

CHALLENGES FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE 21st CENTURY

- Based on the book: *Theological Education in Contemporary Africa*
- Edited by Grant Le Marquand and Joseph D. Galgalo
- Printed in Eldoret, Kenya. 2004
- Papers from the Limuru Consultation on Theological Education at St Paul's United Theological College in Nairobi

NEED ORIENTATED CURRICULA

Click to edit Master subtitle style

**With special reference
to the situation in sub-
Saharan Africa**

START WITH THE NEEDS OF THE LEARNER

- The curriculum should be developed *“from the starting point of the needs of the learner, irrespective of the content and boundaries of existing subjects”* (Dewey, 1927:74)

THE CHALLENGE OF SPIRITUAL FORMING

- *REFLECTION:*
- *Where is the emphasis given during training? Is it in the intellectual training or in the spiritual and character building? Is it in both?*

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

- “Quite often, theological colleges take the spiritual maturity of their students for granted.”
- - Sammy Githuku
- Many students are still infants in spiritual and life issues
- Theological colleges should incorporate into the programme of studies courses and experiences in which spiritual formation of the students is enhanced

Encourage spiritual maturity

- Through Bible study
- Teaching on the habits of Christian life
- Practical spiritual work
- Life in prayer

- “In the end the churches may find out that they have ordained candidates who during their years of training did not grow to the maturity of a minister of Jesus Christ” - Sammy Githuku

TRAINING OF LAY CHURCH WORKERS

- Theological Institutes should admit and train lay men and women who have a call to serve the church in ministries other than the ordained ministry.
- These people can be of good use in the local churches after completion of courses.
- They will bring the realities of the world into theological colleges

URBAN MISSIONS

- The majority of theological institutes are more rural orientated – this should change
- Urban missions should be part of curriculum – here life is more complex, people are more busy, more individualistic.
- People are crowded in slums and use less their mother tongue

Curricula should be more relevant to needs

- Courses relevant to the needs of the churches should get priority
- Courses should be evaluated for their relevance
- Before a new course is introduced it should be evaluated carefully for its relevancy

NEW COURSES SHOULD INCLUDE:

- Theology of Development,
- Crises Management,
- Peace and Reconciliation,
- Law,
- Mission and Evangelism,
- Elementary Accountancy,
- Ministry to the poor,
- Ministry in the context of HIV/AIDS

RELEVANT RESEARCH

- Theological Colleges and churches should work closely together to establish the needs of the churches
- Students should do research and write dissertations on relevant topics for the church

THE CHALLENGE OF BECOMING AN UNIVERSITY

- This is a good idea but if our institutions would like to remain Christian, the Theology Department must remain central.
- Students of other faculties bring with them other standards of behaviour. Proper guidelines should be in place.

THE COST OF EDUCATION

- The cost of theological education is high and this effect theological education
- Some students live outside campus in poor conditions
- Good practical work also needs money – it should be budgeted for
- A year of “In-ministry” training is a good idea if funds are available

RESIDENTIAL AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

- The theological institutes that form part of NetACT follows a traditional, onsite residential system of education
- Here, traditionally, the lecturer is the library and the authoritative source of all knowledge and information. The student is a more passive recipient of this information

THE DRAWBACK OF TRADITIONAL SYSTEM

- The major drawback of the traditional system is that it limits access to theological education to only a few selected people – this in a time when churches in sub-Saharan Africa need more trained leaders.

DISTANCE LEARNING

- Distance learning refers to learning while at a distance from one's lecturer – usually with the help of pre-recorded or packaged materials
- Distance education systems have been established to deal with increasing educational needs that cannot be met by traditional systems

CORRESPONDENCE STUDIES

- This form of learning uses printed materials that may be supported by tape recordings, videos, computer use etc.
- This has been developed into what have become known as Virtual Universities

AFRICA VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY (AVU)

- The mission of the AVU is to use the power of modern information technology to increase access to educational resources throughout Sub-Saharan Africa
- - Magdallen Juma

OPEN LEARNING

- Open learning refers to opening up learning opportunities to a wider range of people enabling them to learn more productively
- Derek Rowntree's definition:
“Arrangements to enable people to learn at the time, place and space which satisfies their circumstances and requirements.”

Theological Education by Extension programmes

- TEE is already playing an important role
- Colleges should integrate TEE courses into their curricula
- ***REFLECTION***

Colleges with TEE to inform others of the way they are working together

INTERNET AND E MAILS

- Internet has revolutionized higher education in many ways
- This help the student to learn at his pace and according to his needs.
- The teacher plays now more the role of interpreter, guide and course developer.

AFRICA NEEDS MORE TRAINED CHRISTIANS

- *“The only way to correct this situation is for theological education to supplement programmes that are being offered through residential institutions to increase their enrolment and the number of graduates released each year to serve in the growing church.” - Godfrey Nguru*

Contextualisation of Theology

- Contextual realities that should receive attention in curricula:
- Neo-colonialism and exploitation
- Dictatorial and oppressive governance
- Poverty
- Social inequality and injustice
- Hunger and diseases – especially HIV and Aids

CRITICAL AFRICAN THEOLOGY

- The pertinent question should always be: “How best the gospel message may be incarnated into Africa”
- Curricula should take notice of South African Black Theology and the African liberation theology
- Curricula should reflect racism, tribalism, oppression, injustice, poverty etc.

Western theological models

- Teaching of theology in Africa continues to be a perpetuation of western theological models. The biggest problem is the hermeneutical gap – a gulf between orthodoxy and orthopraxis and a problem to integrate doctrines into the thought system of the African recipients.
- – Joseph D. Galgalo

RE-WRITE CURRICULA

- This is all the more reason for us to consider the re-writing of curricula, the review of our theological methods and the way we teach theology in Africa to be urgent tasks. It is of little comfort to possess the necessary theoretical knowledge regarding sound doctrine when such knowledge cannot be brought to bear on our worship, life and faith, and everyday living.

■ – Joseph D. Galgalo

A CURRICULUM THAT EXPLORES THE CAUSES

- The curriculum should begin by exploring the causes of pain and suffering in the lives of our people and seeks to identify what has brought fullness of life to people in the midst of destruction and death. - Nyambura J. Njoroge
- The curriculum should take seriously the “pedagogy of the oppressed” and the “education for a critical consciousness”
– Paulo Freire

PASTORAL THEOLOGY

- Given the dysfunctional reality of so many family lives in Africa, pastoral theology should be more developed.
- - Polygamous relations
- - Single-parent homes
- - Absent fathers
- - Sexual abuse
- - Youth and children

OTHER AREAS THAT NEED ATTENTION

- Relations between rich and poor
- Young and old
- Leaders and followers
- Literate and non-literate
- Ordained and non-ordained
- Taboos
- Domestic violence
- Rights of women and children

TRIBALISM AND RACISM

- Curricula should not shy away from tribalism and racism that entered also the church
- Pastoral theology must lead to self-awareness and recognition that tribalism and racism are sins that call for repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and healing

OTHER AREAS THAT NEED ATTENTION

- Ecumenism
- The women's movements
- Liberation movements
- African Traditional Religion
- Islam and other faith communities
- Studies that nurture peace, reconciliation, justice, dismantling a culture of violence, etc
- Human rights

HIV and Aids and other challenges

- *I am begging for a theology that will help us ask critical questions about our inactivity of wrongdoing; a theology that will help the child, youth, women and man in the pew and streets to cultivate a dialogue that will lead to life-giving action in the midst of suffering, misery and death - Musa W. Dube*

NetACT and HIV and Aids

- The Curriculum proposals of the NetACT workshops should be taken seriously
- *Reflection*
- Are your institution aware of these proposals?
- Have your institution started implementing it?

APPEAL

- We should be relevant in our curricula. Things not relevant should go or get less attention
- Curricula should regularly be revised to see if we are still addressing the needs of the students, the church and the community that we serve