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Improving Christian Education in Churches and Colleges

The five articles in this issue of AJET deal with improving Christian education in the Church or improving theological education in Christian Bible Colleges, seminaries, and universities.

In our first article Mary Mwangi dips into Christianity's past to discern how Augustine's educational theories and practices could be used to increase the quality of Christian education in the Church in Africa. Augustine's respect and concern for his students could be especially relevant in African universities wherever administration and students have fallen into an adversarial relationship. Student strikes and protests in public universities could spill over into Christian institutions if students and administration/faculty fail to trust and respect one another.

Joseph Bangura also looks to the past, but more recently and locally. He traces the development of Evangelical theological education in his native Sierra Leone, analyses its current models (university, denominational, and charismatic), discusses the factors that affect its delivery (the emergence of Charismatic Christianity, the need for community development and social transformation, and the need for contextual theology and cultural relevance), and raises questions that Evangelical theological education needs to address in order to be effective and faithful: is its content Biblical enough; is it sufficiently relevant; is it broad enough to deal with social issues; is it cooperative enough?

Benjamin Musyoka has two articles in this issue. The first one deals with how institutions that provide Christian higher education in Africa can achieve greater financial sustainability. Independently, this article picks up one of Bangura's issues – is Evangelical theological education cooperative enough? Among the several other strategies for financial sustainability, Musyoka suggests Christian schools should establish strategic alliances with one another to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and to facilitate the sharing of scarce and valuable resources.

Janice Rasmussen's qualitative study of how non-Kenyan students at Africa International University change offers a glimpse into the transforming lives of specific students from Tanzania, Malawi, Nigeria, South Sudan, the USA, the DRC, Canada, and Ethiopia. These students reported many changes including broadened worldviews, added knowledge, developed skills, and changed attitudes. She uses the theories of several educationalists to evaluate the changes she examines.

Benjamin Musyoka's second article is also about the process of change, in this case, the sticky question of the integration of the Christian faith with learning in Christian higher education. He examines the practicalities of the issue from a philosophical and theological point of view.

Contributors to AJET 34.2 2015

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Augustine's Educational Theories and Practices and Church Education Today

By Mary Mwangi

Abstract

This paper examines Augustine's educational views and practices to discover how these might impact the modern church's educational ministries. First, is a brief biography of his life, including his early years and conversion. Next is an overview of the context in which he ministered that gives insight into the reasons for some of his views. The bulk of the paper discusses his views and practices in his educational work as a catechist. The last portion reflects on what we can gain from these observations, and how they might influence education of believers today.

Introduction

In Biblical history God gave the ability to teach and inspire faith in Him to men like Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Daniel, Paul. The history of the early church includes the contributions of Tertullian, Origen, Ambrose, Cyril, and John Chrysostom to the development of the church. These leaders influenced doctrine in varying degrees, not only in their lifetime but also in subsequent generations.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430) rose a step higher than many great church leaders of the patristic period. He is mentioned almost without fail anytime church history in the fourth century onwards is discussed. He is described as a great church teacher,[1] the greatest Latin father,[2] the greatest thinker of the post-Nicene Christian fathers,[3] one of the leading Western church fathers as well as one of the most learned, noble, and acclaimed leaders of the early church,[4] one of the most creative minds in the history of Christian theology,[5] the greatest Latin theologian, and the towering figure of Christendom's first 750 years.[6]

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[1] "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work," in *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustine, With a Sketch of His Life and Work,* vol. 1 of *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 3.

[2] Joseph F. Kelly, *The World of the Early Christians: Message of the Fathers of the Church,* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 200.

[3] James A. Davies, "Augustine," in *The Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education,* ed. Michael J. Anthony (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 58.

[4] Michael J. Anthony and Warren S. Benson, *Exploring the History & Philosophy of Christian Education: Principles for the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2003), 117.

[5] Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985), 339.

[6] Gordon R., Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, vol.1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 49.

Augustine spent most of his adult life as a catechist and wrote extensively about what he taught and thought about the Christian faith. These writings were momentous enough to impact the teaching ministry of the church in his day and in succeeding generations.[7] Harmless, for example, holds that Augustine's treatise *On Catechizing the Uninstructed* "has helped to shape the pedagogy and programs of influential Christian educators … again and again, educators have been struck by Augustine's pedagogical acumen and psychological sensitivity."[8]

Background

Augustine was born in 354 in Thagaste, North Africa, to his pagan father, Patricius, and Christian mother, Monica. He had a brother and two sisters. He was educated in grammar and rhetoric, and studied law in Carthage. In his early career he taught rhetoric at Carthage, Rome, and Milan. He was brought up as a Christian, and was enrolled as a catechumen while a child. At the age of nineteen, in his quest for knowledge, he joined the proscribed sect of the Manachees, "a gnostic sect that promised great wisdom to its followers."[9] He was teaching in Milan when he was exposed to the teaching of Ambrose, bishop of Milan, which precipitated his conversion to Christianity in 386. Schaff writes a beautiful description of this conversion. It "made him an incalculable blessing to the whole Christian world, and brought even the sins and errors of his youth into the service of the truth," and "if ever there was a thorough and fruitful conversion, next to that of Paul on the way to Damascus, it was that of Augustine."[10]

Ambrose baptized Augustine in Milan in 387, in the company of his friend Alypius and his natural son Adeodatus. Shortly after, while on their journey back home, his beloved mother, Monica died on the way to Ostia. On arriving back in Africa, he spent three years in contemplative and literary retreat. Against his will, but in submission to the voice of the people and the will of God, he was ordained as a priest in 391 and became bishop of Hippo in 395, where he succeeded bishop Valerius in 396. He served in the position of bishop of Hippo until his death at the age of seventy-six, in 430. Out of his humble monastic community went forth ten bishops and many lower clergy. Also, he left a rich library that he donated to the church. His writings not only impacted the church, but also

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[7] Davies, "Augustine," 58; Schaff, "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work," 3*;* Harold W. Burgess, *Models of Religious Education: Theory and Practice in Historical and Contemporary Perspective* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 2001), 41-42.

[8] William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate,* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 108.

[9] Anthony and Benson, *Exploring the History & Philosophy of CE,* 117.

[10] Schaff, "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work," 4.

Western philosophical and psychological thought.[11] It is worth noting that, "in many conflicts, including the Reformation, both sides could claim his patronage, appealing to selected facets of his ever-shifting mind."[12] Erickson asserts that Augustine "developed a synthesis of Platonic philosophy and theology (*The City of God*) which in many ways dominated theology for more than eight hundred years."[13]

The Context of the Church in the Fourth Century

In the fourth and fifth centuries, the church experienced major shifts both within and in regard to the surrounding culture. First, the church ceased being a minority group persecuted and maligned by the state. Beginning with Constantine's reign in 306, the church enjoyed state protection, could own properties, provided support for the poor and underprivileged, and its bishops were given various community responsibilities. Church proselytizing was unrestrained.

Second, many people sought association with the church, not because they had experienced conversion, but because the publicity, state favors and support, and the atmosphere of general goodwill attracted many people from every social strata to the church. But the large numbers of "converts" presented a problem for the clergy. They were unclear about how to process their admission into the church. Previously, admission into the church was consciously and systematically done, culminating in baptism. It took two to three years of concerted instruction and severe scrutiny, and admission was generally restricted to adults, or those who had reached the age of discretion. But in time, Christian parents enrolled their children as catechumens. The following is Dujarier's perception:

> The situation had certainly changed with respect to the preceding century. If, despite the great amount of patristic literature we have from the fourth century, we have so few witnesses to a serious admission examination for the catechumenate, it is because, from this time on, the rite was conferred too readily. It was used as a lure, while it should have sanctioned a conversion![14]

However, the period of faith formation was reinvented as the Lent - when pre-baptismal instruction was provided.

Third, doctrinal disputes multiplied so catechists devoted much time and care to address doctrinal issues.[15] Also, this century marked the

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[11] "St. Augustine of Hippo," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* ed. F. L. Cross, E. A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 108-110*.*
[12] D. F. Wright, "Augustine of Hippo," in *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church,* ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 88.
[13] Erickson, *Christian Theology,* 60.
[14] Michel Dujarier, *A History of the Catechumenate: The First Six Centuries* (New York: Sadlier, 1979), 94.
[15] Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate,* 54.

beginning of councils to deliberate on universal doctrinal matters affecting the church, the first being the council of Nicaea in 325.

Four, there was a marked increase in the number of well-educated Christian thinkers who gave of themselves to teach catechumens and neophytes. The Fourth century especially was marked by a significant theological and intellectual force: Hilary of Poitiers (ca. 315-365) on the Trinity; Ambrose of Milan's exegetical work on the church; Jerome's (ca. 342-420) Latin translation of the Bible and composition of commentaries; Sulpicius Severus' (ca. 360-425) monastic manifesto; Paulinus of Nola (ca. 353-431) religious poetry; and then there is Augustine who began his Christian literary work in the 380s.[16] The teachings of heretics also became widespread. The Donatists, the Manichees, and the Pelagians, were but a few who taught false doctrines in Augustine's day. The burden of combating heresies weighed heavily upon those engaged in biblical teaching.[17]

Five, in regard to spiritual sensitivity, when the church grew in influence and wealth those who preached against Christians' attachment to the world became uncomfortable. Some chose to disassociate themselves from the pleasures of the world by retreating from it. This marked the beginning of hermits and monks. Initially individuals went off alone, but by about 320, Pachominus established communal monastic living. This became the preferred way of isolating one's self from the world.

These form the context within which Augustine came to the faith and the ministry of a catechist. Following his ordination, Augustine lived a monastic life in Thagaste. Later he founded a monastery near Hippo. He had to wrestle with how to: (1) admit the many people who flooded the church, (2) provide the teaching to ground both genuine and uncommitted affiliates, (3) address unprecedented doctrinal and heretical issues in an effective manner. This next section highlights some of the positions he developed to be effective as a catechist.

Augustine's Views and Practices

Most of Augustines' views are taken from three of his treatises. (1) *The Enchiridion*, also called the *Handbook*, which he wrote to Laurentius shortly after 420. Laurentius was probably a deacon or layman from Rome who requested a handbook with instructions on worship and doctrine. (2) *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed*. This was a response (ca. 406) to Deogratias, a friend, presbyter, and fellow catechist who asked for

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[16] Kelly, *The World of the Early Christians,* 200.

[17] Augustine, *Enchiridion*, trans. J. F. Shaw, in *New Advent,* ed. Kevin Knight, 2009 ed. (2009a), 4. http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1302.htm (accessed November 8, 2013).

guidance on the best method to catechize the uninstructed. (3) *A Sermon to the Catechumens on the Creed* was part of Augustine's instruction in which he expounded the tenets of the faith contained in the creed.

Augustine viewed the Scriptures as authoritative and as the content to be learnt. He believed and defended the verbal inspiration of canonical Scripture.[18] Augustine said:

> I have learnt to yield this respect and honor only to the canonical books of Scripture: of these alone do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error. And if in these writings I am perplexed by anything which appears to me opposed to truth, I do not hesitate to suppose that either the manuscript is faulty, or the translator has not caught the meaning of what was said, or I myself have failed to understand it.[19]

Outler says, "it was in Scriptures that, first and last Augustine found the focus of his religious authority."[20] To do this effectively, Augustine studied the Scriptures routinely[21] for his own edification. He was very conversant with the contents of the Bible. Based on what is known from his writings, sermons, and other interactions, and bearing in mind that he never used sermon notes but spoke from what welled up from his heart following prayer and time in the Word, Harmless says he may have committed most of the Bible to memory.[22] In turn, the Scriptures are what he presented to his students, and Scriptures were the catechumenates' textbook. His commitment to the truth in the Scriptures led him to revise his earlier writings to correct any opinions that seemed incorrect when compared with his more mature understanding.[23]

Augustine viewed sermons as a joint inquiry into the Bible, a venture shared by the catechist and his students. He felt he and other catechizers were merely vessels, through whom God ministered, so that students heard God through the catechizer because in essence, the teacher was ultimately God himself. He urged Deogratias, for instance, that when teaching, he should pray that God may speak through him so that the

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[18] Lewis and Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, vol.1, 136.

[19] Augustine, *Letter 82*, trans. J. G. Cunningham, in *New Advent,* ed. Kevin Knight, 2009 ed. (2009d),1.3. http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102082.htm (accessed November 10, 2013).

[20] Albert C. Outler, trans. & ed., *Augustine: Confessions and Enchiridion*, vol. 7 of *The Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1955), 13.

[21] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 431.

[22] Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate,* 165.

[23] Schaff, "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work," 12.

student receives God's message through the human teacher.[24] Augustine was very clear on who was to get the glory should the student begin to notice a change in his moral qualities and knowledge - not the catechist, but God, who loved the catechumen, authored the Word, and spoke it through the catechist.[25]

Augustine valued his students immensely. As they came seeking, whether from genuine or pretentious motivation as was common in his day, Augustine would not turn them away. He always entertained the possibility of influencing the inquirer in the direction of salvation. If the motive of the inquirer was found to be deceitful, Augustine recognized that the catechizer could not know the point at which a true change of heart would take place. Therefore, he advised catechizers to "deal with him [inquirer] in such a manner that this wish may be made to arise within him, even should it not be at present," at the time.[26] The approach was not to be an open attack on nominalism, but in order to isolate the best ministry approach to that person. Closely related was his view of divine involvement which often prompted the inquirers to seek help. Augustine believed that, "very rarely, no, never does it happen that any one comes to us with the desire to become a Christian who has not been struck by some fear of God."[27] He acknowledged that the inquirer may be stirred by either fear of judgment, dreams, or miracles, but behind these God drawing the person to Himself. He felt the role of the catechist was to recognize those events as stepping stones through which the inquirer was to be guided to the more trustworthy foundation for establishing faith, the Scriptures. But Augustine did not believe in basing one's faith on miracles and dreams. He viewed miracles as signs that God used to draw the person's attention, but ultimately, the Scriptures pointed to the more superior pathway, that of hoping in and trusting the invisible. In regard to dreams, he felt a conversion decision was one to be made consciously, not in one's sleep, but based on understanding the Word of God.

Augustine was always cognizant of the possibility of influencing not only the first time inquirers, but also the unconverted who mixed with the believers in church activities. Such people often had ulterior motives such as gaining favors, or a spouse, or even with the aim of tempting and deceiving the believers. His opinion was that God's purpose was confirming,

> the faith and prudence of the elect by means of perverseness of these others while at the same time He also takes account of the fact that many

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[24] Augustine, *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed,* trans. S. D. F. Salmond, in *New Advent,* ed. Kevin Knight, 2009 ed. (2009b), 11.16. http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1303.htm (accessed November 10, 2013).

[25] Augustine, *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed,* 2009b, 7.11.

[26] Augustine, *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed,* 2009b, 5.9.

[27] Augustine, *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed,* 2009b, 5.9.

of their number make an advance, and are converted to the doing of the good pleasure of God with a great impetus, when led to take pity upon their own souls. … many are brought by the same patience of the Almighty to the most wholesome pain of repentance. Until that is effected, they are made the means of exercising not only the forbearance, but also the compassion of those who are already holding by the right way.[28]

To Augustine the inquirers' needs came first. Their comfort and comprehension ranked high in his teaching priorities. He instructs Deogratias:

whenever we observe signs of weariness on the part of the hearer, to offer him the liberty of being seated; nay more, we should urge him by all means to sit down, and we ought to drop some remark calculated at once to refresh him and to banish from his mind any anxiety which may have chanced to break in upon him and draw off his attention.[29]

Augustine also terminated his sermons if he sensed genuine fatigue in his hearers.[30] He also believed that the catechist should assess his students' understanding. If a student did not seem to understand what was taught, then he believed "it becomes our duty in our discourse to make trial of all things which may be of any avail in stirring him up and drawing him forth as it were from his place of concealment."[31] His discourses are therefore characterized by different explanations of the same concept, repetitions, and illustrations that use contextual experiences to ensure his students understood what was taught. Augustine recognized that students came from varying backgrounds with different abilities and so needed to be handled according to their individual differences. Those who had a liberal education should to be recognized for what they knew but their knowledge must be assessed so that wrong doctrine would not be affirmed. Those who came with superior abilities in grammar and professional speaking should be instructed on Christian humility and on the need to accommodate those who usually excelled in pursuing holiness, but had less education. On the other hand, the person who came with little or no education must be given a more detailed explanation of the topic under discussion. Relevant approaches prevented beginning students from despising what they were taught.[32] When teaching the underprivileged, the catechist must follow Jesus' example. Jesus emptied himself so he could communicate with human beings.

Augustine taught from a type of curriculum. He did not call it thus but he had a clear idea of the systematic instructions that those who came to the church needed to hear. He held that students should be taught to

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[28] Augustine, *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed,* 2009b, 25.48.

[29] Augustine, *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed,* 2009b, 13.19.

[30] Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate,* 167.

[31] Augustine, *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed,* 2009b, 13.18.

[32] Augustine, *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed,* 2009b, 9.13.

understand the message of the Bible from creation to the present by focusing on the most significant biblical facts, dwelling on them long enough to "open them out to vision, and present them to the minds of the hearer as things to be examined and admired."[33] It was important that the seeker understand the pivotal events in world history, and the meanings these events carried. This would focus the students' energies on what was really important, and also avoid needlessly exhausting or confusing them.

Augustine felt the creed was indispensable in helping *competentes* (baptismal candidates) and the faithful (those already baptized) to combat heresies.[34] To him the creed was a compilation of fundamental elements of biblical faith. These truths should be understood and believed.[35] He started by repeating from memory, and then he taught it to them phrase by phrase, explaining each of the tenets. He also gave additional material for each phrase, so that these phrases served as subheadings in his instruction. His goal was that they understand it well enough to firm up their identity in the orthodox Christian faith and to combat conflicting religious views. He also required the *competentes* to repeat the creed from memory, the test being a week before Easter. The creed should be written on their hearts, not on paper. Students should recite it daily before bed, and before leaving home.[36] Similarly he required the catechumens to memorize and recite the Lord's Prayer. He vehemently opposed the heretics and their doctrines.[37] Augustine took it upon himself to "save Christianity from the disruption of heresy and the calumnies of the pagan, and, above everything else, to renew and exalt the faithful hearing of the gospel of man's utter need and God's abundant grace."[38]

Augustine had one goal for instruction - love. He was convinced that teacher and student must focus on "the end of the commandment, which is charity."[39] God sent Jesus so He could show His love through us. For Augustine all teaching should help a person understand how much God loves him so he, in turn, may love God and his fellow man. The process was rigorous enough to lead to a complete paradigm shift. It included forty days of lectures, fasting, abstaining from bathing, meat, and sex, occasional all night prayer vigils, alms giving, putting right previously strained relationships, self-assessment and external scrutiny, memorizing

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[33] Augustine, *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed,* 2009b, 3.5.

[34] Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 2009a, 7.

[35] Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 2009a, 20; Augustine, *A Sermon to Catechumens on the Creed*, trans. H. Browne, in *New Advent, ed.* Kevin Knight, 2009 ed. (2009c), 1. http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1307.htm (accessed November 10, 2013).

[36] Augustine, *A Sermon to Catechumens on the Creed*, 2009c, 1.

[37] R. S. Pine-Coffin, trans., *Saint Augustine Confessions* (New York: Dorset Press, 1961), 20; Schaff, "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work," 10.

[38] Outler, *Augustine: Confessions and Enchiridion*, 13.

[39] Augustine, *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed,* 2009b, 3.6.

the creed and Lord's Prayer, weeklong exorcism, and eight days of post-baptism instructions. The *competentes* knew this was no simple transition. For Augustine teaching was about bringing transformation in a person's life. He felt effective teaching resulted in the student being moved to the point of altering behavior. When he taught, he explained the content using different tones, illustrations, pleading, and employed any strategy he felt useful, until he was satisfied that even the slowest hearers understood his message enough to go beyond understanding to action. When his hearers cheered, shouted, and applauded, (a characteristic of audiences of that day), Augustine was not distracted; he begged them to turn their cheers into action. He knew "it was easier to win the applause than to form a community that lived in harmony with God's wisdom. He also knew his natural temptation was to glory in the applause."[40]

Augustine gave instruction on the simple and the challenging issues of Christian living. For example, suffering perplexes every generation. There is always a need to define and explain how to deal with the complexities of suffering and still believe in a loving God. Augustine wrestled with the question of suffering. Drawing from the life of Job, he concluded that suffering should be accepted as that which God has approved. It should not be endured as a means to 'bribe' God so as to be blessed nor in hope of receiving a reward. People should note that just because Job's property, health, and children were restored double what he had before, this outcome was totally unknown to Job and nowhere influenced his devotion to God through his suffering.[41] Job's was not a quest for avarice but an immovable patience before God.

Augustine felt the catechumens should be prepared to handle relationships both inside and outside the church. Although state sponsored persecution was by this time non-existent, the believers still experienced opposition from pagans or heretics who challenged their beliefs. The believers should be helped to realize that such persecution was in fulfillment of prophecy, "and to point out of what service temptations are in the training of the faithful, and what relief there is in the example of the patience of God who has resolved to permit them even to the end."[42] He also felt that new inquirers were in danger of being influenced by pseudo-Christians within the church, whom he called scandalous Christians. Such "Christians" loved, defended, recommended, and even persuaded involvement in drunkenness, covetousness, fraud, adultery, fornication, among other vices. Augustine felt catechumens needed to be instructed about the danger of being influenced into passivity by such people. Students should be instructed that tolerating such

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[40] Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate,* 186.

[41] Augustine, *A Sermon to Catechumens on the Creed*, 2009c, 10.

[42] Augustine, *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed,* 2009b, 7.11.

persons within the church did endorse impunity, but that God's judgment awaited their thoughtless actions. On the other hand, the *competentes* should be made aware that many genuine Christians were also in the church. They would find them if the *competentes* were genuine Christians themselves. He prepared students to relate with others without losing sight of pursuing a closer walk with God.

Augustine cared for the poor. He felt good works included meeting the needs of the needy. He often spoke against the unscrupulous deeds of the elite and wealthy. In their quest for riches, they often distorted justice, and oppressed the poor. He taught that although one did not have to get rid of private possessions, those possessions were not to define the believer. In his own practice, he did not keep what he did not need but either sold or gave away his worldly possessions to the needy. When given gifts by the rich whose methods of acquiring wealth were questionable, he returned them because he did not wish to take part in that which had brought misery to the less privileged. At one point he "caused church vessels to be melted down to redeem prisoners."[43]

Augustine believed in equipping others for ministry. Fellow catechists recognized him as one endowed with the ability to understand both the content and variety of the Christian faith. Deogratias and Laurentius, for example, sought specific counsel that he gladly gave, not just because of his relationship with them, but because he viewed this as a divinely mandated responsibility. To Deogratias he said:

> in the exercise of these capacities which through the bounty of our Lord I am enabled to present, the same Lord requires me to offer any manner of aid to those whom He has made brethren to me, I feel constrained not only by that love and service which is due from me to you on the terms of familiar friendship, but also by that which I owe universally to my mother the Church, by no means to refuse the task, but rather to take it up with prompt and devoted willingness. For the more extensively I desire to see the treasure of the Lord distributed, the more does it become my duty, if I ascertain that the stewards, who are my fellow-servants, find any difficulty in laying it out, to do all that lies in my power to the end that they may be able to accomplish easily and expeditiously what they sedulously and earnestly aim at.[44]

Driven by this commitment, Augustine gave time to equip others for ministry. To this end, he wrote liberally to answer questions for his fellow instructors or any other person in his sphere of influence.

In his personal journey as a Christian, Augustine trained himself to be godly through discipline. He took time to study the Bible and pray. He fasted regularly, and abstained from pursuing worldly pleasures such as

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[43] Schaff, "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work," 5.
[44] Augustine, *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed,* 2009b, 1.2.

fine clothes, fine food, and women. As a matter of principle, Augustine did not allow females, not even his sister, into his house and only saw them in the company of others.[45] Augustine ruled that the character of a person who was absent from meals must never be talked about. He was clearly a model for his students to imitate as they saw him put into practice what he had taught them.

Lessons from Augustine's Views and Practices

Augustine remained a student among students. His writings show that he wrestled to comprehend the most difficult problems of life of faith and was concerned to disseminate his findings to all within his reach. Our context sometimes raises issues similar to those Augustine wrestled with as well as some unique ones. An issue such as acceptance of and/or ordination of homosexuals in church ministry, probably unheard of in Augustine's day, now threatens the sanctity of the church. The church continues to need answers about how to use God's truth to understand and respond to such realities. As Christian educators, we must get all the education we need to engage biblically and intellectually with today's issues, and to establish the church as the place where people will come for sound solutions to their dilemmas.

Prominent marks of Augustine's ministry include: his discourses were learner-centered; student needs were the priority; student differences were important. Our students are often much the same. We also experience phony inquirers who may pretend to be converted for many years, give large donations, and serve in different capacities in the church, but all for ulterior motives. Sometimes their gifts and service are celebrated at the expense of nurturing their souls. Modern educators must respect students and minister to their real needs. At the same time we need to evaluate our focus: are we inadequate, blinded by our own gifts and activities, and so we fail to guide some in the path of spiritual transformation?

Augustine sometimes felt inadequate, unable to pass on to others all that God revealed to him. He disclosed his struggle to Deogratias:

> I am covetous of something better, the possession of which I frequently enjoy within me before I commence to body it forth in intelligible words: and then when my capacities of expression prove inferior to my inner apprehensions, I grieve over the inability which my tongue has betrayed in answering to my heart. For it is my wish that he who hears me should have the same completed understanding of the subject which I have myself.[46]

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[45] Schaff, "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work," 5.
[46] Augustine, *On Catechizing of the Uninstructed,* 2009b, 2.3.

Augustine ministered from the overflow of a deep, genuine, and transforming encounter with God. We see the passion of a transformed teacher desiring the very best for his students. Today, some educators do a commendable job of really seeking God's guidance on what the Bible says, and on how to present their lessons, and the results are telling. But other educators and preachers teach more from head knowledge than from any deep experiences in the presence of God because the message they present has not impacted their own lives. The immense value of the Word of God demands that we also walk with God on the path before we can effectively point out the way to others.

Ascetic living characterized Augustine's life following his conversion. In view of the eternal pleasures promised in heaven, he lived a very basic life. He urged inquirers to become sincere Christians, not motivated by the desire for temporal advantages such as worldly wealth. As educators today we must admit that the quest for material possessions has infiltrated the church and in many cases has distorted the passions and practices of both educators and students. One outcome of this is seen when preachers and teachers can no longer be trusted with church funds and scandals abound in this regard. Despicably, at times ministry is provided in return for money. Clearly, we must keep asking: in light of what God has revealed, what is really important in this life as far as worldly possessions are concerned? Then we must determine to live and teach it. In that regard, Augustine's simplicity will not look extreme.

For Augustine, the student needed to know how to love for God and his fellow man through catechism before he could be certified for baptism. Very often our church educational programs are not coordinated towards a goal. We can learn from Augustine to focus our educational efforts. Whatever we preach or teach, and whatever programs we run, we have a goal known by all stakeholders and we have ways of assessing how well we are moving toward its accomplishment. Such an approach would unify the purposes of the activities in our churches toward a specific goal. It would help us evaluate our effectiveness in detail. The church members would also invest their time knowing which of their needs will be met.

Augustine would not avoid teaching doctrine. He required the catechumens to thoroughly understand and memorize the creed and the Lord's Prayer to equip them to contest opposing views, religious or secular. When this is compared to the teaching in our churches, there is a lot of room for improvement. Systematic teaching of Christian doctrine, in many cases, seems reserved for those who go into theological training. Many churches do not have an organized way of ensuring that members are grounded in the doctrines pertinent to our faith. Even when the creed is taught, it is quickly passed over so long as there is a written document learners can refer to - something Augustine would never allow. Since our

society is also laden with heresies, and since genuine Christians continue to be ridiculed from time to time, there is an urgent need for teaching the Christian doctrines so we may prepare our members to survive in these trying times.

Augustine's students knew from the moment of conversion to break with their past sins and sinful habits and turn to God. It is unfortunate that sometimes sin is dealt with very lightly in our context. In some situations, a simple conversion prayer suffices. While we trust God for the miracle of conversion and his involvement in sanctification, we forget that some sinful habits often need a deeper engagement to root out. Sometimes we leave our members trapped in those habits without providing a way of dealing with them. The ramifications of this can be serious. New believers may fall back into sin, believing the gospel was not effective enough to rescue them from their troubles. Yet the weakness lies in the church's negligence to help free them from the shackles of sin. We may want to consider a more integrated process of presenting the message of salvation so that we not only help our members believe and receive Christ, but also invest the necessary time and training to help them break with their negative pasts.

It is clear that Augustine's practice of admitting people to church membership was very rigorous. "A radical reshaping of habits that touched the whole person: physical, psychological, intellectual, and social" took place.[47] This contrasts sharply with what is practiced in many of our churches today. Sometimes all that is required is for a person to hear a sermon, often unrelated to what it means to be born again, and upon a passionate, occasionally coercing appeal to give one's life to Christ, the person raises a hand and is prayed for. The person is then encouraged to keep coming to church and to pray, and the process of conversion is considered complete. With Augustine by the time a *competente* was admitted to the class of the faithful, their understanding of Bible content, of the need for Christian living and breaking with their pasts, and doctrine was of very high standard. We need to reconsider our teaching approach around the phases of evangelism, conversion, and initial follow up. Perhaps the casualties we encounter might be prevented if we clarify the content and quality of equipping in these phases, otherwise the results Augustine achieved might remain elusive.

Augustine approached the Scriptures with one goal in mind - to learn, and thereafter, to live, teach, and defend the truth. He is credited with writing some of the deepest and richest apologetic work of antiquity.[48] Following his example, we cannot tolerate heresy among ourselves or our

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[47] Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate,* 295.
[48] Schaff, "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work," 15.

students. We must learn to study the Scriptures so we correctly handle the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15) and refute wrong perceptions. In our African context, along with extreme heretical teachings, there occur subtle deviations from the truth that seriously impact how Christians live. For example, the average believer's view on suffering in our context probably deviates from the reverential patience in suffering that Augustine taught. Preachers and teachers today often skirt around the topic of suffering, presenting health and wealth as a mark of being blessed by God. Augustine was clear that we should trust God and unconditionally endure suffering. Time is overdue for Christian educators to take a hard look at the biblical teaching on suffering, and provide a balanced understanding on this topic. Augustine did not promise people miracles to attract them to God as often happens in our churches. Rather, he tried to attract them to God through a passionate commitment to the truth in Scriptures. We need to refute outright heretical opinions, but also constantly review what we teach lest we unwittingly propagate untruth. This latter step is what Augustine demonstrated in his *Retractions* where "he revised in chronological order the numerous works he had written before and during his episcopate, and retracted or corrected whatever in them seemed to his riper knowledge false or obscure, or not fully agreed with the orthodox catholic faith."[49]

Augustine viewed this life as temporary. His passion and longing for heaven flowed easily in his teaching. Worldly pleasures, wealth, and luxuries were inconsequential to him as seen from his choice to live a very simple life in the same house with his clergy.[50] This humility also permeated his writing, being most evident in his *Confessions*, which Schaff describes: "of all autobiographies none has so happily avoided the reef of vanity and self-praise, and none has won so much esteem and love through its honesty and humility as that of St. Augustine."[51] This raises a few points we need to ponder on as educators: has our view of eternity affected how we live and what we teach? When our students look at our lives, do they sense that we lay up our treasures in heaven? Are our learners living with a clear eternal perspective as a result of our teaching and example? Our answers to these questions will help us effectively respond, for example, to the teachings of the prosperity gospel that are more or less subtly eroding biblical teaching on wealth.

Augustine's commitment to equipping other catechists is worth noting. We learn from him to accept other believers and churches where the Bible is being taught. Denominations or congregations are competing with each other. We need to remember that we all belong to the one Church and that

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[49] Schaff, "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work," 12.
[50] Schaff, "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work," 5; Brown, 412.
[51] Schaff, "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work," 3.

if other groups and denominations succeed, we too will have succeeded. Therefore, when opportunities come to help others learn how to teach more effectively or run other aspects of the ministry better, we should do whatever is in our power to help them. Augustine's teaching was not just about delivering content but also modeling Christian living. Those he recruited for priestly training he accommodated in his premises, where he ate with them, and experienced life with them. They could see him practice what he taught and then imitate him. The principle is that educators teach with their lives as well as with their words. This means that building relationships with students should become part of the teaching agenda. Downs says, "the classroom is not a very effective context for touching lives in deep ways."[52] Very often, our students have no other contact time with us apart from the classroom or church experience. We should find opportunities to build relationships and share life with our students outside the formal settings. Then they may have tangible examples to imitate when they see our words lived out in our lives. This is a helpful principle as Downs observes that "people will imitate most those with whom they have a relationship."[53]

Conclusion

Although a lot more could be said about Augustine's educational views and practices, this brief analysis shows that he lived and ministered in times that are similar to our African context. Heretics outside the church enticed believers from the faith. Pagans taunted them for the clinging to such a faith in the first place. A tolerant relationship between the church and the state, with little if any persecution, brought new dynamics to church membership, and for the most part obscured the process of admitting people into the church. Many associated with the church without necessarily submitting to God's authority and rule. Within the church were both the ardent and nominal Christians. The need for sound teaching was, therefore, as vital as it is today. We see Augustine ministering in ways relevant to the needs in his circumstances.

Personally, he gave up all that was of earthly value in utter submission to the grace and love of God. He lived in simplicity and humility, modeling the message that he taught. He was a passionate student of the Scriptures, taking time to wrestle in prayer over many issues that impacted the Christian faith, and he faithfully preached, taught, and put in writing any contemplation he thought might benefit others. The church over the centuries has drawn from and benefited immensely from numerous documents he authored. His voluminous library is a source of Christian knowledge and experience. As an excellent teacher, his sound pedagogical principles, his love, respect, and esteem for his students

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[52] Perry G. Downs, *Teaching for Spiritual Growth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 38.
[53] Downs, *Teaching for Spiritual Growth,* 166.

earned him the right to become an instructor of instructors. These personal choices he made speak into the personal choices we as Christian educators could make to prepare ourselves to be a credible teacher who is first transformed in order to effectively transform others.

Few have attained a legacy like Augustine's. Out of his ministry went forth many bishops and clergy whose impact spread far and wide. His library continues to impact the growth of the church today. These achievements resonate with the longings of most educators. We can safely conclude that Augustine can offer much the twenty-first-century Christian educator in understanding and executing the responsibilities of the church's educational ministry. Augustine is indeed one of the few men in the history of the Christian faith who cannot be ignored as his positive views and practices in the educational ministry are bound to positively impact both the teacher and the student.

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Tracking the Maze of Theological Education in Sierra Leone:
An Evangelical Perspective

by Joseph Bosco Bangura

Abstract

This article examines the context of theological education in Sierra Leone in order to analyze the historical stages (the missionary era, the national independence era, the conflict and post-conflict era) through which theological education has developed over the years. Having set the historical stage, the paper will then consider the nature of theological education in Sierra Leone (university, denominational, and charismatic models of theological education) and the emerging concerns that should affect the delivery of that theological education (the emergence of Charismatic Christianity, the need for community development and social transformation, and the need for contextual theology and cultural relevance). The article ends by identifying the most important questions raised by theological education that require an Evangelical response in Sierra Leone. These discussions take an Evangelical perspective as their point of departure.

Introduction

It is now common knowledge that the most buoyant hotspots of Christianity are firmly anchored in the non-western world,[1] where the faith is blossoming among the young, highly educated, and urban élite members of the population. Recent studies indicate that the Charismatic Movement that began in the late 1970s and early 1980s is gradually becoming the most inviting face of the Christian faith in Africa.[2] Sierra Leone has seen a reinvention of Christianity with the founding and development of independent churches, ministries and networks that clearly espouse Charismatic spirituality. However, the pace of growth seen

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[1] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* Revised, Expanded Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1; John Parratt ed., *An Introduction to Third World Theologies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1; Kwame Bediako, *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience* (Glasgow: Regnum Africa, 2000), 3; Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (New York/Edinburgh: Orbis Books/T&T Clark, 1996), 9.

[2] Kwabena J. Darkwa Amano, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Ghana and the African Culture: Confrontation or Compromise?" *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18 (2009), 125; J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "Hearing in our own tongues the wonderful works of God: Pentecost, Ecumenism and Renewal in African Christianity" *Missionalia* 35:3 (2007), 128.

in the Christian faith far outweighs the available theological training institutions that prepare the leaders who will eventually preside over the affairs of these churches. This scenario suggests that there exists a kind of theological anaemia that does not augur well for theological education in Sierra Leone. Thus, a tracking of the maze in which theological education has evolved is a necessary step in attempting to cure this disquieting anaemia.

Byang Kato, alarmed at the impending and pervasive danger that would befall a church that tries to exist without theology, predicted in the mid 1970s that if theological education is not put at the centre of the growing pace of Christianity in Africa, a kind of "Christo-paganism" was bound to develop. And that when it did, there would be an increased ignorance of the most basic Bible doctrines that churches are expected to possess. Kato believed this reality would be far more destructive to the health of the African church as it would accentuate a return to paganism.[3] More recently, James Nkansah-Obrempong, having presented what he sees as the contemporary theological situation in Africa, notes that one of the main difficulties beseting African Evangelical theologians is their failure to use appropriately African categories in their theological reflection.[4] These voices issue a stern warning that should guide the development of theological education that is beneficial to the church in Africa.

The situation described above not only reflects the Africa of Kato's day, but also, unfortunately, reflects the perception that many hold about

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[3] Byang Kato, "Africa's Battle for Biblical Christianity," *Moody Monthly* (November 1974), 53-56.

[4] James Nkansah-Obrempong, 'The Contemporary Theological Situation in Africa: An Overview,' *Evangelical Review of Theology* 31:2 (2007), 148. There is often considerable acrimony about the precise meaning of the term Evangelical or Evangelicalism. Because of this, it is proper that I propose a working definition that governs my use of this term in this article. This paper follows the meaning of the term Evangelical as understood in Sierra Leone, where it would refer to those churches that were founded by Protestant missionary denominations. These churches hold to beliefs such as: (a) the entire trustworthiness of Holy Scripture; (b) the centrality and finality of Christ in salvation; (c) the total sinfulness of humanity and their need for salvation through Christ's atoning death as well as the need for holy living through the power of the Holy Spirit; and (d) evangelism. This understanding may exclude a number of churches in Sierra Leone from what counts as being Evangelical. Cf. Timothy Larsen and Daniel J. Treier eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-14; Iain Taylor ed., *Not Evangelical Enough! The Gospel at the Centre* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003), 2-3; Tom Greggs ed., *New Perspectives for Evangelical Theology: Engaging with God, Scripture and the World* (London/New York: Routledge, 2010), 5-6; Mark A. Knoll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitfield and The Wesleys* (Leicester: IVP, 2004), 11-18.

the current state of theological education in Sierra Leone. It is known in the academy in Sierra Leone that Harry Sawyerr and Edward Fashole-Luke, both of whom taught theology at Fourah Bay College from the 1960s to the 1980s, agree with Kato's reckoning that theological reflection should emerge from and be solidly based on a carefully developed exegesis of the Bible.[5] This premise lays an appropriate background upon which theological education must seek to interface with the crucial issues that underpin Sierra Leone's African cultures. However, the integration of such themes from Sierra Leone's African cultures must be seen only as an entry point for theological education that is poised to benefit the church.

The Historical Context of Theological Education

The Missionary Era

In the history of missions, theological education is often perceived as a useful tool that helps the church grow in the new territories where missionaries have carried the gospel. This is exactly what transpired in Sierra Leone during the colonial and missionary era. Sierra Leone's contact with Christianity and the role this former British colony played in the early diffusion of Christianity across West Africa are well documented.[6] Considered the first Protestant mission field in tropical Africa,[7] the Province of Freedom became a bastion for the resettlement of freed slaves when it was founded in 1791.[8] Freetown became a major hub for missionary, educational and economic activity across British controlled West Africa. Members of the Clapham Sect[9] who established the Sierra

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[5] See Harry Sawyerr, *Creative Evangelism: Towards a New Christian Encounter with Africa* (London: Lutterworth, 1968), 33; and Edward Fashole-Luke, 'The Quest For African Christian Theology,' *Journal of Religious Thought* 32:2 (1975), 77.

[6] See among others, Jehu Hanciles, *Euthanasia of a Mission: African Church Autonomy in a Colonial Context* (Westport/London: Praeger, 2002); Gilbert W. Olson, *Church Growth in Sierra Leone: A Study of Church Growth in Africa's Oldest Protestant Mission Field* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969)*; Leslie E.T. Shyllon, *Two Centuries of Christianity in an African Province of Freedom A Case Study of European Influence and Culture in Church Development,* (Freetown: Print Sundries and Stationers, 2008); Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (London: C. Hurst, 1983); Lamin Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1999).

[7] Olson, *Church Growth in Sierra Leone,* 15.

[8] Sanneh, *Abolitionist Abroad*, 41.

[9] The Clapham Sect comprised a group of Evangelicals who worked for a variety of religious and philanthropic projects, including 'the desire to convert the heathens, promoting civilization and Christianity in Africa.' The most prominent members of this group included John Venn (son of Henry Venn), William Wilberforce, Henry Thornton, Charles Grant, James Stephen, Zachary Macauley, Lord Teighmouth and Granville Sharp. See Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work* Vol. 1.

Leone Company, envisaged the Province of Freedom to be a Christian experiment where freed slaves would be encouraged to productively use the land and eventually seek self-determination.[10] It was to Freetown that four groups of Africans, the black poor, Nova Scotians, Maroons, and Re-captives, were resettled, trained and eventually dispersed to work in other parts of West Africa.[11] The Re-captives, who later became the Krio people of Sierra Leone, went on to become the single most important factor to profoundly impact early African Christianity and missions in West Africa.

The Church Missionary Society (CMS),[12] which was at the forefront of the missionary expedition in Sierra Leone, founded Fourah Bay College[13] in 1827 as an institute for the training of pastors, catechists, missionaries and schoolmasters. The establishment of this institution offered the Re-captives the opportunity to excel in education, thus leading to their integration in the British colonial administration as civil servants. The most well-known example of the Re-captives' excellence in education and Christianity was Samuel Adjai Crowther who led a pioneering missionary enterprise in Nigeria where he served as the first black bishop in the CMS Niger mission.[14] Through the training provided at Fourah Bay College, the

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[10] (London: CMS, 1899), 41-42; Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Reformation to the Present* Volume II, Revised Edition. (London: Harper & Row, 1975), 1031; and Shyllon, *Two Centuries of Christianity …*, 11-12.

[10] Shyllon, *Two Centuries of Christianity …*, 11; Sanneh, *Abolitionist Abroad*, 41.

[11] Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad*, 41-42; Olson, *Church Growth in Sierra Leone*, 67; Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 86; 103-104; Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 71; Hanciles, *Euthanasia of a Mission*, 7.

[12] The Church Missionary Society (CMS) was founded on Friday 12 April 1799 as the Society for Missions to Africa and the East by sixteen Evangelical clergymen and nine laymen in the upper room of the Castle and Falcon Inn, Aldergste Street in London. The express purpose of the CMS was "that it is a duty highly incumbent upon every Christian to endeavour to propagate the knowledge of the Gospel among the Heathen." In 1813, it adopted the name CMS. See, Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, 69; Hanciles, *Euthanasia of a Mission*, 13; Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, 1033. For a comprehensive history of the CMS see, Jocelyn Murray, *Proclaim the Good News: A Short History of the Church Missionary Society* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985); Kevin Ward, 'Taking Stock: The Church Missionary Society and Its Historians,' in Kevin Ward and Brain Stanley eds., *The Church Missionary Society and World Christianity, 1799-1999* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000).

[13] Fourah Bay College was founded by the Church Missionary Society in 1827. By the 1870s, Fourah Bay College was fully affiliated to Durham University in England, and started to award degrees in the arts and theology. See Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 103; Gordon Hewitt, *The Problem of Success: A History of the Church Missionary Society 1910-1940* Vol. 1. (London: SCM Press, 1971), 19-22.

[14] Hanciles, *Euthanasia of a Mission*, 7; Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 104-105; and Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 75-76. For a

Re-captives returned to their home countries with a "new burden of Christian responsibility to the rest of the continent."[15]

This pattern of missionary theological education continued with the coming of other missionary agencies such as the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion (1800), the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society from London (1811), the US based United Brethren in Christ (1855), the Roman Catholic Church (1859), the American Wesleyan Mission (1889), the Seventh Day Adventist Missionary Society (1907) and the Assemblies of God Mission (1950),[16] among others. Member churches behind some of these missionary agencies cooperated with each other in carrying out their task of evangelism and later founded the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) in 1924 and the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone (EFSL) in 1959.[17] The CCSL promoted the ecumenical activities of the World Council of Churches, while the EFSL chose to associate itself with churches who see themselves as Evangelicals in Sierra Leone. The EFSL went on to become the first national Evangelical fellowship in Africa to obtain membership from the World Evangelical Alliance.

One key consequence of this early missionary collaboration was the founding of The Evangelical College of Theology in 1964 as the primary institution to deliver theological education that strengthens Evangelical churches in Sierra Leone.[18] The missions supplied the teaching faculty,

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biography of Bishop Crowther, see Jesse Page, *The Black Bishop: Samuel Adjai Crowther* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1908); Jeanne Decorvet and Emmanuel Oladipo, *Samuel Adjayi Crowther: The Miracle of Grace* (Lagos: CSS Bookshops Ltd., 2006).

[15] Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 73.

[16] Shyllon, *Two Centuries of Christianity …*, 75-81, 145; Olson, *Church Growth in Sierra Leone*, 95, 135, 186-188; Prince Sorie Conteh, *Traditionalists, Muslims and Christians in Africa: Interreligious Encounters and Dialogue*, (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2009), 95.

[17] Shyllon, *Two Centuries of Christianity …*, 339; Christina Maria Breman, *The Association of Evangelicals in Africa: Its History, Organization, Members, Projects, External Relations and Message*, (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1996), 194.

[18] *The Evangelical College of Theology* (TECT) was founded in 1964 by three Evangelical missionary denominations, the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, the Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone and the Missionary Church of Africa. The Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone and Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion joined the founding denominations to become proprietors in 1979 and 1998 respectively. This college, whose original name was Sierra Leone Bible College, was re-named The Evangelical College of Theology in 2000 to allow it to reflect the diversified educational programmes that are offered at the college. The college offers diploma and bachelor's degree programmes in theology, community development studies, peace and conflict studies and secretarial studies. The

while students were drawn from mainline Evangelical churches who were members of EFSL. The belief shared by these agencies was and still is that the church can be properly incarnated through the training of the national believers in a basic understanding of the Bible, biblical languages, theology and the arts. The missionary agents consitututed the bulk of the teaching force at Fourah Bay College and The Evangelical College of Theology and they controlled the type of theological education provided. This education was tilted toward an understanding of the biblical text that uses the western categories in which Christian theology was formulated. Few attempts were taken to try to understand the traditional and religious African contexts in which the training was done.

The Era of National Independence

After Sierra Leone attained political independence from Britain in 1961, discussions in the political arena soon began to infiltrate the church scene. This pattern was similar to what was happening in much of Africa where the wave of political independence coalesced into a clamour for church autonomy. Churches began to discuss whether or not the inherited theological education that shaped ecclesiastical life under the colonial period was relevant for independent Africa.[19]

When the churches became nationalised, efforts were made to introduce courses that, it was thought, were better able to address important cultural issues with which African Christians were struggling. Theological training institutes became more open to the idea of teaching African Traditional Religion, African Theology, and Contextualization that were once seen as too liberal to be included in a curriculum for theological education. The idea was that, in order for theological reflection to be more useful in addressing the cultural context in which it was practised, the church should pay attention to the cultural situation of its African adherents.[20] This, they believed, was a missing element that had weakened theological education under the missionary era. The few national professors who taught theology at Fourah Bay College became more engaged in conducting research on critical cultural issues that they saw as having significant impact on ecclesiastical life for Sierra Leone's Christians.[21] Students of theology were also encouraged to undertake

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college is accredited by Fourah Bay College, the Tertiary Education Commission in Sierra Leone, and the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa.

[19] See Esther Mombo, 'Theological Education in Africa,' in *Voices from Africa: Transforming Mission in a Context of Marginalization An Anthology*, Andrew C. Wheeler, ed. (London: Church House Publishing, 2002), 127.

[20] See Sawyerr, *Creative Evangelism*, 13-32; Fashole-Luke, "The Quest for African Christian Theology," 75.

[21] See for instance, Harry Sawyerr, "Graveside Libations in and Near Freetown," *Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion* 7 (1965): 48-55.

theological research in issues that interfaced Christian theology with the cultural and traditional background of Sierra Leone.

It appears as if, under the era of national independence, it dawned upon the practitioners of theological education that the African traditional and religious worldview upon which Christianity was received had been ignored for too long. They decided therefore, that this background needed to be revisited for careful analysis if the continued relevance of the faith was to be assured.[22] However, this process moved theological education away from the biblical text and many of its western theological accretions. Thus, theological education became much more concerned with mediating religious, traditional and cultural relevance in the African context, and less about understanding the biblical text.

The Conflict and Post-conflict Era

Independent Sierra Leone soon realized that the political élite must do more if the entire population were to share in the gains of independence. However, after removing colonial oppression, Sierra Leone followed the path taken by other newly independent African states where interparty and intraparty conflicts over access to power dominated the political atmosphere.[23] The decision to introduce a one-party system of governance, the atmosphere of corruption that allowed government functionaries and politicians to freely embezzle state funds without any accountability, the discovery of diamonds, and meddling by powerful external agents led to the outbreak of a horrendous rebel war in 1991.[24] By the time the war ended in 2002, tens of thousands of people were killed and many more had their limbs gruesomely amputated. Women and girls were subjected to gang rape by the rebel forces. Property damage was extensive and many people became either internally displaced persons or refugees outside Sierra Leone. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court for Sierra Leone were set up to investigate what went wrong, seek reconciliation, and try those who bore the greatest responsibility for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and human rights violations committed during the rebel conflict.[25]

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[22] Cf Yusufu Turaki, "Africa Christianity in Global Religious and Cultural Conflict," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 31:2 (2007), 138.

[23] See April Gordon and Donald Gordon, eds. *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, Fourth Edition, (Boulder/London: Lynne Reinner, 2007), 70.

[24] Joe A. D. Alie, "Background to the Conflict (1961-1991): What Went Wrong and Why?" in *Bound To Cooperate: Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone*, Anatole Ayssi and Robin-Edward Poulton, eds. (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2000), 34; Lisa Denney, "Explaining War, Creating Peace: UK Sponsored Reforms in Sierra Leone," *Contemporary Review* (Summer 2009), 155.

[25] See Richard Bennett, *Truth and Reconciliation in Sierra Leone*, (Freetown: UNAMSIL, 2001); Tom Perrillo and Marieke Wierda, *The Special Court for Sierra*

The impact of the war on the churches meant that they had to adopt measures that would restore civility in the political arena and address the social issues that prompted the war in the first place. Churches distributed relief supplies such as food and non-food items, and organized trauma healing and counselling sessions for war victims. Churches became temporary living centres for refugees and internally displaced persons. Given the nature of crimes committed and the trauma suffered by people, many Christians interpreted the war as having been caused by demonic forces whose aim was to destroy Sierra Leone.[26] To ameliorate this terrible situation, national sessions of prayer for repentance were organized by the churches throughout Sierra Leone.

Theological education needed to respond to this new social order in Sierra Leone. The existing curricula of theological institutions were extensively revised to allow the introduction of new non-theological degree programmes. The new programmes were envisaged to address community development, poverty, women and gender issues, conflict, peace and human rights, among others. For instance, The Evangelical College of Theology introduced two new degree programmes, Bachelor of Arts in Community Development Studies and Bachelor of Arts in Peace & Conflict Studies. After their introduction these academic programmes quickly received accreditation from Fourah Bay College. Using a distinctly Christian-based curriculum, the degree programmes offer courses that address social issues and provide a Christian solution to the social disintegration created by the war. This conflict and post-conflict era required theological education to emphasize the relevance of Christian theology for good governance, peace building, human rights, reconciliation, community development and social justice.

The Nature of Theological Education

The University Model of Theological Education
Sierra Leone has a long history of involvement in the delivery of theological education in the West African sub-region. The pastoral training offered to freed black slaves in Freetown contributed to the early spread of Christianity across West Africa. Today Fourah Bay College (FBC), The Evangelical College of Theology (TECT) and Sierra Leone Theological College (SLTC)[27] offer programmes of study under the university model of

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Leone Under Scrutiny, (New York: International Centre for Transitional Justice, 2006).

[26] See Irene John, "Charismatics and Community," in *A Reader in African Christian Theology*, John Parratt, ed., (London: SPCK, 1997), 131.

[27] The Sierra Leone Theological College (SLTC) was founded in 1975 by three church denominations that had membership with the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone. These denominations are: the Anglican Diocese of Freetown and Bo, the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone and the United Methodist Church Sierra Leone

theological education. These colleges provide theological and non-theological education mainly at the baccalaureate level. FBC, which is part of the University of Sierra Leone and the Tertiary Education Commission, provides accreditation to TECT and SLTC. Graduates from TECT and SLTC often proceed to FBC for further studies at the graduate and postgraduate levels in theology and related fields.

There are many benefits that can be identified in the university model of theological education. First, the colleges in this model try to maintain very high academic standards in the process of admitting, training and graduating students. Second, these colleges have national and international accreditation that renders their programmes of study competitive. Third, graduates from these colleges have access to and gain easy admission at institutions of further and higher education in Sierra Leone and overseas. And finally, graduates from colleges that follow the university model of theological education enter diversified professional careers upon the completion of their studies. This makes these colleges the port of first call for those seeking advanced level theological education.

Although advantages such as these exist, Evangelical voices have begun to see areas that tend to weaken the efficacy of the theological education offered by these colleges. First, colleges associated with the university model of theological education have a tendency to pay less emphasis on the practical relevance of their training to the needs of church life and pastoral ministry. Second, they are seen as promoting a pluralistic understanding of theology and religious studies that call into question the need for evangelism. Third, given that graduates have received training that makes them highly qualified professionals, it is often difficult to retain them for service in pastoral ministry. Fourth, given the mass migration of graduates into professions other than pastoral ministry, the church is deprived of its most highly trained theologians.

The Denominational Model of Theological Education

As church denominations became more organized in their governance structures and ecclesiastical networks, the idea to form centres for theological training that are owned and managed by individual denominations was conceived as a viable alternative to the perceived problems in the existing theological colleges following the university model. Two of the most prominent Evangelical denominations that had collaborated to found colleges that follow the university model bought into this idea. The Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone established the Wesleyan Christian College at Gbendembu, in northern Sierra Leone, with the aim of

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Conference. The college offers diploma and bachelor's degree programmes in theology, community development studies, peace and conflict studies and secretarial studies. The college is accredited by Fourah Bay College and the Tertiary Education Commission in Sierra Leone.

training men and women as champions of Christ who would serve in pastoral ministry in Sierra Leone and beyond. The Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone also established the Baptist Bible Institute at Lunsar, in northern Sierra Leone to train its pastors and evangelists. Between them, they offer two theological programmes, Certificate in Theology and Diploma in Theology. Persons who desire to serve in the pastoral ministry in these denominations must first go through the training offered by these denominational training schools before they are accepted as pastors.

The denominations that have established centres where internal pastoral theological training is carried out argue that these institutes promise certain benefits. They see these training centres as less expensive to operate as they simply use the existing infrastructure that the churches already have for its theological training programmes. Further, they believe that these training centres accord students unhindered opportunity to study in-depth their denominational doctrines so that their pastors are thoroughly equipped in understanding the beliefs that underpin their faith convictions. Finally, these denominations believe they can more often retain graduates in the pastoral ministry.

Nevertheless, the denominational model of theological education is not without its limitations. For instance, given that these institutes are cheaper to run, the model is criticised for providing students with limited access to teaching and learning materials. There are also inadequate facilities for the delivery of proper theological training programmes. Moreover, because these institutes cater only for students from its own denominations, their programmes appear to pay less attention to the academic study of theology or dialogue with other theological persuasions that could enrich their graduates' pastoral ministry.

The Charismatic Model of Theological Education

New developments that took place in 1990s transformed the approach of churches to Bible training. These developments prompted a turning point that affected the delivery of theological education in Sierra Leone. The founding of Freetown Bible Training Centre (FBTC) by American Charismatic evangelist and Bible teacher, Russ Tatro, who had relocated to Sierra Leone from neighbouring Liberia, was pivotal in the shift taking place in theological education. Tatro's zeal for evangelism prompted the founding of a non-residential Bible school where students were offered rapid discipleship training and deployed to plant "Charismatic Bible-believing churches." The spread of this Charismatic model of theological education hinged on the suspicion in Charismatic circles that academic level theological education was unsuited to sustaining the revival that was

sweeping across the church scene.[28] In this model, practitioners argue that what is needed for participation in programmes of Bible training is conversion, a sense of call into pastoral ministry, and evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit.[29] FBTC's curriculum starts with a two-year non-residential diploma in ministerial training that meets on Saturdays. This is followed by a one-year of advanced study and leads to an advanced diploma in ministerial training for those who have the backing of their churches to enter the pastoral ministry.[30] The informal nature of training delivered over the years, coupled with the colourful graduation ceremonies organized by FBTC, has seen an increase in the popularity of this sort of Bible training among churches.[31]

The Charismatic model is proud of the following advantages: firstly, this model does not require the completion of secondary school as a necessary condition for admission into its Bible training programmes. As noted already, the emphasis is on the conversion experience, a sense of call, and evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the applicant. Second, the training programme itself is less formal because it is modelled along the lines of discipleship. Classes are often interspersed with sessions of praise and worship, seminars and Bible teaching. Final examinations use a true and false mode of assessment and can be taken in written or oral format. Third, the whole training program is oriented toward Charismatic church and pastoral practice that draws freely from the African concepts of spiritual power, healing, demons and witchcraft. This makes for easy convergence with the spiritual impulses that Sierra Leone's Christians possess.

However, it is at this critical juncture that the Charismatic model of theological training is most criticized by other churches. First, this model is

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[28] Allan Anderson and Matthews Ojo have both noted this paradigm of scepticism over the usefulness of academic level theological education among Pentecostal and Charismatic groups in Africa. See Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 245; Matthews Ojo, *The End-Time Army: Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria*, (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2006), 191.

[29] See for instance Ojo, *The End Time Army*, 195; Henri Gooren, "Conversion Narratives," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, A. Anderson, M Bergunder, A. Droogers and C. Van der Laan, eds., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 95-101; Abraham Akrong, "The Born Again Concept in the Charismatic Movement in Ghana," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 35:1 (2011), 39.

[30] See Russ Tatro, *Establishing and Operating Interdenominational Bible Training Centres*, (Wilmington: Living Word Missions, 2014). Accessed 2015.04.17 at 7:58 PM. http://livingwordmissions.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Establishing-Operating-Interdenominational-Bible-Training-Centers.pdf

[31] See Shyllon, *Two Centuries of Christianity …*, 351.

criticised for being the main conduit that encouraged the spread of prosperity theologies across the church scene in Sierra Leone. Second, many see this form of training as anti-academic due to its primary emphasis on the anointing of the Holy Spirit in training for ministry. And finally, graduates from schools in the Charismatic model are often not given any academic recognition for the training they received. This means that when they seek admission at higher institutions for further studies, they are denied entrance. This happens both at denominational schools and at colleges using the university model.

The Concerns of Theological Education

The Emergence of Charismatic Christianity

The desire to see revival break out in the church scene ignited evangelistic initiatives among Evangelical churches in the 1970s and 80s. Member churches affiliated with EFSL supported the evangelistic work of New Life for All campaign, the Scripture Union of Sierra Leone, and the Sierra Leone Fellowship of Evangelical Students in primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions in Sierra Leone.[32] When these youth completed university, they found that their churches were slow in incorporating their newly acquired zeal for evangelistic revival that these organizations had hoped to achieve. This led some of them to establish small groups that met initially for Bible study and prayer. The small groups eventually became Charismatic churches when they began to meet on Sundays.[33] These new Charismatic churches later received a significant boost with the coming of FBTC in the 1990s.

The Charismatic form of expressing the Christian faith is very spontaneous and lively. This expression represents a conglomeration of various theological and pastoral practices that arouse the interests of worshipers. Such practices include, but are not limited to praise and worship, lively music teams patterned after contemporary western music bands, fasting and all night sessions of warfare prayers, prosperity summits, exorcism, prophecy, and Bible teaching conferences. These practices are designed to evoke the spiritual sensibilities of followers and draw attention to the concepts of spiritual power that are at work in Sierra Leone's cultures. These pastoral practices have not only gained popularity among Charismatic Christians, but have slowly begun to infiltrate and re-configure the pastoral ministry of non-Charismatic churches. This presents a new pastoral context for the exercise of church ministry in Evangelical churches who have been forced to introduce such practices in their weekly

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[32] See Sylvanus Valcarcel, *A Brief Rendition of the Life and Ministry of Rev Dr Joseph Sedu Mans*, (Freetown: The Awakening Pioneers, 2006), 37-39.
[33] A similar pattern in the formation of Charismatic churches has been recorded in Malawi. See Klaus Fiedler, "The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements in Malawi in Cultural Perspective," *Religion in Malawi* 9 (1999), 33-35.

meetings and Sunday worship services. The fact that Evangelical churches have shown this measured willingness to allow such practices is a pointer to theological education that the changing landscape in worship where spontaneity now characterizes liturgy needs to be critically examined and factored into a curriculum for the pastoral formation of church leaders.

Community Development and Social Transformation

Traditionally, denominations have used schools, hospitals and church buildings to engage the wider society. This action had a positive impact that resulted in the translation of the gospel into local languages, the development of the human capital that saw the new African élite taking over the government from the colonial authorities, and the introduction of better healthcare and curative alternatives to treating diseases. While this was done however, the ecclesial emphasis that had separated church and state meant that the churches had to maintain silence on issues that are seen as the root causes of years of corruption, bad governance and poverty that eventually resulted in the outbreak of the rebel conflict in the 1990s. That war impelled the churches to be more involved in the distribution of relief supplies, organizing trauma healing and counselling sessions, as well as accompanying the government and warring factions to negotiate peace and seek reconciliation. Theological education institutions supported the work of the churches by introducing new degree programmes that specialized in community development and social transformation courses. Although the usefulness of these courses is no longer in doubt, many voices are worried that theological education is in danger of losing its primary focus.

Contextual and Cultural Relevance

Sierra Leone's cultural context and the practices associated with it have not changed. The majority of the cultural, traditional and religious practices that help people derive meaning from the multifaceted experiences of life are still very much alive. Many people still hold secret society events where initiation ceremonies prepare young people to meaningfully participate in community life as adults.[34] Many others regularly observe ancestral rituals, and have a preference for polygamous marriages. Traditional beliefs in spirit possession and in diabolical activities perpetrated by witchcraft still dominate the spiritual landscape. However, the questions now put to this context, particularly by the young

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[34] See for instance, James E. Davies, *The Church and the Secret Society Syndrome in Sierra Leone*, (Freetown: TECT, 2009); Richard Fanthrope, *Sierra Leone: The Influence of Secret Societies, with Special reference to Female Genital Mutilation*, (London: Writenet Independent Analysis Paper, 2007); Bianca Schimmel, *Female Genital Mutilation in Sierra Leone*, (Eschborn: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, 2007).

educated urban élite who have become the most faithful members of the churches, have significantly changed. Two examples of questions proffered by the urban élite suffice as illustration. First, in light of Exodus 20:12, Matthew 15:4, Mark 7:10 and Ephesians 6:2, what would be a biblically appropriate response to one's ancestors after conversion? Second, given the provisions of Exodus 22:18 and Leviticus 20:27, how can the church deal with persons who openly acknowledge their involvement in witchcraft and sorcery? These questions challenge various positions on culture once held by the churches and call for answers that explain the contextual nature and cultural relevance of the ministry of the churches. This means that theological education needs to create training programmes that address cultural and contextual issues raised by these questions in a biblically sound manner. Perhaps theological education needs to encourage students to progress beyond merely taking courses in African Traditional Religion to writing thesis dealing biblically with the issues of spiritual warfare and demonic possession, because these are increasingly becoming the pastoral issues that churches have to face. Academic studies that critically examine these practices can enhance the effectiveness of the ministry of the churches.

Conclusion

This survey of the trajectory of theological education points to certain currents that leave open a number of questions that merit discussion and reflection among practitioners involved in the delivery of theological education. Four of the most pressing questions are discussed below. First, are we seeing a gap developing between the biblical text and the content of theological education? Although it is agreed that theological education should be based upon a carefully constructed exegesis of the Bible, yet there appears to be less focus on the biblical text, and a greater focus on courses dealing with community development and social transformation.

Training programmes for pastoral formation require biblical truth and depth if they are to help build healthy churches. Therefore Sierra Leone's theological education programmes should return to a greater focus on the biblical text. The aim of this call is to prevent the churches in Sierra Leone from reverting to the era of Christo-paganism that Byang Kato vigorously fought against.

Second, what is the precise cultural relevance of the present theological education programmes on offer in Sierra Leone? We noted that the post-independence attempts to free theological education from its western accretions brought about a renewed awareness among practitioners that there must be a connection between theological education and cultural relevance. This need is further buttressed by the Charismatic pastoral practices that draw freely from concepts in Sierra Leone's traditions that deal specifically with the exercise of spiritual power.

This demands that theological education must convey a proper understanding of the place that spiritual power has for pastoral ministry and church growth.

Third, to what extent have the many contemporary social issues that Sierra Leone has endured impacted the content of theological education programmes? Sierra Leone's period of rebel insurrection brought to the fore discussions about the role that theological education should play in helping to (re-)shape the churches' agenda on poverty, lack of good governance, gender disparity and ecological issues, among others. While courses have been introduced that have enriched the theology curriculum or brought in new non-theology bachelor's degree programmes, the question that one might still ask is, are theology graduates effectively prepared to face the demands of pastoral ministry in a context where emerging social concerns threaten the people's daily life? Theological education programmes, particularly those offered at the masters level or higher, must ensure that theology students are adequately prepared to engage seriously with the wider society in a manner that reflects the nature of God's love in Christ Jesus. Such programmes of formation are believed to honour Christ, prepare theology students to assume leadership roles that benefit the church, and also serve the greater good of society.

Finally, isn't it time for the university, denominational and Charismatic models of theological education to collaborate in order to achieve their goals? If this were to occur, one could foresee that theological education would be better placed to benefit from the meagre resources available to the churches that support theological education. The churches are longing for theological education programmes that train the minds/hearts, hands/feet and eyes/feelings of pastors and church workers who should radiate the love of Christ in a rapidly changing context plagued by numerous problems. Theological education cannot afford to settle for rivalry and competition as it seeks to fulfil the mandate of training the next generation of church and societal leaders who will be passionate about their faith and share what they have learned with other competent leaders. Such a vision for biblically-based and contextually relevant ministry calls for dialogue that must begin in the academy where theological education is delivered.

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Financial Sustainability in Christian Higher Education in Africa

by Benjamin Mwange Musyoka

Abstract

Like many other private and public institutions of higher learning around the world, many Christian Bible colleges, seminaries, and universities in Africa face financial instability for a variety of reasons, including globalization, increased competition leading to lower enrollment, and reduced donations from traditional sources leading to increased competition for charitable donors. Providing higher education has, in some ways, evolved into an industry, like tourism or real estate, but it remains different in other ways. This article discusses strategies for enhancing the viability and competitiveness of Christian institutions of higher learning, including strategic alliances. The paper concludes with five recommendations for moving towards financially stability.

Introduction

Traditionally, Christian institutions of higher learning have operated as not-for-profit organizations funded mainly by their founding denominations or mission organizations and individual donors. However, with increased competition in higher education and growing donor fatigue, these institutions are increasingly under-staffed and under-funded, often operating without consistent and reliable sources of funding.

This problem is not limited to Christian institutions. All institutions of higher learning, both private and public, face this reality. Governments worldwide are cutting back on their university education spending and instead are encouraging their institutions to find additional ways of generating resources in order to shift part of the cost from taxpayers.[1]

Africa in particular is facing unprecedented demand for higher education and growth in enrollment in higher institutions of learning. This growing demand far outstrips the countries' economic growth and the capacity of governments to keep pace in providing financial support to public institutions of higher learning. There is also a growing realization by traditional donor agencies that "pouring financial aid into Africa as an approach to improve the impoverished nature of the continent is in fact having the opposite effect".[2]

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[1] Roger Bennett, "Competitor Analysis Practices of British Charities", in *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 21(6), (2003): 335-345.

[2] Ken Turnbull, "Discipling Africa through Higher Education: A Proposal for an African Christian Education", in *Mission Frontiers*, Nov.-Dec. 2011: 12-18.

Professor Thairu, the former Chairman of the Commission for Higher Education in Kenya noted that:

> Universities the world over are operating in increasingly challenging environments. Such environments are characterized by financial uncertainty caused by limited government support and increasing competition among other higher education providers and varied modes of delivery. It is a well documented fact that proliferation of provision and product diversification has resulted in an increase in the choice for the higher education customers and a growing awareness among providers that survival in such environment requires appropriate marketing responses.[3]

As a result of these challenges, individual universities are coming up with creative and non-traditional strategies of diversifying their income generation internally. What is happening in Ethiopia is a good case in point showing the trend among many other African countries. In a 2010 study among eight Ethiopian public universities, it was found that the main revenue diversification strategies they adopted included the admission of privately sponsored students, the use of extension studies and distant learning, short-term training seminars, commercialization of staff and student services, crop and livestock farming, furniture workshops, as well as leasing and renting university buildings and any idle land.[4]

Coupled with shrinking traditional sources of funding of university education, is the challenge of globalization that has resulted in increased student mobility, staff exchange, and an increasingly international dimension to the curricula in the institutions of higher learning. Students no longer feel compelled to study in a given institution or country unless what that institution offers is packaged attractively and is student friendly in terms of cost, convenience, and mode of delivery. The increasing quality of university education in developing countries such as South Africa, South Korea, China, India, Mexico, Brazil, and many others is giving students many options beyond the traditional Western countries, and the institutions that have traditionally operated under Western patronage in the developing countries.[5]

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[3] Kihumbu Thairu, "Message from the Chairman", In *The Fourth Exhibition by Universities: The University as a Catalyst for Development*, (Nairobi: Commission for Higher Education, 2006). Prof. Kihumbu Thairu was Chairman of the CHE from 2004-2010. Prof. Thairu Henry Moses currently chairs the commission under its new name, the Commission for University Education.

[4] Waweru K. Munyua; Sewale Abate; Guyo S. Huka, and Shano M. Dawe, "Financing Higher Education in Africa: A Case of Ethiopia Public Universities Revenue Diversification Strategies", in *International Journal of Business and Public Management*, 1(1) (2010): 15-21.

[5] Ebubekir Koc, "Extended Review of Shakespeare, Einstein and the Bottom-line: The Marketing Mix of Higher Education", in *On the Horizon*, 14(1) (2006): 19-21.

There is also a marked increase in competition among the institutions of higher learning for students and for funding from businesses, foundations and individual donors. This competition is intensified by the increase of not-for-profit organizations started in response to needs created by decreased government spending, not only in public education but also in many social services.[6] The pursuit of market-driven strategies for delivering university education has become an obsession for public and private institutions of higher learning including Christian institutions.

Bracing for Competition and Survival

Two main challenges have slowed the progress of Christian institutions of higher learning toward sustainable financial stability. The first is their inability to consistently attract adequate resources from the donor community that would enable them to expand their facilities and services. The second one is low student enrollment in theological and ministerial academic programs.[7] In the past, Western Christian churches and mission organizations heavily subsidized these programs as a way of investing in leadership development for churches and Christian institutions in Africa. The relatively few students attending these schools and the relatively low tuition fees they paid could not support the annual expenditures of these institutions.

This is no longer the case. Christian institutions of higher learning are finding themselves with no option but to enhance their long-term financial sustainability by adopting strategies that enable them to recruit more students, rejuvenate donor interest and funding while at the same time trying to reduce their operating costs without compromising academic standards.

"All providers of higher education today inhabit a more competitive world where resources are becoming scarcer, but at the same time they have to accommodate increasing demand from the local community as well as changing expectations".[8] Particularly, financial constraints on these institutions are forcing many universities and their host nations to aggressively seek ways to attract students locally and internationally.

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[6] Bennett, "Competitor Analysis Practices of British Charities", 335-345.

[7] Most of the Christian institutions of higher learning in Africa started as seminaries or Bible schools run by Western missionaries. But after political independence and the subsequent clamor for Africanisation of national leadership, many of the missionaries handed over the institutions to African leaders who did not have Western churches and mission organizations to support them. Suddenly these institutions found themselves financially unsustainable, and many have opted to diversify their academic programs to attract a broader spectrum of students.

[8] K. Mok, "The Quest for World-class University", in *Quality Assurance in Education*, 13(4), 2005: 279.

The education sector has evolved into an industry in the same category as tourism, manufacturing, or real estate. As far back as June 1999, "the UK government launched an initiative to attract additional 50,000 international students to UK higher education by 2005 and to win the market share from its major competitors, the US and Australia".[9] At the time, foreign students in the US contributed over $12 billion annually to that country's economy.

Christian institutions of higher learning, especially in Africa, have become key players in this globalization process, competing for resources from charitable organizations and for students. The students themselves feel increasingly free to move across international borders in search of education and relevant training for Christian ministry and service.

A 2003 study among the British not-for-profit organizations found that, "In addition to charities competing against each other, the public sector as a whole was beginning to compete against charities for donor sympathies, as hospitals, universities and schools increase their independence from the state".[10] In the same way, Christian institutions of higher learning worldwide are not only competing with one another locally and globally, but also competing with public universities since all of them are attempting to diversify and expand the scope of their training to attract more students and more funding from tuition.

Market Orientation in Higher Education

Universities have come to grips with the reality that the provision of higher education is a service to be marketed just like services and products offered in the business world. In an environment where education is becoming global in nature, students have broader choices and there is greater competition among educational institutions:

> The higher education market is becoming increasingly dynamic and competitive. Consequently, one can say with confidence that it is no longer sacrilege to mix the words marketing and customer with university education.[11]

However, most universities have tended to use either the product philosophy of marketing or the selling philosophy of marketing. The product orientation assumes that offering high quality, high performance, or innovative products is what customers need or want - hence the expert or ivory tower symbol of universities. Those following this kind of approach pride themselves on being centers of academic excellence, but their definition of excellence is internally determined and is assumed to be what customers need.

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[9] Koc, "Extended Review of Shakespeare, Einstein and the Bottom-line", 65.
[10] Bennett, "Competitor Analysis Practices of British Charities", 335.
[11] Koc, "Extended Review of Shakespeare, Einstein and the Bottom-line, 19.

However, with increased challenges of globalization of higher education, the more popular approach seems to be the selling philosophy of marketing. This is about achieving a critical mass of publicity and public awareness of the universities' offerings:

> It is about projecting the right image, providing university information and maintaining a steady or increasing stream of applicants through a range of strategies that include advertising, public or external relations, direct promotion and personal selling.[12]

But this hard sell approach does not necessarily produce the expected results because it does not help to counter any negative feelings, sentiments or attitudes that potential students and other potential stakeholders may have about an institution. While students may be seen as customers or clients in need of routine information or expert guidance, they are more than that, and what they feel they need as customers or clients may not necessarily be what the conventional wisdom of higher education dictates. "The middle ground position is that students have a lot to contribute to the educational process. Delivering educational programs that ignore this fact becomes an exercise in imposition and deception".[13] Universities must listen to the needs of prospective students, employers, and their society to tailor academic programs that meet those needs.

Strategies for Enhancing Viability and Competitiveness

The formulation of an institution's competitive strategy begins with identifying the forces affecting competition in an industry or sector followed by identifying the institution's strengths and weaknesses relative to the sector, as well as taking into consideration the broader societal expectations. In short, a competitive strategy is not really about competition but a definition of the long-term direction of an institution; a description of the scope of the institution's activities; a description of what the institution should be and do in order to sustain a unique distinctiveness among its existing or anticipated competitors; a reflection of anticipated changes in the sector; and a statement of values and expectations of the stakeholders.[14]

To cope with the challenges of globalization in higher education and the increased competition both for students and for donor funding, institutions of higher learning have generally adopted a number of strategies which include: carrying out comprehensive curriculum review

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[12] Felix Maringe, "Interrogating the Crisis in Higher Education Marketing: The CORD Model", in *International Journal of Educational Management*, 19(7), 2005: 566.

[13] Maringe, "Interrogating the Crisis in Higher Education Marketing, 568.

[14] Gerry Johnson, Kevan Scholes, Richard Whittington, *Exploring Corporate Strategy*, 7th ed. (Harlow, Essex, UK: Financial Times Prentice Hall, 2005), chapter 5 "Business-Level Strategy".

and diversification to align programs with the trend toward globalization, a knowledge based economy, and cultural diversity; positioning as international players in higher education with teaching and research intended to benefit the international community and not just to meet the expectations of the local context; adopting role differentiation by moving from being comprehensive in teaching and research to identifying specific areas that the universities within which to make unique contributions and then concentrating resources on those areas; and engaging in collaboration with other institutions and sharing resources to enhance global competitiveness.[15]

But since the main objective of universities is to ultimately attract more students in order to ensure long-term financial viability, more attention is usually given to student recruitment through aggressive marketing of programs and at the same time ensuring that the programs are tailored to meet the needs of the students. Students tend to select institutions of higher learning on the basis of the perceived quality and reputation of the institutions and especially the extent of recognition the institutions enjoy in their own countries. But equally important is the cost as well as the perceived usefulness or utility of the degrees offered by the institutions.[16] Thus Christian institutions of higher learning that do not project a public image of quality and distinctiveness are unlikely to attract students even though they may have excellent academic programs.

Strategic Alliances

A strategic alliance may be defined as an arrangement where two or more institutions share resources or activities so that they may excel in their area of collaboration. Alliances make it possible for institutions to access academic resources, skills, innovation, finances or markets through cooperation rather than through ownership and hence attaining the critical mass needed for growth and long-term sustainability. Forming partnerships with providers of complementary services helps in reducing cost and improving service delivery. It also allows for co-specialization with each partner concentrating on activities that best match their capacities. In addition, alliances help to meet the need to learn from partners.

Usually the types of alliances that are common with institutions and businesses include joint ventures on programs like research, publishing, staff development; networks which are basically arrangements whereby two or more organizations work in collaboration for their mutual benefit;

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[15] Mok, "The Quest for World-class University", 277-304.
[16] Marilyn Russell, "Marketing Education: A Review of Service Quality Perceptions among International Students", in *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 17(1), 2005: 65-77.

and franchising where the franchise holder undertakes specific activities like manufacturing, distribution or selling while the franchiser is responsible for the brand name, marketing and probably training. This relationship may also involve licensing where the right to make a patented product is granted for a fee.[17]

This is a strategy that many small Christian Bible schools and colleges should consider in order to enhance their financial sustainability. But the main stumbling blocks to a strategic alliance are fear to venture into the unknown, partisan interests, or the sheer selfishness of institutional and denominational leaders. Instead of pursuing productive initiatives, many small Bible Colleges have tried to become universities on their own or have simply chosen to remain small and hope for a miracle to survive.

Of course for any institutions to enter into strategic alliances, they need to have clear, compatible, strategic objectives. They should have clear performance expectations, clear goals and organizational arrangements. Trust is the most important ingredient that contributes to success. This trust could be competence based where each partner believes the other has the competences and resources to fulfill their part in the alliance. The trust could also be character based, where the institutions trust each other's motives, and are also "compatible in terms of attitudes to integrity, openness, discretion and consistency of behavior".[18]

It is understandable that competition is not part of the daily language used by Christian institutions and charitable organizations, but in practice, many of them compete for the limited resources that they use to provide their services. Christian institutions in particular are intensely involved in competitive activities in response to pressure that has been building on them to expand their services and to become self-sustaining, at least in their day to day operations.

Christian institutions of higher learning have often been viewed as charitable organizations because they depend, to a large extent, on voluntary donations and grants mainly from private funding institutions and individual well-wishers to financially sustain their services and operations. In research conducted in 2003 involving 134 British charities, the idea that they were in competition among themselves was either suspect or strongly opposed. The general feeling was that "Not-for-profit or charitable organizations tend to see other charities not as competitors but as fraternal organizations working in the same general sphere".[19] The study found that the strong sense of collective identity where charities perceived

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[17] See chapter 7 "Directions and Methods of Development" in Johnson, Scholes, Whittington, *Exploring Corporate Strategy*.
[18] Johnson, Scholes, Whittington, *Exploring Corporate Strategy*, 357.
[19] Bennett, "Competitor Analysis Practices of British Charities", 339.

themselves as belonging to a larger group of philanthropic organizations created a feeling of community and a desire to cooperate rather than compete. This same altitude is generally held within Christian institutions and within the society at large. Many people do not expect Christian institutions to compete amongst themselves or with other institutions in the education sector. But in practice, they have to employ strategies and activities that are competitive in nature. Yet often, when they engage in aggressive resource mobilization activities, they risk being perceived negatively by those who have not come to grips with the realities of the changing Christian higher education dynamics.

Christian institutions of higher learning tend to follow the same kind of thinking and practice as charitable organizations even though the two are not quite the same. Charitable organizations exist mainly to provide services to the under-privileged and the disadvantaged or to provide services intended for the common good.[20] On the other hand, Christian institutions of higher learning exist to provide education and training that targets current or potential religious leaders or community influencers for the purpose of propagating or upholding the institutions' religious beliefs and values. As such they are not charitable organizations in the usual sense of the word 'charity'. Graduates of Christian institutions of higher learning may provide leadership to charitable organizations, but that does not make the institutions charitable organizations.

The reality is that there is a greater need for Christian institutions of higher learning to be more business-minded and market-sensitive than charitable organizations. Very likely there is going to be greater pressure for institutions to compete as Lettieri, Borga, and Savoldelli noted:

> The non-profit sector is at present involved in a deep renewal process. Non-profit organizations are required to deliver tailored and high-quality services in order to overcome environmental complexity and scarcity of resources. In this context, non-profit organizations are being called to reengineer their core processes and organizational paradigms.[21]

Not-for-profit institutions that are market oriented in relation to fundraising are also market oriented when they offer their services to the beneficiaries. Quality service and beneficiary satisfaction almost always tend to be correlated positively with the market-orientation.[22]

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[20] Bennett, "Competitor Analysis Practices of British Charities", 335-345.

[21] E. Lettieri, F. Borga, and A. Savoldelli, "Knowledge Management in Non-profit Organizations", in *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 8(6), 2004: 16.

[22] Roger Bennett, "Competitive Environment, Market Orientation, and the Use of Relational Approaches to the Marketing of Charity Beneficiary Services", in *Journal of Services Marketing*, 19(7), 2005: 453-469.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In view of the strategies identified and discussed, the following conclusions and recommendations are made. First, since students in Christian institutions of higher learning have become the main source for funds to cover operational expenses, as a matter of priority, aggressive student recruitment by professional staff should be carried out using a mix of marketing techniques.

Second, in addition to the low cost strategy used by Christian institutions of higher learning in order to attract students, such schools should include quality facilities and market-sensitive academic programs. This strategy should be coupled with an emphasis on fewer, but higher quality staff who are well remunerated and motivated in order to attain the lowest possible cost in operational expenses without compromising educational quality.

Third, Christian institutions of higher learning, assuming that they have a shared sense of divine calling and purpose, should avoid a duplication of efforts through offering similar programs and targeting the same group of potential students. The institutions should embrace collaboration and adopt differentiation strategies by creating programs that are perceived to be unique and valued by their potential customers. Ultimately, it is the value ascribed to the programs by the customers that determines whether they will pay for them or not.

Fourth, Christian institutions of higher learning should deliberately reduce their dependence on donor funding for recurrent expenditure. Such funding has become increasingly unpredictable and will most likely continue to shrink considerably in the future. The institutions should only seek donor funding for income generating projects and programs. Professional fund developers, as opposed to fundraisers, should be hired rather than relying on staff trained in other fields.

Fifth, Christian institutions of higher learning need to establish strategic alliances that would enable them to access and share academic resources, physical facilities, expertise, innovations, finances or markets through cooperation. Student exchanges and joint programs in which students cover part of the curriculum in one institution and complete the rest of the coursework in another need to be encouraged, depending on which institution owns which facilities. Staff exchanges and collaboration needs to be encouraged especially in the areas of joint research, and collaborative teaching.

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Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind:
Exploring Change in International Students at Africa International University

By Janice Horsager Rasmussen

Abstract

Many institutes of higher education aim to transform students. Parents, churches, and governments spend plenty of money and students invest years of their lives for this goal. This qualitative inquiry explores how international graduate students at Africa International University say they have changed. The levels and domains of change are analyzed. International students reached holistic perspective transformation (according to Mezirow's phases) in one main area: the broadening of perspectives related to international and interdenominational worldviews. They also evidenced various affective, psychomotor and cognitive changes, as categorized by Bloom's taxonomy. More specifically, on Krathwohl's revised taxonomy of the structure of knowledge, students showed learning in factual and conceptual knowledge. They also learned procedural and meta-cognitive competencies, although these were mostly learned informally. Student quotes illustrate these various levels and types of change students experienced. Implications for theological educators are given.

Introduction

For over thirty years, students from around Africa and the globe have sought higher education at Africa International University (AIU). They came because of AIU's reputation as a premier theological school. The faculty, many of whom are respected authors, attracted students. Students were also drawn AIU because it has international networks. And yet, while international, it is solidly situated in an African context, claiming to be "a school in the heart of Africa with Africa on its heart." Its long-standing mandate to develop Christian scholars and leaders for and in Africa has resulted in a powerful base of AIU alumni who also pull students to AIU.

AIU's mission clearly aims for change in its students. That mission is "to educate Christ-centered leaders for the transformation of God's people and world"[1]. This implies that the students themselves must first be transformed before they can transform others and the world. But how do we know if students have transformed? How do they change during their time at AIU, if they do change? Exams may show some changes while

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[1] "Africa International University Website," *Africa International University*, November 26, 2014, http://www.aiu.ac.ke/.

graduation brochures reveal others, but how do the students themselves gauge the changes in their lives?

This article reports how international students at AIU describe the ways in which they have changed while studying at AIU. These findings come out of the author's MPhil in Education research. An overview of the study's purpose, scope, context and methods are given. Findings are reported using the frameworks of Mezirow's phases of transformational learning and Bloom's learning domains and then analyzed. Implications for theological educators follow.

Purpose of the Study

This study was an exploratory qualitative inquiry into the experiences of international students at AIU. Generally, it aimed to understand the ways international students described their learning experiences at AIU, including the influences of their past learning experiences on their expectations and experiences at AIU. More specifically, it aimed to understand how international students described themselves changing while at AIU, if indeed, they did change. This article will focuses on the latter aim.

Africa International University

Africa International University (AIU), which provided the context of this research, is located in the suburban Karen area of Nairobi, Kenya. Since its inception in 1983 as Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST), AIU has aimed to prepare Christian scholars from throughout English speaking Africa for ministry in Africa. The original goal was to provide quality theological education at the graduate level (Master's and recently Ph.D.) for students from many denominations. AIU is currently expanding beyond the graduate level into Bachelor's level and also beyond theological education to train Christian professionals for the marketplace and civil society.[2] Started by the Association of Evangelicals in Africa, it is accredited with the Accrediting Council of Theological Education in Africa and chartered with the Kenyan government.

In recent years, 19-23% of the student body has been international students (non-Kenyan passport holders) from about 28 countries. During the 2012-13 school year, one-hundred and seven international students enrolled at AIU. Most come from English-speaking countries in Africa, but North America, Asia, Europe, Australia, and South America have also been represented in the student body in the past five years.[3] Some of these are only on campus two or three weeks per year for intensive

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[2] Douglas Carew, "From the Voice of the Vice Chancellor," *NEGST Graduation Magazine*, 2009, 15.
[3] Nidah Mutheu, *Summary Statistics on Reported Student Intake 2012/2013*, Admissions Dept. (Karen, Kenya: Africa International University, May 2, 2013).

programs, while others live on campus. Because international students get priority for campus housing, the on-campus community is very international. Most international faculty also live on campus. In recent years, about half (10 of 17) of full-time AIU faculty are non-Kenyan, although as the school adds bachelor's level courses, the percentage of international faculty is decreasing[4].

Method

This study utilized a qualitative, phenomenological, interpretive approach. The intention was to understand the lived experiences of these international students and the meaning they made from these experiences, from their points of view and in their own words. Participant observation and interviews were utilized. Since the researcher was the International Student Coordinator at AIU throughout the three years of the study, she knew most of the international students on campus personally and interacted with them regularly.

Participant observation notes were taken which captured a broad range of experiences of international students on campus. These included skits in chapel, small group discussions and one-on-one discussions with international students from many countries and programs. Five preliminary interviews with international students were also conducted, transcribed, and analyzed.

To get more in-depth, rich, detailed description, she developed and pilot-tested an interview guide. After revising it, all those in the population were sent an email invitation to be interviewed. Those who agreed were interviewed by the researcher. Fortunately, these represented a variety of countries, programs and family statuses (near maximum variation). When permission was granted (in all but one case) the interview was digitally recorded and then transcribed verbatim. In the other case, notes were taken during the discussion. Transcriptions were sent back to participants for accuracy checks and a few clarifications were made.

1. Population and Sample

International graduate students were chosen as a focus for this study because of AIU's history as an internationally-recognized graduate institution. In addition, very little research has been reported on international students studying in Africa. The population included all enrolled graduate international students living on the AIU campus and studying full-time and with at least one previous term of enrollment. "Graduate" included Masters and PhD students. "International" referred to

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[4] Ruth Kihika, *Summary Statistics on Reported Students 2010/2011 Intake*, Summary Statistics on Student Intake for 2010-2011 (Admissions Department: African International University, April 13, 2011).

all non-Kenyan passport holders. The total population at the time of the study was 34.

Students were interviewed from different countries, family and marital statuses, and programs. The sample included 12 men and one woman. It included six Master of Arts students, three Master of Divinity students, one MPhil student and three PhD students. The students in the sample had studied at AIU between three and fifteen terms, some in previous programs. The average was eight terms. The average age was 35. Various marital statuses were represented in the sample (single, engaged, married with family on campus, married with family back home, no children, up to five children). The students had lived outside of their passport countries from zero to 19 years, besides their stay at AIU.

The thirteen interviewed represented the wide cultural variety of students who attend AIU. This group spoke seven different mother tongues and came from eight different countries (Tanzania, Malawi, Nigeria, S. Sudan, USA, DRC, Canada, and Ethiopia). They had studied in thirteen countries in various languages including Arabic, Amharic, Oromo, French, Kiswahili, and English as well as some years in their mother tongues. Students came from a variety of schools, including denominational Bible schools, liberal arts colleges, secular universities, schools of ministry, and other theological schools.

2. Data Analysis

The transcripts and the participant observation notes served to triangulate the findings, as the participant observations included those who had not agreed to an interview and caught a wider range of student experience. The texts from both interviews and participant observations were all analyzed using the computer program WEFTQDA. The data were open coded into categories, then into axial codes, with themes eventually emerging. The process continued as interviews continued until no new information emerged. These themes were then sent back to the participants for member checks and comments. Informal discussions with international students helped to solidify the researcher's understanding of the themes. The themes related to transformative learning and changes in the various learning domains are reported in this article. Quotations from the transcripts were added to illuminate each theme, using pseudonyms for students.

Results and Discussion of Learning Theories

While international students reported changing in many ways, one may wonder if there was evidence of any transformative learning in their time at AIU. Indeed, there was one way in which all of them reported a transformational level of change: this is in the broadening of their worldviews. This perspective transformation happened as students

encountered diverse cultural perspectives and different theological, denominational viewpoints at AIU. They were challenged to examine their assumptions and to consider new meaning schemes and perspectives while at AIU. This transformational learning will be reported and analyzed, using Mezirow's framework of perspective transformation. This theory is meant to explain the process of perspective change, although it has been noted that the learners' perspectives have been missing in the transformational learning theory.[5] This article attempts to address that gap.

In other areas, student added knowledge, skills or changed attitudes. For example, they gained Biblical knowledge and hermeneutic skills. They developed confidence in their writing and ministry abilities. They developed coping skills for handling challenges in the new environment of AIU. These changes will be examined, using Krathwohl's revised Bloom's taxonomy.

Transformative Learning

First, a brief overview of Mezirow's transformative learning is in order. Mezirow claims that transformational learning occurs when one's person's belief, attitude, or entire perspective is transformed. As one's point of view (made of specific attitudes, beliefs, values) changes, so then, can one's habits of mind (dispositions) change. On a deeper level, one's frame of reference can change when taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations are challenged. If experiences and impressions are then filtered differently, those experiences may be given new meaning. This new meaning may lead to perspective transformation. This process of perspective transformation involves cognitive, affective, and conative aspects.[6]

Mezirow asserts that true, deep change often begins with a "disorienting dilemma,"[7] Other theorists of transformation in education concur, referring to this as a "sense of disequilibrium" (Piaget),[8] a "perplexing trigger event"[9] or a state of disenchantment.[10] This implies that

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[5] Patricia Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide for Educators of Adults* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 63.

[6] Sharan B. Merriam, Rosemary S. Caffarella, and Lisa M. Baumgartner, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 133.

[7] Jack Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1991), 168.

[8] Diane E. Papalia, Sally Wendkos Olds, and Ruth Duskin Feldman, *Human Development*, 9th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2004), 36.

[9] Stephen D. Brookfield, *Developing Critical Thinkers: Challenging Adults to Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1987), 26.

some pressure and discomfort is helpful, or even necessary, for transformational learning to happen.

In Mezirow's phases, once a disorienting dilemma happens, the person begins to reflect on the situation and the associated feelings. The person then must critically examine their assumptions and their meaning schemes. The person talks with others (who may be having a similar experience) about this issue and their related assumptions. Together, they consider new ways of acting, relating, and thinking. They rethink their frames of reference and their meaning schemes. They make a plan of action (develop an alternate perspective) and then look for the knowledge and skills to carry it out. With the help of a mentor, they try out the new roles/perspectives and then they revise them and gain confidence and competence in them. They then integrate these changes into their daily lives.[11] See Figure 1.

1. Disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examine, with feelings of guilt, shame
3. Critically assess assumptions – their epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions
4. Recognize discontent and that the process of change is shared - others have been through it
5. Explore options for new roles, relationships, actions
6. Plan a course of action, an alternative perspective
7. Get knowledge and skill to implement new plan/perspective
8. Try new roles/ideas, provisionally
9. Build competence and confidence in new roles/relationships/perspectives
10. Reintegrate life on basis of new perspective's conditions

Figure 1. Mezirow's Phases of Perspective Transformation, Adapted by Author[12]

Transformative Learning: Broadening Perspectives

All of the international students interviewed and many around campus spoke of experiencing the transformational change of broadening their perspectives. This occurred as they were exposed to different cultural mores and different ways of thinking. It also resulted from exposure to different denominations and various Christian viewpoints. Following are quotations from students' experiences that illustrate each of Mezirow's phases of transformation. These all relate to the theme of "broadening perspectives and worldview change" in their Christian, international context.

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[10] William Bridges, *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Transition*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2004), 107.
[11] Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, 4, 168–169.
[12] Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*, 146, 168.

1. Disorienting dilemma

International students were faced with many disorienting dilemmas. Their past learning and cultural experiences affected how they approached learning at AIU. Even before going to class, they had to deal culture shock and disorientation.

> *You are coming in Africa, you don't expect such changes. You assume that it's going to be like Africa. You are Africans. You have similar outlooks and all that. Then all of a sudden there's this rude shock or awareness that, oh, we're Africans, but there are so many things that are different (Jeremiah, Nigeria).*

In class, although all held an Evangelical theology, they were surprised at all the different perspectives presented by faculty and represented by their fellow students. Many had previously attended Bible schools in their own country and denomination. Suddenly, the viewpoints of many cultures, denominations and worldviews were thrust upon them.

> *When I came here, I have only one perspective; I have only one perspective of Anglicanism because all my learning was done on Anglican institutions… Then when I came here, I was exposed to a bigger tradition, the mixed international tradition or mix of many traditions, not only Anglicans. . . . You mix with other peoples, you know their theology, and you know their thinking. . . . The church is so big. . . . We have to listen to one another, to respect one another's view (Timitheo, Tanzania).*

> *AIU made me think critically about my theology, about my church doctrines. . . . AIU is an ecumenical university with people from different denominations . . . . The more you interact with these people, the more you gain, the more you change your mind (Isaka, Tanzania).*

2. Self-examination

Once they were exposed to people believing and doing differently, students began to question their own perspectives. They began to reconsider some of their beliefs and attitudes.

> *AIU changed my thinking, yeah, wrestling with professors in class about issues; at times I questioned myself and never thought that way. . . . It has just really changed me in thinking a different way (Yohanna, Malawi).*

3. Critical assessment of assumptions (epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic)

As international students confronted dilemmas and they began to examine their own viewpoints, they became cognizant of some of their basic assumptions. As they reconsidered their assumptions and checked their validity, they found that some needed to change. Many students shifted at this point, changing their frames of reference, and eventually, their meaning perspectives.

> *I think the classroom experience has been quite unique… I can say for sure that my perspectives have changed on a good number of things I used to think… I am able to double-check, sort of, some of the things I have been holding as my own perspective and world view. It has been*

challenged and shaped so that I think I'm going out a better person than I came (Samson, Cameroon).

4. Recognition of discontent, need to connect with others going through similar changes

The international, non-denominational campus community became important not only for providing disorientation, but for processing it. Students sought out others to discuss their confusion, both in class and outside of class. The international community on campus was vital for this processing.

If your interest is also to interact with people outside your culture, or to meet different people and if your vision is to work in future in Africa, this will be a good place to interact with people from outside of your country, in Africa. … This is a campus made up of people from different cultural backgrounds so that is a solidarity pool. . . . You know you are not alone whatever happens (Matteo, Nigeria).

If I was going through a rough time, like culturally, adjusting, I could just go across the room, you know, and go to my friend and they could relate to me, because on my floor, we had an Ethiopian, Tanzanian, Kenya, and an Indian. . . . It's all totally diverse. . . . We help each other out; the ones on the floor, over time as we've understood each other….We've become our own little family (Samuel, USA).

I expected to have classmates who I would really learn from as well and that's happened – people who are in pastoral ministry or people in Muslim related ministry or something – and we've been able to discuss things and sharpen each other and that kind of thing . . . It's after we'll have breaks and things during classes and so we'll be out talking and yeah, things just come out, like how my friend Paul, he'll see things like from a very unique perspective that I had not even thought of (Yakobo, USA).

5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, actions, and beliefs

Students continued to interact on the perplexing issues, talking with their lecturers and fellow students about their assumptions, predispositions, and frame of references. They compared theirs with those of others. In relationships, they dialoged through their questions and explored new beliefs and attitudes.

I enjoyed the intercultural and ethnic mix of the school… that's, for me, the strongest learning thing, 'cause you learn from different experiences across Africa and across the world. For example, I was in a class with [various students] ... from America, from England, from Zambia, from Malawi, and each is bringing something into the learning environment…that… helps to broaden your knowledge, broaden your understanding and broaden the concepts that you have in mind…that learning environment was very helpful, very rich for me… you have your own assumptions, prejudices, but … with time, it reduces that. Wherever go, you are able to say, well ... people have their own good ways of doing things. My own way is not always the best. So those prejudices are lowered (Jeremiah, Nigeria).

You get to know how other people approach life from their different countries and how they see what you don't see, through interaction with one another, learning from what they are doing out there in their countries, how they approach life, how they see things, how their system in education. . . . I had a roommate from Nigeria. . . . The Nigerian and Tanzania culture, they differ. So we came to learn from one another, slow by slow. We came to appreciate one another for that one year we spent together (Pierre, Tanzania).

6. Plan a course of action, develop an alternate perspective

Students spoke of developing new perspectives and thinking about how these might operate once they went back home. Some of their work at AIU facilitated this process.

I feel like each term ... there is a certain paradigm shift that I totally went through, just kinda of thinking of things in a totally different perspective (Benjamin, USA).

I've been generally really happy about the assignments because essentially what the profs are doing is they are saying, 'OK, take the content and merge it with your life and your ministry.' . . . A good percentage of my assignments have been geared toward engaging, and not just spitting back the content, not just demonstrating that you understand it but demonstrating that you have engaged it in such a way that it's kind of become part of your life, part of how you want to be and then part of how you want to teach and preach or minister on the side, too (Yakobo, USA).

Whatever I was receiving in class, my mind was reflecting back to the ministry (Pierre, Tanzania).

7. Get knowledge and skill to implement plan

Students built knowledge and skills as they broadened their perspectives on worldview and Christian diversity. Lecturers taught them to seek knowledge for themselves through such skills as learning Greek and Hebrew to read the Bible in its original languages, and developing skills in hermeneutics. Students also learned to relate cross-culturally so that they could continue to broaden their cultural perspectives, checking assumptions and frames of references in new situations.

I meet different lecturers in different departments and they are quite good lecturers, quite a good approach in teaching and helping students to understand, in helping us to learn more, to be independent, not too dependent only on the commentaries - you can read commentaries and critique them. This is what I found very inspiring at AIU (Timitheo, Tanzania).

So relevance and context have been very, very important ... other departments [besides Biblical Studies] also have been of great help to me and help me to really think outside the box (Samson, Cameroon).

8. Try out new roles, beliefs, ideas provisionally

Some international students were able to try out their new perspectives around campus and around Nairobi. Others wished for more practical outlets to try their new perspectives out while they had support and to solidify them before returning home.

The African is more practical-oriented, but here you are meant to think more in terms of abstract. You learn a lot of stuff, but there are no outlets. It's like you have to wait after three years. Then you go there and then you start to practicalize some of these things and . . . some of them, you even forget. ... but if you had opportunities to maybe put some of them into maybe direct practical use, they may be helpful, may stick with you more and perhaps, even help you to see how you may act out some of them in your context (Jeremiah, Nigeria).

9. Build competence and confidence in new roles/relationships, beliefs, attitudes

Some international students had opportunities to develop their broader perspectives through events on campus and through interactions with other students, teachers, and visitors. Faculty who were available to support the change and to coach and mentor students were appreciated.

One of the events that took place here that still has an impact in my life is the witchcraft colloquium. It has enhanced my understanding of witchcraft phenomena. I come from a culture where people really, really, really feel witchcraft and it's an issue. But I feel like I've felt an environment where we can talk about it, discuss it and it has really shaped and changed my way of looking at, 'What is witchcraft?' And when I go back home, I think I'll be different and I'll be able to help people to see how we can handle this issues that is with us (Daudi, Malawi).

So the faculty, most of them, have been very, very generous and gone out of their way to give advice and counsel outside of the classroom which has been very, very helpful, . . . more mentoring. They have given the students the feeling that we're more like colleagues than a strict teacher-student division. . . . I wasn't expecting it would be that collegial. . . . . It's not just about being in the classroom. So exposure to faculty who are willing to talk to students outside of the classroom has been a great benefit (Paulo, Canada).

10. Reintegration into life on the basis of the new perspective's conditions

For many international students, the real test of their perspective changes will be when they reenter their home cultures and ministries. However, some returned home each term break and were able to integrate some of their learning into their ministries. For example, one pastor told how he had realized some of his decisions were made based on culture, when he had thought they were Biblical. He went home and was able to reverse a decision about who someone could marry after he had gone through a perspective transformation at AIU.

In attitude, especially before coming here, I was very conservative in my ministry, just following some cultures, but my mind became open more to deal with the issues . . . reading books, learning here, having different discussions, different situations in the cultures, opened my mind to think broad and ah, to deal with the situation by being based on the Bible, not only on the culture (Emmanuel, Ethiopia).

I know there will be a lot of ministry benefit too in terms of teaching and ministry strategizing for later – there is a lot of benefit in my studies so far - because of exposure, yeah – and even in talking with fellow students and getting different perspectives – so some of the problems I was encountering as a teacher in Tanzania are being touched on in different ways (Paulo, Canada).

Student Changes by Domains of Learning

International students reported many other changes while at AIU. Although not necessarily transformative in Mezirow's definitions, these are still worth exploring. Bloom's revised taxonomy is helpful in studying the ways international students changed while at AIU. Bloom and his group separate possible learning outcomes into three basic dimensions: cognitive/knowledge, affective/character, and psychomotor/skills. See Figure 2. Students reported changing in various degrees in all of these domains.

Cognitive/Knowledge
Affective/Attitudes/Character
Psychomotor/Skills

Figure 2. Bloom's Taxonomy: Domains of Learning[13]

The affective and the psychomotor domains will be explored first. Then the changes in the cognitive domain will be explored in more detail. Although Bloom's taxonomy further stratifies the domains into levels, for clarity of discussion here, the affective and psychomotor domains will not be categorized by levels. For the cognitive domain, the revised "structure of knowledge dimensions" is more helpful for reporting these findings than the original "levels of learning" which used remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create.[14]

1. Affective Domain Changes

In the affective domain, including the character and spiritual aspects of learning, the students learned to integrate their faith and learning. They reported that they grew spiritually through programs on campus, through friendships and through their struggles. Many developed compassion for

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[13] Norman E. Gronlund, *Stating Objectives for Classroom Instruction*, 2nd ed., Current Topics in Classroom Instruction (New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., Inc., 1978), 26–34.

[14] David R. Krathwohl, "A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy: An Overview," *Theory into Practice* 41, no. 4 (Autumn 2002): 215.

people who suffered, as they suffered more away from home, without their families and communities around for support. Many also learned to trust in God anew for financial provision, as they no longer had steady jobs or family nearby to care for them. They learned to pray hard and to trust in God more. Their faith grew as they saw God provide. Humility grew in many, as some were bishops, teachers or pastors but at AIU, all were just students learning together.

> *It has helped me to trust God more than there [back home] where you can make phone calls and say there is no bread. . . . You don't have to pray. But here, you have to pray quite a lot, so that has kind of strengthened my faith to believe God will [provide] more for big things than was the case [at home] (Matteo, Nigeria).*

Decker[15] asserts that students who study in another country for several months often experience spiritual disorientation. This period of spiritual dissonance may follow a similar pattern to their cross-cultural adjustment. It is generally not an intended experience, but happens as a result of the many challenges in the new environment. He noted that, while the person often feels alone and far from God in this period, the person's identity is often permanently changed from living in a new culture and from going through this dissonance. He recommends support for students before, during and after this experience, to keep pointing them to God, and even praying Psalms of Lament.

> *Yeah, so it was about prayer and total surrender to God and even it was a time of humbleness, humility, to give over your pride and just be humble, to ask from people, and share with people your struggles. Actually prayer helped me also. I also find friends who can pray with me (Luka, DRC).*

Students developed networks with people from around the world and grew in appreciation for others. They mentioned professors who believed in them and who mentored them. Through this, they gained confidence that they could contribute to the world.

> *Here the learning process is for the purpose of ministry together. So we're all doing these studies because we're all going to go out and better the African church and start and understand our ministries better so there's more of a team sense, even with the faculty. . . . We have some mutual respect for each person's studies as each contributing to something broader. We're all working for the church in Africa. . . . We are all doing it together here. . . . We're part of a community and we're contributing to the greater good of the church and the academy across the continent, and also a sense that our studies are relevant and needed.*

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[15] Murray S. Decker, "Student Sojourners and Spiritual Formation: Understanding the Intersection of Cross-Cultural Adjustment and Spiritual Disorientation," in *Effective Engagement in Short-Term Missions: Doing It Right!* ed. Robert J. Priest, Evangelical Missiological Society Series 16 (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2008), 566, 584.

That's also something that our teachers have given us a strong sense of (Paulo, Canada).

Being grounded in African realities with African faculty and experienced students affirmed some of the students as African scholars.

My worldview has changed. I now cherish my Africanness. . . . Most of the lecturers that were teaching me here were Africans. . . . I'd never interacted with African PhD guys, because we don't have many there. . . . I . . . was about to lose my Africanness because I grew up in town and I went to American school where we felt like . . . our Africanness will one day disappear. But coming here to this school, AIU, I found it taking me back to my roots . . . the courses that I've taken here, the lecturers. They really push us back to our African roots to value our culture, to appreciate a lot of cultural aspects of our communities (Daudi, Malawi).

Now, I began to read a lot. . . . Now I have the interest of to being writing and to see how to start writing career, like writing books and articles in missions, even for the church, doing field research and writing articles. . . . Now, I'm more interested in combining the practical part of mission and the academic part. . . . I had never thought of myself like being a lecturer, but now I can see it (Luka, DRC).

2. Psychomotor (Skill) Domain Changes

Many students developed skills while at AIU. Skills mentioned included study skills, writing, researching, reading, and English proficiency. Some greatly improved their computer and library skills, particularly those who arrived with few of these skills. Doing parts of their classes via e-learning challenged some.

I struggled like the first three terms. I was like totally confused between the IT, and the library, and the classes and actually in my undergraduate we don't use computers. This was one of the hard things. Sometime I can write and in the middle of my assignment, I lost it. You can just feel the frustration (Luka, DRC).

Many students came from schools with exam-based assessments, but at AIU, academic papers were often required. Some came with very little experience writing academic papers or book reviews. Or the essays were expected to be written in a different style, as a Korean student found when he tried to write in the more "spiral" Korean writing style. The standards upheld at AIU for issues such as ownership of knowledge, plagiarism and reference systems were foreign to many students. Many noted improvement in their writing and research skills.

I've improved my writing skills, especially writing a thesis has helped me to know how to write. I have especially appreciated . . . the critique that people were putting on my paper. It really helped me to see, yeah, this is how I should write (Daudi, Malawi).

Although NEGST (now AIU) was established as an institution for English-speaking Africa, English was the mother tongue of very few international students. English language abilities varied immensely. Some

had hardly studied previously in English, whereas others had studied their entire lives in English. Some were proficient in French, but chose to come to AIU instead of its French sister school because of geographic accessibility, perceived quality differences, quantity of theological resources, and a desire to develop English competence. In fact, students from many countries (Rwanda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Tanzania, DRC, and S. Korea) came to AIU partly to improve their English competence.

> *We sometimes have very complicated books, so coming from French to English – even now, if you go to my desk, I have English dictionary. . . . I normally write slowly. I have to do these things together. So I need much time than my colleagues . . . and I need a proof reader. . . . It's expensive. . . . My English has improved a lot. When I came for the first time, I could even not pray in English. Now I can pray in English, I can preach in English. I can write in English. I've written two theses now in English, though it was hard, but I've done it and so my language has changed (Marco, DRC).*

Those accustomed to learning in other languages (Congolese, Ethiopian, Tanzanian, Sudanese) found it nearly overwhelming to learn solely in English. Simultaneously, many had to learn computer, library, critical thinking and academic writing skills. All of the language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) in English challenged them. Several sent their papers to friends around the world (even to Australia) to proofread for them, or they paid people locally.

> *That's another challenge, in fact, to write in a good way; since we are from different countries . . . we don't have English. Our people, they do not speak English. But here, since we are from different countries, our teachers, they look to our work, according to their standards or according to the other students, not understanding our problem, or our weakness in English (Emmanuel, Ethiopia).*

Some who were accustomed to learning in English (West Africans, North Americans, Malawians) struggled most with listening, as understanding the various professors' accents in echoing rooms was difficult at first.

> *For a lot of the students, you know, English isn't their first language, so they have to put in so much effort and time. It's just overwhelming. Even for me English was a challenge,. . . like when you hear some of the accents from West Africa,. . . I couldn't understand for a while (Samuel, USA).*

Students found their classes were preparing them practically for ministry. They appreciated opportunities to develop ministry and leadership skills in class, in their practicums, on the student council, and in their work study jobs. They developed these skills by doing oral presentations in class, by being a teaching assistant for a professor, by doing work study in the IT lab, and by observing the teaching processes at AIU. Their practicums in churches helped them gain confidence and

experience teaching, developing curricula and other ministry. They watched teachers teach, learning from faculty as models. Some noted the small class sizes at AIU as an advantage to getting attention and mentorship from professors. Some learned new skills because of their family situations, such as cooking, marketing, and balancing roles in the home.

3. Student Cognitive Changes by Knowledge Dimensions

In his revision of Bloom's taxonomy of learning, Krathwohl categorizes the knowledge dimensions into factual, conceptual, procedural, and meta-cognitive knowledge. These categories provide a framework to illuminate the various types of cognitive learning that students reported. The sub-categories of meta-cognition are also instrumental in understanding how students have changed more specifically in that category. See Figure 3.

A. Factual Knowledge - The basic elements that students must know to be acquainted with a discipline or solve problems in it.
Aa. Knowledge of terminology
Ab. Knowledge of specific details and elements
B. Conceptual Knowledge - The interrelationships among the basic elements within a larger structure that enable them to function together.
Ba. Knowledge of classifications and categories
Bb. Knowledge of principles and generalizations
Bc. Knowledge of theories, models, and structures
C. Procedural Knowledge - How to do something; methods of inquiry, and criteria for using skills, algorithms, techniques, and methods.
Ca. Knowledge of subject-specific skills and algorithms
Cb. Knowledge of subject-specific techniques and methods
Cc. Knowledge of criteria for determining when to use appropriate procedures
D. Metacognitive Knowledge - Knowledge of cognition in general as well as awareness and knowledge of one's own cognition.
Da. Strategic knowledge
Db. Knowledge about cognitive tasks, including appropriate contextual and conditional knowledge
Dc. Self-knowledge

Figure 3. Structure of the Cognitive Dimension in the Revised Taxonomy[16]

3.1 Factual Dimensions of Knowledge

In the factual dimension of knowledge, students learned basic facts and concepts. Many reported a significant increase in knowledge, particularly related to their majors and to the African context. They gained new insights which most felt would be helpful in their future work and lives.

The reason I came here is to be changed, to increase my knowledge. . . .
The Yoruba proverb that says if you are singing and your voice is not melodious; you don't need anyone to tell you as long as you can hear. . . .
I can tell that I have changed in terms of what I know... If your primary

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[16] Krathwohl, "A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy: An Overview," 214.

objective is to get content, I think this is the best place to get it, in our area of interest, on this continent . . . and to prepare for ministry (Matteo, Nigeria).

3.2 Conceptual Dimensions of Knowledge

In the conceptual dimension, they learned theories and how the concepts fit within the larger structure of their disciplines.

I've now done this course and realize theory is with me. . . . They are like brother and sister, theory and research, side by side. Theory is needed. For me, theory was like those who go to the moon. It has brought them to my home. . . . [I] thought these are for the Western world. We don't speak like being a scientist, yet what we're doing makes you a social scientist (Jean, Nigeria).

Students learned principles for understanding the Bible. For many, AIU challenged them to new levels of analyzing and evaluating information and theories. They were encouraged to critique commentaries, to think critically about doctrine, to compare ideas, and to create their own research projects.

[I changed in my] approach of the Bible, how I can read the Bible in its' own context 'cause sometime we, and I can say that even myself, we can jump to the Bible and jump to conclusions, we think that this is what the text is really saying, but sometime we got the message wrong so after theses two years I came that I should be very careful in every text . . . and faithful in every text I'm approaching and preaching, to have a right and good message from the test, not to bring my presuppositions and thinking to the text (Timitheo, Tanzania).

3.3 Procedural Knowledge Dimension

Most international students had to learn a new system of education, so their procedural knowledge increased drastically while at AIU. By necessity, they learned various methods of inquiry, criteria for deciding which skills, techniques, and methods are appropriate for which problems and when to apply them. Some who were accustomed to more teacher-centered approaches to learning had to develop skills in discipline to adapt to the student-centered approach of many lecturers at AIU. Many struggled to become more independent learners.

When I came here, I found a very different system. The teacher is like giving highlight and sending you back to work so that you may fill the gap – don't give you everything – give you major things and he send you now to fill the gap with readings, with assignments, with whatever. So that was, that was too new for us…. You are teaching yourself, you have to teach yourself. That's the kind of learning process here. They just guide you (Marco, DRC).

One of the least favorite has also been the best. There was one particular assignment where we really were pushed . . . using only primary sources . . . we were just groping in the dark to try and figure it out and produce a decent paper, so that was a really tough exercise, but it was also one of the best learning experience, without very much

guidance…so it was just kind of being thrown into the deep end. . . .
Most of it was on our own. (Paulo, Canada)

Since lecturers varied in their approaches and expectations, they also had to adapt to the context of each class, figuring out what was expected and the knowledge that would be most useful in that situation. This was a greater challenge when teachers and students were more dissimilar in teaching approaches and cultural values. So the students had to learn the AIU system in general, but also the specific expectations of each teacher, who had schooled in a large variety of contexts and systems.

You can have different lecturers; everyone . . . has his own system of
writing papers, even of referencing. . . . We are using Turabian as a main,
but some are like parenthetical, some footnotes (Matteo, Nigeria).

Because of the heavy work load, students were forced to develop better time management, planning, and study skills. They worked many hours, but they also learned how to discipline themselves and how to prioritize their work. They learned when to skim books and when to study in depth.

I've learned how to plan, how to use time well and using every single
minute wisely (Yohanna, Malawi).

I'm not a fast reader, so I'm learning how to read more quickly and
selectively . . . . I think I'm more efficient in thinking, sorting out, in reading
– being able to sort out what the key arguments are, what to look for – for
academic reading – that's a big benefit. (Paulo, Canada).

Perhaps because of the many diverse backgrounds, students wished for more clarity from professors and more consistency across the system. They wanted expectations to be clearly laid out in the syllabi. They wanted constructive feedback on their work.

You keep saying, 'Write a good paper.' That is somehow confusing . . .
but if you give me guidelines, follow these guidelines correctly, then I can
do better (Timitheo, Tanzania).

3.4 Meta-cognitive Knowledge Dimension

In the metacognitive realm, students increased their strategic knowledge capacities. Critical thinking, though expected in many graduate classes at AIU, was difficult for many. Students reported growth in their reasoning and thinking abilities. They learned some contextual knowledge and also increased in self-awareness.

Previous research on master's students at AIU revealed that most students expected knowledge to be absolute and certain. They were accustomed to receiving knowledge from authorities, such as elders,

sages, and bishops.[17] They were challenged when they were expected to critique various points of view and create their own evaluations regarding the knowledge claims.

Some students from Ethiopia, South Sudan, DRC, and Tanzania, for example, had previously been punished if they did not merely repeat back what the teacher said. Critical thinking had not been taught nor encouraged in their previous schools. A Sudanese student who had been taught in his Arabic school not to question the teacher but rather to repeat back what had been said found it difficult to debate with his American teacher. Lecturers often assumed students came in with these skills, so it took time for students to figure what was expected from some teachers (thinking critically, debating, or arguing in class) and to develop these skills. Likewise, students who had been taught to critique various viewpoints and to question all sources found it difficult to be in class with a professor who was expecting to be seen as the expert.

> *At AIU, study goes beyond what they call soaking in . . . beyond cognitive . . . like you wake up overnight . . . the learning is so different . . . a beautiful, wonderful program. . . . It's unique. It needs decoding. It's in coded form (Jean, Nigeria).*

> *I've improved my reasoning. I can argue and find my way out (Daudi, Malawi).*

Students' daily interactions within the international environment required that they develop contextual and conditional knowledge as they learned how to relate to various people and how to operate at AIU and in Kenya. All students came to AIU with considerable previous learning experiences which, no doubt, influenced their expectations of their time at AIU. Those who came from backgrounds based on more differences from the AIU and Kenyan cultures faced a steeper learning curve than others.

> *[The] learning approach when I was doing my Bible School and diploma was totally different from the system that I've seen here at AIU, and as well in South Africa, and even when I was in England (Isaka, Tanzania).*

AIU is smaller than some of the schools people had previously attended, with only about 500 students at the time of the study. Those from large secular universities (such as Nigerians) were confounded by the more organic way education was administered at AIU. Procedures seemed unclear, inconsistent, and they were unsure of where to take their concerns and questions. Conflict resolution processes were culturally confusing to many.

> *Here you don't quite know where to go. Maybe that is where you get some of your worry from. You don't quite know which systems to follow.*

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[17] John K. Jusu, "Factors of Epistemological Frameworks among Master of Divinity Students at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology" (Doctoral Dissertation, Trinity International University, 2009), 170, 185.

And even when you do that, the general spirit around does not seem you as if you are doing something right even when your motive is right (Matteo, Nigeria).

Students also developed their self-knowledge through studying at AIU. The doctoral students in particular spoke of how much they had learned about themselves. One said "a lot of self-awareness" when he was asked how he had changed from studying at AIU. Many master's students also grew in their understanding of what worked for them as they tried to cultivate discipline, time management, prioritizing, planning capabilities.

Conclusion

This research study described how graduate international students at one private Christian university in Kenya (AIU) reported changing. This study revealed that perspective transformation was possible at AIU, as evidenced by students' transformed perspectives on worldview and theology. This change will prove helpful as students go out into an increasingly globalized world and as they interact with other ministers from various denominations. They will be equipped to be bridge people for God's kingdom. However, this change took time and effort. It required some discomfort, a hard look at one's assumptions, comrades in the process, and coaching as students considered new perspectives. It required a safe place where students were allowed to try out new ideas. It also required "scaffolding" and support from teachers as students made commitments to new perspectives. A holistic, campus-wide effort was needed, as the informal discussions around campus in grace groups, the cafeteria, and the apartments were just as important as classroom discussions in facilitating perspective transformation.

This study also uncovered that learning occurred at AIU in all of the various domains. These were worthy changes, but some of these may have been more transformational if lecturers intentionally approached them with a goal of perspective transformation. The cognitive learning goals were more intentionally taught, particularly at the factual and conceptual levels. Some psychomotor, procedural and meta-cognitive competencies were taught. For example, staff on campus taught library and computer skills and some lecturers taught students about time management or writing a book review. However, students learned many of these haphazardly, out of necessity. Explicitly teaching some of these competencies (such as critical thinking, academic writing and English) may have been more efficient. Affective learning was often more "caught" than "taught" although a few lecturers intentionally influenced students' affective learning.

It is uncertain if or how long these changes will endure once they return home. Mezirow suggests that the more students have developed and "practiced" new perspectives, skills or attitudes at AIU, the more they

will be incorporated into their lives and in future situations. Coaching, group support, practicums, and bridging to key people back home during the AIU stay may help facilitate lasting change.

This exploratory study points to several follow-up studies. Researching how alumni have changed from their studies at AIU would shed light on which changes have been the most important and enduring. Comparing Kenyans with international students would differentiate which changes are particular to international students. Comparing students at AIU with students of other similar institutions would provide insight on various contexts. A more in-depth study on how students experience the steps of perspective transformation may reveal more about the process. Studying how faculty facilitates change as they teach would also be helpful for teachers in similar institutions.

Implications for Theological Educators

While perspective transformation involves the entire campus, this study points to several key actions faculty can take if they are sincerely interested in transforming God's people, as AIU's mission states:

Create disorienting dilemmas for the students, or utilize their existing dilemmas.

Help students check their assumptions and rethink their frames of reference.

Push them to develop alternative perspectives and try them out.

Provide coaching, support, scaffolding, and a safe environment for trying out new ideas.

Encourage students to build a learning community at AIU but also including key people back home.

Teach procedural and meta-cognitive competencies needed to learn the facts and concepts.

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The Integration of Faith and Learning:
Aligning Values and Intentionality with the Mind of God

by Benjamin Mwange Musyoka

Abstract

This paper probes the issue of the Christian integration of faith and learning from the broad sphere of human nature, spirituality, and the mission of the Church on earth. The paper posits that the greatest hindrance to the integration of the Christian faith and learning is the subtle dichotomization of life into the secular and the sacred. There are too many Christian scholars and, particularly theologians, who operate unconsciously from that dichotomization and who see themselves as called by God to focus only on the sacred issues of life. The intention of this writer is to draw attention to this subtlety that has influenced evangelical Christian theology and educational practice for years and left many believers disillusioned by the apparent failure to find a meaningful role for their faith in daily life.

Introduction: Defining the Problem

What is it that necessitates the existence of Christian institutions of learning alongside the public ones that offer similar formal academic programs targeting the same people in a given locale? Christians are certainly key stakeholders in public education in their countries of residence, and unless there is something educational in nature that the public school is not able or willing to provide, there should be no justifiable reason for the existence of the Christian school. In most cases, public and the Christian schools play a complementary role; that of the public school being to provide knowledge and skills needed for the workplace and good citizenship while the role of the Christian school is to deliberately shape in students the specific kinds of values and life motives that govern the use of educational knowledge and skills in the promotion of the mission of the Church on earth as God intends it to be. This requires the integration of the Christian faith and learning.

The need to integrate faith and learning arises out of three perennial problems for Christian educators: the ineffective nurture of the Christian faith, the apparent disconnect of the Christian school from the mission of the Church, and the identity crisis of the Christian scholar. Each of these will be addressed in order to clarify the nature of the problem.

The Ineffective Nurture of the Christian Faith

In 1976, John Westerhoff, an Episcopal priest and a Professor of Religious Education at Duke University Divinity School wondered whether Christians were indeed able to pass on their faith in Christ to the next generation or were they merely engaged in religious indoctrination that

was devoid of spiritual power and relevance to the realities of life? He observed that:

> A continuing myopic concern for nurture, understood primarily as schooling and instruction and undergirded by increasingly vague pluralistic theologies, will not be adequate for framing the future of religious education. Today we face an extremely radical problem which only revolution can address. We must now squarely face the fundamental question: Will our children have faith?[1]

His point was that the local church does not seem able to produce the intended results in the nurture of the Christian faith and neither are Christian schools and universities. Fifteen years later, Jim Wilhoit of Wheaton College echoed the same concerns when he boldly asserted that Christian education was in a crisis - bankrupt and purposeless. Teachers, youth pastors, and Bible study leaders, all followed a curriculum, stated or assumed, which had no ultimate purpose. They studied one book of the Bible, finished it up and moved to another without being able to tell exactly what they hoped to ultimately accomplish.[2]

In an article that appeared in the Kenyan *Standard* newspaper on July 10, 2010, Anne Muraguri captured the concerns of many when she wrote:

> It seems the Church is not meeting the spiritual or otherwise expectations of the faithful and that's why they are joining cults at will… . We always hear of 'mega' Christian concerts, which the youth flock in large numbers with apparent spiritual hunger, yet we never see the results of transformed lives. They often come out of the concerts exhausted but spiritually malnourished.[3]

Muraguri's observation is significant. While there is a lot of religious activity around us, there is very little nurture of Christian spirituality. We often confuse religious activity with spirituality. Many people are religious but their religion seems devoid of spirituality and a connectedness to and fear of God. As a result, there is a growing number of people who no longer want to be associated with religion and who believe that they are spiritual but not religious. Unfortunately, such people who tend to differentiate spirituality from religiousness as two non-overlapping concepts also tend to make spirituality subjective and are more easily drawn into cultic groups where proper teaching and guidance is lacking.[4]

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[1] John Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 2.

[2] Jim Wilhoit, *Christian Education and the Search for Meaning* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 9-11.

[3] Anne Muraguri, "Church Failed to Guide the Youth", *The Standard*, July 10, 2010.

[4] Brian J. Zinnbauer, *Capturing the Meanings of Religiousness and Spirituality: One Way Down from a Definitional Tower of Babel* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Bowling Green State University, Ohio, 1997), 5-6.

This growing disillusionment with religion and religious activities has become a major concern to Christian educators, creating an urgency to look afresh into the issues and processes of the integration of the Christian faith and learning. The disillusionment is not limited to one religion; it is an expression of a restlessness creeping over humanity as the world slides into post-modernism, a chilling sense of failure of human effort, science, and even religion, to inspire a realistic hope for a better future.[5] Both the local church and the Christian school stand condemned for failing to nurture true, holistic, Christian spirituality.

A Disconnect of the Christian School from the Church's Mission

Closely related to the lack of nurture is the disconnection of the Christian school from the mission of the Church. Most Christian schools and universities offer academic programs whose content differs very little from what is offered in non-Christian institutions of learning apart from the fact that there may be prayer, Bible reading, and chapel attendance.

Christian institutions of learning seem to exist primarily for the purpose of providing a protective environment that shields students and staff from the onslaught of secularism and the moral perversity of the world. Many Christian educators give little thought to how the school fits into the mission of the Church, and what that mission is or what it ought to be. They make no attempt to relate their teaching and scholarship to the Church's mission and rarely do they make this a subject of discussion and reflection during their faculty colloquiums or curriculum review deliberations - unless they are theological schools. Very few Christian scholars see their involvement in research and reflection as a divine calling related to God's mandate for His Church on earth.

The dichotomization of life into the secular and sacred, and Christian mistrust of the naturalistic understanding of human nature and behaviour, has led to the failure by many Christians to see the natural and the supernatural as complementary. This is a doctrinal problem. Christian teachers and preachers agree that all truth is God's truth yet many of them reject or ignore much of what we can learn about human nature through careful observation and experimentation. They pay little or no attention to the role human emotions, feelings and psycho-social needs play in worldview formation and transformation.[6] Therefore, they fail to create a supportive social environment in which the Church and Christian school can nurture a holistic Christian worldview.

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[5] Paul Lakeland, *Postmodernity: Christian Identity in a Fragmented Age* (Minneapolis: Fortress press, 1997), 26-30.
[6] John Carter & Bruce Narramore, *Integration of Psychology and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1979), 8-9.

The Christian school is the educational arm of the Church that, as the Body of Christ, exists to exercise dominion over God's creation on earth (Gen. 1:26) and to reverse "the damage done to persons and nature through the Fall".[7] This includes bringing everything under the headship of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:19-21; Eph. 1:10), not just by preaching about the Kingdom of God, but also by demonstrating its presence on earth in practical ways (Matt. 12:28).

However, many denominational and church leaders are hardly concerned about or involved in what goes on in Christian schools even when the churches or denominations own the institutions. As a result, those churches have little or no influence on the philosophy and practices of those institutions, especially the Christian universities. The churches often do not provide sufficient support to their institutions in terms of personnel and/or resources to promote quality teaching, research and professional development of the staff. To them, the Christian school is not really a priority but just a peripheral community service ministry. As such, there is little or no collaboration between the local church and the school in the nurture of the Christian faith, and in the promotion of teaching and scholarly research for the common good of humanity.

The Identity Crisis of the Christian Scholar

The other challenge the Church faces today is the identity crisis of the Christian scholar. For much of the 20th century the secular elite in the academia has been suspicious of the Christian scholar and at times harassed them. For example, in 1988, a subcommittee of the American Association of University Professors argued that, "religiously based colleges and universities forfeit their 'moral right to proclaim themselves as authentic seats of higher learning' and are not institutions in the same class as those without religious commitments".[8] As a result, scholars from religious institutions of learning were at the time denied the right to be members of the association.

This is just one of the many experiences that Christian scholars have been subjected to, especially by the Western world in its gradual slide into secularism, religio-phobia, and moral disorientation. There has been a concerted effort among the dominant secular elite to silence and deny the Christian scholar the opportunity to influence academia. Unfortunately, Christian scholars themselves have responded to this by either submitting to the forces of secularism that dichotomize life into the secular and the sacred or by forming alternative professional associations which apparently do not seem to enjoy the same prestige and broad recognition as their secular counterparts. This is mainly because the alternative

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[7] H. Snyder, *The Community of the King,* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1977), 47.
[8] Stephen V. Monsma, *When Sacred and Secular Mix* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996), 68.

associations are formed more for survival than for offering unique educational and research services for the benefit of humankind and God's creation on earth. Hence, the secular elite in academia and the world in general tend to see Christian scholars as narrow minded and insensitive, if not completely out of touch with the realities and challenges of life today.

The Western Slide into Secularization

A 2008 study conducted in Denmark and Sweden found that for most of the people in the two countries, religion had simply become a non-issue.[9] J. E. White, writing from the North American context agrees that in the Western world, religion is getting to the point where it no longer matters. There is now a large proportion of people who are not just rejecting religion; "they're not thinking about it at all".[10]

The rise of modern Western secularism can be traced to the collapse of the Roman Empire and especially the fall of Rome in 410 AD. This marked the beginning of what historians used to refer to as the Dark Ages, spanning the first 400 years of the Medieval Period in Western civilization.[11] The Medieval Period was characterized by little human development and lack of advancement in all fields of life. Without a powerful central government in the then Roman Empire, tribal groupings across Europe rose against one another and the devastation that followed was unimaginable. Almost every symbol of culture, education or religion was reduced to ruins, except in the churches. The mighty Roman Empire had dominated the world for over 620 years, and with its collapse people seemed not to know how to organize their lives. What followed was a state of anarchy across Europe.

Church leaders, especially the bishops stepped in to fill the void, and it was indeed at that period that Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo in modern day Algeria, provided the intellectual leadership needed. He offered answers to the many spiritual and philosophical questions that the shocked world was asking after the collapse of the Roman Empire. His writings laid the philosophical foundation on which modern Western culture rests. With the support of numerous feuding monarchs across Europe, the Bishops of Rome became the symbol of hope and unity in the matters of both Church and State.[12]

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[9] Phil Zuckerman, *Society Without God* (NY: New York University Press, 2008), 18-21. Zuckerman, a sociologist, fails to see morality as inherent in human conscience and concludes that since Scandinavians are rated as among the least corrupt, it possible to lead a happy and morally upright life without religion.

[10] J. E. White, *The Church in an Age of Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 21.

[11] Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, (Waco, TX: Word Publishers, 1982), 140-142.

[12] Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 196-200.

But the assumption of centralized spiritual and civil powers, and the pursuit of material wealth by the Bishops of Rome corrupted the Christian faith to the point where religion became a tool of repression and exploitation of the masses by the ruling Church elite. This continued for several centuries until a revolt within the Church gained momentum. In 1517, a disillusioned but courageous Roman Catholic priest and monk, Martin Luther, posted the 95 theses that publicly questioned the teachings and practices of the Church. This helped stoke the fires of what became known as the Protestant Reformation led by himself and others, including John Wycliffe, Jan Hus, and John Calvin.[13]

Those reformation efforts within the Church inspired courage in non-clerical scholars, who until then had operated under the shadow of the clergy. They began to express themselves and eventually became the key drivers of the Western Renaissance (rebirth) that marked the end of the Medieval Period in Europe. By their Reformation initiatives, the clergy had unknowingly sowed the seed of secularism that began to manifest itself as the Age of Reason or Enlightenment during the 17th and 18th centuries (1648-1789 AD).[14]

The Reformation was driven by the need to re-establish the authority of the Scriptures over the Christian faith and practice. But the Renaissance was spearheaded by a broader spectrum of scholars as a re-discovery and re-birth of the values of classical Greek and Roman civilization as previously expressed in literature, politics, and the arts before the collapse of the Roman Empire. But the Roman Catholic Church saw those reforms as a challenge to papal authority and a recipe for doctrinal anarchy. This necessitated the Council of Trent (1545-1563) where the Roman Catholic Church re-examined its beliefs and practices and spelt out what it considered to be Orthodox Christianity.[15]

However, the followers of Martin Luther in German did the same while the followers of John Calvin in France and Switzerland also affirmed their beliefs as the true believers in Christ.[16] None of the groups were willing to soften their hard line stands to accommodate the others. Roman Catholic persecution of heretics intensified. Lutherans responded by going to war with Catholics in Germany and Calvinists fought Catholics in France. The Puritans in Britain also agitated for the reform of the Anglican Church that had formally broken off from the Catholic Church in 1536 AD when Henry III of England dissolved the Roman Catholic monasteries and abbeys in a move aimed at freeing his country from religious control by Rome.

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[13] Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 255-258.

[14] Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 319-338.

[15] Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 295-308.

[16] Jose L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: The Reformation to Present Day*, *Revised Edition* (NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), 37-52.

This turmoil in the Church led to the religiously motivated Thirty Years War in Europe that finally ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. People, both within and outside the Church, were exhausted and sick of seeing bloodshed in the name of religion and of a fanatical fixation on doctrinal orthodoxy.[17] Scholars began to ask hard questions about religion as Shelley points out:

> Common decency cried out against the power of fanatical clerics. More and more people felt only disgust at the burning or drowning of an elderly woman accused of witchcraft or heresy. Religious prejudice seemed like a far greater danger than atheism. So a thirst for tolerance and truths common to all men spread.[18]

Three things precipitated the growth of secularism in Western Europe:
1. The need to be liberated from the dominance and apparent exploitation of the masses by the clergy;
2. A rejection of the assertion that there was a special knowledge that God makes known only to the clergy and not to all believers;
3. The emergence of a view of science and reason as capable of uniting humanity on the basis of truth that is common to all and can be verified by all.

To Christians, this was not a rejection of Christianity, but a movement of freedom of belief and worship that became the basis for Evangelical Protestantism and the profession of personal rather than group faith in God. But to non-believers, the Enlightenment era was a declaration of freedom from religion. It was a proclamation that human beings were reasonable by nature and their future and wellbeing were best guaranteed by Reason and not by God who seemed unpredictable and worked only through a privileged few within the clergy. What a person could not perceive and experiment on through the five senses was not reality and hence, there was the need to separate the objective reality of science from the unverifiable subjective experiences of religion.

Dualism of Body and Spirit

For Christian scholars of the 17th and 18th centuries, the clamor to unify humanity on the basis of truth that is common to all and that could be verified by all was not a bad idea. It could be justified on the basis of the dualism of the body and spirit. For them it was common sense that there was some form of knowledge that lies in the non-material realm, and this truth could not be subjected to scientific analysis and experimentation.

Past attempts to understand human nature thought in terms of body and soul as inseparable entities (monism) or in terms of body, soul and spirit as separate entities (trichotomy). But now it was the dichotomous

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[17] Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity,* 67-71.
[18] Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 331.

view that prevailed due to its simplicity - the dualism of the material (body) and the non-material (soul/spirit).[19]

Descartes (1596-1650) made an influential attempt to defend the idea that there were two kinds of knowledge, one derived from the non-material realm and the other from scientific research and experimentation in the physical world. He justified his arguments through the concept of dualism of the body and spirit, asserting it was possible to know more intuitively than the senses allow. Hence faith and reason could be separated.[20]

Basing his thinking on this concept of dualism, Spinoza (1632-1677) popularized the idea that the State and public institutions should promote learning through reason and experience only and thus protect the freedom of thought. Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) built on this and laid the groundwork upon which Kant (1724-1804) and Hegel (1770-1831) developed their own educational philosophies. They stressed that the primary function of public education is the improvement of the physical qualities of human life especially through liberal education. This in turn led to the development of the progressive philosophies of education during the 19th and 20th centuries.[21]

But eventually the debate on the dualism of the body and spirit drifted away from simply understanding human nature to focus on keeping religion out of public life. The dichotomization of the material and the non-material nature of humanity elevated the autonomy of human reason and science above religion in the quest to find solutions to human problems and in the pursuit of happiness.[22] This view has grown within academia to the extent that secular scholarship sees religion in general as an impediment to science and human progress.[23]

Functional Interdependence of Body and Spirit

A fundamental concern that educators in general have often grappled with is whether embracing the view of dualism of body and soul/spirit necessarily requires the dichotomization of the secular and the sacred. Scholars who hold a scientific or materialistic worldview believe that a Christian worldview is incompatible with science and reality. Some go as far as to insist that the spirit is an aspect of the mind and a function of the body, specifically the brain, and not a non-material entity with its own existence separate from the body. However, according to Lewis and

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[19] Gordon L. Lewis & Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, vol. 2. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 482-483.
[20] William H. Schubert, *Curriculum: Perspective, Paradigm, and Possibility*, (NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986), 383-385.
[21] Schubert, *Curriculum: Perspective, Paradigm, and Possibility*, 387-396.
[22] Lakeland, *Postmodernity: Christian Identity in a Fragmented Age*, 13-16.
[23] Monsma, *When Sacred and Secular Mix*, 24-26.

Demarest, the Christian worldview holds that the mind is the functional link of the soul with the body, the soul being capable of subjective awareness, reason and intentionality.[24]

The soul is non-material, immortal, and the animating essence in humans and other animals. But within the human soul is the spirit - the energizing component of the soul that serves as the interactive link with other spiritual entities. The Bible uses the terms body, soul and spirit but quite often, the soul and spirit are used interchangeably.[25] This implies that the difference between the two is more functional and relational than substantial. Thus the belief in dualism of the body and spirit does not exclude the soul. It also does not imply a dichotomization of the secular and sacred with regard to human nature and life in its totality. Dichotomization is based mainly on monistic-materialistic philosophies whose intent is to curtail the influence of religion in education and normal daily life.

Learning from the Story of the Demoniac in Mark 5:1-15

In Mark 5:1-15, we encounter a demon-possessed man whom Christ brought to normalcy. Something non-material left the man at the command of Jesus. Before then, the man did not have control over his body (brain) and whatever was in him had taken charge of his mental faculties. The evil spirit had knowledge of the Son of the Most High, but there was no reason or evidence to suggest that the spirit of the man had such knowledge. The spirits were capable of thinking and making choices, and hence the ability to make the request to enter into the pigs. The decision to make the request was not made in the man's brain or soul; he had no awareness of what the spirits were doing when they were using his body.

From this encounter, it is reasonable to conclude that a spirit is capable of acquiring knowledge, thinking and making choices. Thus self-awareness, reason, and intentionality belong to the realm of the spirit and not the body. The body provides the spirit with the means for physical expression and interaction with the material world. However, when the body is not in a good physical state due to sickness or injury, the spirit's physical expression and functioning may be impaired depending on the nature of the problem.

The brain, which is matter made up of different elements of different atomic composition, is not self-conscious and does not think, for there is no evidence that atoms have life in themselves. The brain receives sensations from the five physical body senses but it does not interpret and

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[24] Lewis & Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, vol. 2, 450-459.
[25] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 473-477.

make conclusions and decisions from them. That lies in the realm of the spirit or soul. Thus education is for the soul.

Intellect, Mind, and Soul

Educators have noted that the ability to learn is dependent on brain development.[26] Children are not able to think and reason like adults and their intellectual advancement takes place in stages, becoming more sophisticated from childhood to early adulthood when the brain reaches its full physical development.[27] The works of Lawrence Kohlberg and others have also demonstrated that moral development is dependent on intellectual development and both follow the same pattern of brain development.[28] James Fowler too links faith development (in essence worldview development) to the intellectual development pattern.[29]

According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, intellect "signifies the higher, spiritual, cognitive power of the soul. It is … awakened to action by sense, but transcends the latter in range." Thus intellect is a mental skill, the cognitive ability of the mind for rationality beyond mere sensation. The encyclopedia adds that intellect is "not exerted by or intrinsically dependent on, a bodily organ, as sensation is". But it presupposes sensation in that cognition starts from a sense experience.[30]

Thus, intellect is the functional ability of the brain that allows the soul-mind to interact with facts, understand them, make conclusions and solve problems. A person who displays the capacity for critical and analytical thought and reasoning is referred to as an intellectual which means that intellectual development is the qualitative progression of a person's body-soul interaction in the acquisition and construction of knowledge from one's environment to make sense of and draw logical conclusions based on such knowledge. A soul trained in the spiritual realm differs from other human souls at the level of values and intentionality and not necessarily in intellectual, academic, or professional skills.

Educating the Soul

As the soul-mind is able to construct knowledge from interactions with the material world, engagement in the non-material realm through the spirit is also through physical brain sensations. Thus through intellectual

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[26] Jean Piaget, *The Department of Thought: Equilibration of Cognitive Structures*, (NY: Viking, 1977), 16-17.

[27] Herbert P. Ginsburg & S. Opper, *Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development*, 3rd edition, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988), 206-236.

[28] Lisa Kuhmerker; Uwe Gielen; & Richard L. Hayes, *The Kohlberg Legacy for the Helping Professions*, (Birmingham, Alabama: R.E.P. Books, 1991), 11-17.

[29] James Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, (NY: Haper Collins Publishers, 1981), 89-114.

[30] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, www.newadvent.org/cathen/08066a.htm, accessed on March 18, 2014.

stimulation, it is possible to educate the human soul-spirit. The human soul is capable of communing with the Spirit of God through intellectual engagement and hence able to understand, to some extent, the mind of God, His values and intentions (Gen 2:7; Is. 1:18). Value and intentionality are within the soul, but for those values and intentions to be aligned with the mind of God, the human soul must be educated and trained to relate, commune, and interact with the Spirit of God.

Therefore, the purpose of Christian education, both in the local church and in the Christian school, is primarily to shape the values and the intentions of the soul by nurturing a relationship between the human spirit and the Spirit of God. That relationship was broken after the fall of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3) and is restored through faith in Christ (John 1:12). The restoration of the relationship is only the beginning of a transformational journey in the realm of values and morality both of which dictate human intentions.

The Christian school needs to educate the soul to discover and internalize the virtues and values of the mind of God or the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:15-16). The Spirit of God had purpose and intention when He created human beings, and by their spirits they are able to interact with and know the mind of God, to the extent that He wills (Deut. 29:29). This is what is often referred to as the Christian worldview, a view of the world and the universe as conceived in the mind of God when He said, "Let there be" and there was. This is a view of the universe that does not separate the secular from the sacred, religion from science, or personal from public life. It sees design and purpose in all creation, visible and invisible, material and non-material.

Philosophical secularism is the belief that there are aspects of life where religion is irrelevant or unnecessary. Values are based on existential necessity and narrow human interests. Choices are made without regard for God's will and purposes. Human acts of benevolence and good works bring glory and honor to creation rather than the Creator.

Albert Greene describes worldview as a constellation of beliefs, attitudes and prejudices that we have internalized through personal experiences of our own environment and life and that operates below the level of consciousness.[31] The Christian school plays a vital role in shaping those personal experiences through learning interactions and engagements with the Spirit of God. This is about God centered and Christ directed soul orientation in the realm of the spirit. For it is Christ who reveals the Father to the human soul.

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[31] Albert Greene, *Reclaiming the Future of Christian Education: A Transforming Vision,* (Colorado Springs: Association of Christian Schools, International, 1998), 92-94.

Unfortunately, many Christian educators have borrowed from the educational models of the public school that primarily teaches knowledge and skills needed by students to respond to their physical environment and to exploit it for their own benefit and survival without a sense of stewardship and accountability to God. Such a school attempts to provide value-free education for problem-solving, critical thinking, and adaptation without seeking to align the human soul with the mind of God. But by so doing, the educational skills acquired lack the values required to govern their use.

Conclusion

When Christian scholars succumb to the predominant worldview and culture of scientific dualism, by their practice they subtly affirm a belief in the dichotomization between the secular and the sacred as two realities between which they should make a choice. As Albert Greene puts it, they take comfort in the correctness and the orthodoxy of their theological doctrines, but their vision of reality is dictated more by the popular culture and practices of the time and not by the theological doctrines they treasure.[32] Where they need to speak out on issues, they keep quiet; where they need to be involved, they withdraw, and where they need to be proactive, they react. For these scholars, the Christian school is about teaching believers how to withdraw from the world and remain untainted as they wait for a new world to come.

However, the Christian school should be a place for the nurture of the values of the soul as opposed to mere religious instruction. Students and staff need a community of faith where love, justice, faithfulness, fairness, kindness, and mercy are nurtured and where there is a sense of calling and commitment to the virtues of the common good of humanity. These are the values and intentions of the mind of God. Worship of and communion with God is critical.

The pioneering spirit of Christian scientists and scholars like Copernicus (1473-1543), Galileo (1564-1642), Francis Bacon (1561-1626), and Isaac Newton (1642-1727) needs to be rekindled in the Christian school. These 16th-18th century Christian scholars led and others followed. Today's Christian leaders and scholars tend follow and fit into the existing structures of society rather than provide new and viable options. As a result, spiritual casualties are always high whenever Christian school graduates enter the market place or public life. But if such graduates are guided by the mind of God and have a sense of calling in the use of their skills, the world will take notice.

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[32] Greene, *Reclaiming the Future of Christian Education,* 95-96.

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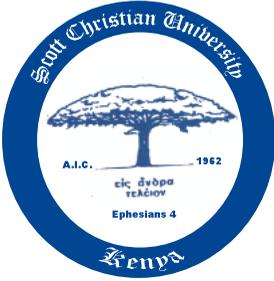
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Chima Agazue

The Role of a Culture of Superstition in the Proliferation of Religio-Commercial Pastors in Nigeria

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Reviewed by Andrew G. Wildsmith, Scott Christian University

Chima Agazue is an Igbo from Nigeria who studied criminology and the psychology of religion at the University of Huddersfield in the UK and also worked as a Research Fellow there. He now lives in London. The overflow of his academic research resulted in this self-published book.

Agazue's research encompasses on-line reports (facebook, newspaper articles, TV programs, blogs, academic papers) journals and monographs (most of them are non-theological, coming from the social sciences), academic theses, personal observations, conversations, and interviews in Nigeria.

Agazue focuses on what he calls "religio-commercial pastors" in Nigeria, people who trade on the fear caused by "the culture of superstition" wherein many people "seek magico-religious explanations for problems which already have scientific explanations" (p.23). Through the cynical use of false prophecies, faked miracles of healing, promises of instant prosperity, and violent exorcisms, these extreme, mostly Pentecostal-oriented pastors seek to become rich by duping and coercing their followers into purchasing "spiritual" practices and products. Agazue carefully and repeatedly distinguishes between religio-commercial "churches", and other churches that are not in that category, including conservative Pentecostal churches.

Throughout, the author's passionate opposition to the many ways that these pastors cause harm and even death is slightly tempered by occasional statements that save him from being merely another Western-oriented, scientific, secular opponent to these popular pastors. Two examples follow. "Although as a Christian, I do believe that God may reveal some mysteries to a person and may also perform wonders through someone, I am not convinced that the hundreds of thousands of prophets competing to sell prophecies or perform miracles on Nigerian streets on a daily basis do hear from God or have received powers from God when a careful observation can easily reveal the tricks which many of them apply" (pp. 13-14). "The points I make in this book are not to

suggest that evil spirits do not exist or that none of those who desperately seek prophecies and miracles from the men and women of God experience strange things which cannot be scientifically explained" (p. 22). Here is an authentic African worldview that has absorbed enough Western-oriented education to describe in detail how the extreme prosperity preachers take advantage of vulnerable people in Nigeria.

Agazue traces the origin of this culture of superstition to the unconverted aspects of traditional African religions, specifically the continuation of an excessive fear of evil spirits and witches that he labels "superstition".[1] "Africans believe in spirits, therefore spirits are used to easily defraud them" (p. 28). For example, dedicated followers of a prophet (who functions as a Christian diviner) don't waste money, time and energy on medical diagnoses and treatments when their prophet offers Holy Spirit revealed and instant miracles for barren women – for a price (p. 29). Witchcraft is one person using magical or spiritual powers to harm another person in a number of ways (p. 30).

Despite the adoption of Christianity and Islam as Nigeria's major religions, and despite the acceptance of Western technology, medicine, and education, many people, including many educated people, still believe it is possible to manipulate spiritual beings (including God) and spiritual powers to achieve what they want. The continuing belief in witchcraft powers is "being reinforced by the exorcism merchants." All of life's problems and difficulties can be blamed on witchcraft. (p. 30). He uses the horrible example of child witchcraft accusations with many accused children being abandoned, mutilated, tortured and killed since 2008 in Akwa Ibom State. We lived and worked in that state in the 1980s and 1990s and my PhD research found a great fear of witchcraft and some accusations against children, but nothing like what the so-called Christian exorcists have perpetrated in this century. The area has always been plagued by periodic witch-hunts and witch cleansings, but nothing on this scale and certainly not with such a focus on children.

Each chapter in the book focuses on a different aspect of the main problem, that a culture of superstition enables spiritual fraud that causes immense suffering. In chapter 2 Agazue studied Nigerian internet postings and blogs and concluded that beliefs about evil people using magic or juju charms to amass a fortune or to bewitch other people are increasing significantly (p. 43). He then illustrates his point with a number of stories. For example, he found that many people believe that virtually all road accidents are caused by blood-sucking demons flying over Nigeria's roads, and concludes that pastors pray for pay to deliver a

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[1] In this book there is no sense that the word "superstition" is inappropriate or politically incorrect.

vehicle from their clutches, just as traditional diviners sell charms that are supposed protect passengers from harm on their journeys. Sensible precautions and defensive driving are replaced by 'spiritual protection'. Potholed roads, poorly maintained vehicles, careless and drunk driving, and drivers who don't really know how to drive properly are not seen as contributing factors in road accidents, but highway witches are the real cause of the carnage (p. 45).

In his third chapter and the conclusion Agazue virtually equates superstition with belief in the supernatural as he finds that Christianization increases superstition because it shares a belief in the supernatural with other religions, including African Traditional Religion (ATR). When the religio-commercial pastors cash in on this belief in the supernatural, they adopt the ATR worldview and fear of evil spirits (including traditional spirits such *Ogbanje* and newer ones such as *Mamiwata*), magnify those fears through lies (as with the child-witches above), and then sell very expensive exorcism packages. "The overlap of the teachings of both the old and the new religions on evil spirits has remained a significant promoter of superstition among African Christians" (p. 69). As in some other chapters, Agazue makes comparisons and contrasts with Pentecostal religio-commercial pastors, traditional diviners, and prophet-healers from the "syncretistic churches" – and by this, he means the African Initiated Churches.

Agauze briefly notes that the commercialization of Christianity is the antithesis of loving one's neighbours and instead breeds mistrust and jealousy between people, especially between rich and poor, (p. 78), and even between the village people and city dwellers, for example when someone suffers a stroke after a visit to the ancestral village (pp. 82-83). Two studies in this century reveal a new pattern of seeking help when health is threatened. Many Nigerians, including many Christians, first seek magical/religious solutions to their health problems, and when they fail, then head for the hospital (p. 83). The older pattern was for Christians to pray, go to the hospital and seek prayer from the church, and if no resolution is forthcoming, then seek help from the prophet-healer at the Pentecostal church compound, then the prayer house, and then, under cover of darkness (Nicodemously), the traditional diviner.

In chapters 4 through 10 Agauze continues to describe how religio-commercial pastors use, magnify, and even invent many superstitious beliefs that create fears which they then claim to relieve, all the while financially, physically and/or psychologically harming their victims. These are the false beliefs he focuses on: divorce and death are always the result of witchcraft; suffering is always the work of evil spirits; there are no psychological disorders because the symptoms of these are really manifestations of possession by evil spirits; any abnormal behaviour is

really evidence of possession by evil spirits; miracles are the only solution to these essentially "spiritual" problems; pastors and prophets are like Jesus so people desperate to achieve something must have "faith" to expect miracles – which are then fabricated; religio-commercial pastors and prophets have a direct hotline of revelation through the Holy Spirit – though in reality they covertly gather information to identify and learn about the lives of potential clients. This information they then present to the client as if it is divine revelation. Diviners have been doing this in Nigeria since the first researchers studied divination in Nigeria.

In a few places Agazue quotes a series of Biblical passages that are correctly understood as indications of how Christians should treat and help other people (e.g. circa p. 194 and p. 207). He then describes how the religio-commercial pastors and prophets violate the intentions of the passages. For example, some of these religious predators visit the sick in hospital, but with the intention of defrauding them. The victims "are advised to cast their anxieties to God because he cares for them (1 Peter, 5:7), but thereafter, they are turned into the money-making-machines of their pastors with the promise – often a guarantee – that God will pay them back in abundance" (p. 208).

This book is not organized into clear sections on different topics that then build up to a conclusion. But once the reader recognizes this, he sees that Agazue weaves peoples' false beliefs and real life examples of how false pastors take advantage of those beliefs for financial gain into a tapestry that organically reveals the patterns of deception. He looks ahead to other parts of the book with some examples and refers back with others. The book is not difficult to read, and clearly proves his point over and over again, that a culture of superstition fuels the proliferation of religio-commercial pastors in Nigeria.

In chapter 11 Agazue describes how religio-commercial pastors entice and pry members from mainstream churches. He notes that mainstream churches are tempted to adopt regular Pentecostal worship styles to keep members, and how a few of their priests and pastors adopt the fear tactics of the religio-commercial pastors for personal gain. As a Roman Catholic, he quotes examples mainly from that church.

Agazue is not a theologian, does not write in a scholarly voice, and does not write from a Christian point of view, but his book is a gold mine of information about how religio-commercial pastors operate. This can be translated into ways to protect people from being deceived by false pastors and prophets. Pastors and theological libraries would benefit from having it available.

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Book Review

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