for selection processes as a whole? In what ways are criteria of ministerial vocation, academic excellence, spiritual background, character formation and professional skills balanced with each other in any selection process and how are these processes adequately related to the biographical situation of candidates, or alternatively simply dominated by market demands?

f) Churches should regard the support for theological education (both with regard to lower degrees as well as higher degrees at Master level) as one of their most important priority mandates and obligations. A church without proper and qualified theological education systems tends to diminish itself or ends in Christian religious fundamentalism. A church with properly developed theological education qualifies itself for greater degrees of interaction and outreach to the different levels and challenges in its society as well as to a deeper commitment to holistic Christian mission. Churches should have a clear sense of ownership of their institutions of theological education without falling into the trap of dominating or curbing them.

g) In situations where accountability, transparency and patterns of governance in Church leadership are low, questions regularly arise such as: What went wrong with the theological education which all Church leaders received, when later in responsible church positions they fall prey to corruption, misuse of ministerial power and violation of any standards of proper responsibility and accountability in church ministry? While not all failures in the performance of later church leadership positions can be attributed to earlier failures or shortcomings in theological education it is still a valid question to explore how more emphasis can be given to character and spiritual formation, good governance and management principles and a code of conduct or a basic ethics of integrity for Church leadership in theological education curricula. This report is convinced that character and spiritual formation, preparation for good governance, proper management principles and a code of conduct for church leadership should become a key factor to be put forward in curriculum development in order to reach a radical transformation in the formation of the leadership of the church and the ecumenical movement. A major need and area of frequent neglect in many churches of the Southern hemisphere also is more commitment and involvement for **in-service training modules** for pastors and church-workers who have finished their first degrees in theological education already but need continued accompaniment and education within the demanding situation of local or regional church ministries.

To conclude this chapter a basic conviction on the partnership relation between churches and theological education is well summarized in a study paper from Lukas Vischer from the WARC:

“In many schools, theology is expected simply to confirm and to defend the teaching and the positions held by the church. Other schools consider theological research and thinking as an exercise which is to be carried out in complete independence from the church. Thus, theology is exposed to two temptations. Either it confirms and solidifies the *status quo* and moves in narrow circles, or it develops theological insights without regard of the communion of the Church. Freedom and responsibility towards the communion of Christ’s Church must be brought into a constructive relationship. The relationship must not be allowed to develop into an either-or. Freedom is to serve the communion of the Church.

In the first place, the vocation of theological reflection is to lift up Biblical truth. By doing so it is bound to challenge the *status quo* and point beyond the church in its present form. Theology is called to address issues which have so far not been clarified by the Church. Theological schools just confirming the *status quo* fail to live up to their vocation. In order to fulfil their vocation, theological schools, need to be free to develop their research, their thinking and their teaching.

At the same time, the other side needs to be stressed. Theological reflection always takes place *within* the communion of the Church. Theology seeks to interpret the faith confessed by the Church. It has its roots in the praise and prayers offered by the Church. Both teachers and students are members of the Church. They are called to serve a community, not the abstract vision of a Church not yet existing, but an actual community with its strengths and weaknesses. As members of *this* community they are also servants of the Church universal in all places.”<sup>42</sup>

## **5) Theological education and different understandings of the Bible – the importance of Biblical hermeneutics in theological education**

There is widespread debate today on different cultural ways of reading and understanding the Bible.<sup>43</sup> The missionary work of nearly 2000 years has provided the groundwork for these cultural readings of the Bible by making Bible translations available for a majority of languages around the world – a work which is still going on and which cannot be overestimated in its missiological and hermeneutical relevance. The availability of Bible translations in different vernacular languages however does not necessarily mean that the ways of reading and interpreting the Bible have changed and become directly related to the methodologies applied in theological education. There is an international debate regarding intercultural dialogue and hermeneutics concerning the interpretation of Biblical tradition. It has become obvious for many that socio-cultural populations which have been marginalized, suppressed and ignored for centuries in the past in their contexts,

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<sup>42</sup> Vischer, Lukas. "A Reflection on the Role of Theological Schools " WCC, <http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p5/ete/AReflectionontheRoleofTheologicalSchools-LukasVischer.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> See among others: Werner Kahl, "Intercultural Hermeneutics -- Contextual Exegesis," in *International Review of Mission* (2000).; ———, "Jesus Als Lebensretter : Westafrikanische Bibelinterpretationen Und Ihre Relevanz Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft" (Habilitation - Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt, 2004, Lang,, 2007).; David H. Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology*, 1st paperback ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979).; ———, *Proving Doctrine : The Uses of Scripture in Modern Theology* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1999).; ———, *Imagining Redemption*, 1st ed. (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).; Mary N. Getui, Samuel Tinyiko Maluleke, and Justin S. Ukpog, *Interpreting the New Testament in Africa*, African Christianity Series (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton Publishers, 2001).; JC Loba-Mkole, "Rise of Intercultural Biblical Exegesis in Africa," *HTS Theological Studies/Teologiese Studies* 64, no. 3 (2008).

like Dalit Christians in India, Native Americans in Canada and the US, the Indigenas or Afro-Brazilian Christians in Latin America, The Black-led- Churches in Britain or The Aborigines in Australia have their own approach to reading the Biblical tradition and that new attempts of Biblical commentaries from their frame of reference are being produced.<sup>44</sup> There have been major new developments with regard to reading Biblical tradition from the perspective of Liberation theology and different contextual theologies in Christianity of the Southern hemisphere.<sup>45</sup> However, western styles of Biblical interpretation in theological education dominate in major parts of theological education in the South.

At the same time, theological controversies in many churches around issues like homosexuality, the ordination of women, or the understanding of creation which have given rise to tensions within denominational families as well as between them (for instance the Anglican World Communion) are often closely intertwined with different hermeneutical approaches and different ways of understanding and interpreting biblical tradition. There are several cases in history where organizational splits in institutions of theological education have taken place within denominational families over differences in understanding the authority and interpretation of the Bible ( see the splits which occurred in the history of Princeton Theological Seminary and Westminster Theological Seminary in the United States in the 1920s). Some theological educators have even identified the controversy regarding the Bible, its authority and interpretation, as the issue that will most likely cause division and discord in the decades to come.

Theological education as a whole often seems to act as a sort of prism through which intensely refracts the issues that the church as a whole needs to address. Specifically theological education, in its content and its methodology, has the mandate to engage with the important tension between the contextual dimension of Christian faith and witness and the received tradition of the Church, between contextuality and catholicity of theological education. While this holds true for all of theological education this tension between the contextual and the traditional seems to be particularly apparent in relation to the Bible and the discipline of Biblical theology – both how the Bible is studied and how it is used in the wider life of the Church. Ultimately any serious engagement with theological education is forced ‘back to the Bible’ – and conversely attitudes to the Bible influence other dimensions of theological education, both in their content and their methodology. This is why in a number of the controversies that many churches today are facing e.g. questions of sexuality, Christian attitudes to other religions etc, the key matter for discussion underneath such ‘presenting issues’ is the attitude to biblical authority and the nature of biblical hermeneutics. This is part of the background why in the Anglican Communion a promising new project was started in 2008 with the title “The Bible in the Life of the Church”<sup>46</sup> which aims at clarifying the question: “What do we mean when we say that we are a Church that lives under Scripture?”.

Differences in Biblical hermeneutics today are contributing to some of the root causes for ongoing splits within denominations and within World Christianity and between some seminaries and institutions of theological education in mainline protestant seminaries, evangelical and Pentecostal seminaries. It should be mentioned however, that these tensions are not just between some

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<sup>44</sup> See for example: T. K. John and James Massey, *Dalit Bible Commentary. New Testament*, 10 vols. (New Delhi: Centre for Dalit/Subaltern Studies, 2007).

<sup>45</sup> Gerald O. West, *Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation : Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African Context*, 2nd, rev. ed., The Bible & Liberation Series (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1995).

<sup>46</sup> “The Bible in the Life of the Church” *Anglican Communion Office*, [http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/acc/meetings/acc14/reports/pdf/bible\\_project.pdf](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/acc/meetings/acc14/reports/pdf/bible_project.pdf); Lillian Kwon, "Anglicans to Re-Evaluate How They Interpret Scripture," *Christian Today*, May 12 2009.<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/anglicans.to.reevaluate.how.they.interpret.scripture/23334.htm>

denominational traditions, but much of these reoccur within some World Christian families (like Anglican Church, Baptist Churches, Orthodox Churches, Pentecostal Churches).

The last 40 years have seen a revolution in Biblical studies, with traditional historical-critical methods being challenged by techniques of reading the Bible which claim to draw on the insights of ‘reader response criticism’ and/or ‘experiential Bible study’. In some circles and contexts these recently popularised methodologies have been called into service to invalidate critical study of the Bible – although that would not necessarily have been the aim of those who originally developed these techniques. Ideally Biblical study needs to take seriously ‘the world of the text’, ‘the world behind the text’ and ‘the world in front of the text’ and enable all three ‘worlds’ to continue a dialogue with each other. Yet this dialogue seems to be quite difficult to sustain, and in most cases one ‘world’ seems to predominate.<sup>47</sup>

The emergence of the Pentecostal movement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century can well be regarded as a “broad-based re-lecture of Biblical tradition” which moves beyond patterns of inherited scriptural interpretation by the established churches and strives towards a popular re-appropriation of Biblical tradition which is meaningful and liberative for the marginalized masses of impoverished or suppressed populations. Pentecostal hermeneutics of Biblical tradition focuses on experiential reading rather than academic interpretation; Spirit-centered belief rather than analytical scrutiny of Biblical tradition; collective appropriation on Biblical tradition rather than individualistic interpretation; immediateness of the Biblical world to modern times rather than remoteness of the Biblical world (of spirits, wonders and healings) over against the frame of reference for modern life today. While the Reformation principle that there is a difference between the literal word of Biblical tradition and the Spirit of God and central hermeneutical significance of Jesus Christ as the center of Scripture can still serve as a critical principle over against a rigid and unbiblical literalism, the Pentecostal hermeneutics of a spirit-led interpretation of Scripture has an important relevance and liberating function in the context of academic interpretation of Biblical tradition today and can contribute substantially to a holistic and multifaceted hermeneutical approach to the Bible in contemporary theological education.

It belongs to the key convictions of this study paper

- a) that the different hermeneutical approaches to Biblical tradition (historic-sociological, charismatic, feminist, Asian contextual and African contextual approaches) do need each other and can complement each other in the journey towards a holistic and comprehensive understanding and interpretation of Biblical tradition in theological education today;
- b) that *common* theological education is possible even with some divergence and variety in the understanding of Biblical tradition and the applied Biblical hermeneutics, provided that there is an open and attentive mutual dialogue on different approaches to issues of Biblical hermeneutics within the curriculum of theological education (or between different schools);
- c) there should be much more input in theological education (particularly Biblical theology) on the different concepts of Biblical hermeneutics today;
- d) there is much more in common between theological education institutions in the ecumenical, evangelical and Pentecostal world than is often realized in the actual processes and curricula of theological education; the potential for better and more open cooperation is a Biblical imperative and has many promises for mutually enriching and strengthening theological education as a whole.

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<sup>47</sup> Marcus J. Borg, *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time : Taking the Bible Seriously but Not Literally*, 1st ed. ([San Francisco]: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001).

## **6) Theological education and the unity of the church – interdenominational cooperation and ecumenical learning in theological education**

There are at least three major expectations in respect of theological education which can be found in different degrees in most of the institutions of theological education and their governing boards:

- a) theological education should strengthen and reinforce denominational identity of future pastors and church workers, so that they know to which church they belong and work for (*theological education as denominational initiation*);
- b) theological education should introduce students to the wider horizons of the worldwide church in order to give a sense of belonging also to the ecumenical fellowship of churches (*theological education as discovery of catholicity*);
- c) theological education should engage and prepare candidates to relate to and to enact viable models of church unity, to theologically reflect “unity in diversity” and to ask how the relation between local or denominational identity and the ecumenical worldwide fellowship can be lived out and theologically founded in a sound manner (*theological education as enabling for ecumenical learning*).

This report is convinced that to strengthen the denominational identity of future pastors and church workers, so that graduates understand the church to which they belong, on the one hand is important for theological formation. But on the other hand it remains an even more important task how to introduce students to the wider horizons of the worldwide church to enable them for an understanding of what their belonging to the ecumenical fellowship of churches means. It is vital for any theological education to prepare candidates to engage with models of church unity, to reflect theologically on ‘unity in diversity’ and to ask them to study how the relation between commitment to local and denominational identity and cooperation on the one hand and commitment to ecumenical learning and the worldwide fellowship can be lived out.

There is a resurgence of denominationalism in theological education today which is not a good sign for the integrity of Christian witness within the protestant family. Many denominations, even smaller churches, tend to build or to plan their own theological colleges. The denominational fragmentation of theological education is one of the root causes for the continuation of the ecumenical divide. The WARC a few years ago (1999) did a major study on the question as how to «*understand the role of theological schools as uniting or dividing force in churches, and to identify ways for Reformed seminaries and schools to promote unity* » in which it is stated:

“The multitude of theological schools (here in Reformed tradition) represents no doubt an enormous potential. In hundreds of places, theologians – *docteurs* – reflect on the meaning of God’s word and seek to communicate the Gospel to a new generation of ministers and lay people. The schools are the expression of an impressive theological zeal. Often, they give birth to constructive new insights and theological perspectives.

But the multitude of theological schools also represent a threat to the coherence of Reformed theological thinking. On the whole, there is little communication among the various centres of theological learning. Schools tend to be self-sufficient and develop their thinking and their activities along separate lines. Often, both in past and present, theological schools have been the cause of splits, or have at least contributed to maintain divisions within the Reformed family.

A few examples may serve as illustration:

- In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the rise of liberal theology, the authority of the historical Reformed confessions of faith and even the ancient creeds was called into question in the Swiss churches. In response, theological schools were founded to maintain the traditional teaching of the Church. A similar initiative was taken in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the foundation of the Freie Evangelische Theologische Akademie (FETA) in Riehen/Basel.
- In 1953 a major split occurred in the Presbyterian Church of Korea. The cause was a dispute over the authority of Scripture. The issue was the use of the historical-critical method in interpreting the Bible. As the Assembly decided against the innovation, a group of professors decided to establish a new seminary. Eventually the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) was formed.
- Often, especially in Korea, theological seminaries were established with a view to the outreach of the church. Pastors were trained to become missionaries and to found new congregations. Theological schools have been the source and centre of several separate Presbyterian Churches in Korea. Korean missionaries often apply the same method abroad. In many countries, Bible schools, theological academies, even universities, have been founded, to advance the missionary cause (Bolivia, Uganda, Russia). Often, little attention was paid to the relationship with existing educational institutions.”<sup>48</sup>

This study paper is convinced that theological education is the seedbed for the renewal of churches, their ministries and mission and their commitment to church unity in today's world. If theological education systems are neglected or not given their due prominence in church leadership, in theological reflection and in funding, consequences might not be visible immediately, but quite certainly will become manifest after one or two decades in terms of theological competence of church leadership, holistic nature of the churches mission, capacities for ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and for dialogue between churches and society. The transmission of the ecumenical memory and vision to future generations of pastors and church workers is a priority need in many WCC member Churches, its continuation is far from being secured at present.

This can be underlined with a special sense of urgency for the African continent: The missionary enterprise in Africa led to the creation of predominantly ethnic churches in Africa – ethnic identities aligned with denominational identities. There are about 2600 ethnic groups in Africa. In many countries – like Kenya, Nigeria or DRC Congo - there are thousands of different Christian denominations and churches today (Kenya: 4000 denominations, Angola: 800 denominations). There is a contradiction between the growth of churches and the increase of misery and disunity on the African continent. Much of the dominant popular theologies are heaven-orientated, reflecting the miseries of daily life, but do not encourage involvement in changing and transforming the situation or creating greater unity between different ethnic groups. Thus Ecumenical Theological Education is vital not only for the future of African Christianity but vital for the future of the whole African continent.

In taking up some key insights of earlier studies (for instance common statement of the Joint Working Group on Ecumenical Formation in Theological Learning” from 1996<sup>49</sup>) it is affirmed

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<sup>48</sup> Lukas Vischer, A Reflection on the Role of Theological Schools. Contribution to the WARC Study Process on Mission in Unity Project during the 23<sup>rd</sup> General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC Office Geneva)

<sup>49</sup> Joint Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches. and World Council of Churches., *Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches Seventh Report : Including: The History of the Rcc/Wcc Joint Working Group and with Three Study Documents Commissioned and Received by the Joint Working Group: The Ecumenical Dialogue on Moral Issues : Potential Sources of Common*



again here that increased efforts need to be undertaken to properly place and emphasize ecumenical formation in theological education and to strengthen interdenominational cooperation both within certain theological courses as well as between institutions of theological education.

It was stated in the Oslo world conference on theological education 1996:

“There is a need to keep before the churches and the younger generation a concern for the visible unity which links sharing in God’s mission and the pursuit together of justice and peace with the need to heal divisions between the churches through mutual dialogue, mutual recognition and reconciliation. Those involved in theological education and ministerial formation have a vital part to play, not only through giving an ecumenical dimension to all parts of their curriculum, but by embodying ecumenical principles through the sharing of resources, the establishment of ecumenical colleges, institutions, courses and federations, and the interchange of faculty and students of different traditions. A genuine ecumenical institution will not only acknowledge the differences between churches, but will work towards their reconciliation. Faced by the challenges of the world, the prophetic voice calls out to the churches to respond to them together across cultural and geographical boundaries and not to reinforce divisions and hostilities between people. Those engaged in ecumenical theological education and ministerial formation can respond to that call as they digest and reflect on significant ecumenical documents and live out new possibilities for common actions.”<sup>50</sup>

Further, the *Charta Oecumenica* of 2001 which was prepared jointly by CEC and the CCEE declares in section 3 “Moving towards one another”: “It is important to acknowledge the spiritual riches of the different Christian traditions, to learn from one another and so to receive these gifts. For the ecumenical movement to flourish it is particularly necessary to integrate the experiences and expectations of young people and actively encourage their participation.” The *Charta* then adds the following commitment:

- “to overcome the feeling of self-sufficiency within each church, and to eliminate prejudices; to seek mutual encounters and to be available to help one another;
- to promote ecumenical openness and co-operation in Christian education, and in theological training, continuing education and research.”

These commitments find an echo in the third recommendation of the final message of the Third European Ecumenical Assembly at Sibiu in 2007 which says: “We recommend finding ways of experiencing the activities which can unite us: prayer for each other and for unity, ecumenical pilgrimages, theological formation and study in common, social and diaconal initiatives, cultural projects, supporting society life based on Christian values.”<sup>51</sup>

It has become clear meanwhile that what is at issue in the challenge of ecumenical learning is not just the addition of elements of ecumenical theology into the curricula of theological schools and seminaries. But the question is whether and to what extent the basic orientation of theological education reflects the fundamental relational nature of being the church, its vocation to live as a

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*Witness or of Divisions ; the Challenge of Proselytism and the Calling to Common Witness ; Ecumenical Formation : Ecumenical Reflections and Suggestions* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998).Appendix D.

<sup>50</sup> Pobee and Churches, *Towards Viable Theological Education*.

<sup>51</sup> Konrad Raiser, "The Future of Theological Education in Central and Eastern Europe: Challenges for Ecumenical Learning in the 21st Century," *International Review of Mission* 98, no. 1 (2009).

true *koinonia* in relationship with God, with other Christian communities and with the wider human community and the world as God's creation.

Here an understanding of ecumenical learning holds true which was affirmed in the final report of the Herrnhut consultation on "Theological Education in Europe" in 1980 (brought together by PTE/WCC). In its report it is stated: "We understand ecumenical learning not as a separate part or sub-division of theology, even if for the time being attention may need to be drawn to it in specific ways if it is not to suffer neglect. It is a dimension of all theology and theological education. It has to do with the readiness to experience and take account of other confessions of Christian faith, other religious traditions, and other social and cultural realities, in order to see things whole. It has to do with local and concrete issues, not parochially but in the awareness of the whole inhabited earth and in the perspective of unity in Christ."<sup>52</sup> The same Herrnhut report then goes on to underline that theology should be understood as an activity of all God's people "in the light of God's revelation and in active obedience, which constitutes the mission of the Church in the world....Theology is the corporate work of a community in which a certain style of relationships becomes extremely important...The corporate nature of theology is but one reflection of the corporate nature of the Church's ministry. Therefore, theological education must be made available for and engage all the people of God."<sup>53</sup>

The report concludes with a number of recommendations specifically concerning the ecumenical perspective in theological education. These recommendations remain valid even almost 30 years later and might serve as an indication of practical steps to begin responding to the challenge of ecumenical learning.

- "We recommend that institutions of theological education consider the appointment of persons who will not only offer courses in ecumenics but work with the whole educational community to ensure global, interfaith, and inter-confessional perspectives in all courses and programmes.
- We recommend that information about other churches and their traditions be given an important place in theological education and that wherever possible this information be presented in person by representatives of those churches and traditions.
- We recommend that wherever possible firsthand experience of the liturgical and spiritual life of other Christian traditions be provided.
- We recommend that, as a means to ecumenical awareness, students and teachers be encouraged to learn other living languages and to engage in dialogue with persons of other cultures.
- We recommend that opportunities be sought to enrich the learning resources of institutions by exchange of faculty members and students from different traditions and educational centres within Europe and beyond."<sup>54</sup>

These recommendations (and they can be easily contextualized also in non-European contexts) have not lost their relevance until today. If an example is needed on how a new style of ecumenical formation in theological education is related to practice and proper curriculum the programs of the Graduate School for Ecumenical Studies in the Ecumenical Institute of **Bossey**

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<sup>52</sup> World Council of Churches, *Theological Education in Europe: Report of the Consultation Held in Herrnhut, German Democratic Republic on the Theme, Theological Education for Ministerial Formation, 8-14 October 1980*. (Geneva, Switzerland: Programme on Theological Education, World Council of Churches, 1980).13.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*,16.

(affiliated to the WCC) can serve as an example. There are ample resources of educational and curriculum-related experiences in Bossey which are documented both in its complex and exciting history<sup>55</sup> as well as in its present trends<sup>56</sup>. It remains vital to renew a commitment to ecumenical perspectives in theological education like those spelled out in the key reference text “Magna Charta on ecumenical formation in theological education” from WCC in 2008:

“If the ecumenical movement as a whole is about strengthening common witness and promoting new forms of the visible unity between churches of different denominational and confessional traditions then the scandal of churches remaining in disunity and using distorted images of sister churches in one’s own educational materials and publications needs to be overcome with foremost priority in the area of theological education and ministerial formation. The strengthening and pursuit of church unity in theological education is a Gospel imperative for any church joining in the affirmation of the church as being “one, holy, catholic and apostolic” in its essence (The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed [381])...The emphasis on interdenominational cooperation in theological education as well as the development of proper teaching materials on ecumenism remains an indispensable component of the theological education of pastors and ministers which in many places is still lacking. There is no future for the ecumenical movement as a whole if there is no commitment to ecumenical formation processes in formal and non-formal theological education programmes of WCC member churches. If theological education fails to be guided by an ecumenical vision of a church renewed in mission and service to the whole of humankind there will be a serious shortage in terms of a new generation of Christian leaders, pastors and theological teachers carrying on the ecumenical vision and commitment into the 21st century and a widening gap and estrangement between the majority clergy and ever fewer experts on the ecumenical movement and ecumenical theological discourse which can already be observed in a number of member churches.”<sup>57</sup>

## **7) Diversity in theological education and the different forms of ministry in the church**

It was in the middle of the century and journey between Edinburgh 1910 and today, that the international missionary movement realized more strongly than ever before that there is not but one predominant model of (full-time ordained) ministry in the church, but there are *different forms of ministry* some of which are more adequate and adaptable for the needs both of growing and independent churches in the South as well as for churches in modern societies of the North. The major international study on, *Patterns of Ministry – Theological Education in a changing world*’ which was worked out in the sixties and then was presented for the WCC Assembly in Uppsala 1968<sup>58</sup> marks a watershed in the developments towards a *concept of diversified ministries and related theological education programmes*.

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<sup>55</sup> Hans-Ruedi Weber, “A Laboratory for Ecumenical Life,” *Ecumenical Review* 48, no. 4 (1996).; Hans Ruedi Weber and World Council of Churches., *A Laboratory for Ecumenical Life : The Story of Bossey, 1946-1996* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996).

<sup>56</sup> Dagmar Heller, *Ecumenical Perspectives of Theological Education in Bossey Ecumenical Institute, the Future of Ecumenical Theological Education in Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Viorel Ionita and Dietrich Werner, Full Report of the International Seminar for Young Lecturers and Professors of Theology in Sambata De Sus, Romania, 24-28 September 2008 (Geneva, Switzerland: CEC/ETE, 2009). 89-ff.

<sup>57</sup> World Council of Churches ETE, “Magna Charta on Ecumenical Formation in Theological Education,” *Ministerial Formation* 110 (2008).

<sup>58</sup> Steven Mackie, *Patterns of Ministry: Theological Education in a Changing World* (London,: Collins, 1969).

Which forms of ministry are applicable and relevant to what kind of church and social context? Which forms of complementary alternative forms of ministry alongside the traditional full-time professional model of a residential pastor do we have to develop in contexts where churches cannot afford the traditional model? Questions like this were debated.

In many churches today there is a growing relevance felt for theological education for diversified ministries in the church. The assumption that theological education is mainly targeted and structured for those studying full-time and for full-time professional ministry has changed and is continuing to change in several contexts. The Anglican Communion in its TEAC Working Party (Theological Education for the Anglican Communion) has distinguished four different areas of theological education, each of which has received distinct and separate, though related, directions and recommendations (“grids for theological education”): In developing theological education in “The Anglican Way” the question was asked: What is the framework within which theological education needs to be developed, and what are the ideal outcomes of theological education? After having clarified “What is theological education?” (Lecture of Archbishop Rowan Williams in November 2004) and the production of a document by TEAC called “**Principles for Theological Education**”<sup>59</sup> a series of **grids** was worked out, each linked to a specific form of ministry or discipleship, giving the ideal outcomes at various stages of the educational process:

- Theological education for **laity**
- Theological education for **vocational deacons** and **licensed lay ministers**
- Theological education for **priests**
- Theological education for **bishops**, concluded by the final statement on:
- Theological education on **The Anglican Way** (reference statement from 2007)

The reference text defines different types of competencies and related theological education requirements for different forms of ministries in the church (later to be followed even by user-friendly manuals which translate some of the basic principles into recommendations).

In many churches of the South the predominant form of theological education which is within reach and accessible for people in poorer sectors is theological education by extension (TEE). Case studies about TEE projects from several countries<sup>60</sup> underline the indispensable and vital function of these programmes as well as the need for institutions of formal theological education to add a program on TEE to their own activities in formal theological education and to help to train the trainers for regional and local TEE programmes. Most probably decentralized TEE programs for most of Christianity in the South will prove to be the most effective and most widely spread models of theological education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as many rural or poor churches cannot afford to maintain residential theological education programs. Ross Kinsler, the founder of TEE movement, has made a strong argument for starting a mass movement integrating TEE theological programs, primary health care education programs and education for development programs in order to engage in a mass movement towards “education for life” which is more urgently needed than ever before for survival on a planet which is deeply endangered today: “Theological education committed to such a vision of education for life, life abundant for all, would need the full

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<sup>59</sup> “Theological Education & Studies – TEAC (Theological Education for the Anglican Communion).” *Anglican Communion*. <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/teac/index.cfm>

<sup>60</sup> F. Ross Kinsler, *Diversified Theological Education : Equipping All God's People*, 1st ed. (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey International University Press, 2008).

collaboration of the theological institutions at upper academic levels and their graduates, the many, diverse pastoral or Bible institutes, and the churches' leadership training programs. It would have to develop, with the churches and relevant social sectors, a mass movement for social and ecological transformation. The potential for mass movement is evident among the base ecclesial communities of Latin America, the African Instituted Churches, and Pentecostal or charismatic churches around the world. It is also evident at the World Social Forum, which each year gathers hundreds of thousands of activists from around the world, including secular and religious and inter-religious movements. To pursue a holistic vision, theological education might combine the best elements and models of Theological Education by Extension, Health Education by Extension, and Education for Self-Development. It would need to be empowered by an awakening such as took place at Pentecost, a new evangelization that would incorporate all God's people in that struggle for life, for Jubilee, for holistic salvation."<sup>61</sup>

While programs of non-residential theological education by extension (TEE) are increasingly practiced and spread in churches of the South it should also be noted that there has been a remarkable shift in terms of the reality of part-time study and in-ministry study in many countries and churches in the North. In England non-residential ordination courses are offered which are based on part-time studies. In North America several churches opt for part-time and non-residential theological studies for several reasons: The increasing lack of funding for residential types of theological studies by the church or the candidate is one, but not the only reason, the contextual nature of non-residential types of theological education and its improved accessibility for the new generation of candidates of ministry many of which have a professional background already is adding to the attractiveness of these programs. Institutions such as New York Theological Seminary operate only for part-time, non-residential students in order to provide training for those who are in professions and/or already in formal ministry. Many seminaries and theological colleges recognize the value of having students with different levels of experiences and knowledge studying together, that is, providing for both residential and non-residential students in the same program. 40% of the MDiv-students in the US are already studying according to non-residential programs. The implications this gradual shift from residential to non-residential types of theological education for established institutions and colleges of residential theological education are manifold. Many have to invent new programs and try to combine residential and non-residential types of theological training.

In the international debate on theological education a consensus has developed nowadays that shaping the future of theological education for a diversified spectrum of ministries in churches of the South is a fundamental issue of **justice**. It is a matter of *access to theological education systems and of openness of curricula and models of theological education for the needs of people with different backgrounds of marginalization*. Access to theological education is still extremely imbalanced between North and South, between rural and urban regions within both the northern and the southern hemisphere, between women and men, between lay people and candidates for ministry. Access to theological education is specified as a fundamental issue in the Introduction to the Book on "Diversified theological education"<sup>62</sup> in its different dimensions:

- 1) Geographical access
- Traditional, centralized patterns of theological education have reached out primarily to those who could leave home, community, employment and the local church for extended periods of full-time study
- 2) Economic access

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<sup>61</sup> Ross Kinsler, Education for Life, manuscript 2008, unpublished

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenical-formation/ecumenical-theological-education-ete/edinburgh-2010-international-study-group-on-theological-education.html>

<sup>62</sup> Kinsler, *Diversified Theological Education : Equipping All God's People*.8.

- The cost of theological education drops considerably when the students remain within their local base of support
- 3) Cultural access
- Decentralized programs of theological education can more easily adapt to the cultural and linguistic diversity of their constituencies.
- 4) Ecclesiastical access
- Due to the high cost per candidate of centralized programs many churches tend to select for theological training only candidates for ordained ministry, decentralized programs can open the door to theological education more widely and to any and all members of the church
- 5) Gender access
- Women in some churches have traditionally been marginalized from theological education programs and/or limited to social ministries with women and children. Strengthening the accessibility of theological education for women will gradually change the orientation, methodology and also contents of theological education (see chapter ...)
- 6) Class access
- In many regions theological education and ministry are oriented toward high academic and professional standards that alienate the poor from leadership and tend to orient the churches to certain class expectations. Some de-centralized programmes have better access to a very diverse socio-economic levels of theological education
- 7) Differing abilities access
- Many institutions of theological education have made some efforts to provide better access to persons with differing physical, emotional and mental abilities, but progress in this area is varied and on the whole has been gradual
- 8) Pedagogical access
- Dialogical and participatory pedagogical methods which focus not only on repetitive knowledge-based styles of learning and one-way lectures, but are open to equipping people for their own critical theological reflection are not always taken for granted
- 9) Spiritual access
- Is theological learning in centralized or de-centralized models of theological education open to encountering different Christian and religious spiritualities today?

Analyzing and shaping future programs of theological education in a given region with regard to these criteria of accessibility remains a priority need for church leadership and associations of theological schools within World Christianity.

## **8) Theological education and a missionary spirituality – spiritual formation and missionary training in theological education**

For many networks and churches involved in cross-cultural missionary work the key question for the future of theological education is: Which models of theological education can prepare and equip people for a commitment to integral mission and deepen a missionary spirituality? The concern for mission and spiritual formation in theological education has been a key issue and working priority on the agenda of the PTE-program in the WCC in the 80s.<sup>63</sup> There is an

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<sup>63</sup> Samuel Amirtham, Robin J. Pryor, and World Council of Churches. Programme on Theological Education., *The Invitation to the Feast of Life : Resources for Spiritual Formation in Theological Education* (Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, Programme on Theological Education, 1991). 146. Particularly the report of the Iona-Consultation on Spiritual Formation.

impressive variety of recent studies available on pre-field mission training programs from different sources, many of which are from an evangelical background. Global Connections is a growing, vibrant network of UK agencies, churches, colleges and support services linked together for resources, learning and representation. Together, they seek to serve, equip and develop churches in their mission in order to fulfil the shared vision of 'mission at the heart of the church, the church at the heart of mission'. The promotion of missionary spirituality is part of their agenda.<sup>64</sup>

In 2006 the Global Connections network commissioned research into the situation of mission training in the UK "What is happening in UK mission training?" This was completed by Vaughan Consulting in February 2006. The research explores: current demand for mission training, current supply of mission training, perceptions of trends and developments in mission training and views of quality of mission training.<sup>65</sup> There is also a searchable Internet database "Train For Christ" that lists evangelical, pastoral, theological and missionary training courses in countries around the world. It seeks to allow Christians everywhere to find the training they need to better serve the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>66</sup> The Database "Train for Christ" is run by the Missionary Training Service, based in the United Kingdom, working with member organizations of the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) and the Trainers of Pastors International Coalition (TOPIC). The Missionary Training Service is a member of Global Connections in the United Kingdom (formerly known as the Evangelical Missionary Alliance).

Many denominational churches have developed their own missionary awareness building programs, particularly Christian women's organizations, which play a leading role in this regard. The United Methodist Women's Network has an annual women in mission education program which involves hundreds of women each year.<sup>67</sup>

Also the International Missionary Training Network (IMTN) of the World Evangelical Alliance has done some major research on innovative models of theological education for missionary spirituality and practise originated and mandated by the Mission Commission (MT) of the WEA.<sup>68</sup> Realising many shortcomings of established centres of academic theological education with regard to proper and in-depth training and formation for mission ministries and cross-cultural mission "regretfully many of us have concluded that most formal education institutions in both the North as well as the South are the least willing to change, to examine their training assumptions, or to learn from others. Some of the greatest creativity in ministry/mission training takes place not in the North (though there are seminal exceptions) but in the South. But the pressures of supposed "excellence" and accreditation are just too much for some of them".<sup>69</sup> The resource book "Integral Mission Training Design and Evaluation from Robert Brynjolfson and Jonathan Lewis brings together a wealth of resources and new models for training for cross-cultural mission and nurturing mission spirituality both in short-term courses as well as in life-long learning perspective.

Many mission organizations see an increasing need for short term mission education programs. CWM is offering a Training in Mission Programme (TIM) which is a youth leadership

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<sup>64</sup> "Home," *Global Connections*. <http://www.globalconnections.co.uk/>

<sup>65</sup> "Mission Training Review," *Global Connections*. on <http://www.globalconnections.co.uk/resources/training/>

<sup>66</sup> "Train for Christ-Database," *Train For Christ*. <http://trainforchrist.org/public/>

<sup>67</sup> "Home," *United Methodist Women*. <http://new.gbpm-umc.org/umw/>

<sup>68</sup> , *Connections, the Journal of WEA Mission Commission on Holistic Training for Cross-Cultural Ministry* 4, no. 2 (2005).[http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/2005\\_02.pdf](http://www.worldevangelicals.org/resources/2005_02.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> Robert Brynjolfson and Jonathan Lewis, *Integral Ministry Training: Design and Evaluation* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2006).X.

development programme run by CWM. Young Christians from CWM churches around the world come together to discover their own role in the mission of Christ's church through practical work and study. They spend five months in South Africa and five months in India. CWM is offering 12 young people the opportunity to join the next TIM programme. The Training in Mission (TIM) program of CWM is a flagship program of “mission education with a Difference”, aiming “to equip young people for a lifetime of service to Christ and his church”. TIM was initiated in 1981 in response to a challenge to CWM to create an opportunity for involving young people in mission learning and mission engagement. The stated aim and objectives are:

- Building capacity for interpersonal relationship and community building.
- Challenging the theological and missiological status quo.
- Motivating mission action, and
- Empowering young people to return to their local congregation and continue their journey as mission animators and partners.

In the past 28 years approximately 280 young people aged between 20-30 years old, drawn from CWM member churches and the wider ecumenical community have participated in the program. Over these years the methodology of engagement and program delivery has evolved. There have been changes of location and format. Currently the program is hosted in South Africa and India. Each cycle of the program runs for 10 months. Irrespective of the location or format the TIM experience has been consistent in holding to a model of education based on “action reflection” or “learning by doing”. The intent is “to draw out” of the participant their own evolving perspective of mission. It is acknowledged that each participant has his or her own perspective that can be explored, shared and challenged. Therefore each participant is expected to bring to the program their own knowledge of the life, witness and history of their church within context.

The “action reflection” model assumes that:

- The experiences of life provide the opportunity for learning. It is the constant of engagement with people that provides the catalyst for insight about life.
- The ideas about life are shaped by context; equally they are challenged and transformed by a changed context.
- Engagement and participation in mission is informed through grappling with issues and not only through quality of knowledge.<sup>70</sup>

The experiences that a participant in the TIM program encounters bring an element of risk in the journey of discovery. The following extract from the TIM diary of 2008 outlines the nature of risk involved in this model of theological education. “The TIM program is not just another youth training program. It seeks to offer a radical alternative to the mission formation of young adults. The following expectations are associated with participating in the program:

- Participants are to be the visible expression of God’s calling of every Christian to be ‘sent-out’ as witnesses to the risen Christ in the world.
- Participants are to witness to the new humanity in Christ by taking action to break down cultural, racial, linguistic and other barriers. They are called to a lifestyle that is shaped by more than one culture and tradition.
- Participants are to be living examples of partnership in mission, the principle upon which the Council for World Mission is founded, by:

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<sup>70</sup> Adapted – Sharing people in Mission – Case studies from the Council For World Mission, Andrew P. Williams; D.Th. thesis submitted to the University Of Birmingham, 2004)



- challenging and enriching the lives and mission of other partners in mission;
  - being responsible for and accountable to one another.
- (TIM Diary 2008)

TIM participants have returned to work with their churches in varied roles and with CWM globally at various levels. Additionally persons have brought a new perspective on their faith to their work. One former participant commented on the way in which the TIM experience had enabled him to relate mission to all of life. Other participants have mentioned how cultural barriers were broken down, new perspectives on the world and new ways of thinking were gained.

Also other mission organizations like Mission 21 or UEM are offering Internship or Volunteer Programs. There is a good experience in providing short-term exposure to mission realities of Christianity in the South and to bridge the generation gap for forming a future leadership generation involved in holistic Christian mission.

How do we educate for contextual mission? What is a proper attitude and methodology for authentic missionary learning? Cathy Ross from CMS in a major article<sup>71</sup> has given some helpful suggestions:

a) Education for contextual mission has to be done on the basis of mutuality in learning.

“Any mission practice that starts from assumptions of superiority of *doers* and inferiority of *receivers* is not really mission, but imperialistic aid. While the theory of partnership, equality and mutuality between older and younger churches goes back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the gap or transition between vision and practice has often been discouraging.”<sup>72</sup>

b) Missionary Learning takes place in a context and attitude of solidarity.

Solidarity requires taking the ideas and experience of others on their own terms and “suspending one’s personal, cultural and religious ideas and practices to listen for the experience and meanings of others. The key to solidarity is compassion and empathy – walking the road in someone else’s shoes.

c) Missionary Learning is about experiences of new questions and a new identity in zones of marginality. It makes a difference whether one reads a Biblical text from a comfortable place in a home in the west or from a shabby slum area in the Philippines. “De-familiarization”, the experience of estrangement and becoming distant to one’s own cultural background openness new ways for really perceiving the other in contexts of marginality. Missionary learning involves listening to the little ones, the unnoticed and the insignificant, the refugees and strangers, the aliens and asylum seekers, the unwanted and the ignored.

d) Missionary Learning involves a new relationship between the host and the Stranger.

“A stranger exists as such by virtue of the host: to be a stranger is, curiously perhaps, to be in relationship to another.” To be a stranger is to feel out of place, to be unsure, to experience

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<sup>71</sup>Cathy Ross, "Educating for Contextual Mission," *Colloquium (Australian and NZ Theological Review)* 38, no. 2 (2006).

<sup>72</sup>F. J. Verstraelen, *An African Church in Transition : From Missionary Dependence to Mutuality in Mission : A Case-Study on the Roman Catholic Church in Zambia* (Leiden: Development Research Institute, Tilburg, and Interuniversity Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research, 1975). 44.

dislocation. To be a stranger is to feel vulnerable, to make mistakes, to be dependent, to have needs. To be a stranger is to lose control. To be a stranger is to be ‘other.’

Hospitality can be subversive because it is inclusive. It can begin a journey towards visibility, dignity and respect. Hospitality suggests face to face encounters and burgeoning relationship. It presupposes servant-hood and service. Because God is the original host, inviting us into a relationship with Christ, when we practise hospitality we are nurtured, challenged and strengthened in our relationships – both with God and with others.

The field of missionary training and spiritual formation probably is one of the most divergent and un-clarified field of competing and contradictory tendencies today:

- a) In some regional contexts theological seminaries or theological faculties from historical churches have ceased to offer long-term or short-term training programs for missionaries or mission workers leaving this task to theological education institutions from evangelical or Pentecostal background;
- b) In some western countries there are signs of growing interest in and programs for young people or adults going abroad for a year or longer period of internship (as volunteers) in missionary or developmental work which allows for a firsthand experience of Church realities in the Southern hemisphere – a unique chance for intercultural and missionary learning;
- c) There are many mission agencies in the western world today which offer new courses for short-term mission programs, exposure visits to Churches in the South which have a potential for intercultural theological learning for mission;
- d) There are some Christian groups, parishes and organizations which send out “missionaries” or fraternal workers with only a rudimentary and basic Biblical learning or without any proper missiological formation and without much prior contact, to churches and ecumenical organizations already existing in the countries to which they are sent – which can contribute to creating tensions or ill-informed and culturally insensitive mission;
- e) That the majority of missionaries or mission workers today are trained below any theological degree level though there is an immense need for theological education;
- f) There are some few first examples (but still also an urgent unanswered need) for short-term and long-term (reverse) mission – periods of missionaries and fraternal mission workers from churches of the South serving in churches of the North – projects which need to contribute to the task of evangelizing in Western culture, but which are facing many obstacles (visa and financial problems) as well;
- g) There are worrying trends at work particularly in secularized European countries which diminish the presence and outreach of missiology in formal theological education and research in faculties of theology (or to diminish its theological scope by transforming it into some “intercultural theology”) which is curbing its claims and impact with regard to a genuine missionary encounter of Christian Churches with the culture(s) of the West and a vivid participation in Christian World Mission today.

In summarizing it should be noted

- that there is a need in World Christianity today to have some common understanding on what defines a “missionary”, the different types of a “mission co-worker” or a “mission partner” today;
- that there is a need to (preferably within the different regions) develop some common standards on what missionary formation and mission training would need to involve today to be holistic and

sound in order to have some common frame of reference (there are some important models for standards and courses available in the UK and also the so-called ‘mission training profiles’ which were developed by David J. Agron from Fuller Theological seminary)<sup>73</sup>;

- that some modules for missionary training should be standardized and made available for accreditation to have some common standards and basis for common recognition between the churches.

## 9) Women in theological education - a continuing journey and struggle

Nothing has probably changed theological education in the past 100 years of missionary history more than the increasing presence of women both in theological study programmes as well as among theological educators. Women theologians have challenged and renewed both methodology, orientation and curriculum contents of theological education.

It is often forgotten or bypassed in patriarchal perspectives of mission history that even before 1910 there was a powerful Christian women’s missionary movement and already in the year 1900 more than 40 women missionary societies existed involving some three million women in their work which mainly focused on education of the marginalized and on social uplift.<sup>74</sup> Side by side with women from western churches there were innumerable indigenous women missionaries working as Bible women in several Asian countries. Already twenty two years before Edinburgh 1910, at the London Missionary Conference of 1888, American, British and Canadian women missionary leaders had organized the World’s Missionary Committee of Christian Women which created a team for the united study of missions proving to be a key tool for mission formation through mission education.<sup>75</sup> In the U.S. in the year 1910, much forgotten in patriarchal history, a major occasion was celebrated de-centrally by all the forty women’s missionary societies which was the Jubilee of the Woman’s Missionary Movement<sup>76</sup> and it has been estimated that 55% of all denominational missionaries sent out by Western mission agencies in 1910 were women at that stage. Their approach was related to a broad-based Christian grassroots movement and their interest and contribution to education cannot be overestimated – though it has taken a long time to be recognized and to move into the circles of higher theological education.

It has been a major effort of women theologians from the regions in cooperation with programs like PTE/WCC, FTE, PTCA and many others to strengthen women’s participation in theological education in the decades after the Second World War. As a result in many regions women’s theological networks were formed which are now existing both in Asia (Asian Women’s Resource Center for

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<sup>73</sup> “Short-Term Mission Code of Best Practice For Churches and Agencies Facilitating Short-term Mission trips in the UK and Worldwide,” *Global Connections*.

<http://www.globalconnections.co.uk/resources/standardsinmissionpractice/CBP/>; David J. Agron. „Missionary Training Profiles,” <http://www.agron.info/doc/Agron.pdf>

<sup>74</sup> Glory E. Dharmaraj, "Lay Women, Mission Practices and Theological Thought" (paper presented at the consultation 'Ivory Tower and Muddy Grounds', Queens College, Birmingham, March 2009).

<sup>75</sup> Dana L Robert in her *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice*. (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997. Reprint. 1998), 129..

<sup>76</sup> HB Montgomery, *Western Women in Eastern Lands: An Outline Study of Fifty Years of Woman's Work in Foreign Missions* (Macmillan, 1910). was a key ecumenical study initiated at this Jubilee, and the methods of spreading the information was not through commissioned reports, but through” missionary teas,” “pageants,” “kitchen table conversations”, and “luncheons” Dana Lee Robert, *American Women in Mission : A Social History of Their Thought and Practice*, The Modern Mission Era, 1792-1992 (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1996). 256 .

Culture and Theology; Association of Theologically Trained Women of India (ATTWI)<sup>77</sup> constituted 1979 in Chennai; the Association of Women in Theology in the Philippines (AWIT)<sup>78</sup>; in Africa (CIRCLE), in the Pacific (Weavers / SPATS and Manahine Pasifica)<sup>79</sup> and on the world level The Women's Commission of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT)<sup>80</sup> or the new Anglican Women Theological Educators Network<sup>81</sup> and the Asian/Asian American Association of Women Theologians in the US<sup>82</sup>.

While we can celebrate that in some contexts significant changes occurred during the past decades with regard to women's participation in theological studies and teaching it should be emphasized that we have no reason to diminish our efforts. In most of the regions of the world there is still an overwhelming task to be accomplished and a long way to go in terms of equipping, enabling and encouraging young women theologians to get access to proper study programs, teaching positions and networks of committed women theologians. As there is a backlash in many regions in terms of women's participation in the churches it will be even more important to strengthen women's participation in theological education.

In the following one example should be given which is about the history of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. The CIRCLE was launched 1989 in Ghana, mainly founded by Mercy Amba Oduyoye.<sup>83</sup>

The Circle is a community of African women theologians who come together to reflect on what it means to them to be women of faith within their experiences of religion, culture, politics and socio-economic structures in Africa. "The Circle seeks to build the capacity of African women to contribute their critical thinking and analysis to advance current knowledge using a theoretical framework based on theology, religion and culture. It empowers African women to actively work for social justice in their communities and reflect on their actions in their publications."<sup>84</sup>

<sup>77</sup> "All India Christian Organizations." *National Council of Churches (NCCI)*.

<http://www.nccindia.in/affiliates/christianorganization.htm>

<sup>78</sup> Darby-Williams, Rebecca. "Philippines Women's Studies Bibliography." University California Berkley, <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/SSEAL/SoutheastAsia/seaphil.html>; The Association of Women in Theology (AWIT) is a visible expression of women's initiative in the Philippines to work collectively in living out their faith. With direct connection to the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, the association, which consists of local chapters around the country, aims to strengthen women's vision and action to fully express the imago Dei in each of them. AWIT women strives to critique and challenge various expressions and practices of patriarchal power, advocates for peace and justice and the integrity of God's creation. In 2009, AWIT chapter at Union Theological Seminary reached around sixty female students and wives of students on a day session of bonding, clarifying association's purpose, and theologizing. In short, the event was self-nurturing and faith-nurturing.

<sup>79</sup> Lydia Johnson, Joan Alleluia Filemoni-Tofaeno Weavers, South Pacific Association of Theological Schools and Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific (Fiji 2003) ISBN 982-02-0347-3

<sup>80</sup> "Home," *The Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians – EATWOT*. <http://www.eatwot.org/>

<sup>81</sup> Anglican Communion News Service, "Anglican Women Theological Educators Meet in Canterbury, England," <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2009/3/3/ACNS4584>.

<sup>82</sup> In the United States, the late Letty Russell was responsible in starting the Asian/Asian American association of women theologians in mid-80's on the west coast. Present in the initial gathering held at Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, California included Kwok Pui Lan, Elizabeth Tapia, Rita Brock, and Afrie Songco Joye. Those women have been involved in the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature which provide a forum for reflection, discussion, and future action on the concerns and issues related to Asian American women theologians.

<sup>83</sup> IA Phiri, "Major Challenges for African Women Theologians in Theological Education (1989–2008)," *International Review of Mission* 98, no. 1 (2009). 105..

<sup>84</sup> These are the objectives of the Circle as reflected in the Circle draft constitution, 2007; The Circle of Concerned African Woman Theologians, "Profile," <http://www.thecirclecawt.org/profile.html>.

The Circle played a major role in

- (1) re-defining the identity of African women theologians;
- (2) promoting more women to study theology and be on permanent staff in theological institutions;
- (3) inclusion of African women's theology in the theological curriculum;
- (4) and particularly in deepening theological reflection and research on issues like human sexuality, HIV/AIDS, gender and cultural practices affecting women in the context of patriarchy.

From the outset, the Circle was inclusive in its membership and in the type of theology produced. African Women were defined as women who belong to diverse classes, races, cultures, nationalities and religions found on the African continent (Oduyoye, 2001b:10) and in the diaspora. This also meant bringing women from the different religions in Africa to reflect theologically together. Therefore, African women have diverse experiences of patriarchal oppression in religion and in society. The theologies that African women write about reflect this diversity. What is important is that African women theologians are united in voicing out their views against patriarchy.

Since its launch in 1989, the Circle has had three Pan-African conferences, each focusing on a particular theme that reflects the issues that African women theologians are concerned about. Its membership has grown considerably since its inception (see Circle membership list<sup>85</sup>). In 1996, the second Pan-African Conference took place in Nairobi, Kenya with the theme "Transforming Power, Women in the Household of God". This theme afforded the Circle to engage with what it means for African women to be Church. The third Pan-African Conference took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in August 2002 with the theme "Sex, Stigma and HIV and AIDS: African Women Challenging Religion, Culture and Social Practices". Through this theme, the African women were highlighting the role played by sacred texts, the faith communities and African culture in the fuelling and prevention of HIV and AIDS as it affects African women. The Circle's fourth Pan-African Conference took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in September 2007 under the theme: "The Girl Child, Women, Religion and HIV and AIDS in Africa: A gendered perspective." The highlight of this conference was the realisation that women alone cannot stop the spread of HIV in Africa. It emphasised the importance of a community approach to prevent HIV. Therefore it was the focus on identifying liberating masculinities that was unique about this conference.

As noted from the Circle vision and mission,<sup>86</sup> research, writing and publishing on religion and culture from an African women's perspective forms the core business of what the Circle is about. It is what distinguishes the Circle from other women's organisations and movements in Africa. Nevertheless, the Circle did not want to limit the production of its theology only to those who reside in theological institutions. From the beginning it sought to be inclusive in its style of work. This has meant working with women from outside the disciplines of theology and religion within the academy. It has also meant the inclusion of women who, for various reasons ended their theological education at certificate, diploma and first degree level and are working in the church or have moved on to further their education in other disciplines outside theology and religion. Then there are those who are interested in issues that interface culture, religion and women in Africa,

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<sup>85</sup> In 2007 the Circle had 660 registered Circle members divided as follows: Anglophone members 522, Francophone members 83, and Lusophone members 55. (information from the author Isabel Phiri)

<sup>86</sup> The mission of the Circle is to undertake research, writing and publishing on African issues from women's perspective. The vision of the Circle is to empower African women to contribute their critical thinking and analysis to advance current knowledge. Theology, religion and culture are the three chosen foci, which must be used as the framework for Circle research and publications. The Circle of Concerned African Woman Theologians, "Mission," <http://www.thecirclecawt.org/index.html>.

but do not have any theological background.<sup>87</sup> It is for this reason that the Circle claims “elitism is not our way of life” (Oduyoye, 2001a:34). It is about doing theology in the community of women in the academy and in the communities of faith. It is also about acknowledging the community of women who share their knowledge with researchers.

The Circle has also built up partnerships with other organisations as an opportunity to enhance the research and writing skills of its members. For example, between 2002 and 2007, the Circle formed partnerships with Yale University Divinity School (hereafter YDS) and Yale School of Public Health, together with Yale University’s Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS (hereafter CIRA) to offer fellowships to African women theologians who were theologically reflecting on HIV and AIDS.<sup>88</sup> In total, twelve Circle members have benefited from spending four to nine months at Yale University as Faith fellows on research that deals with Gender, Faith and HIV and AIDS.<sup>89</sup> This partnership afforded Circle members, the majority of whom are in theological education, to use public health and theological methodologies to conduct field research in the area of Gender, Faith and HIV and AIDS. Most of all, the time spent at Yale University gave Circle members access to resources, which are not always available in most African countries. The research generated has/will result in quality articles published in international academic journals and chapters in academic books. The African women theologians have continued to seek partnerships of equals with other institutions to promote joint projects. The Circle also formed partnerships with the Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa of the World Council of Churches (EHAIA) in 2006 in order to equip the Church in Africa to be HIV and AIDS competent. From 2003 to 2007, the Circle and EHAIA organised joint writing workshops and consultations in Moçambique and Angola in 2003 and 2004; in Benin, Rwanda, Botswana, South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria in 2006 and 2007. It is through this partnership that the Lusophone Circle has managed to write and publish its very first book. (Pereira and Cherinda 2007). The Circle’s partnership with EHAIA also gave the Circle an opportunity to evaluate the quality of its research and writing. In 2006, EHAIA sponsored Musa Dube to evaluate the work of the Circle on HIV and AIDS. The report (Dube 2006) was presented at the Circle EHAIA 2006 Consultation held in Johannesburg. This report showed where the gaps were in the Circle research and writing in the area of gender, faith and HIV and AIDS in Africa. In this way, future Circle researchers are given direction as to which themes they need to place emphasis upon.

While the example of the CIRCLE in Africa shows that some progress can be made if women theologians stand and network together it is equally true to be reminded of the fact that in many cases it is only a small minority of women who are reached and affected by changes of empowerment and much of the work remains to be done. We must not be satisfied with tokenism, like having only one woman on the faculty or serving as women

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<sup>87</sup> The 2007 draft constitution of the Circle recognises the two levels of African women theologians when it states: “The membership of the Circle shall be individual African women theologians who are committed to research, writing and publication. A woman theologian shall be defined as women who have studied religion and/or theology and religion at university departments, schools or faculties of Religious Studies/theology or in faith based theological institutions. A woman theologian shall also include a woman of faith from other disciplines who share the concerns of the Circle.” (information from Isabel Phiri)

<sup>88</sup> The agreement for the Circle partnership with YDS and CIRA was established during the Circle leadership of Dr Musimbi Kanyoro (1996 to 2002) and was implemented during the period of leadership for the Circle by Dr. Isabel Phiri, 2002-2007. The Circle worked with Prof Letty Russell, Dr Shannon Clarkson, Prof Margaret Farley and Dr Kari Hartwig to make this dream a reality. (information from Isabel Phiri)

<sup>89</sup> The list of the faith fellows include: Fulata Moyo (Malawi); Sylvia Amisi (Kenya); Vuadi Vibila (Democratic Republic of Congo); Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike (Kenya); Dorothy Ucheaga (Nigeria); Teresa Tinkasimiire (Uganda); Constance Shisanya (Kenya); Isabel Phiri (Malawi); Dorcas Ankitunde (Nigeria), Hazel Ayanga (Kenya), Lillian Siwila (Zambia) and Bongiwe Dumezweni (South Africa). (information from Isabel Phiri)

pastors only in smaller congregations instead of being equally represented and eligible in all positions with men. As a summary we might conclude in the words of a consultation on “Women’s Perspectives on Mission and Theological Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” in Bossey in 1-4<sup>th</sup> December 2008:

- “We mourn:
  - That women have often been invisible, their contribution has been undervalued, and they have been marginalized within the structures of knowledge and power.
  - That women were not full participants of Edinburgh 1910 and that the contributions of women to mission were not well-represented at Edinburgh 1910.
- We celebrate:
  - That the status and role of women in society and in church has advanced in many contexts and in many ways. We have women theologians and women in ordained and lay ministry. More doors of seminaries and theological faculties have opened to women as well as increased opportunities for lay formation. There has been a proliferation of feminist theological literature around the world. Women have been active in advocacy and their ministries increasingly recognized.

With regard to the present,

- We regret:
  - That resistance still exists in church and society to the full participation of women in societal structures.
- We affirm:
  - The priceless contribution of women theological educators who have brought women into the scene of mission and theological education, the many women’s networks that support women in their call to be agents of transformation in the world, and the existing partnerships between women and men.
  - The commitment of the organizers of Edinburgh 2010 to have balanced representation of women and men and people from the global south and global north.

With regard to the future,

- We sound the alarm:
  - That progress made is not being sustained in many places. Funding and support for feminist theology and gender studies is being seriously reduced. The proportion of women on some theological faculties is decreasing. Many men have not been adequately empowered to partner with women in our mutual mission.
- We commit ourselves, in hope:
  - To challenge churches and theological schools to proclaim and practice the full participation of women and men in the mending of creation.
  - To work towards the eradication of violence against women by involving both women and men to challenge domination and violence.”<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>“Mission for All: Full Participation in the Mending of Creation”, (paper presented at the Towards Edinburgh 2010: Women’s Perspectives on Mission and Theological Education in the 21st Century, Ecumenical Institute Bossey, December 2008).

## 10) Theological education in a religiously plural world – common concerns

One of the major challenges facing theological education at the start of the twenty-first century is that of helping to equip the churches to respond to religious plurality.<sup>91</sup> The societal and cultural contexts within which this challenge is to be addressed are very varied – one particularly significant difference being between theological education in the historic heartlands of ‘Christendom’, where religious plurality is being experienced as a relatively new phenomenon, and theological education in societies where the churches have throughout recent history lived as minorities among other faith communities. In any context, though, there are at least three interrelated dimensions of theological education which will need to be developed in the inter-faith area: namely, learning about other faiths; equipping the church’s ministry with the pastoral capacity to engage positively inter-faith relations; and exploring the fundamental theological presuppositions and implications of inter-faith encounter.<sup>92</sup>

Firstly, a knowledge of the beliefs, practices and attitudes of other faith communities is an important prerequisite for theological education in contexts where people’s lives have been shaped by different religious traditions, and such contexts are now found in virtually all societies. As the earliest theological school, that of Alexandria, provided an understanding of the dominant Greek philosophical traditions of the patristic period, so today an awareness of Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist and other traditions is indispensable for training in Christian theology.

A certain amount of understanding of other faiths can of course be obtained by textual and academic studies – it is notable indeed that missionary scholars were among the pioneers in bringing a knowledge of ‘Eastern religions’ to Western audiences through their translation activities. However, it is increasingly being realized that a Christian account of, say, ‘Islam’ may well differ appreciably from a Muslim’s own account of what her faith means to her. In fact, there is need of a two-stage educational process, described by Gavin D’Costa by the successive terms ‘auto-interpretation’ and ‘hetero-interpretation’.<sup>93</sup> Thus, those being educated theologically need first to hear what Islam means to a Muslim, and then they need to reflect on that in the light of their own Christian faith. Without the former, theological education remains an introspective exercise without the challenge of the other; without the latter, it does not go beyond a religious phenomenology. Christian theological institutions need urgently to consider how they can create a relationship of collegiality with other faith institutions which will allow both auto- and hetero-interpretation to inform their teaching and learning.

Secondly, insofar as theological education is designed to equip men and women for pastoral ministry and leadership in mission in the churches, it has to develop within them the ability to navigate the complexities of inter-faith relations with confidence, sensitivity and integrity. Such a navigational ability is not merely a matter of acquiring a set of skills; at a more fundamental level, it is the formation of a set of attitudes arising from a Christian orientation towards the other. This

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<sup>91</sup> The following is from a paper received by the study group from Michael Ipgrave, who is currently Archdeacon of Southwark in the Anglican Church of England, and was previously national inter-faith adviser both for the Church of England and for Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

<sup>92</sup> Samuel Amirtham et al., *Ministerial Formation in a Multifaith Milieu : Implications of Interfaith Dialogue for Theological Education* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986).

<sup>93</sup> Gavin D’Costa, *Christianity and World Religions : Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).



orientation has been described by Michael Barnes<sup>94</sup> as an 'ethical heterology': a living out of the conviction that I and my community can only attend to God if we attend to the attendance on God of other individuals and communities. The practical import of such a heterology for ministerial training can be seen from two examples.

At the level of interpersonal relationships, a growing number of marriages involve couples of different faiths. From the perspective of religious leadership, inter-faith marriages have often been seen as a threat to the handing on of faith to the next generations, and there is doubtless some substance in this concern. Nevertheless, the pastoral needs of the couple, and of their wider families, require a ministerial response which can engage sympathetically with the realities of another religion, and the development of such sympathy will rely on ministerial formation. At a communal level, in a world where many conflicts are linked, with more or less justice, to religious difference, it is essential that Christian pastors and leaders recognize that building bridges to other communities, committing to relationships of trust and understanding across religious divides, is part of the ministry of reconciliation. Such relationships will be more robust and durable insofar as they are rooted in an orientation which sees leadership in the church as not just defending the interests of the Christian community, but also having a care for the religious other.

Thirdly, theological education in and for the inter-faith arena must include theology. This may seem a truism, but in fact it is easy for engagement with other religions to be kept apart from the core matter of developing credible ways to believe the faith today. When this happens, 'inter-faith' may be seen either as a tiresome necessity imposed by the recalcitrant persistence of other religions, or as the latest enthusiasm opened to the church by the challenges of contemporary life. Serious recent theological reflection in this area, by contrast, links inter-faith engagement to the heartlands of Christian theology – it is in the core affirmations of Christian faith that motivations for inter-religious encounter are to be found, and that encounter in turn reflects back on the churches' understanding of that faith. Three themes in particular can be briefly identified as significant in this respect: scripture, mission and Trinity.

Studying the scriptures in a situation of religious plurality can recover an inter-faith engagement which has been, as it were, encoded in the texts themselves ever since their original formation in multi-religious contexts. Thus Israel among the nations each following their own god, and the early church amidst the multiple religions and philosophies of the Roman Empire, both had to contend with what today would be called inter faith issues. In terms of theological education, this means that the inter-faith agenda is at the heart of Biblical studies, not isolated as an appendix to be considered when the substantive theological work has already been done. In a similar way, inter-religious encounter is to be seen as part of missiology. Proclamation and dialogue belong together within the church's evangelizing mission. In practice, this poses a challenge to theology, which has often separated out dialogue and evangelism as alternatives practiced by different persuasions within the church; there is ongoing work for Christians in developing a more integrated approach here. Finally, the mission of the church is itself a sharing in the mission of God, which arises from the heart of the Trinity, as the Father sends the Son and the Spirit into the world. It is striking that much recent theology looks to a Trinitarian pattern as a key resource for Christian engagement in inter-faith encounter – the 2008 Anglican document *Generous Love*<sup>95</sup>,

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<sup>94</sup> Michael Barnes, *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions*, Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>95</sup> Anglican Communion Network for Inter Faith Concerns, "Generous Love: The Truth of the Gospel and the Call to Dialogue an Anglican Theology of Inter Faith Relations " [http://www.acommonword.com/lib/downloads/generous\\_love\\_A4\\_with\\_foreward.pdf](http://www.acommonword.com/lib/downloads/generous_love_A4_with_foreward.pdf).

prepared for the Lambeth Conference, for example, speaks of Christians maintaining a presence among communities of other faiths as signs of Christ's body, of transformation of society in the power of the Spirit, and of giving and receiving hospitality as a sign of the generosity of the Father. These are high aspirations to set for inter-faith encounter, and the realities of Christian behaviour often falls short; but the role of theological education is to set a vision grounded in the reality of the God and lived out in the complexities of our multi-religious world.

In summary it might be stated:

- a) inter-religious dialogue for theological education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not an arbitrary option, but a necessary pre-condition and obligatory and basic dimension;
- b) inter-faith concerns should be integrated into all disciplines of theology and not delegated just to one branch or special module and seminar;
- c) inter-religious encounters and inter-faith dialogue still in many cases are not fully and organically integrated into the mainstream theological curriculum although there is a lot more rhetoric on inter-faith dialogue today.
- d) inter-faith learning cannot take place without sharing (and/or further deepening) one's own personal journey of direct encounters with people of other living faiths.
- e) sharing appropriate resources for innovative models on inter-faith learning is of extreme importance for the future of theological education.<sup>96</sup>

### **11) The role of theological education in Christian Youth Leadership Formation – urgent needs and future priorities**

The majority of Christians in the South are young and below the age of 40. The consequences of this for theological education are barely drawn and thoroughly investigated. Members of the WCC- ECHOs commission have challenged this study group to rethink the understanding, outreach and methodology of theological education with regard to the increasing relevance of Youth<sup>97</sup>:

Youth ecumenical formation is undoubtedly the most vital and crucial part of theological education, as educating youth means equipping the future generations theologically in order to face the challenges of their time. In this perspective, we believe that youth ecumenical formation does not refer only to the 18 to 30 years old age group, but it should be an educational process already starting from the early age of 7 years old –when children's formal education usually begins– and continuing throughout their life as teenagers and adults. Thus ecumenical formation should be approached as an ongoing educational process, whose coherent aim through its different stages is serving to build-up the Body of Christ, in other words the unity of the Church.

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<sup>96</sup> NIFCON is the Network for Inter Faith Concerns across the Anglican Communion, "Mission Statement " <http://nifcon.anglicancommunion.org/index.cfm>.

<sup>97</sup> The following is from Natalie Maxson and Katerina Pekridou (WCC Youth Program/Faith and Order) originally written under the title, "Ecumenical Youth Formation as Integral Part of Theological Education," (2009).and sent to the study group as a contribution

Consequently, there are two points that need to be emphasized. First, there should be a clear re-affirmation of the broader vision of theological education, and careful long-term planning. In this sense, the goal of youth ecumenical formation has to be clarified and underlined, and attention must be given so that all initiatives and projects in the different phases of formation serve this purpose. Especially in the midst of the global economic crisis, we believe it is urgent to ensure that resources spent on theological education serve its specific goal and that they are spent in effective ways, so that concrete outcomes of transformation are traced in the faith communities. Secondly, youth have different needs depending on the different age groups, as well as the different cultural, ethnic and religious contexts (multi-religious or atheistic contexts, minority churches, ethnic churches etc). Young people can never be treated as a homogenous group. Ecumenical formation cannot disregard these different needs, but should respond to and satisfy them based on an interdisciplinary approach while maintaining an overall inter-religious understanding.

### **In this Historical Moment—What Young Ecumenists Are Inheriting**

A key question we must consider in the area of theological education with each new generation is how has the ecumenical movement affected our theological institutions and churches up until now, if at all? What ecumenical common sense does each new generation grow up with? In this specific historical moment we look back at one hundred years since the mission conference in Edinburgh 1910 in which young leaders played a key role. We look back at the past 20 some years of churches in dialogue on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. We look back over thirty years since the World Conference on Faith, Science and the Future at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The Second Vatican Council which influenced the Roman Catholic Church and its relations with other churches along with these other major ecumenical landmarks are well ingrained in what we might consider the “ecumenical common knowledge” available to this generation .

All of this builds towards a certain communally held understanding of where we are in the ecumenical journey. And while it may seem we are just celebrating a “bunch of anniversaries”, we must critically discern the way forward and examine how theological education is responding to emerging issues today. The ecumenical movement may easily become trapped in a mode of nostalgia or a sort of fatigue. Young people tend to have little patience for this and it is essential to remember that a new generation is just discovering the gems of Christian unity. It should not be underestimated that for each new generation, discovering together with other Christians the message of unity in the prayer of Jesus (John 17: 21, “that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”) can profoundly impact one’s life.

Young people pose many challenges to traditional and institutional theological education insofar as many are engaged in Christian communities outside the confines of conventional churches or denominations. In some churches young people’s presence and involvement is continually diminishing while in other churches and countries youth make up a disproportionate part of the population however, this is rarely reflected in the church leadership. It should also be realized more clearly in church leadership and ecumenical bodies that it is predominantly youth which presents a generation very often exposed to traumatized experiences of wounds from violence, dislocation of families and the fabric of society, of conflicts and genocids, uncertainty of the future and desintegration of Christian families. It is the youth which bears the shadow sides of so many unsolved conflicts of today’s world while at the same time raising its voices as a sign of hunger for meaning, for hope and for better education. Nonetheless, many cases would show that young people are hungry for spirituality, meaningful community, mentorship, peace, justice and to grow in their Christian faith. Churches and theological institutions must ask how they are relevant to the younger generation. What are young people searching for today and what is theological education offering? A successful way to find out is to work directly with young people and be open to their suggestions and opinions.

Young people find themselves in different positions while engaging with theological education. For instance, youth are directly engaged in theological training to become pastors, priests, teachers, lay leaders etc. In addition, young people also play important roles in church congregations, Christian NGOs and

ecumenical networks or organizations without necessarily having formal theological training. In this case, all those engaged in theological education, both young and old, are challenged to share their knowledge, experience and talents with one another.

In some contexts, young people go through theological training but find few opportunities to serve the church. However in other situations, churches are in desperate need of pastors and leadership and not enough people are engaged in theological education. How can we face such challenges together as an ecumenical family? Can we share gifts and resources so that we proclaim the good news of the gospel by word, deed, prayer and worship, and the everyday witness in Christian life? In what ways can we help one another to carry on our mission in the world as Christians?

When Theological Education is oriented towards building up and strengthening the relationship between people and God, with one another, and the whole creation, it can be regarded as participation in God's mission for the human race and creation. It can be a way to raise up a strong new generation of Christian leaders for whom the vision of Christian unity –and in extension the communion of all people with one another, God and creation– is an integral part of their identity and understanding of the church's mission. Through ecumenical formation, young people discover that they are part of something bigger and deeper than they could ever imagine, and is a factor that has often strengthened young people's commitment to the church. This commitment transforms into an enormous potential to reinvigorate and renew the church.

### **Holistic and Intergenerational Approaches to Theological Education**

We must ask ourselves how far ecumenical formation has advanced along with new methods or holistic approaches to education. We can apply the model of Incarnation to theological education as a way to provide educational methods that embrace the human person as a whole. As Christ fully received human nature and renewed it in Him, so must theological education receive fully the human person (soul, mind, body, senses, imagination), transform it and prepare it to be sent in the contemporary society. But holistic education is also that which relates the person to the whole community and engages that whole community with the knowledge and experience from communities of the past, as well as the challenges and concerns of future communities.

A holistic character of theological education would envisage intergenerational and interdisciplinary perspectives in combining spirituality, bible, pastoral care, mission and important contextual issues that the local community and whole Christian family face. Theological education needs to equip people to tackle emerging issues so that the education remains relevant for the community.

Theological education is not only the transmission of Christian faith and ecclesial tradition from one generation to the other, but learning from the gifts, talents, experiences and expertise of people of all ages. An intergenerational approach necessitates the longer term vision of the ecumenical movement and theological education because it encourages a broader and richer perspective on theology and ecumenism representing the needs of people at different stages in their life. Inherent in such an approach is the understanding that each generation may offer valuable contributions and in doing so challenge norms that may limit how we conceive of knowledge or who holds knowledge. Theological knowledge is communally held and is a resource for all people. Intergenerational approaches affirm the concept that learning continues throughout our life time and the importance of bridging the gap between generations so we can listen and learn from one another.

### **Theological Education and Ecumenical Challenges**

Often when the World Council of Churches organizes ecumenical learning programs seminary students who participate explain that they do not meet other young people outside of their own church tradition. Some young people have followed up this concern by starting local ecumenical projects that bring students together from different seminaries either to pray, socialize or organize a joint workshop on a topic of interest. In every case it is essential that international ecumenical formation experiences are followed up with local action. Ecumenism at a global level can be very attractive or sound exciting but if it is not

combined with practical ways to increase contact and cooperation between Christians in their local setting then such ecumenical encounters become nothing more than tourism.

Some questions that may be pertinent to those engaging in theological education: How does theological education make concrete attempts to bring young Christians together locally? How does theological education help young people to make the connection between local realities with global concerns? How does it help young people to feel part of a larger Christian history and family? How is such education made accessible to young people despite ethnicity, gender, ability or class? How does theological education relate to young women and young men and encourage them to work together as equal partners by raising-awareness about gender and power? How does theological education renew the church and encourage young people to invest their talents and time? How does theological education make ecumenism accessible for practical exploration in the church and everyday encounters?

Sometimes we witness that the ecumenical movement suffers from a lack of vision and loss of direction or enthusiasm. Perhaps this is a side effect of institutionalization of ecumenism over the last one hundred years or more. We need to reaffirm why Christians need each other and why we are called to be the one Church of Christ. For young Christians encountering each other for the first time the promise of unity is often an exciting possibility.

Theological education can serve as a bridge in two ways. Firstly, to help transfer knowledge from generation to generation about both the achievements, failures and ongoing challenges of the ecumenical movement. This will help young people to have a sense of ownership of the ecumenical legacy and understand the history that they inherit and will ultimately shape. Secondly to facilitate the reception of major church agreements or processes into local reality and practical follow up. Much work is still needed in this area so that the major landmarks and achievements of the ecumenical movement have resonance and relevance in local church contexts. There is a gap between what church leaders and confessions decide together and how this reaches local congregants. Theological education could help the ecumenical movement to work less with top down approaches but rather discover the needs from the local churches first and ensure this informs larger ecumenical processes through participatory methods. Theological education can also mediate communication between different ecumenical actors and be the testing ground for innovative thinking and new approaches to our work.<sup>98</sup>

In this area one particular issue might need to be mentioned specifically which refers to the increasing relevance of children's ministries within Christianity in the Southern hemisphere. Children's ministries - though presenting a long tradition within the Sunday School Movement since decades have been a neglected area in much of formal theological education. Keeping in mind that children form the future of the church and children often belong to the most vulnerable and oppressed groups of society it is in children's ministries that many of the crucial challenges of holistic Christian mission today will surface. It is encouraging therefore that at some place innovative theological training takes place with regard to enabling and qualifying children's ministries in the churches. One key example for this is Petra College in South Africa which is an independent Christian training centre in South Africa focused on children's ministry.<sup>99</sup> Petra has a very specific vision or 'dream': 'We share God's desire that the lost and broken

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<sup>98</sup> There are some helpful examples of ecumenical education for young people which could serve as inspiring other churches and networks to develop similar programs: The "School for Ecumenical Leadership Formation—S.E.L.F." is organized together with the World Student Christian Federation in Asia/Pacific region and Christian Conference of Asia and regularly brings together young Christians from a variety of countries. "Revitalizing the Ecumenical Movement through Ecumenical Leadership Formation for the Youth and Students," [http://www.wscfap.org/regionalprogramme/self/2009/2009-self\\_cp.html](http://www.wscfap.org/regionalprogramme/self/2009/2009-self_cp.html). Also the Finnish Ecumenical Council has an ecumenical training program which is called KETKO which is worth being mentioned. It should be encouraged to share other and similar initiatives and success stories programs for ecumenical formation and theological education involving Youth as the future of the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. "Home," <http://www.ekumenia.fi>.

<sup>99</sup> Petra College was established 20 years ago to train Sunday school teachers and children's club leaders, but soon realised that the church itself needs to be equipped for children's ministry. Currently Petra College is working in

children will be found and restored in healing Christian families and communities, to join Him in transforming society'. This means that this College gives priority to partnerships with churches and organisations working in contexts of poverty, deprivation and persecution.<sup>100</sup>

## II) Changing Contexts and Case Studies for theological education

### 12) Changing context for theological education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

When we look back and review the mission history since Edinburgh 1910 it can be affirmed that some major advancement was made in some areas, namely the creation and pluralization of independent institutions of theological education in the churches of the South. Also some major efforts have been made in order to work out indigenous and contextualized models of theological education. At the same time it is the conviction of this study paper that new and old challenges in the area of theological education continue and persist to hamper the relevance and accessibility of theological education for Christian mission today. Some crucial challenges seem to be even more dramatic than 100 hundred years ago. Thus there is an urgency for increasing coordinated efforts for international networking and solidarity in promoting theological education in the fellowship of churches. Some would speak of an *emerging global crisis in theological education* which are becoming obvious increasingly and will be marking the next decades in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, having the potential of endangering the very future and integrity of World Christianity. Others would speak of major challenges for theological education in the period immediately ahead. Just a few factors should be mentioned along these lines:

a) The *absolute majority of resources for theological education – both teaching staff, scholarship funds, theological libraries and publications – are still located in the North*, whereas the majority needs and demands for theological education, in a situation marked by a remarkable shift of the center of gravity of world Christianity, are in the Southern hemisphere.<sup>101</sup> The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada has more than 250 member institutions; in the whole of South East Asia there are only 104 theological education institutions (related to ATESEA), in the whole of South and Central Africa there is only a very small number of (maybe three) functioning associations of theological education (like ATISCA, WAATI and EAATI). The average full costs for one student place per year in Princeton Theological Seminary are some 60.000 USD, the average costs for a BTh student place in an institution for theological education in Nepal are just 1000 USD per annum. Access to PhD scholarships, to theological library resources and to research visits for theological students from churches in the South, in countries of

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partnerships with national churches, ecumenical bodies and faith based organisations (primarily in Africa, but also beyond). "Home," <http://www.petra.co.za/>.

<sup>100</sup> Training programs in Petra College South Africa are designed according to the needs of the partner. Since experiential learning is a key to the programme, most of the training is done within the context of the partner. The result is that the partner organisation can test and multiply the programme with relative ease. Petra College also assists the organisation in drawing up and implementing its own strategic plan for children's ministry. As part of this plan a team from the partner will be equipped for *children's ministry* (defined as ministry to, with, through and on behalf of children). A key concept is 'hospitality' – welcoming children (in terms of Mat 18:5). Therefore children's ministry is seen as relational (rather than programmatic), experiential (rather than theoretical), holistic (rather than sectional), transformational (rather than educational), intergenerational (rather than segregated), contextual (rather than general), etc. Participants to the program learn how to apply children's ministry skills and principles in different contexts. *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Unfortunately the Global Christian Database is not yet offering exact statistical data on the allocation of resources and institutions of theological education par country and continent. To collect reliable world data on spread and accessibility of theological education programs and institutions is still an issue worth a PhD on its own.

the Northern hemisphere, becomes ever more restricted and difficult – not least due to heavy restrictions on visas and increased health insurance costs.

b) According to the UNESCO Report on Higher Education in the world in 2007 the twenty-first century has begun with an explosion in the number of higher education students.<sup>102</sup> According to UNESCO, enrolment has increased approximately from 72 million in 1999 to 133 million in 2004. Excluding North America and Western Europe, enrolment in the rest of the world more than doubled in these five years, with an increase from 41.1 million to 99.1 million. China alone increased its share from 6.4 million in 1999 to 19.4 million in 2004, giving it the largest higher education enrolment in the world at more than 23 million in 2005. This massive expansion is taking place for at least two reasons: an increase in social demand for higher education and an increase in the economic need for more highly educated human resources.<sup>103</sup> What is shown in these global figures concerning dramatic *increase in demands for general higher education* due to younger and dynamic populations in Asia and Africa also is reflected in *growing demands for theological education* and theological study programs in many countries of the South. There are *grave regional discrepancies in terms of availability and accessibility of institutions of higher theological education* between different countries (such as between South India and Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh or Vietnam and Cambodia) and also between different regions within one country. The impression is that in some areas the institutional capacities for theological education are not keeping pace with the growing needs and demands for theological education. In a great number of countries theological (and any other higher) education still takes place under appalling conditions (erratic electricity supply or ‘dirty electricity’ problems; long distances to reach for a theological college; no scholarships available for theological students; libraries totally ill-equipped; no work-stations for theological students). In Nepal for instance where the number of Christians has grown from zero to 900.000 only within the past fifty years, many pastors have only a rudimentary 5-month training program which enables them to read the Bible and to pray. There is an enormous zeal to serve God, but an enormous lack of well-trained pastors and theological educators and still no M.Th. course can be offered in that country. Another example, standing out on its own, is certainly China where for a growing number of Christians there are only some 3000 ordained pastors, many of whom have to shepherd up to 4000 Christians or more due to lack of well-trained pastors. There are also many theological education institutions in Africa which lack the basic equipment in terms of a proper selection of key text books for their theological libraries. The capacity to provide theological education is far from keeping pace with church growth and regional needs. The picture is worsening because demographically Christian populations in the West are shrinking whereas in Africa and Asia Christian populations are young and growing fast.

c) It can be argued that in the past hundred years of mission history there was a *predominant trend to export models and curricula of theological education from the West (which have been coined and formed within a Constantinian or post-Constantinian<sup>104</sup> church setting) into contexts in the*

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<sup>102</sup> More information on the UNESCO Report on Higher Education in the world 2007 on the website of «Global Universities Network for Innovation»(GUNI) <http://www.guni-rmies.net/info/default.php?id=89> or the website of the publisher Palgrave Macmillan <http://www.palgrave.com/pdfs/0230000479.pdf> )

<sup>103</sup> UNESCO Report on Higher Education in the World 2007, 4.

<sup>104</sup> Today, in many situations in the South Christians live and practice their faith in context similar to that of Christians before Christianity was accepted by Constantine and given to it a respectable status as a state religion, the religion of the Empire. In these situations of churches in the South, Christians are a minority with no political clout, no social status compared to other religious communities. In some circumstances they are even despised and persecuted with charges that they belong to a foreign religion and culture (See the challenges that Christians face for instance in

*South which in most cases have a pre-Constantinian setting.* Many of the problems and unsolved challenges for contextualization of theological education in the churches of the South are related to this background. Much of what is happening in evangelical or Pentecostal theological education can be regarded as reflecting or answering a pre-Constantinian church situation whereas much of what is developed in mainline Protestantism and established churches is reflecting the predicaments of a post-Constantinian setting. It can be seen as one of the fundamental tasks of the global missionary movement today to strengthen the self-reliance and independence of theological education institutions and curricula in churches of the South which have to adapt themselves to pre-Constantinian settings

d) The increasing demand for theological education in the South has also given rise to a *mushrooming of new colleges and Bible schools* in many regions many of which have an unstable institutional existence. While the proliferation of theological colleges and Bible schools reflects a genuine desire for access to theological education the commercialization of theological education is leading also to negative side-effects. Quite a few of the new schools (for instance in Latin America) offer only light and “fast food theological education”, having no libraries, no worked out curricula and no common educational framework, but offer impressive titles. Many of the new schools also do not have experience or connection to the organized ecumenical movement or the established association of theological schools in the different regions which in many cases serve as accrediting or qualifying networks for their members. In some contexts it is also the unaccommodating nature of the established theological institutions which has contributed to the mushrooming of theological colleges. The fragmentation, lack of unity and common standards, and disintegration in the landscape of theological education in several contexts, has reached an unprecedented level at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, less than 100 years after 1910. Western Christianity though has no reason to exclude itself from self-criticism in this regard as fragmented Christianity for centuries also has given rise to a fragmented picture and landscape of theological educations in the West. Thus all are in need to critically review their own priorities and support for unity and ecumenical cooperation in theological education.

e) Established institutions of theological education from historical mainline churches on the other hand in some cases have *increasing difficulties to cover their expenses and to keep programmes running due to shrinking membership and financial setbacks of historical churches*. Interdenominational colleges are under pressure. In some churches there is an increasing shortage of ministers because institutions of theological education cannot offer sufficient places for studying theology or the number of enrolments for ministerial formation programmes is going down (Lutheran Churches in South Africa; United Methodist Churches in US, Churches in Britain, Churches in Germany, Churches in Scandinavia...)

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Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Egypt, and Nigeria). Some of those Christian communities which have come into being due to Western missionary activity during the colonial era on the other hand had enjoyed special status during the Western colonial time but then had to adjust to the new reality of having no privilege and position as in the colonial days. Therefore they need to rethink their practice of Christianity and of their mission task in a mind set and spirit of pre-Constantinian Christianity. Just following the practice of Christianity as it was introduced/taught to them will not help them in their new context. A “Constantinian” church setting thus would be defined here as a church setting which is marked by a majority situation of Christianity which – like after the 4<sup>th</sup> century – has become something like a state-religion, recognized, privileged and supported by the state or very favorable church-state relations. A pre-Constantinian church setting would be defined as an institutional and socio-political environment of Christianity in which it experiences itself as a minority, sometimes only tolerated, sometimes actively discriminated against by the majority religion or state authority with different or no religious value systems.



f) As church funds are dwindling and financial support for church-based seminary types of theological education has become fragile and unreliable in contexts both in the South as well as in the North there is *a trend and some pressures in certain contexts to move to state-funded Departments of Religious Education*. In several cases Theological Faculties which were closely related to churches and serve both ministerial formation programs as well as general religious education programs were being transformed into mere Departments of Religious Studies which are integrated into larger Faculties of Humanities (for example in UNISA, South Africa). While also new opportunities can be implied within these new scenarios (more openness and potential for interdisciplinary research and academic recognition, more financial stability, overcoming of one-sided dependency from one major denominational tradition) this also poses some questions: How is the inner coherence and church-related responsibility of theological education exercised if the structural framework does not any longer allow staff to emphasize ministerial formation? How are churches enabled to continue to formulate their own priorities and directives for theological education if they are structurally no longer related to the institutional framework of theological education in their countries?

g) *the age, gender and denominational backgrounds of new generations entering theological education programs are continuing to change dramatically with regional differences*: Fewer students are entering theological education with the explicit and firm aim of ordained ministry. Students tend to be older and already have family commitments, and come from more diverse backgrounds than formerly, some are without foundational Christian formation, an increasing number are from charismatic and Pentecostal backgrounds, many with their own work commitments along with their program of studies – though the picture varies considerably regionally (for African theological institutions it is reported for instance that more and more *young* people are enrolling to study theology and enter clergy formation programs). Surveys in the US show that more and more adults are entering theological seminaries. In the United Methodist Church in the US for instance less than 4% of the ordained ministers today are below 35 years old – the clergy thereby aging dramatically, posing some questions about how to reach out to the younger generation and the future of ministry. Many churches therefore have developed “multiple paths of preparation for ordination”, most of which would not require a seminary degree and would increase non-seminary and non-academic types of preparation for ordination thus integrating some models which have been common in much of the Holiness and Pentecostal traditions which have never required seminary education for the majority of their ministers.<sup>105</sup>

h) *The real impact of theological research and theological knowledge on the church, on the orientation and actual practice of pastoral ministries, sermons and Bible studies, is not easy to measure, but remains questionable* from some perspectives. Some argue that there still remains a huge gap between the production and dissemination of academic theological knowledge with good insights based on proper theological and Biblical research, as over against the popular Christian publications, religious literature, hymns and sermons which inspire the daily realities of parish and believers’ lives. In many cases what is missing are proper forms of popularized theology which can communicate to Christians at the grassroots. Instead populist theological idioms tend to dominate and to be disseminated in pamphlets and ‘light’ religious literature which are not informed by sound and good contextualized academic theology.<sup>106</sup> In several places there is a

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<sup>105</sup>TP Weber, "The Seminaries and the Churches: Looking for New Relationships," *Theological Education* 44, no. 1 (2008).

<sup>106</sup>,Francois Swanepoel, *Lecture for Joint Conference of Theological Societies* (Stellenbosch University: UNISA, 2009). ,

search for new models of an ‘organic theology’ which would not repeat the failures of some of the ‘academic theology’ in the West which tends to disconnect with the real life of the church and the faithful, but instead would help in the production of a theology, literature, poems, teaching and hymns that enhance the life, witness and growth of the local church.<sup>107</sup> There are also contexts in which church leadership, in terms of its integrity and spiritual leadership role, is in a deplorable state which again poses questions as to how theological education should be geared in order to produce integrity and accountability in leadership and ministry.

i) There is a backwards trend and a *cutting back in terms of interdenominational, intercultural and ecumenical programs in theological education*. the number of chairs and institutes for missiology, World Christianity and/or Ecumenism Courses has been reduced in some regions (Western Europe; India). As many endowment funds are going down in their returns interdenominational theological colleges and joint programmes for theological education have more *difficulties to become financially self-reliant and viable* then ever before. Trends are increasing that many denominations, even smaller churches or dioceses prefer to have their own little college of theological education instead of joining in with an existing interdenominational college. Thus even long-established interdenominational theological colleges are getting weaker and suffer from withdrawal or diminishing of support from member churches.

j) Many churches as well as funding organizations in developmental work are feeling unable to give *proper priority importance to theological education* in their budget plans; the *international financial support (and lobby) for promoting ecumenical theological education has remained or become small*. With a heavily reduced program on ETE in WCC from 2010 onwards the chances for international networking and lobbying are again being reduced or need to be re-invented via different means and channels.

k) Due to shrinking budgets and low salaries for theological educators in many countries of the South a number of *theological faculties or seminaries have to rely mainly on part-time lecturers* and cannot employ full-time lecturers any more (or only to a lesser extent), thus reducing enormously the capacities of theological educators from the South to enter into research projects and to contribute to indigenous theological research or the development of contextualized new theological textbooks for theological colleges in the South. There are cases in which a theological colleges is forced to operate only with one or two full-time professors while all other teaching staff works only part-time – a situation which leads to burned out syndroms , exhaustement and overburdening on the side of those remaining full-time. In addition church boards often resort to Deans and Principles of theological colleges in trying to answer their needs in the search for appropriate candidates for bishop’s positions which in turn leads to lack of continuity on the side of well-trained theological educators.

l) There are also many instances in which there are *major problems of proper and qualified governance in institutions of theological education*. Established principles regarding rotating responsibility for leadership roles like Principal or Treasurer according to denominational affiliation are not always guaranteed to attract highly qualified leadership staff. People are sometimes appointed for the wrong reasons and do not bring proper competence in tertiary education systems or in the management of budgets. Also the rotating period is often too short to make a real impact and to tackle some of the root problems and instabilities in theological education.

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<sup>107</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology : An Introduction*, 4th ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007).

m) *Many associations of theological schools in Africa (and partly also in Asia and in Latin America) remain fragile* and unstable due to lack of continuous funding, one-sided dependency from sources in the west and lack of commitment from individual member schools or shifts of accreditation processes to government-related agencies. Thus commitment to common curriculum development or common methodological training of theological educators is low. We still need major efforts to strengthen the financial autonomy, the functionability and organizational effectiveness of associations of theological schools worldwide.

n) There continues to occur a tangible *brain drain of highly trained theologians from countries of the South to countries of the North*. Colleges in the South are not enabled to pay sufficient salaries for highly qualified teaching staff. South-South exchange in theological education is demanded but not sufficiently developed. On the other hand there is a huge impact, brought about by the different migration waves between and within the various continents, on the needs and contextualization of theological education. Migration brings the spread of hybrid identities, enforces the need for intercultural communication and multi-lingual theological education programs within national boundaries due to mixed populations. The implications of global migration for the landscape of theological education have barely been realised and grasped by the churches.

o) Related to this phenomenon there still remains a *completely imbalanced system of transfer of theological knowledge between the churches of the North and the churches of the South*: While still much of the theological knowledge production of theological faculties in the Anglophone North is forwarded and sent to theological colleges in the South, there are blockages and hindering factors which inhibit an equal sharing and transfer of new theological knowledge production from the churches of the South to the churches of the North (and between theological colleges and educators for instance from Africa and Asia). There are for instance many European theological books in the theological libraries of Africa, but comparatively very few books of African theological developments in libraries in Europe. The imbalances in the production and distribution of theological knowledge is a critical point and crucial issue not only to the existence, growth and sustainability of Christianity in the South but also worldwide. If the demographic shift of Christianity to the South is not taken seriously and Christians and theologians in that hemisphere are not allowed to organize themselves, to produce contextual theological knowledge this will lead to a dramatic impoverishment of theology and religious Christian knowledge for World Christianity as a whole.

p) There is a *resurgence of fundamentalism and confessionalism both in churches and in related theological education which can be seen* as counter-movements to the pressures of globalization. Anti-ecumenical propaganda and tendencies are on the increase still in Latin America or in Asia. The question of how to continue and deepen the commitment for interdenominational dialogue and Christian unity in theological education despite the dwindling of funds and financial resources is high on the agenda.

What are contextual facets of these global changes in the landscape and challenges for theological education today? And how are churches reacting to these changes?

In the midst of an emerging global crisis in theological education there are also a lot of new opportunities, chances and new tasks for global solidarity in theological education some of which will be highlighted in the following short case studies:

### **13) Interdenominational institutions of theological education – United Theological colleges – promises or failures?**

One of the key visions and hopes in the early days of the Theological Education Fund was that United Theological Colleges, bringing together several denominational traditions, would not only strengthen interdenominational theological education as a future oriented model, but would also enhance the promotion of church unity as such. The Theological Education Fund of the WCC had a keen interest in promoting United Theological Colleges and contributed significantly to a number of key institutions which are now well established institutions in their region (United Theological College of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica, and Pacific Theological College in Suva, Fiji, both founded 1966; United Theological College Harare, Zimbabwe, founded 1954; United Theological College in Bangalore, founded 1910). The expectations aligned with this model unfortunately were met only partly, though this is not an argument in principle against United Theological Colleges.

Experiences so far have shown

- that United Theological Colleges can provide a sound and viable basis for theological education if there is a balanced relation between the supporting member churches and a similar degree of ownership and support to the interdenominational college;
- that only in some cases United Theological Colleges are actually linked to processes of forming a united or uniting church (see for instance United Theological College of Montreal from United Church of Canada or United Theological College in Sydney from Uniting Churches of Australia) and the term “United Theological Seminaries” sometimes refers only to seminaries supported only by one denomination but bringing together two or more sites (United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, Church of Christ; United Theological Seminary Dayton, United Methodist Church);
- that institutional instability can occur for such institutions where minority churches feel dominated by majority churches;
- that for many churches there is the dominant expectations that theological education should benefit their own church and denominational identity;
- that sometime interdenominational churches are perceived as not providing theological education sufficiently geared towards the needs of denominational churches;
- that some United Theological Colleges have shown an impressive degree of adaptation and integration also to new denominational forms of Christianity (integration of both Pentecostal students and teachers);
- that the common commitment for interdenominational theological education can dwindle where and when the political situation and external pressures on Christianity are reduced.
- that there doesn't seem to be an increase in the number of United Theological Colleges worldwide. At the same time a new model seems to have developed in some areas which is usually called the “Consortium”-model of theological education which is a valid way to reduce administrative costs and institutional duplication of programs of theological colleges while at the

same time allowing the opportunity to safeguard the denominational identities of supporting churches<sup>108</sup>

As a case study the history of the Federated Seminary in South Africa is presented here<sup>109</sup> which shows particularly that interdenominational theological colleges also can fall apart again when outward political pressures to maintain church unity are lessened and denominational interests are taking priority again:

The Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa, perhaps better known as Fedsem, was founded in 1963. The Seminary was created for the purpose of providing theological education and ministerial formation for candidates from the Anglican, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches in southern Africa, in an ecumenical setting and within a non-racial community context.

The creation of Fedsem stemmed, to a large extent, from a response to the policies and practices of the Nationalist Party in South Africa, who came into power in 1948 on the basis of a racist philosophy called ‘Apartheid’ or ‘Separate Development’. It was in particular the introduction of the Bantu Education Act and the Group Areas Act that galvanised the affected churches into ecumenical cooperation and increased opposition against government policy. These two explicitly racist laws, more than any other brought the churches to a ‘*kairos* moment that brought Fedsem into being’<sup>110</sup>. The implementation of the Bantu Education Act meant that the churches were faced with either being deprived of their established centres for theological education and ministerial formation, or with the unwelcome scenario of them not being able to continue in educational and theological institutions that had been forcibly transferred to the control of the South African government’s Department of Bantu Education. An urgent need therefore arose to provide theological education for black<sup>111</sup> ministerial candidates at the highest possible academic level, as under the Apartheid laws, black students were barred from enrolling in ‘white’ universities. To their credit, the churches seized the *kairos* moment, responding boldly and creatively.

The four colleges that constituted the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa were Adams United College (Presbyterian), John Wesley College (Methodist), St Peter’s College (Anglican) and St Columba’s College (Congregational). St Columba’s College and Adams United College merged to become Albert Luthuli College in 1974. Staff, students and their families stayed on the campus, thus creating an alternate non-racial community.

From the outset students from the four colleges would take lectures together, thus benefiting from a shared faculty that provided a broader and more comprehensive training that any one church on its own could give. Three levels of study were offered at the Seminary, namely certificate, diploma and degree, with the last leading to the Associate of the Federal Theological Seminary (AFTS). The AFTS, which obtained international recognition, represented a direct counter and challenge to the South African government’s edict that degrees could only be taken by black people at one of the ethnic universities established by the state to perpetuate racial separation also at tertiary education. The AFTS also signaled the churches’ determination that the nature and content of theological education for their ministerial students would be determined by themselves and not by a government, least of all by a racist state. The overall programme at Fedsem sought to incorporate and integrate three major components, namely a good academic standard, contextual relevance of the curricula and practical engagement by the students during the course of their studies.

It was inevitable that the existence and the witness of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa was going to prove to be a stinging political thorn in the side of a bellicose and belligerent South African government, given, for instance, the explicit non-racial profile of the community and the Seminary’s anti-Apartheid activism. It was also to be expected that the Apartheid state would seek to remove this thorn, and to do so by means most foul. The first major blow landed on Fedsem, when on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 1974, the government issued an expropriation order, giving the Seminary three months to vacate the land and the buildings. All attempts to obtain a reversal of the expropriation order were met with total intransigence by the state authorities.

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<sup>108</sup> “Associated Canadian Theological Schools” <http://www.acts.twu.ca/about/acts-member-seminaries/>; Washington Theological Consortium <http://www.washtheocon.org/>; “Association of Chicago Theological Schools,” <http://www.actschicago.org/>. Consortium of European Baptist Theological Schools (CEBTS); <http://www.cebts.eu/>

<sup>109</sup> The following text is an abstract from an essay made available from Des van der Water, CWM

<sup>110</sup> Njongonkulu Ndungane, PW, p. 2.

<sup>111</sup> Meaning black African, ‘coloured’ and Indian

On 13 March 1975 the Seminary was forcibly handed over to the University of Fort Hare<sup>112</sup>, in terms of the expropriation order. Thus begun a period of exile and wilderness experience for the beleaguered community of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa. After being forced to leave Alice, the Seminary community relocated to Umtata in the Transkei<sup>113</sup>, to share limited accommodation that had been generously made available by St. Bede's College<sup>114</sup>. Their stay in this location did however not last very long, as the president of the Transkei 'homeland', true to the attitude of his South African masters, cast the Seminary community as political troublemakers and ordered them to leave, barely a year after they found sanctuary at Umtata. A lay ecumenical centre near Pietermaritzburg, in the province of Natal, served as the next temporary accommodation and campus for Fedsem, until the new Seminary plant was constructed at Imbali, a black township also near Pietermaritzburg. At the height of the political violence between the African National Congress and the Inkatha freedom Party, Imbali turned out to be a flashpoint of conflict. It was yet again in a context of political conflict and crisis that the new campus was opened in August 1980, with Bishop Lesslie Newbigin preaching the sermon at the dedication Service of Worship.

Fedsem represents a shining witness to ecumenical commitment in the task of theological education and ministerial formation in southern Africa. Wing sums up the nature of the Seminary's witness as follows:

At the time of its formation and throughout its history, the Seminary has been perceived as a symbol of positive resistance to the structures of apartheid, as an institution with a reputation for excellence in contemporary theological education and as an exciting ecumenical venture<sup>115</sup>

Denis observes that Fedsem 'is regarded by many as one of the most remarkable achievements of the Christian Church in South Africa'<sup>116</sup>. Such accolades which recognize and celebrate the remarkable achievements of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa, render the fact of the Seminary's ignoble termination all the more sad and lamentable. There are several factors that brought about the closure of Fedsem. One major factor was clearly the demise of Apartheid. The question therefore emerges about the churches ongoing commitment to ecumenical cooperation in theological education, beyond the Apartheid era and whether it was inevitable that the Fedsem project would come to an end. Denis concludes that the Seminary's closure was not inevitable<sup>117</sup> and many would agree with this finding. There remains, amongst other things, therefore the 'unfinished business' of addressing the very painful story of the closure of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa.

To conclude we want to refer to an interpretation of the story of FedSem from John de Gruchy who on the occasion of the viability study on theological education from the ETE program of WCC made some very pertinent remarks reflecting on the failure of FedSem as a symptom and signal for a global crisis in ecumenical theological education to which churches and the global community of theological educators need to be alerted :

"Why, then, did it (FedSem) collapse? Why did this major ecumenical achievement in theological formation suddenly become financially unviable? The reasons are several and complex and cannot be discussed in any detail here. One of them was undoubtedly its location in violence wreaked KwaZulu. Another was a lack of ecumenical commitment upon the part of the participating churches and some of their leaders. Yet another, was the fact that apartheid began to crack at the seams allowing black students access to traditionally white universities. At the same time, well-trained black theologians also became eligible to teach in such institutions so that FEDSEM had to compete for their service. The moratorium on missionary involvement and the general withdrawal of mission personnel compounded the problem. The result was a lack of ecumenically committed leadership, mismanagement, and the deterioration of academic standards. All of which combined in the end to undermine FEDSEM's financial viability. But financial failure was in large measure a reflection of the deeper malaise - a crisis in the commitment of the

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<sup>112</sup> Also one of the government created ethnic universities

<sup>113</sup> Homeland.

<sup>114</sup> Anglican.

<sup>115</sup> Liturgy.

<sup>116</sup> P Denis, "Fedsem Ten Years Later: The Unwritten History of an Ecumenical Seminary," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (2003).68

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

churches to ecumenical theological formation, and a corresponding lack of ability on the part of FEDSEM to provide a viable ecumenical theological formation. In the end, FEDSEM failed because it was not delivering. That is symptomatic of the crisis in ecumenical theological formation which we face, because the failure of FEDSEM is our failure.

The crisis facing us is, however, of a far greater magnitude than can be illustrated by reflecting on FEDSEM alone. It is a global crisis. Theological formation today has to take place in a world which is presently undergoing enormous changes politically, culturally and economically. Every nation and most local communities are going through fundamental changes as perhaps never before. In some countries these changes are of such a nature that the very fabric of society is being torn apart by violence and war. In many situations around the world people are not primarily concerned about improving their quality of life, but simply struggling to survive. But even in more affluent countries many social problems are reaching crisis proportions. We are all aware, for example, of the extent of informal settlements throughout Africa, Latin America and Asia, and the frightful poverty in which so many people are forced to live; we are also aware of the impact which AIDS is having on virtually all societies. If theological formation is related to the mission of the church, and it surely must be, then all of this impinges directly upon theological formation for ministry. ...

But the crisis which we face is not just one which is, as it were, out there in the world, it is also a crisis within the life of the churches themselves. Ecumenism is no longer "the great new fact of our time" even though its achievements have been far-reaching and remarkable. We are all aware that there has been something of a backtracking in ecumenical commitment and involvement during the past decade or two. This has had an impact upon theological education as we have noted in the case of FEDSEM, just as it has on other aspects of the life of the church. At the same time we are aware that the very contours of historic Christianity are changing as a result of the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism and Independent churches - notably here in Africa. Indeed Christianity itself is far more variegated and divided today than at any time previously in its history. Moreover, the vacuum created by the withdrawal or reduction of missionaries of mainline denominations in Africa has been filled by many others whose approach to Christian faith is more fundamentalist and sometimes blatantly right-wing. This has all kinds of implications for theological formation, not least the fact that many students training for the ministry today may have very little background in the life and tradition of the historic churches."<sup>118</sup>

#### **14) Migration and theological education - Theological training programs for migrant churches**

In the past 100 years we have witnessed with the end of colonial rule and an enormous vitality of mission and ministries of local communities the birth of a polycentric world church and a new shape of Christianity having tilted to the South, but also the emergence of new immigrant churches originating in the South in the northern hemisphere<sup>119</sup>. The 16th century up to the middle of the 20th century was a period of European migration towards the South and with this also the European model of theological institutions with major European human resources had migrated.

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<sup>118</sup> John W. de Gruchy, "From the Particular to the Global Locating Our Task as Theological Educators in Africa within the Viabilitystudy Process," <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/sorat/theology/bct/degruchy.htm>.

<sup>119</sup> Roswith Gerloff, "The African Diaspora and the Shaping of Christianity in Africa," *Letters from Byblos* No. 23, *International Centre for Human Science* (2009).99;; Afeosemime U. Adogame, Roswith I. H. Gerloff, and Klaus Hock, *Christianity in Africa and the African Diaspora : The Appropriation of a Scattered Heritage* (London ; New York: Continuum, 2008).

Since the middle of the 20th century there has also been a massive migration in reverse to Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. With this African, Asian, Latin American and Pacific Islanders have become part of the Christianity in the western hemisphere. While the legacy of the Christendom tradition and its patterns continues to influence many churches in Asian and African contexts and forms of theological thinking and ministerial formation there, on the other hand increasingly also forms and shapes of non-western Christianity have spread in pockets of western Christianity. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), “Migration is considered one of the defining global issues of the early twenty-first century, as more and more people are on the move today than at any other point in human history. There are now about 192 million people living outside their place of birth, which is about 3% of the world's population. This means that roughly one of every thirty-five persons in the world is a migrant. Between 1965 and 1990, the number of international migrants increased by 45 million - an annual growth rate of about 2.1 per cent. The current annual growth rate is about 2.9 per cent.”<sup>120</sup> Woman accounted 49.6% of the global migrant population in 2005. If approximately 10 million migrate annually this has enormous implications both politically, economically, but also in the religious dimension. Both the host country and the home country of migrants bear consequences including in the religious sphere. It is in the area of religion that uprooted communities find and express their identity very often. Reactions derived from a history of migration might vary from restoring and strengthening ethnic or religious identities, transforming traditional religious identities to supporting exclusive or fundamentalist forces. Who is taking care of the needs of theological education for immigrant churches and what models are adequate to provide proper education for and with them?

In **Great Britain** it has become obvious in the past years that as we reach the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the cultural and ethnic landscape of Britain has radically changed.<sup>121</sup> A new wave of migration has hit the British shores. People from many parts of the globe (in particular Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe) in search of educational and economical betterment have chosen Britain as the country to pursue this goal. However, this advancement is not just based on educational and economical grounds. For those who profess the Christian faith, significant numbers of such persons have specifically come to Britain in order to evangelise the nation believing that although it is officially declared a Christian State, in practice, in the everyday busyness of life and living, its inhabitants can no longer be said to actively adhere to the principles and tenets of Christianity. A new wave of migration has brought a new wave of Christianity, one that is vibrant and purpose-driven to effect spiritual and social change. Almost in a kind of role reversal, this missional activity is seen by those who offer it as a gift to Britain and the world.<sup>122</sup> As a case in point, statistics from the last Church Census in England show that the growth in Black Pentecostal Churches partly account for the slowing rate of decline in churchgoing. Black people now account for 10% of all churchgoers in England and in inner London alone, 44% of churchgoers are now black.<sup>123</sup> With many of such Black Pentecostal Churches achieving mega-church status, the

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<sup>120</sup> “About Migration,” *International Organization for Migration* (IOM). <http://www.iom.int/jahia/page3.html>

<sup>121</sup> Lynette Mullings, “Centre for Black Ministries and Leadership in the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education,” [http://www.queens.ac.uk/black\\_ministries/](http://www.queens.ac.uk/black_ministries/).

<sup>122</sup> According to the findings of the last church census of 2005, churches started by ethnic minority groups across a whole variety of languages have included those sent as missionaries from Africa or the Caribbean or Asia to help evangelise the “mother country which gave them the gospel a century or so ago. P. W. Brierley, *Pulling out of the Nosedive: A Contemporary Picture of Churchgoing: What the 2005 English Church Census Reveals*, 1st British ed. (London: Christian Research, 2006). 8-9.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*



implications for impacting the theological training of those who are called into some form of lay or ordained ministry are particularly significant.<sup>124</sup>

The enthusiasm and vigor with which these migrant churches bring to their faith is fertile ground for theological reflection, mission formation and leadership development. Many of whom have set up their own Bible institutes to provide a level of training for the burgeoning congregations who desire to know more about God and become actively involved in ministry. However, such training only goes so far and requires those theological colleges that have been long established in Britain holding appropriate course validation from Certificate level right through to PhD to work in partnership with migrant churches and ethnic minorities as a means of resourcing their theological education and training. The importance of theological institutions across Britain positioning themselves to accommodate this factor cannot be overstated. Not only is it important for the new growing migrant churches but it is especially crucial for those denominations particularly from the Caribbean who have a much longer history of establishment in Britain from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century and are now assessing their priorities for relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This includes the training of leaders to be suitably qualified to engage with a society that has changed considerably and continues to be on the move.<sup>125</sup> The kind of training required then is one that develops their leadership craft, provides them with practical tools for mission and ministry within diverse cultural and religious contexts. Space should also be provided for them to critically reflect on the practice of ministry that takes into account their specific cultural heritage. Herein lies the case for theological education that embraces intercultural teaching and learning. Courses and programmes with an emphasis on contextual theology need to be developed along with the teaching of liberation theologies such as Black and Asian Theology. The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education in Birmingham, UK presently is the leading institution in Britain and Europe for teaching Black Theology, where it is mandatory for all students (preparing for ordained and/or authorised ministry) to sit the modules in Black and Asian Theology and Bible and Liberation. It is worth pointing out the observations of Black British theologian Anthony Reddie who identifies Oxford Brookes University outside of The Queen's Foundation and The University of Birmingham, as probably the only other institution that offers a taught course in Black Theology in the UK.<sup>126</sup> This is clearly not enough. For equity and justice in the curriculum development of theological education and for the equipping of leaders within migrant churches who will engender a bold and radical outlook, the stark call is for other institutions to take up the challenge to embrace this new and exciting direction.

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<sup>124</sup> Pastor Mathew Ashimowolo is Founder and Senior Pastor of Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) the largest Black Majority Church in Britain with an average attendance of 12,000 people. "Kicc Home," <http://www.kicc.org.uk/>, "Soul Stirrings Easter Special - Faith Matters," *The Voice*, March 21 2005.. They organise Britain's largest regular prayer gathering called the Festival of Life attracting over 20,000 Christians from across the UK. See "Historic visit by the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall to one of London's largest black majority churches, Jesus House" in *Keep the Faith* Issue 35..

<sup>125</sup> A case in point are denominations like the Church of God of Prophecy (CoGoP) and New Testament Church of God (NTCoG) whom have established links and partnerships with the Centre for Black Ministries and Leadership at the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education, identifying The Queen's Foundation as a viable institution to send their key leaders and serving clergy to advance their theological training. Mullings, "Centre for Black Ministries and Leadership."

<sup>126</sup> AG Reddie, "Exploring the Workings of Black Theology in Britain: Issues of Theological Method and Epistemological Construction," *Black Theology: An International Journal* 7, no. 1 (2008). Footnote 26.

In **Germany** there is the case of Hamburg where there are about 80 African churches, most of them of west-African background.<sup>127</sup> Christians from these different cultural backgrounds normally would find it difficult to enter into university based educational programs and theological degree courses which have different entrance requirements and were not designed for the specific purposes of these groups. Therefore committed theologians around the Missions Academy of Hamburg launched a special theological education program for African immigrant churches which is described in the following case study on “African Theological Training in Germany“ (ATTiG), a study program of the Academy of Mission for, and with African migrant-church leaders in Northern Germany:

In 2001 a unique program was inaugurated at the Academy of Mission at the University of Hamburg designed to provide theological training for African migrant-church leaders in Northern Germany. ATTiG is a two-year program during which the participants meet once a month for a weekend. Each course has about 20 participants, mostly from Hamburg and other areas in the northern part of Germany. The program was the outcome of deliberations between African migrant pastors in Northern Germany and German theologians at the Academy of Mission, held in the second half of the 1990s. It is no coincidence that this development took place in Hamburg since this metropolis has the highest density of migrants originating from West-Africa most of whom are Christians from Ghana and Nigeria. The beginnings of the 1990s saw a sharp rise of West Africans migrating to Germany which was accompanied by the establishment of numerous, mostly neo-pentecostal ministries. Today there are not less than 80 churches in Hamburg with an African membership and leadership (all over Germany about 1000 of these churches were founded within the last two decades). Besides the neo-pentecostal ministries there are relatively few so-called African independent churches (AIC) like Aladura from Nigeria or MDCC from Ghana, traditional pentecostal churches like The Church of Pentecost or The Assemblies of God, and missions by, in West-Africa so-called orthodox churches like The Methodist Church of Ghana or the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. In addition, the Catholic Church provides here and there services for Catholics from Africa, run by African priests.

Interestingly, many of the migrant churches celebrate their services in church buildings belonging to the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) making use of the church premises after the service of the locals has ended. Because of cultural and theological differences between the old and the new population there have only occasionally been points of qualified encounters such as joint services. However, it has become obvious – also to the migrants – that most of them have come to stay. As a matter of fact, many have become German citizens due to intermarriage, and the second generation is coming up.

Therefore the need is increasingly felt by pastors of a West-African origin, to deepen their knowledge about church-life and theology in Germany, in order to be able to connect in meaningful ways to the German system, to reach out successfully to Germans, and also to be accepted as pastors of an equal standing by their German counterparts and by the society at large. Most neo-pentecostal pastors have no formal theological training but they claim to depend on spiritual insight in leading a congregation. This contradicts the positive value attributed by the Evangelical Church of Germany, to a purely academic theological training required of its ministers.

The Academy of Mission attempts, by means of ATTiG, to meet this need and to bridge the gap between African migrant pastors on the one hand, and German theological thinking and church life on the other hand. However this is not meant as a one-way street of theological instruction. ATTiG rather creates an interface in Germany where African migrant pastors learn about German and Lutheran traditions in a critical way and where they exchange theological views with German theologians. However, it is the mission of the Academy of Mission to enable the participants to reflect critically on their faith and experience and to communicate the need of contextually aware theologies.

ATTiG has been sponsored mainly by the Evangelische Missionswerk (EMW: The Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany). Many of the instructors are theology professors of the University of Hamburg of whom it is required that they are open for theological debate. The participants most of whom are neo-pentecostal or charismatic “mainline”-Christians tend to represent their versions of Christianity in rather self-confident ways and they do not shy away from challenging their professors theologically, albeit respectfully.

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<sup>127</sup> Werner Kahl (Hrsg.), *Afrikanische Diasporakirchen in Deutschland*, in: *Transparent – extra* 12/52, 1998: 1–15.; Benjamin Simon, *Afrikanische Kirchen in Deutschland* (Frankfurt: Lembeck, 2003), Amele Adamavi-Aho Ekue, *Afrikanische Christen in Europa Und Der Perspektivenwechsel in Der Missionsgeschichte*, ed. Rudolf vonm Sinner Andrea Schultze, Wolfram Stierle, *Vom Geheimnis der Unterschieds, Vom Geheimnis Des Unterschieds : Die Wahrnehmung Des Fremden in Ökumene-, Missions- Und Religionswissenschaft* (Münster: Lit, 2002). 218.

In the course of the theological debates it becomes clear to everybody involved that we all have our theological predilections and respective, culturally bound hermeneutical keys in reading Scripture. We come to an appreciation of this variability of Biblical interpretation. In such a way it becomes possible to learn from one another, e.g. of dimensions of Biblical passages that have been overlooked in certain traditions, and to become aware of certain blind spots and areas to grow. All this contributes to laying the foundation on which Christians with different cultural and confessional origins may grow-together in church and society.

Similar developments can be reported from the context of **North America**. The Christians from the South are bringing a hybrid Christianity to North America as they migrate there, that is a Combination of the 19th century evangelistic western missionary Christianity (with particular denominational affiliation) and the local religio-cultural practices (which the local converts brought with them). This hybrid Christianity is alien/strange to North American who follow Western Christianity with some North American nuances. The North American churches are eager to welcome the migrants with their Christianity and accommodate them especially in the context of diminishing membership of European decent, but are unable to fully integrate them to the denominational setting as exists now in North America.

The North American churches have also opened up to the multicultural and multiracial challenges and have created programs in their seminaries for multicultural and multiracial exposure and experience. Besides through the initiatives of ATS (Association of Theological Schools in US and Canada) from the 80s, the globalization program has become an important part of theological education. And from the 9/11 incident interfaith engagements, especially with the Islamic community, are also taken up by many seminaries as an important area of future ministerial challenge in the US.

These new challenges have led to the appointment of a number of faculty members from churches in the South and the Diaspora community and minority communities like African American and Latino/Latina Churches. As their numbers increase the ethos of seminaries are bound to change.

The gender justice is another significant issue in North American Christianity. We may need to add feminization of ministry and the increased number of women who are trained in theological institutions and appointed for ministries, including to faculty positions and leadership, in the seminaries in North America.

To briefly summarize:

- a) To develop innovative models for theological education is a key mandate for mainline churches all over the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as migration is hugely and fastly changing the global landscape of Christianity;
- b) it is a major challenge how the (African or Asian) diaspora communities of Christians and theologians can in turn become a resource for strengthening theological education institutions and programs within their home countries – new models of inter-contextual cooperation in theological education between Diaspora and home-based communities of theological educators need to be developed;
- c) Diaspora communities of people living as strangers in a foreign context point sharply to the issue of accessibility of theological education systems as developed within established churches which is one of the key issues of justice in theological education in world Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **15) Reconstructing churches by reconstructing theological education – Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS) as a case study of theological education in China**

There is an enormous challenge in China to equip a new generation of leadership and to bridge the wider generation gap between church leaders and theologians that exists after many years of inadequate theological training. China's theological education was rehabilitated with the reopening of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in 1981.<sup>128</sup> At present there are 19 regional theological seminaries and Bible Schools operating in China and more than 1700 theological students attend courses on campuses. Since 1981 already more than 10.000 students have graduated from these seminaries and are working in local parishes, some also ordained as pastors. Most of the leadership of local churches belongs to the new generation today, thus making Chinese Christianity looking younger and younger.

There is some great progress and renewal today in China's churches. Since some 10 years ago there has been a process towards theological renewal emphasizing the development of a Chinese Christian theology which affirms traditional Chinese culture and relates openly towards society and the tasks of citizenship in China today. During the devastating earthquake of Sichuan on May 12 Chinese Christians engaged in emergency relieve and financial support to the victims (some 50 million RMBs were donated). A new theology has emerged which enables Christians to engage with society which is very important for Christianity becoming rooted in China. As a result China's government now actively affirms and highly esteems religion and supports religions to play a positive role in society. Without the support of the government Nanjing Union Theological Seminary could not move to the new campus and also some local governments have given their hands to local seminaries. The CCC/TSPM has set up twelve commissions to deal with fundamental issues of church renewal and social ministries, one of which is the commission on Theological Education.<sup>129</sup>

There is a broad awareness of the manifold urgencies to renew and strengthen theological education in China in order to strengthen the reconstruction of churches rooted in China soil.

When Bishop K.H. Ting launched a theological movement aiming at the Reconstruction of theological thought in China his intention or purpose was to help the Chinese pious believers to better explain their proper faith at the basis of the Bible and to unfold its proper relevance and meaning for contemporary social life and current challenges in China today. Some of the key challenges which are behind the need for theological reconstruction come from two factors which are characteristic for Chinese Christianity today,

- one is the considerable influence of a certain pietism which has marked Christianity as brought by western missionaries which had put more emphasis on personal faith, prayer and the Bible and less emphasis on a clear concept of Christian doctrines and a proper understanding of the church – thus giving rise to a wide range of different isolated tendencies and some peculiar, sometimes even

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<sup>128</sup> The following is based on an essay contributed to the study group by Rev. Dr. Aiming Wang, Vice President and Dean of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary on theological education in Nanjing in the context of contemporary challenges for protestant churches in China. For more background information also see: Aiming Wang, *Church in China : Faith, Ethics, Structure : The Heritage of the Reformation for the Future of the Church in China* (Bern ; New York: Peter Lang, 2009), Henry S. Wilson, "Theological Reconstruction in China: Ecumenical Accompaniment in the Self-Theologizing Effort in Theological Education," *International Review of Mission* 98, no. 1 (2009).; C. Stanley Smith, *The Development of Protestant Theological Education in China* (Shanghai Kelly and Walsh, 1941).

<sup>129</sup> Rev Dr. Yilu Chen is Chair and Rev Dr. Aiming Wang is vice-Chair of this commission on theological education in China.

fundamentalist phenomena in understanding and practicing Christian faith among Chinese believers, particularly among analphabets.

- another tendency is the wide spread of trends particularly amongst believers in rural areas which can be called syncretism or religious relativism, by which a situation has emerged in parts of rural Chinese Christianity which can be seen as similar as the encounter with Gnosticisms in the first two centuries of Christianity against which the patristic Fathers developed their concern for purity of Christian faith and a proper understanding of what it means to be the church, focused in the proposal to formulate more clearly the *Fides ecclesiae* by the *Regula ecclesiae* (as initiated by St Justin Martyr, and officially by St Irenaeus). More and more students and intellectuals in campuses have become converted to faith of the Christian Cross, at the same time, phenomena of the Gnosticism like the one of the patristic period silently but very strongly appear among the elites with elements of Christianity and of Confucianism being mixed with some modern theories and spiritual cults. The multiples orientations in the area of values seem to be a characteristic mark of our époque today leaving the Church in China confronted with the menaces of the syncretism and the relativisms. Thus one of the key tasks of theological education today is to develop a proper understanding of what it means to be the church today as it is *Ekklesia* which is the central weakness of the Christian phenomena in today's China.

In order to overcome certain weaknesses in the understanding of the Christian church and to strengthen a proper and developed understanding of Christian faith the only way is to work hard and to strengthen systematically the area of theological education in China. Quality improvement in theological education is needed

- to counter and remedy superficial and extreme nationalism which can function as a cancer of the conscience of the believers and is so often behind some patriotic slogans. To establish a proper Chinese system of theology is possible and reasonable when we try to avoid excluding the universal values and catholicity of Christian faith which puts a patriotic commitment in a proper context and surpasses mere nationalist interests and values.

- to counter and remedy some extreme trends of the pietistic heritage combined with some Donatist tendencies. These positions tend to reject any necessity of norms of Christian faith and deny even the usage and importance of Christian doctrines and dogmas, including even the three Creeds of the Early Church. They would emphasize only the holy life of the individuals and are focused on seeking permanently only for the inner purity of the closed Christian community thereby reducing capacities for the communication and dialogue between Chinese believers and civil society in China which are extremely necessary for the theological awakening of China in today's world.

- to counter and to remedy increasing trends which are presented in the charismatic movements or the Pentecostal mass movements which do not seem to have a proper distinction between the law and the gospel.

Against this background since 1999 in Nanjing Union Theological Seminary a concept and curriculum framework for theological education was formulated which include some of the following strategic goals:

- a) to interpret the significance of the heritage of the patristic Fathers;
- b) to introduce the meaning of the Early Church in order to prepare for an ecumenical understanding and aim;

- c) to stress the necessity of the three Creeds for the Church in China although they were written outside China by the western Church Fathers at an ancient time;
- d) to explain the extreme importance of the legacy of the Protestant Reformation as the reference point for the identity of Protestantism all over the world as a means to decrease the negative impact of narrow nationalism;
- e) to establish an ecumenical and catholic mind among the seminarians who are future pastors and leaders of parishes and churches in China etc.

Accordingly the new curriculum in Nanjing Theological Seminary is based on models of the European curriculum, especially that of the universities in Switzerland and Germany which was transplanted into Nanjing Union Theological Seminary since 1999. But it also has added some special additional courses contextualizing theological education in China which are offered as compulsory courses, such as modern history of China, Morality and Duty of the citizens, basic knowledge of Chinese laws, the study of the Three-self and patriotic principles etc.<sup>130</sup>

The introduction of a revised curriculum and the inclusion of a proper introduction into Biblical tradition and Church History according to European standards have led to improvements in the academic quality of the teachers and the students instead of the pietistic standards before. The same process also is accompanied by major efforts for continued formation programs for pastors and teachers by additional short term training courses with partner organizations in Bossey/WCC, SEK(FEPS) Switzerland, EKD/EMW/EED of Germany, FTE of USA, Church of England, Church of Finland or Seminaries in Hong Kong, Singapore etc., so many teachers of NJUTS have been trained systematically during the certain semesters or years. Thereby the quality of the teaching and of the research has been much improved. The programs of the Bachelor's and Master's degree in NJUTS are continuing very positively and constructively for serving the growing Church in China now.

In summarizing it has become clear that the renewal and reconstruction of the Church in China must be based on a proper construction of theological concepts and ideas. While the Church is rapidly growing, the quality and common standards in parishes and in the ways communication takes place with the local believers are at stake. The basic principles now adopted in theological education which are a) the academic studies of the Scripture; b) an orientation about the heritage of the Patristic Fathers of Early Christianity; c) an orientation on the principles of the Reformation; and d) the encouragement for open minds in terms of interdisciplinary dialogue and sharing knowledge with other human beings including the Chinese classical thought, will help to contribute to the reconstructing churches by reconstructing the theological education – examples

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<sup>130</sup> Thus until at present there are six kinds of the obligatory courses and auxiliary courses which compose the curriculum of NJUTS since 1999:

1) the biblical languages: Basic Hebrew of OT; Basic Greek of NT; Basic Latin for the Patristic since 2003 by Prof. Rev. Dr. Miikka Ruokanen from Helsinki University.

2) OT.: Exegeses and Theology of OT besides the interpretations of each book of OT;

3) NT.: Exegeses and Theology of NT besides the interpretations of each book of NT;

4) Systematic Theology: Introduction; Dogmatics and Ethics; Dogmatic theology of Luther and Calvin;

5) Historic Theology: History of Christianity, History of the Christian Thoughts, Patristic studies; Theology of the Reformation etc. History of the Chinese Church etc.

6) Practical Theology: Christian Pedagogy; Liturgical studies (Worship; Sacred Music); Homiletics; Diaconia; and Psychology (Christian Counseling) and the theories of ministry etc.

7) Auxiliary courses on: a. Confucianism; b. Taoism; c. Chinese classic philosophy; d. Chinese classic literature; e. Western philosophy; f. German Classic philosophy; g. Introduction of Sociology; h. Introduction of Psychology; i. Introduction of the Law etc.

of which are testified been testified in the period of the Swiss Reformation by the practical initiatives of John Calvin and by others reformers in the later centuries in the world.

## **16) Fragmentation and pluralization in theological education – a case study on theological education in Myanmar**

Myanmar in socio-politically terms is a very diverse country. Its population is multi-ethnic in composition and highly divided. Christianity in Myanmar with 6.2 % from the 57 million people of Myanmar belongs to the minority religious group in this country. Christianity arrived in Myanmar much earlier but it took roots only with the mission of Judson's in July 1813. Only afterwards other Christian missions followed.<sup>131</sup>

Most of the theological seminaries in Myanmar are today Church-based and run by the respective churches, conventions and ethnic associations. They aim at producing efficient ministers and lay leaders, equipping them with academic knowledge, pastoral skills and missionary zeal for the ministry and the mission of God. Most of the theological colleges focus their training on denominational values and needs while only a few seminaries are more academic and ecumenically oriented. The first seminary or Jungle Bible School was established in 1836 in Tavoy in the Tenasserim Div., down South in Myanmar.

Myanmar gained independence only in 1948 (January 4). The church at that time was growing and had a leading role in the social sphere through education in schools and in hospitals. Then the government took steps to stop the growth of the church by trying to introduce Buddhism into State religion in 1960 which brought about a revolt within the country. This led to the military coup in 1962. Myanmar went into a self-imposed moratorium cutting all links with the world. The late 50ies then saw the emergence of new Para-church movements. With the closure of the country, the Pentecostal movement began to grow as Christian mission was worried about the closure of the country. The focus was on establishing churches and multiplying congregations.

The Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) was established in 1914 and its member churches asked their seminaries for cooperating and working together under the Association for Theological Education in Myanmar (ATEM) which was established in 1986 as the body of MCC (Myanmar Council of Churches) to bring together theological colleges in Myanmar. In other words, ATEM is born out of the ecumenical endeavor and exists as an independent body only now. ATEM has grown from 8 member schools to 33 member schools representing the eleven major denominations all across the country.<sup>132</sup> Some member schools have grown too big and larger institutions. The sad fact that Globalizations discards history is very much present in the Church which is fighting Globalization. Each for himself is the motto of the day seems to creep in the area of theological education. Its mission and objectives in short are to build unity in theological education and theological thinking. It's mission and objectives are related to the vision "to help upgrade theological institutions and promote relevant theological education that will help equip God's people for the mission and ministry." It belongs to the key objectives of ATEM

- to upgrade theological institutions
- to develop faculty
- to promote theological education that is relevant and contextual

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<sup>131</sup> Most of the following text is from a contribution made available to the study group by Peter Joseph, former Executive Secretary of ATEM, the Association of Theological Education in Myanmar

<sup>132</sup> The present executive secretary of ATEM is Rev. Dr. Lal Tin Hre, who has developed a detailed outline for the future development of ATEM which is available in ETE office.

- to provide theological literature
- to run postgraduate studies
- to develop contextual theology
- to work towards Union Theological College or Theological Union

In its work ATEM has realized as a major challenge how much theological education in Myanmar is marked by a bi-polarity between East and West: Most of the Myanmar seminaries are established in the traditions of Western theological seminaries in terms of their academic orientation as well as confessional (spiritual) orientation. Financially, they are still totally, partially or mostly (by and large) dependent on Western resources. The same applies also in terms of academic matters such as faculty development, human/other resources.

Myanmar is currently experiencing a boom in theological colleges together with a dramatically increasing number of theological students. Even in Yangon there are *more than one hundred theological colleges* which also some international guests perceive astonishingly and critically. A lot of factors are behind this development and have contributed to create this situation. For instance there are deteriorating secular educational standards and also more activities of foreign missionary bodies which employ local people. With this development some kind of danger emerges as well. Most of the students are still very young during their seminary training and therefore a lack of dedication and commitment can occur or can be observed in some cases. This can also result in some kind of elitism, losing the contact with the grassroots. Some would think that this is part of the current trends in the context of the age of knowledge, information and globalization. Despite of many critical questions some positive facts can be observed as well, namely increasing trends to providing training and education for the students in such a way that they are enabled to employ their knowledge and skills not just within the church community, but also in a wider community of society beyond the church.

The increasing number of theological schools and colleges also prompts another urgent need for ATEM, namely to be engaged in constant dialogue between ATEM seminaries and other theological seminaries representing Evangelical and Pentecostal churches and other mission organizations. Only by doing so, common standardization and quality assurance may be sustained and a wider ecumenical cooperation and common witness may be possible for theological education in Myanmar in the future. One of the key questions is what can be a strategic incentive for Bible Schools and smaller theological colleges in Myanmar to really work together and to prepare a process by which a major Federated Theological Faculty or Union Theological Seminary is formed in Myanmar which can also offer higher degree courses and will be a partner for churches on the national level.

Thus in summarizing five key questions for theological education in Myanmar remain:

- a) how can theological education in Myanmar be upgraded and developed to provide relevant and contextualized theological orientation to churches and society in Myanmar?
- b) how can theological education interact more with society and the pressing needs of the multi-ethnic background of people living in Myanmar?
- c) How can ways be promoted to work towards a Federated or United Theological College in Myanmar which would allow to develop a center of excellence in higher theological studies within Myanmar itself and reduce the number of students going to places outside the country?



d) How can common standards and quality assurance be safeguarded in a context which sees a proliferation of theological colleges and Bible schools which try to answer the vast need for higher Christian education?

e) How can interfaith perspectives be included and strengthened in theological education so as to enhance dialogue with people of other faiths in Myanmar?

### **17) New accreditation criteria and the quality of theological education – a case study on theological education in Latin America and South Africa**

Many regional associations of theological schools are committed to improving the quality of standards in theological education by regular accreditation and evaluation visits to their member schools. There is a new debate on what “quality improvement” is and means for theological education. **Latin American** networks have introduced an important study document with the new manifesto for “A quality theological education” (published by Servicio Pedagogicos Y teologicos, SPT, Bolivia).<sup>133</sup> “Quality” of theological education according to their statement cannot just be defined in the seemingly neutral terms of academic excellence or “effectiveness-standards” as applied and sought for in many training and education programs of the business world. There is a special and distinct approach of theological institutions speaking of “quality theological education” which is defined by seeking “quality in the theological undertaking...by combining in an imaginative way the search for theological relevance in the overwhelmingly pressing reality of Abya Yala<sup>134</sup> regarding the pertinence of a discipline that has its own epistemological identity and demands.”<sup>135</sup> The theological approach to quality of (higher) education undeniably is related to the quality of life which God has promised in the prophetic vision of abundant life for all and an explicitly missiological orientation of the paradigm of theological education in the context of the concept of *Missio Dei*.<sup>136</sup> For patterns and models of theological education geared towards that abundance of life for all which constantly is denied by existing systems of exploitation and globalization some essential requirements are identified in the statement which would lean towards inter-disciplinary and intercultural methods, clear account of pedagogy and teaching methods, inclusivity in terms of multiple forms of rationality and human potentialities (emotional, cognitive, physical, spiritual, moral, intuitive, creative) and contextually and historically rooted discourses on theological concepts. There are consequences of this for the “quality management” of the life of institutions of theological education which ought to be measured “by the level of learning, security, welfare, mutual trust, initiative, as well as by other general criteria linked to an inclusive character, diversity, gender equity.” The document is an indication of how the debate on quality of theological education is both advancing in some regions and essentially needed still in other

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<sup>133</sup> Matthias Preiswerk and Others, “Manifesto of Quality Theological Education in Latin America,” *Ministerial Formation* 111, no. November (2008).

<sup>134</sup> “Abya Yala” means “Continent of Life” in the language of the Kuna peoples of Panama and Colombia. The Aymara leader Takir Mamani suggested the selection of this name (which the Kuna use to denominate the American continents in their entirety), and proposed that all Indigenous peoples in the Americas utilize it in their documents and oral declarations. “Placing foreign names on our cities, towns and continents,” he argued, “is equal to subjecting our identity to the will of our invaders and to that of their heirs.” The proposal of Takir Mamani has found a favorable reception in various sectors. Thus this term is used to describe Latin America from indigenous perspectives. “About Abya Yala,” *Native Web, Inc.* <http://abyayala.nativeweb.org/about.html>

<sup>135</sup> Preiswerk and Others, “Manifesto of Quality Theological Education in Latin America.”

<sup>136</sup> NJ Njoroge, “Transforming Theological Education in Mission,” *International Review of Mission* 94, no. 373 (2005). Peter F. Penner, *Theological Education as Mission* (Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld Verlag, 2005). Lothar Engel and Dietrich Werner, *Ökumenische Perspektiven Theologischer Ausbildung*, Beiheft Zur Ökumenischen Rundschau (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Otto Lembeck, 1990).

regions.<sup>137</sup> The international debate on comparable quality standards of theological education has barely begun among existing associations of theological schools, though it was becoming clear during WOCATI conference that this is a field of strategic importance and many potentials for mutual learning between the associations of theological schools.

*What are common standards for quality assurance and evaluation in theological education in the 21st century?* There are also external reasons for intensifying this debate, as looking beyond one's own nose it is soon becoming clear that there are enormous and rapid developments going on with regard to quality assurance and international standardization of higher education systems in the secular field which are of crucial importance also for higher institutions of theological education. Since the first UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in 1998 (WCHE) there has been an intense debate on quality of higher education at UNESCO level which theological colleges and regional associations should not despise but explore with interest what they can learn and benefit from them. In the "World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty First Century: Vision and Action" from 1998 it was stated that "Developing quality in higher education and mechanisms for its assurance is crucial for the future of education in the 21st century". The definition given here was: "*Quality in higher education is a multidimensional concept, which should embrace all its functions, and activities: teaching and academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment, internal self-evaluation and external review, conducted openly by independent specialists, if possible with international expertise, are vital for enhancing quality*" (Art. 11)

In 2004 there was an important First International Barcelona Conference on Higher Education on the theme "The social commitment of Universities", organized by GUNI (Global Universities Network for Innovation, a network created by UNESCO and the University Politecnica de Catalunya in Barcelona), which is very rich in terms of deepening insights and experiences in quality assurance in higher education institutions.<sup>138</sup>

In **South Africa**, theological education has been challenged greatly on the issue of quality assurance.<sup>139</sup> With the arrival of democracy in 1994 and the emergence of a new education system, issue of accreditation and quality assurance began to surface as extremely important. New institutions and mechanisms were put in place to deal with these issues like the South African Qualifications Authority, the National Qualifications Framework with its concomitant Standard Generating Bodies etc. All of this was quite scary to theological education, in particular theological faculties, clusters and institutions benefiting from state funding. There were in particular two major challenges facing theological education. First, the simple fact that quality assurance is a very technical thing which comes from the corporate world of business, in particular manufacturing. In business quality assurance is the process of making sure that the end product or commodity is of very good quality by taking care of the different steps in the manufacturing process. For this mechanisms are put in place, turning quality assurance into a very technical process. This is difficult for theological education to follow since it does not deal with

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<sup>137</sup> For the debate on quality in theological education in the US comp. the excellent book of Daniel O. Aleshire, *Earthen Vessels : Hopeful Reflections on the Work and Future of Theological Schools* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2008).

<sup>138</sup> "Higher Education in the World 2007: Accreditation for Quality Assurance: What is at stake? GUNI series on the social commitment of universities," *Global University Network for Innovation*. <http://www.guni-rmies.net/info/default.php?id=89>

<sup>139</sup> Prof. Nico Botha, UNISA ; see also: McCoy, "Restoring Mission to the Heart of Theological Education a South African Perspective."

commodities in the consumerist sense of the word. It can also lead to a very deep identity crisis not only for theologians, but all those in the human and social sciences since teaching has now become the production of knowledge and the teacher a producer of knowledge. However, despite these pitfalls the emphasis on quality assurance in education has also come as a blessing in disguise to theological education. For the first time now, theological education is subjected to the same accreditation criteria and quality assurance measures like all other disciplines. There is a unit standard informed by outcomes based education which requires a careful formulation of the purpose of a particular course or module, specific outcomes, critical cross-field outcomes and importantly also, assessment criteria. Educators in theology now have to collaborate with a whole range of agencies like experts on learning and curriculum development, critical readers, focus groups (learners) in designing study material. The three main areas in which competencies are to be developed, namely knowledge, skills and attitudes or values, have helped theological education greatly in developing relevant, context-based material in response to authentic problems in church and society. As an institution in open and distance learning, Unisa has empowered theology to bring quality theological education to people without uprooting them from context.<sup>140</sup>

### **18) Pentecostalism and theological education – a case study on the interrelation between the Pentecostal movement, theological education and the ecumenical movement**

Allan Anderson has argued<sup>141</sup> that theological education as shaped in the West with its tradition of encounter between Protestantism and Enlightenment in many cases originally was in some tension with Pentecostal theological Spirituality and learning. The “liberal and pluralistic theological agenda ...often seems to diametrically oppose Pentecostal/ Charismatic spirituality and exclusivity. A certain tension exists between academic integrity and spirituality, especially when education does not seem to further Christian spirituality.” For Pentecostal traditions in the Southern hemisphere Christian spirituality was influenced by the popular religions of the regions in which they lived, which often led to sharp differences with the rather cerebral Christianity of western missionaries and their theological colleges. The context of theological education is not the Bible college, the seminary or the university, but the community in which God’s people are found. Only when the context is clear in our minds can we begin to adjust the content of our education; and this is as true for Europe as for anywhere else.”<sup>142</sup> But despite all historical hesitation and tension there is an increasing trend within Pentecostal churches to get access to advanced programs of theological colleges in other historical churches and/or to set up their own institutions of theological education. There are some impressive “efforts of Pentecostal colleges in Europe to forge alliances with secular universities and seek validation for degrees including masters’ programmes in Pentecostal studies, while Pentecostal educators attain doctoral degrees in theology.”<sup>143</sup>

There are however also dangers and hidden challenges involved as much of Pentecostal theology did not yet develop a critical assessment of modernity and post-modernity from their own viewpoint, but to some extent was also incorporating uncritically some of the assumptions of western theological thought: For instance “North American Pentecostal missions contributed generously towards the establishment of “Bible schools” and in-service training structures

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<sup>140</sup> “See UNISA website on Quality Assurance,” *UNISA*

<http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=10740> and particularly the policy of quality assurance which applies for all disciplines: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/policies/policies/academic/A35a.asp>

<sup>141</sup> ;Allan Anderson, Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality and Theological Education, *PentecoStudies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2004, in: <http://www.glopent.net/pentecostudies/2004/anderson2004.pdf/view>

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

throughout the world, resulting in the more rapid growth of indigenous Pentecostal churches.<sup>32</sup> However, the fundamental flaws in these structures exist particularly because they are western models foisted onto the rest of the world. This is part of the legacy of the colonial past with its cultural imperialism and ethnocentrism. Pentecostal (and other) missionaries from Europe and North America followed this pattern. They thought they knew what sort of training people needed in Africa, Asia and Latin America, in order to become ministers after the model of the West. It is clear that the alliance between Evangelicalism and white classical Pentecostalism in the USA from 1943 onwards had a profound effect on Pentecostal theological education. Pentecostals found themselves being drawn in to the evangelical-ecumenical dichotomy pervading evangelical Christianity. Pentecostals became vulnerable to losing their distinctive experience-oriented spirituality as Evangelical and fundamentalist models of education were bought into wholesale and uncritically.<sup>144</sup>

As it is a historical feature of many Pentecostal churches, “that many of the early Pentecostal leaders in Europe and North America and some of the most successful indigenous pastors in many parts of the world have been those with little theological education, or none at all”(p. 6) many Pentecostal leaders remain critical and “less confident of the benefits of theological education, and even of the method of training in the developed countries which were imposed on Protestants in the developing nations...The emphasis in Pentecostal and Charismatic leadership usually has been on the spirituality of the leader rather than on intellectual abilities or even ministerial skills.”

But how to relate the Pentecostal movement and the ecumenical movement today which by some are regarded as the two most important religious renewal movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?<sup>145</sup> Are they two different and irreconcilable movements? There is still a lot of ignorance on Pentecostalism in mainline and ecumenical churches, and there is a lot of ignorance on ecumenism in some Pentecostal circles. It is the conviction of this study paper that both movements need and complement each other, that both should come together, because this will have enormous positive consequences for theological education. A Pentecostal ecumenism might be growing and is already emerging and this has a lot to do with theological education. In the first phase of Pentecostalism (1901-1930) theological education did not play a major role in Pentecostalism, as this was a mass movement mostly of poor people with not much education at all. But with the institutionalization of Pentecostal churches in the second phase (after 1930) and the second or third generation of Pentecostal leaders there emerged a Pentecostal interest in theological education. Most of the early theological education for Pentecostal leaders came from the historical churches (Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptists). Only in the third phase, after the 1980ies Pentecostalism began to more systematically develop a theology of its own which reflects more the charismatic roots of this movement. While some major institutions of theological education have accepted Pentecostal students or even theological teachers, others are still not prepared to open themselves up in this direction. Nowadays there is a new generation of Pentecostal leaders many of whom are very open to encounters and cooperation with historical mainline churches and with the ecumenical movement. There is a huge interest of many Pentecostal churches to invest more in theological education and to upgrade their theological training.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>145</sup> See for the whole context the background article of Daniel Chiquete, "Pentecostalism, Theological Education and Ecumenism in Latin America," <http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p5/ete/DanielChiquete-PentecostalismoeducacionteologicayecumenismoenLA.pdf>. ; Henry I Lederle, "Pentecostals and Ecumenical Theological Education," *Ministerial Formation* 80, no. January (1998).

<sup>146</sup> Amos Yong, "Pentecostalism and the Theological Academy," *Theology Today* 64, no. 2 (2007).

In summarizing it can be said

- that it is a key task for the 21<sup>st</sup> century to develop joint theological education programmes with Pentecostal churches and Pentecostal theological educators;
- there is much that historical churches can learn from Pentecostal churches in theological education with regard to the understanding of the Holy Spirit and ways of reaching out to the poor and marginalized;
- There is also much to learn from historical churches' theological education traditions in the area of Biblical hermeneutics, social ethics and methodology of dialogical learning.

### **19) The role of regional centers (of excellence) in theological research and studies – a case study of SEAGST program in ATESEA**

For most regions of the world a crucial question in the area of theological education is whether and where to create some regional centers of excellence in theological research and post-graduate theological education, some hub-centers of theological education for leadership development, as it is not possible to have proper post-graduate course resources in each of the national or local theological colleges. The issue of how churches can invest into long-term theological leadership development programs which would be an appropriate shape for a post-graduate theological leadership development program cannot find an answer which is identical for all regions in the world, but rather needs careful assessment of situations, needs and resources in order to receive a contextually viable answer.<sup>147</sup> But most of all it needs joint planning and very good cooperation of all partners involved in a region and beyond.

A prominent example for a regional center of excellence in theological research and post-graduate education is the SEAGST program of ATESEA which in fifty years has grown from a community of 16 colleges to a community of 104 colleges in South Asia at present. A consortium style of higher theological education institute, the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology (SEAGST) was established in 1966 under the auspices of the Association of the Theological Schools in South East Asia. In cooperation with and on behalf of member schools of the Association, the Graduate School conducts programs of advanced theological studies at the master and doctoral levels and grants the degree of Master of Theology (M. theol.) and Doctor of Theology (D. theol.) The program makes available to graduates of approved theological schools in South East Asia the combined academic resources of the participating accredited schools so that suitable students may have the opportunity of continuing their studies within South East Asia.

Four specific aims were designed for this Graduate School:

1. To assist in the intellectual and spiritual development of Asian theologians so that their Christian ministry will be enriched and be more effective;
2. To contribute to the emergence of contextual and Asia-oriented theology by providing the facilities, and opportunities of research into, and reflection upon, the Christian faith as it relates to the living faiths, cultures and traditions of Asia, and to contemporary Asian society and its problems;
3. To further the training of competent teachers for the theology faculties of the region and of leaders for Christian ministry in the church and society;

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<sup>147</sup> comp. the highly interesting TEF staff paper on „Centers for Advanced Theological Study in the Third World: A Survey and Evaluation of Developments“, in: Learning in Context, TEF London Bromley, 1973, p. 155ff

4. To promote opportunities for the interchange of the graduate students and faculty members between the different participating institutions with a view to enhancing both a regional consciousness and Christian fellowship across the barriers of race, cultures and nations.

The advanced theological education implemented in South Asia through area cooperation in order to overcome the limitation of personnel, experiences and educational resources, i.e. South East Asia Graduate School of Theology (SEAGST), has come to a turning point under the influence of factors within and outside. The challenges of the popularity of religious studies in universities, and the readiness of many of the local theological institutes to offer higher theological degree programmes, raised questions about the quality and legitimacy of the current area setup (more and more participating schools are launching their own advanced theological degrees, which creates an overlapping of programmes). While recognizing the strengths of the current model for contextual concerns, the need for reviewing and re-engineering the SEAGST to a more relevant model of theological education for the churches and societies in Asia has been discussed widely.

During the Malang Assembly of ATESEA a major draft project was proposed and accepted in principle that ATESEA would be restructured according to the two main objectives of this association, namely to provide an accreditation program for the degree programs of accredited member schools and to provide a faculty development program both with a teachers academy and with a new common doctoral degree program which might be called “Asian Theological Union”. The ATU is envisaged as a consortium of participating schools offering joint degrees in the level of D.Th. programs and directed by an independent senate which has to safeguard its integrity, quality and academic directions.

However these exciting project plans of ATESEA will be realized and carried out not only in the Asian context, for this paper at the world level explores some of the key questions with which churches and institutions have to wrestle, concerning cooperation in higher theological education which are relevant not only in Asia but apply in principle to many other contexts though conditions vary among the different local settings<sup>148</sup>:

- a) How can smaller colleges of theological education which cover a vast region establish a common framework for cooperation in the area of higher degrees in theological education?
- b) How are theological institutions enabled to develop a common working process for excellency in contextualizing theology in a broader region and to formulate new coherent trends in their theological discourse (comp. the relevance of the “Asian Critical Principle” or the subsequent “Guidelines for doing Theology in Asian contexts”)?
- c) Is it better to have one regional center (central campus) of theological excellence which can serve as a hub and trendsetter of contextual theologies or to have a cooperative network of several doctoral centers which have a common framework (instead of each center following its own policies without any relation to the other)?

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<sup>148</sup> There are certainly other regional centers of excellence in theological research and studies in other continents and it would be promising to have a more detailed study on the future development perspectives of hub-centers like in Latin America the Universidade Metodista de Sao Paulo with its Programa de Pós-Graduacao em Ciencias da Religiao or the major theological colleges located in Hong Kong and Singapore.

d) What are the best ways to bring to mutual benefit and fruition resources of theological education and theologies from within a certain region with other theological and personnel resources offered in the Diaspora community of theological scholars (like for example ATESEA the Asian theological educator's community at large, which exists outside the geographical region of Asia)?

## **20) Structural divides and potentials for cooperation in different networks of theological education – a case study on the interrelation between Senate of Serampore College (University) - and ATA – related theological colleges in India**

There is a striking un-simultaneity between the growing missiological convergence between evangelical and ecumenical circles engaged in Christian mission and theological education – both in many cases affirm basically common convictions in the understanding of mission and education - and the institutional structures and “camps” of theological schools and colleges which remains structurally divided or in some areas are even marked by identities which are shaped in opposition to each other. There will not be any major progress in ecumenical orientation and contextualization of theological education unless there are no deliberate attempts for *bridging the institutional divide between global ecumenical networks in theological education and global and regional evangelical and Pentecostal networks of theological education*. There are well-developed evangelical networks of theological education (like International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE)<sup>149</sup> under WEA which play an important role in some regions and levels of theological education and which are neither part of WOCATI nor of any ecumenical networks in WCC for a number of reasons. Bearing in mind what was called for during the Global Christian Forum in Nairobi in November 2007 in terms of widening the networks of cooperation one should explore in each region what kind of signals could be developed to invite some of these networks for a process deliberately designed to strengthen mutual cooperation.

In India for instance there is the family of colleges linked and recognized by the Senate of Serampore.<sup>150</sup> Some 50 colleges belong to this family which actually brings together both “ecumenical”, pentecostal and “evangelical” theological colleges.<sup>151</sup> The Senate of Serampore College follows the system of affiliation of colleges and awards the (same) degree from Serampore College to all the qualified candidates doing studies in one of its affiliated seminaries. A common syllabus with flexibility and common exam of certain number courses are undertaken to assure the academic standards in all the affiliated seminaries. The strict academic scrutiny of Senate of Serampore College for affiliation purposes has been a challenge for many theological schools in India who were not able to meet the academic requirements (demanded by the Senate of Serampore College). On the other hand there is the Asian Theological Association<sup>152</sup> (ATA) which represents evangelical theological colleges and brings together nearly 200 member institutions in Asian countries and around 100 member institutions in India - over 60 already accredited and another 40 on the

<sup>149</sup> “Home,” ICETE-International Council for Evangelical Theological Education. <http://www.icete-edu.org/>

<sup>150</sup> Ravi Tiwari, "Senate of Serampore College (University) at Ninety: Issues and Concerns,"

[http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-](http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p5/ete/SENATE%20OF%20SERAMPORE%20COLLEGE%20(UNIVERSITY)%20AT%20NINET)

[main/documents/p5/ete/SENATE%20OF%20SERAMPORE%20COLLEGE%20\(UNIVERSITY\)%20AT%20NINET Y\\_%20ISSUES%20AND%20CONCERNS%20-%20Ravi%20Tiwari.pdf](http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p5/ete/SENATE%20OF%20SERAMPORE%20COLLEGE%20(UNIVERSITY)%20AT%20NINET%20Y_%20ISSUES%20AND%20CONCERNS%20-%20Ravi%20Tiwari.pdf).

<sup>151</sup> Whereas it is assumed that the Senate of Serampore College leads the ecumenical theological education, quite a number of the colleges affiliated to it are of the evangelical persuasion and are identified with the national and international evangelical / Pentecostal movements, such as the Union Biblical Seminary, Allahabad Biblical Seminary, Madras Theological College and Seminary, New Theological College, Gospel for Asia Biblical Seminary, etc. Even colleges in the North East India such as Clarke Theological College, Aizawl Theological College, John Roberts Theological Seminary, etc., will hold either a middle position or lean towards evangelical views. Hence, one cannot say Serampore leads ecumenical theological education and ATA leads evangelical theological education. If ATA does lead strictly evangelical theological education, Serampore leads both ecumenical and evangelical theological education for India. For funding reasons, sometimes, these distinctions are over played.

<sup>152</sup> “Home,” Asia Theological Association. <http://www.ataasia.com/>.

way. ATA understands itself as a community of “theological educational institutions, committed to evangelical faith and scholarship, which are networking together, to serve the Church in equipping the people of God for the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ....(established in 1970 it aims at) serving its members in the development of evangelical biblical theology by strengthening interaction, enhancing scholarship, promoting academic excellence, fostering spiritual and ministerial formation, and mobilizing resources to fulfill God’s global mission within diverse Asian cultures.” There is dual affiliation for some of the colleges so that there is no clear dividing line between ecumenical and evangelical colleges but structurally there are two distinct bodies dealing with issues of and curriculum developments in theological education though ATA cannot do this on the level of university degrees. There even is a third accrediting association which is the Indian Institute of Missiology (IIM). It was founded in 1994 and meanwhile brings together some 70 institutions of theological training and education in the area of mission work within and outside India – but only in 2004 equivalency and mutual recognition was worked out between ATA and IIM concerning their curriculum and degrees in mission and theological studies.<sup>153</sup>

While the historical reasons for the formation of a distinct evangelical network of theological education (in the context of the emergence of the Lausanne movement) are obvious relating to the polarization in the understanding of mission in the late 60ies and 70ies it should be asked today what is the distinct common task and what are common objectives for all major stakeholders in theological education. Sometimes distinctive affiliations seem to be more caused and emphasized due to funding reasons related to external partners than actually rooted in the content, understanding and methodology of theological education. It needs to be justified whether it still make sense to have separate networks for theological education and how the given picture really presents the unity of the church and the strategic importance of theological education for future generations. We have to ask: How should the situation be transformed for securing a common and not fragmented future of theological education in Asia and Africa? How can we best contribute to visible unity in the area of theological education in the different parts of our global community? Moving beyond

the 60s and 70s divisive journey, “ecumenical” and “evangelical” theological educators which share so much in common should work to converge and unify their common vision and mission. Efforts towards such unity should not in themselves be made to appear in a partisan manner - such as WCC attempts should be ecumenical in ethos but not ecumenical in party language as a divisive element. We need to steer clearly with nobler ways to unify and show forth a mentality that shall reflect the will and purpose of God in our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **21) New Models of Distant Learning in Theological Education – Case Study on UNISA and other models**

Nothing has a more profound impact on the patterns of education globally then the rapid transformation processes going on with regard to new information and communication technologies (ICT) which are both opening up new potentials in theological learning (e-learning, research exchange groups via internet, distant master courses using digital formats; digital libraries) as well as creating new problems and discrepancies. While the „global digital divide“ in terms of accessibility to the web and electronic libraries still is a major problem and challenge particularly in many African and some Asian countries there is no halt to the global spread of modern ICT’s in principle. There are theological colleges in Africa now which have only 30 residential students, but 300 distant learning students.

Experts in global higher education have assured us that there is a historically unprecedented acceleration of knowledge in science and education which goes hand in hand with improved means of rapid dissemination of knowledge by modern means of ICT’s though we also face the widening digital or knowledge divide (but this not only between North and South, but very much

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<sup>153</sup> Siga Arles, "Advocacy: A Missiological Imperative," *Indian Journal of Missiology* 8, no. 1 (2007).



also within many nations depending from educational and socio-economic level of development in certain groups of society.<sup>154</sup>

There is a vast literature already on backgrounds, potentials and challenges for distant learning models in theological education.<sup>155</sup> But still only some few theological colleges in Asia and Africa have a department on Christian communication and more still need to be done in terms of studies and research on how theological education institutions should plan to make proper use of modern communication and information technologies for theological teaching, for mutual cooperation, for exchange and dissemination of information to larger sectors of their societies.

Distant learning models according to a definition used at UNISA in South Africa is a “concept aimed at bridging the time, geographical, economic, social, educational and communication distance between student and institution, student and academics, student and courseware and student and peers. Open distance learning focuses on removing barriers to access learning, flexibility of learning provision, student-centredness, supporting students and constructing learning programmes with the expectation that students can succeed”;

And according to a further definition

“Open learning is an approach to learning that gives students flexibility and choice over what, when, where, at what pace and how they learn. Open learning is all encompassing and includes distance education, resource-based learning, correspondence learning, flexi-study and self-paced study”<sup>156</sup>;

Many theological colleges all around the world are now adding distant learning programs to their curriculum in order to reach out to new student groups. There are also some churches which have offered distant learning programs which are internet-based:

An interesting example is “The Methodist e-Academy” which is an initiative aiming to meet the challenge of equipping people for ordained and lay leadership by making use of the resources offered by contemporary computer technology and the internet. The aim is to train leaders who can equip Methodist churches to bear faithful and effective witness to God’s reign and thus become agents for personal and social transformation.

The Methodist e-Academy<sup>157</sup> is a project of the four Episcopal Areas of the United Methodist Church in Europe and works in co-operation with the British Methodist Church and other independent Methodist Churches in Europe. It was developed in response to a specific need in many European countries where there are no Methodist seminaries to educate pastors and limited facilities to educate lay leaders. This situation is particularly acute in the central and eastern Europe where the church is experiencing growth and requires well equipped leaders. On the other hand there are, within the different European countries, well qualified people who can provide the required education. The challenge posed by this situation is how to meet the need for educating in a manner which maximises the potential of the resources that are available across Europe. The

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<sup>154</sup> Wadi D. Haddad, “Tertiary Education Today: Global Trends, Global Agendas, Global Constraints,” in *ICETE International Consultation for Theological Educators* (High Wycombe, UK: International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE), 2003).

[http://www.theoledafrica.org/ICETE/Files/Haddad\\_TertiaryEducation.htm](http://www.theoledafrica.org/ICETE/Files/Haddad_TertiaryEducation.htm)

<sup>155</sup> Charles Bellinger, “Theological Education and Distance Learning: A Working Bibliography,” Brite Divinity School, [http://www.lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/theo\\_distance\\_bib.htm](http://www.lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/theo_distance_bib.htm).

<sup>156</sup> “Distance Learning.” *UNISA*. <http://www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=15100>

<sup>157</sup> David Field, “Methodist E Academy Homepage,” <http://www.methodist-e-academy.org>.

Methodist E-Academy began as a response to this challenge as an internet based distance learning program which draws faculty from across Europe and reaches students across Europe.

Hence the initial project of the e-Academy was to launch a program aimed at preparing students for ordination. It could not nor did it intend to offer a full program in theological studies nor did it intend to replace existing seminaries. Rather it provides a limited range of courses can be used in different ways in the different European countries as a supplement to seminary education. At present we are offering a program of 6 courses in Methodist Studies.

The development of the project of a Methodist e-Academy coincides with plans been made by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church to develop internet based distance learning programs to meet the needs of theological education in Africa and Latin America with the eventual goal of a global network of e-learning programs.

Another prominent example is STETS - the Southern **Theological Education** and Training Scheme, based in Sarum College, Salisbury, in the UK<sup>158</sup> which provides training and formation for stipendiary, non-stipendiary and lay-ministries in that region. Or the first Ecumenical Studies Distant Learning Program in Eastern Europe which is offered by the Institute for Ecumenical Studies (Dr. Antoine Arjakovsky) in the Ukrainian Catholic University of Lviv, Ukraine.<sup>159</sup>

### **III) Affirmations, Questions and Recommendations**

At the end of this survey concerning contemporary trends and challenges in theological education we cannot present a homogeneous concept which would be applicable everywhere disregarding the specificities of time and context. Rather we prefer to conclude this summary report paper with a number of crucial affirmations, questions and recommendations on a number of key areas which seem to be of strategic importance for the future of theological education in world Christianity:

#### **22) Christian mission and theological education**

We *affirm* that theological education is vital for the transmission of Christian tradition from one generation to the other and for integral Christian mission in today's world. Theological education is essential for the renewal and continuity of the church and its leadership. Theological education is a matter of survival for an authentic and contextual mission of the church in contemporary contexts. Theological education is crucial for the interaction between church and society where many issues demand for a sharpened stand and position of Christianity. This has become a commonly held conviction both in western and eastern Christianity, in both the churches of the South and the churches of the North. Theological education is deepening biblical knowledge and the capacity to distinguish and to assess the different powers and spirits and to discern God's working in this world. The promotion of theological education is a life and death issue for Christianity particularly in Africa and Asia. It is only through theological education that a door can be kept open for the vision of a renewed Africa and the Gospel values kept alive for allowing metanoia to happen within churches and society in African nations. Building up capacities for theological education in Africa has had only a short history. A major withdrawal from this monumental task at this point of history can only lead to a continuation of the plundering of the

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<sup>158</sup> "STETS - The Ecumenical Distance Learning Theology Course For Southern England," <http://www.stets.ac.uk/>

<sup>159</sup> "Institute of Ecumenical Studies," *Ukrainian Catholic University* <http://www.ecumenicalstudies.org.ua/eng/>;

continent from its political leaders and a continuation of the ignorance of masses which long for more education, liberation and human rights.

We *recommend* that churches and partner organizations increase their efforts to strengthen, to accompany and to enhance theological education – particularly in Africa. Courses on Christian mission, World Christianity, Church Unity and Ecumenism should be given a prominent place and be strengthened in theological education institutions around the world in the coming decades.

### **23) Global and Regional Forum on Theological Education**

We *affirm* the broad-based dialogue process which begun with Edinburgh 2010 and recommend that it continue involving representatives from all historical and new Christian churches which are part of World Christianity today. This dialogue process on major goals and common cooperation in theological education is needed more urgently now than ever before, lest isolation and fragmentation in theological education overcome the churches and the responsibility for promoting and supporting theological education is neglected.

In the light of the very few opportunities for dialogue between historical, evangelical, charismatic, Pentecostal and Independent churches on theological education and the reductions in important programs in several institutions (including the WCC), we *recommend* that a continuous global forum (working group) on cooperation in theological education be created. The Global Forum on Theological Education could serve as a continuation committee within Edinburgh 2010 process to take up some of the challenges identified in this paper in an effort for joint cooperation, bring together key representatives from major associations of theological schools, networks for theological education and partner organization supporting theological education institutions. It should closely cooperate and/or be seen as an enlarged framework of the WOCATI network (World Conference of Associations of Theological Schools). At the same time the Regional Ecumenical Organizations (REOs like CCA, AACC, CLAI) should play a new role in strengthening and supporting networks, fundraising and grant-giving on theological education within their region to enhance the interrelation between churches and institutions of theological education within their regions. There is also a need to strengthening inter-regional networking and exchange between theological educators and institutions of theological education (for instance between Asia -Africa, Africa-Latin America, Europe-Africa).

### **24) Bridging the divide in terms of unequal accessibility of theological education**

We *affirm* that theological education should be accessible for all parts of the Christian family: We affirm that access to theological education be available to all segments of the Christian family, the churches in South and North, East and West, women and men, people from poor and affluent backgrounds (see categories of access to theological education as mentioned in chapter 7). The fast growing churches in the South have a right and an essential need to have better facilities for theological education.

In the face of glaring discrepancies in terms of availability and accessibility of theological education we *recommend* that adequate attention be given by churches, ecumenical partner organizations and REOs for strengthening theological education programs and institutions particularly in those areas where the enormous demand for theological education cannot be met properly at present..

## **25) Theological education between church and university settings**

We *affirm* that there are legitimate and different historical reasons for some church contexts to opt primarily for church related institutional settings of theological education and for others to opt primarily for university related institutional settings of theological education.

While each context has to be looked at within its own right we also *recommend* that churches should consider some of the following basic questions in order to justify and to decide about related priorities concerning the institutional settings of theological education as adequate and appropriate in a given context such as

- a) What kind of church-model (church vision) is informing and guiding what type of TE today?
- b) Is there a proper balance between the different types of TE in a given context?
- c) What kind of TE in a particular context is most appropriate for nurturing and inspiring a missionary church, engaged in Public Theology, social witness and global solidarity?
- d) What are the primary subjects of theological learning/target groups of theological education in a given context? For whom and with whom are students learning theology? What is - for which context - the most relevant place/institutional framework/learning context for theological education?
- e) What is the proper self-perception of an institution of theological education? Should it view itself more as a mere academic institution or more as a part of the church or how are both essential dimensions related to each other?
- f) As universities are not value-free zones, but also driven by certain implicit or explicit value systems and ideologies it needs to be asked: Are university settings offering a solid space for free and genuine academic exchange of values, ideas and uncontrolled research or are universities themselves led by business driven agendas and tend to devalue the relevance of humanities (including social and religious studies)?
- g) If in a given context (like Africa) the predominant trend is to move towards Christian Universities as the most promising and appropriate institutional context for theological education it needs to be asked: What makes a university Christian? What makes a university a Christian university? Is genuine interdenominational cooperation secured? What kind of advantages can Christian Universities offer in terms of relating TE to other disciplines and subjects like development studies, communication, health studies, management studies etc.? And what guarantees quality, academic excellence as well as spiritually sound formation in theological education in these settings today? How can Christian Universities avoid to become enclaves for Christian fundamentalism (which certainly is the opposite from what they want to stand for)?
- h) What kind of scope is offered by secular universities to provide models of theological education which safeguard the integrity and identity of Christian theology, have an openness to the dimensions of ministerial and spiritual formation and maintain a proper relationship with the existing churches in that context? To what extent do secular university contexts allow theological

education sufficient freedom not to be driven by pressures from an economy driven, mono-cultural setting of academia?

i) How are the different types of theological education if co-existing with each other in a given national or regional context related with each other and can cooperate with each other in a way which benefits all of them?

## **26) Churches support and sense of ownership for institutions of theological education**

We *affirm* that churches, mission organizations and ecumenical partners have a key responsibility for supporting and enabling high quality institutions of theological education while respecting a certain degree of autonomy in their operating and academic research. There are different models by which this sense of ownership for theological education is expressed in the different church settings. But there are also cases in which a genuine lack of support and ownership for institutions of theological education, particularly those who are supported by an interdenominational set of churches, is experienced.

Theological education not only serves the building up the church from the perspective of the reign of God, but it also creates social awareness, political discernment, social involvement, and Christian participation in transformation processes of societies. Investment in theological education is a direct investment into the social and political development and transformation of society and the raising of its educational levels. Ecumenical partners and funding agencies which focus on development projects should review their guidelines so as to give theological education projects a place and higher priority in their agenda where ever possible.

The only proper remedy against religious fundamentalism is investment in education. Lack of education and theological formation often is one of the root causes for ignorance over against other cultures, religious traditions and special social contexts. Churches which take theological education of both laity and ordained seriously and support all its different levels are better equipped to counteract trends towards religious fundamentalism and communal tensions in their own regions and worldwide.

Churches and Christians should be aware of the fact that Christianity – in different degrees, but both in the protestant, roman-catholic and orthodox traditions - had a strong historical inclination and heritage to support and nurture theological education (theological faculties often have been the centre around which secular universities later grew). But investments in theological education have gone down in a number of countries both in the West and also in the South and some churches consider theological education as only important up to the lower degree levels (BD) in order to secure input of new ministers. The abilities of Churches however to strengthen their own leadership, to prepare a new generation of well-trained theological educators and to remain attractive for younger generation of intellectuals still to a large extent depends on investments and an increased sense of ownership and responsibility of churches for higher (postgraduate) programs of theological education.

We *recommend* that churches and its agencies (development, mission and others) reconsider their priorities in terms of making more regular support available for institutions of theological education. As there does not exist any set pattern on the percentage which might be recommended to be made available for theological education in Christian churches around the world we recommend to consider an application of the UNO regulation or recommendation, that nation

states should make available at least 6% of their annual gross national product for higher education, to the principles applied in church budgeting for theological education.<sup>160</sup>

We also ask whether there is a way of strengthening theological education in those countries in which Christianity is just emerging in a way which is not repeating and imposing the same fragmented forms of denominational Christianity which were inherited from the West.

## **27) New forms of global and regional solidarity in theological education**

We affirm the ongoing obligation of the international missionary movement for developing new forms of global and regional solidarity in theological education. In the history of the missionary movement it was due to a major common effort and a marvelous act of global solidarity for funding and strengthening theological education in churches of the South that the Theological Education Fund (TEF) was founded in 1958. Many of the key theological education institutions in the South owe their existence to this program and its subsequent forms in the PTE and ETE program in the WCC. As many mainline churches in America and Western Europe face decline in membership and financial resources due to demographic reasons and also because the changing ecclesial landscape sees some new and financially very gifted churches in countries like South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and other parts of the world it should be explored whether there can be a new system of global solidarity for promoting ecumenical theological education worldwide. Time has come to *reconsider the (one-sided) international division of labor with regard to making available grants and scholarships for theological education and theological library development*. The number of applications by far outweighs the resources available for theological education in the WCC at present. It might be explored whether the WCC or other organizations should mobilize for a *new global solidarity fund for theological education* or whether it is more appropriate to establish *regional solidarity funds for ecumenical theological education* in cooperation with the regional ecumenical organizations (AACC, CCA, CLAI) which exist already in some regions (comp. South Asia Solidarity Endowment Fund for Theological Education).

One of the most important forms of developing regional ways of solidarity and networking in theological education is the establishment of a *regional association of theological schools* which now exists in many areas of the world. Their viability and relevance however is subject to some key factors which should be considered in order to avoid a devaluation and ineffectiveness of this precious instrument of cooperation in theological education (many associations of theological schools in some contexts are also dormant, non-functioning not viable or not sufficiently inclusive: Regional associations of theological schools should have

- an able and committed leadership and if possible an office which is not moving every second year;
- a discipline of regular contributions of member institutions to build up sufficient self-reliance in its budget;

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<sup>160</sup> The Sixth International Conference of Adult Education of UNESCO (CONFITEA VI) has recommended in May 2009 in Belém, Brazil among other items, that the CONFITEA V agreement should be implemented, that at least 6% of the GNP of all states should be devoted to education and the allocation to adults education and e-learning should be increased. Scientific United Nations Educational, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Harnessing the Power and Potential of Adult Learning and Education for a Viable Future: Belém Framework for Action: Preliminary Draft," in *The Sixth International Conference of Adult Education of UNESCO (CONFITEA VI)* (Belém, Brazil: UNESCO, 2009).

- a focused program in terms of achieving feasible goals in the area of contextual theological textbooks, a common curriculum development plan and a program for continued education for existing faculty;
- a deliberate strategy for correcting the imbalance in the distribution and accessibility of theological knowledge by producing and distributing new contextual theological literature in their region and between the regions;
- a system to contribute to quality assessment and enhancement in the theological training programs of its member schools;
- working relations with ecumenical partners which are helped to relate to a regional association instead of just to one theological institution in the region;
- a constituency which brings together a broad spectrum of different denominational traditions in theological schools and an inclusive range of theological colleges from diverse backgrounds.

It is *recommended* therefore that a round table of new major ecumenical partners sharing financial, human and material resources for theological education should be installed in order to facilitate international lobbying and coordination of efforts for theological education in the South.

It is also recommended that committed and joint efforts are taken to revive existing associations of theological schools to serve as an instrument for ecumenical regional cooperation, common project planning and quality enhancement in the area of theological education.

## **28) The relevance of theological education for the unity of the church**

We *affirm* that theological education is a task which is common to all Christian churches and that efforts need to be undertaken to do all in common what actually can be done in fulfilling the common Christian mandate of theological education without violating ecclesial or denominational identities in a given setting. The increasing fragmentation and denominational isolation of institutions of theological education is harmful for the very nature of its mission which is to introduce people to the nature and horizon of what it means to be the whole body of Christ in today's world.

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

We *recommend* that efforts should be taken to increase interdenominational cooperation, that synergies be sought between different denominational institutions of theological education and that wherever possible interdenominational settings of theological education will be pursued and strengthened.

## **29) New models of online-education and e-learning in theological education**

In taking up some of the deliberations on new distance-learning models of theological education (chapter 21) we *affirm* that theological education is about communicating Good News and creating

new abilities to communicate God's Gospel values in today's world. Therefore new technological achievements should be explored and proper standards for increased use of ICTs should be developed in theological education.

We *recommend* that more deliberate attention should be given to questions of theological education, communication and the use of modern ICT's such as: What kind of curricula and courses on theological education can be more easily shared with each other by being made available online or on a CD-ROM? What diversified forms of theological education in a non-residential pattern (TEE-programmes) can benefit from proper and contextualized use of the new ICTs? In some Evangelical and Pentecostal as well as many mainline colleges there is much use of modern ICTs already but a properly developed ethics of modern communication means for theological education still is missing in most settings.

### **30) Financial viability of theological education**

After the famous world study on Financial Viability in theological education which was prepared by Herbert Fritz Zorn in 1975<sup>161</sup> there doesn't seem to have been any major effort undertaken in terms of a comprehensive study of this strategic issue, although in each theological college in the South the continuing urgency and challenge of financial stewardship and sustainability are felt annually and even more dramatically than before as a result of the Global Financial Meltdown in 2008.<sup>162</sup>

We *affirm* that churches in cooperation with theological college leadership need to urgently develop an improved strategy for financial viability of theological education and to develop some common regional standards of financial viability for theological colleges in the Southern hemisphere.

How to finance theological education in the South? This is a question which is of vital importance for the future of World Christianity. Studies show that very deep problems in this regard are also known in the North<sup>163</sup>:

A recent report on Americans graduating from a study of four-year liberal arts colleges is shocking in that it shows a very high percent of graduates joining the work force [that is, if they could land a job!] with a big student loan to pay up. The 'student loan' phenomenon is so serious that the report had used *bankrupt BAs* to emphasize its point. The same point applies equally to graduates from medical schools. It is estimated that a new graduate from most medical schools in America owes the bank US\$150,000. It is thus not a surprise that many new seminary graduates, upon graduation from seminary, owe their banks \$30,000 on the average.

Education, whether liberal arts or medical, or theological, is expensive world-wide. Graduates from medical schools can expect to earn \$100,000 p.a. after their three-year residence following acquisition of M.D. This will give them the financial clout to pay up their loans.

Theological Seminary graduates (in the US) tend to look for churches that could pay them well enough, to enable them to pay back their loans. Inter alia, this means that churches which are unable to put together an

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<sup>161</sup> Herbert M. Zorn, *Viability in Context : A Study of the Financial Viability of Theological Education in the Third World, Seedbed or Sheltered Garden?* (Bromley: Theological Education Fund, 1975).

<sup>162</sup> Yeow Choo Lak, *The Financial Viability of Theological Formation*, ed. J. S. Pobee and World Council of Churches, *Towards Viable Theological Education: Ecumenical Imperative, Catalyst of Renewal* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997). 94.

<sup>163</sup> The following examples are quoted from an additional paper made available for the study group from Cheow Lak.



average of \$60,000 p.a. cannot hope to call a pastor. It also means that many small and rural churches are left without a pastor, forcing many of them to 'join forces' to invite a minister to pastor two or three churches.

Many Third World seminaries have to raise funds to feed and educate their students who do not necessarily face a steady future employment in the church.

It has been frequently stated<sup>164</sup> that it is contextually inappropriate when the commonly used 'professionally-paid' ministry model was blindly applied to the Long House Churches in East Malaysia. The flaw with applying the 'professionally-paid' ministry model in an essentially non-cash society was high-lighted when the money from the West used to pay the pastors dried up. If only this was the only incident in the history of theological education in Protestant churches.

Today, many rural churches, whether in the scenic Hawaiian islands or in the USA cannot afford any more to have their own pastor and have fewer and fewer worshippers on Sundays, because they cannot afford to pay some \$60,000 p.a. to have a "kahu" (Pastor in Hawaii). Many churches in rural settings (like The United Church of Christ, USA) have therefore decided to open for multiple tracks for ordination. The usual, traditional track known as 4/3, i.e. four years of college education, topped off with 3 years of seminary training [the traditional BA, M Div track] is still there and the one most favored. The second track is for the natural church leaders to do part time theological education classes for at least two years and then seek ordination, with five years of mentoring after ordination. The third track is for the natural church leaders to do seven years of mentoring and then seek ordination. Presumably, ordinands from tracks two and three would settle for less than the normal salary a pastor receives, making it possible also for smaller churches to call pastors.

While this can reduce the costs involved for theological education still the question remains how to develop a viable and sound concept for funding theological colleges and programmes run in churches of the South.

We *recommend* therefore that a major international study is done on future key aspects of financial viability of theological education both in the North and in the South.

The kind of thumb rule from the past that one third of the costs should come from the supporting churches of a college, one third from income generating resources of an institution of theological education and one third from partner institutions in the global network in many places has proved helpful, but also did not materialize in many places. It is increasingly difficult to financially maintain a proper institution of theological education as a) funds from the West are dwindling, b) supporting churches are struggling financially due to increased costs caused by global economic crisis and c) an increasing number of students come without having any sufficient funds to contribute. Perhaps a new discipline needs to be explored by which each parish should give an annual contribution for theological education in order to have this task of the church firmly rooted into the responsibility and consciousness of local Christian communities. There are examples of churches (for instance in the Baptist tradition), in which 25% of all donations and pledges received for Christian mission regularly are going to projects of theological education. What would this imply for the budget policies of mission agencies and churches all over the world?

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<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

### **31) Innovative models of engaging with persons of other faiths through theological education**

We *affirm* that engaging with people of other faiths is an essential component in theological education. his engagement needs to take seriously dialogue in all its forms. We draw attention to the often used typology which suggests that there are at least four forms of dialogue:

- a) the dialogue of life, where people naturally relate to each other across religious boundaries in the course of their daily living;
- b) social dialogue, where people of various faiths collaborate with one another in the cause of peace and justice;
- c) intellectual dialogue, developing a dialogue which can explore different beliefs and their claims to truth;
- d) spiritual dialogue, where people open themselves to the force of one another's religious experiences.

We also affirm:

"Dialogue does not require people to relinquish or alter their beliefs before entering into it; on the contrary, genuine dialogue demands that each partner brings to it the fullness of themselves and the tradition in which they stand. As they grow in mutual understanding they will be able to share more and more of what they bring with the other. Inevitably, both partners to the dialogue will be affected and changed by this process, for it is a mutual sharing." ('The Way of Dialogue' ,Lambeth Conference 1998)

In order to engage appropriately in such dialogue Christians, both laity and clergy, need to be well-trained and secure in their understanding of their own Christian tradition and theology. We are aware of the growing importance (and number) of highly equipped and well-funded Muslim institutions of higher and academic education worldwide, and believe that it is vital for the Christian family not to renounce its own tradition of a strong commitment to higher theological education. Although Christians need to be equipped to engage in dialogue with people of all world faiths – as well as the 'faith' of secularism - we believe that given the contemporary world situation it is vital for Christians to be able to engage constructively and confidently with Muslims. The future of Christian-Muslim dialogue needs well-educated pastors and well-trained lecturers of theology and religions in institutions of theological education. The future of many Christian minority churches in Muslim countries also depends to a considerable extent on the educational level of their leadership and their ability to enter into qualified dialogue with Muslim neighbours. We also believe, given both the tragedy but also the renewal of Christian-Jewish relations during the past 100 years, that theological education needs to encourage exploration of the unique aspects of the Christian-Jewish relationship.

We therefore recommend that a collection of innovative models and curriculum proposals for dialogue with people of other faiths should be made available on the internet site of ETE and related bodies.

### **32) Diversity of human languages and the dominance of English in global theological education**

We *affirm* that the investment in a variety of languages for theological education is an essential prerequisite for achieving *unity in diversity* in world Christianity. All churches are challenged to develop a balance between the need for becoming open to the challenges of the globalized world and the need for vital interaction with and inculturation in the local cultures in their own context. All churches are challenged to become “glocal” in their own identity and in their capacities for dialogue. The appropriate means to assist in this process is theological education. But becoming “glocal” necessarily entails the development of a counter-balance to one-sided dependency on English language in theological education. The plea of Edinburgh 1910 to develop a plurified concept of theological education in the vernacular still is not sufficiently answered and fulfilled.

Theological Education in multi-lingual settings is an issue which demands more attention. What does it mean and imply when theological education and teaching take place in a different language than the language which is demanded in communicating with people in the actual pastoral ministry situations? There are more than a few cases in which for a number of reasons the language of theological learning and instruction is different from the language settings in which later pastoral ministry, counseling and Christian education take place (for instance Northern Theological Seminary of the United Church of South Africa in Pretoria where teaching language is English, but pastoral ministry situations are in Zulu, Xhosa or Sotho; or NEST in Beirut, Lebanon, where teaching is in English, but pastoral ministry situations are in Arabic, Syriac or other languages; or UTC Bangalore, again teaching language in English, but pastoral ministry situations in Kannada or other Indian vernacular languages; or theological education in Spanish language in Latin American countries where pastoral ministry is in Quechua or other indigenous languages).

We therefore *recommend* that deliberate efforts will be taken to strengthen non-Anglo-Saxon teaching resources, curriculum developments and theological publications for theological education. The multi-lingual plurality of human communities and Christian churches will be strengthened and respected the more theological education is not restricted to a mono-lingual setting, but takes place in languages which are close to the communities the churches serve.

## **IV) Resources**

### **33) Selected new websites of important networks of theological education and research**

#### **World Conference of Associations of Theological Schools (WOCATI)**

<http://wocati.oikoumene.org/>

#### **International Network in Advanced Theological Education (INATE) Oslo**

##### **Websites:**

[www.tf.uio.no/masternetwork/inate/networkinstitutions.html](http://www.tf.uio.no/masternetwork/inate/networkinstitutions.html)

[www.inateonline.org](http://www.inateonline.org)

[www.tf.uio.no/masternetwork/inate/](http://www.tf.uio.no/masternetwork/inate/)

#### **International Association of Mission Studies (IAMS)**

<http://www.missionstudies.org/>

**Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT)**

<http://www.eatwot.org/>

**The Anglican Communion Website on Theological Education**

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/>

**The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry/United Methodist Church**

[http://www.gbhem.org/site/c.lsKSL3POLvF/b.3463035/k.935B/Higher\\_Education.htm](http://www.gbhem.org/site/c.lsKSL3POLvF/b.3463035/k.935B/Higher_Education.htm)

**International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE)**

<http://www.icete-edu.org/>

<http://www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/icete.htm>

**World Evangelical Theological Institute Association**

<http://www.wetia.org/>

**Theological Education in Africa - Evangelical Network**

<http://www.theoledafrica.org>

**Caribbean Evangelical Theological Association (CETA)**

<http://www.cetaweb.info/>

**United Board for Higher Christian Education in Asia**

<http://www.unitedboard.org/>

**International Baptist Theological Seminary of the European Baptist Federation**

<http://www.ibts.eu/>

**ABWE/CU Commission on International Theological Education, Cornerstone Grand Rapids, US**

[http://www.abwe.org/news/press\\_releases/CU\\_commission.asp](http://www.abwe.org/news/press_releases/CU_commission.asp)

**Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia**

<http://www.ftesea.org/>

**Institute for International Theological Education**

<http://www.iitheoed.com/>

*Association of Evangelicals in Africa*

<http://www.aeafrica.org/commissions/atcec.htm>

**European Pentecostal Theological Association**

<http://www.eptaonline.com/>

**European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism**

<http://www.glopent.net/>

**Asia Pacific Theological Association . Network of Pentecostal/Charismatic Schools**

<http://www.apta-schools.org/>

**Overseas Council Advancing Christian Leaders**

<http://www.overseas.org/default.aspx>

**International Association for the Promotion of Higher Christian Education**

<http://www.iapche.org/>

**Center for the Study of Christianity in Asia (CSCA)**

<http://www.ttc.edu.sg/csc/csc.htm>

**World Evangelical Theological Institute Association**

<http://www.wetia.org/>

**34) Major regional associations of theological education**

**Africa**

Association des Institutions d'Enseignement Théologique en Afrique Occidentale (AIETA)

Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa (ATIEA)

Association of Theological Institutions in Southern and Central Africa (ATISCA)

West African Association of Theological Schools (WAATI)

**Asia**

Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC)

<http://www.senateofseramporecollege.org/>

Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia (ATESEA)

<http://www.atesea.org/>

Association of Theological Schools in Myanmar, Yangon

Association of Theological Schools in Bangladesh

The Association of Theological Schools in Indonesia

Perhimpunan Sekolah-Sekolah Teologi di Indonesia (PERSETIA)

<http://www.persetia.org/>

**Eastern and Central Europe**

Association of Theological and Religious Educator in Eastern Europe (ARTEEE)

<http://www.arteee.ru>

**Pacific**

South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS)

<http://www.spats.org.fj>

New Zealand Association of Theological Schools (NZATS)

<http://www.nzats.godzone.net.nz>

**Australia**

Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools (ANZATS)

<http://www.anzats.edu.au>

Melanesian Association of Theological Schools (MATS)

**Caribbean**

Caribbean Association of Theological Schools (CATS)

<http://www.wocati.org/cats.html>

**Middle East**

Association of Theological Schools in the Middle East (ATIME)

**Latin America**

South American Association of Theological Schools  
Asociacion de Seminarios e Instituciones Teologicas (ASIT)  
<http://www.asit.org.ar/>

Latin America Association of Theological Education Institutions  
Asociación Latinoamericana de Instituciones de Educacion Teologica (ALIET)

Associacao de Seminarios Teologicos Evangelicos (ASTE)  
<http://www.aste.org.br/>

Latin America and Caribbean Community of Ecumenical Theological Education  
Comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuménica Latinoamericana y Caribe (CETELA)  
<http://www.cetela.com.br>  
[www.est.com.br/cetela/index.htm](http://www.est.com.br/cetela/index.htm)

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