Evangelical Review of Theology

EDITOR: DAVID PARKER

Volume 28 · Number 3 · July 2004

Articles and book reviews reflecting global evangelical
theology for the purpose of discerning the obedience of faith

Published by

PATERNOSTER PERIODICALS

for
WORLD EVANGELICAL
ALLIANCE
Theological Commission

Church and Mission: Decolonizing the Mind

Thomas J. Kopp

Moving into the 21st century

While this article bases its suggestions on the study of a specific old and important South African mission society, as well as a younger church, the suggestions made carry implications for all existing mission societies and their daughter churches worldwide.

Most mission agencies and national churches have made no endeavour to gloss over the fact that each is imperfect. Both groups have recognized weaknesses and shortcomings and yet, more often than not, they are more similar than dissimilar in terms of ministry goals and values.

Now that both have entered the new century, and work together in a 'new South Africa', ministry strategies need to be either introduced or strengthened to propel the Mission and the Church in certain new directions. This can be done effectively, however, only after taking into consideration the world-wide debate concerning mission/church relationships. While it is not the purpose of this article to undertake an extensive analysis of this debate, a very broad outline of it will be helpful at this point.

The debate, as would be expected, is approached from different angles and perspectives determined by ecclesiastical associations, theological persuasions, stages of church life and development, and whether or not the proponent represents the Mission or the Church.

Following the second World War, as more and more countries gained their independence from colonial powers, so too, young churches began to receive more autonomy from their parent mission organizations. While some gained it too early perhaps and others gained it rather late, all faced new tensions in their mission/church relationships. Eventually, the tensions built to the extent that a moratorium was called on missions, largely by 'those Third World churches affiliated with the World Council of Churches; in Roman

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Catholic and conservative-evangelical churches, moratorium does not appear to be so much of an issue.'[1] When first used, moratorium meant that western missionary involvement should be deferred for a limited time of five years but John Gatu later 'changed that to "Missionaries should be withdrawn. Period"'.[2]

During the 1900s particularly, a great deal of thought and discussion has gone into the ideas originally proposed by 'Henry Venn (1796-1873)…and Rufus Anderson (1796-1880)…[who] wrote about the necessity of planting "three-self" churches—churches that would be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating (Venn used the term "self-extending")'.[3] Missions and churches have wrestled with how the three-self formula should be worked out in practice, as well as what conditions would be needed for missions to move from the parent stage to the partner stage. A great amount of lip service has been paid to the idea of partnership between missions and their daughter churches, but it has been quite a different matter to undertake effectively. As the old saying goes, 'When all is said and done, more has been said than done!' This is particularly the case when such divergent ideas exist of what partnership really entails.

The two essential issues around which the debate revolves at present are mutuality and interdependence. David Bosch referred to what he termed the 'Constantinian dispensation',[4] due to which mission agencies remain in their parental roles, finding it difficult to release hold on control and power—especially because they provide the large portion of the finances, personnel, and skills needed for the developing church. The challenge, as the Bangkok conference expressed it, is 'to relate to one another in a way which does not dehumanize'.[5]

For true mutuality to take place between the Mission and the Church, there has to be a genuine give-and-take from both sides. The Church needs to be heard and taken seriously by the Mission, and the Mission will need to take considerable initiative to see that it happens. Both the Mission and the Church (but particularly the Mission) will need to bear in mind the two most common models used in approaching partnership, consciously moving from the 'business' model to the 'family' model.

> The business model views people as stockholders, while the family model sees them as members. Control in the business model is maintained with money, but in the family it is relationships that keep control. In the business model the emphasis is on activities, while the family model values fellowship.

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1   David J. Bosch, 'Towards True Mutuality: Exchanging the Same Commodities or Supplementing Each Other's Needs?' *Missiology: An International Review*, VI (3 July 1978), p. 283.
2   Bosch, 'Towards True Mutuality', p. 287.
3   John Mark Terry, 'Indigenous Churches', in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, Harold Netland and Charles Van Engen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), p. 483.

4   Bosch, 'Towards True Mutuality', p. 288.
5   Bosch, 'Towards True Mutuality', p. 291.

Contributions are seen as competitive in the business approach, but they are complementary in the family model. No contribution is devalued even though recognized as distinct. Both models will pursue accountability. However, the business model is one-sided, whereas the family model seeks a mutual accountability.[6]

David Bosch adds that 'Genuine reciprocity can only develop where the two respective partners do *not* receive the same as they have given. In other words: does reciprocity not presuppose complementarity?'[7]

Healthy, personal, and sincere (not merely expedient) relationships are required for successful partnerships. However, various hindrances exist which deter such partnerships; these have been enumerated as 'diverging agendas, insufficient emphasis on relationships, and the indiscriminate usage of old sponsorship methods'. These can be combated by moving from the 'sponsorship' model to the 'partnership' model, as seen in the following chart.[8]

SPONSORSHIP	PARTNERSHIP
Money	Gifts
Control	Communion
Donation	Participation
Hierarchy	Equality
Imposed vision	Shared vision
Short term	Enduring
One-sided	Mutual
I—You	We
Domination	Cooperation
Dependence	Interdependence
Parent—Child	Peers
Suspicion	Trust
Unhappiness	Joy

According to Dr Robert L. Ramseyer,[9] both those who send missionaries and those who receive them have scars of suspicion and distrust due to the underlying question, 'Do we really believe that we are, or can be, partners?' This results from a deep 'consciousness of inequality'[10] which keeps both mission and church groups from seeing objectively how God has gifted each. The goal would be to move toward the statement expressed in Philippians 1:3-6, which reads, 'I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being con-

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6 Rob Brynjolfson, 'From Synthesis to Synergy: The Iguassu Think Tanks', in *Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue*, ed. William D. Taylor (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), p. 482.
7 Bosch, 'Towards True Mutuality', p. 293 (Bosch's italics).
8 Brynjolfson, 'From Synthesis to Synergy', p. 483.

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9 Robert L. Ramseyer, 'Partnership and Interdependence', in *Church and Mission: Reader for MSB200-B and MSR521-X* (Pretoria, South Africa: University of South Africa, 1988), pp. 93-100.
10 Ramseyer, 'Partnership and Interdependence', p. 94.

fident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ' (NKJV).

It is with the hope that both mission agencies and national churches will move proactively, positively, and with Holy Spirit-led determination from the sponsorship model to the partnership model that the possible mutual contributions below are suggested.

Possible mutual contributions of both Mission and Church

There is a very real sense in which a meaningful partnership will be able to display clearly the power of the gospel. Whereas in the past, there have been clear lines of demarcation between the 'white' and the 'black,' there is no excuse for such demarcation lines to continue. 'The object of leadership is to work with your people. You don't say, "Do this." You say, "Let us do this."'[11] Genuine partnership does not mean one taking over the other. Nor does it mean the Mission coming in with an attitude of superiority or the Church coming in with an attitude of inferiority. The idea is to struggle together to broaden the narrow horizons and to strengthen the vision or perspectives, which may be too short or low. 'It's not as easy as I say, but I think that can be a true, good witness to God's kingdom and the world. We need to strive for kingdom principles together, and that would mean acknowledging each other as God's agents, and finding a way to

have a common witness.'[12] To cross the lines takes courage, especially after believing and living a certain way for so long. It also takes faith, expecting God to accomplish bigger and better things through the body of believers as they work and minister together.

Engaging the new culture

The time is approaching when '…there will be no Zulu man and Sotho man. We will be just African.'[13] Both the Mission and Church need to keep a constant 'watch on the culture of the people',[14] resisting the laager[15] mentality that dulls the senses and destroys vision.[16] Churches need to understand the context in which they exist, and, like the Old Testament sons of Issachar (1 Chr. 12:32), understand their times and know what to do. 'The culture now in South Africa is becoming the global culture. On TV you see people from England, from America, others from Australia and China. They become a part of your life and you behave like what you have been watching. There's no specific time when we can say,

11 Knox Mavimbela, Interview with author, cassette recording (Roodepoort, South Africa: 27 January 1999).

12 Faki Bodibe, Interview with author, cassette recording (Roodepoort, South Africa: 3 February 1999).
13 Wilson M. Magubane, Interview with author, cassette recording (Harmelia, Germiston, South Africa: 30 January 1999).
14 Lloyd T. Magewu, Interview with author, micro-cassette recording (East London, South Africa: 19 May 1999).
15 A laager was a circle of wagons lashed together by the Afrikaner *voortrekkers* (pioneers) to form a defence against attackers.
16 Caesar Molebatsi, Interview with author, micro-cassette recording (Rosebank, South Africa: 25 May 1999).

"Now is the time we changed our teachings." It just happens slowly.'[17]

Mission and Church leaders need to work together to overcome their shallow theological traditions or narrow perspectives of the church and move assertively ahead to maturity. For instance, the term 'indigenous church' could be thought more in terms of 'South African' as opposed to 'American' rather than 'Indian' as opposed to 'African' or even 'Zulu' as opposed to 'Xhosa'. The deeply ingrained habits that keep the groups separate and still distrusting of each other need to be overcome, and it will require give-and-take from all sides.

Confronting the new cults/religions

With the new freedom of religion in South Africa, many new cults have come forward and present a challenge to the churches. The churches need to be aware of what the cults teach and how to answer them biblically. Christians need to stand up for what they believe. The aim, of course, would be that the evangelical wing of the church would become stronger rather than merely developing an interfaith system (which is now strongly emphasized because of the influence of human rights and the new tolerance of religion). The issue of whether Jesus is the only Saviour of the world, which has been a world missiological issue for a long time, is now very much a South African issue as well. 'So it's time for us [i.e., evangelicals] now to really shine, and not merely to say we are different by word, but really live it so that the credibility of Christianity could be seen beyond any shadow of doubt. The answer for the world is in the church, but the church is [just] sitting!'[18]

Moving beyond the 'problems'

Rather than dwelling on the negatives of the past, it is imperative that together the national and expatriate church workers establish a let's-go-and-build-together attitude for the good of the church as a whole, recognizing that they are here to positively benefit the growth of the body of Christ.

Neither the Mission nor the Church will gain anything by repeatedly laying the blame at each other's door for either past or present situations. Each needs to take its own responsibility now and move forward. Dwelling on the difficulties or misunderstandings of the past will only give bitterness an opportunity to spring up and cause trouble (Heb. 12:15). Now is the time to turn over a new leaf, begin a new chapter, and start a new heritage! 'If you never move on from your problem, people are going to remember you for the problem and not for the things you could have done. There is the example of Judas and Peter. Peter did exactly what Judas did, three times. Peter managed to move on. Judas couldn't.

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17 Thembinkosi Ntongana, Interview with author, cassette recording (Hilton, South Africa: 9 February 1999).

18 Aiken Zondo, Interview with author, cassette recording (Durban, South Africa: 10 February 1999).

So what will we remember Judas for? Betraying Christ. What do you remember Peter for? For his Pentecostal sermon.'[19]

Encouraging and participating in evangelical ecumenism

Related to the previous two recommendations is the matter of cooperation with other churches. Many of the more conservative Missions have policies similar to that of the former Africa Evangelical Fellowship.

> Every Missionary shall exercise Christian love towards every other member of the Body of Christ. Fellowship and co-operation are encouraged with those who hold beliefs that are in agreement with the Fellowship's Basis of Faith, but there shall be no co-operation in spiritual ministries with those who are not in agreement with such. The Fellowship rejects the extreme separatism which withholds fellowship and co-operation on the basis of 'secondary association'.[20]

The limits of cooperation stated above were no doubt associated with the fear that relating to other organizations, churches, and agencies which were not doctrinally similar would lead to the loss of the Mission's commitment to mission and evangelism.

As Pierson points out, when the International Missionary Council became a part of the WCC [World Council of Churches] in 1961 'some hoped it would place mission at the heart of the Council. Others feared the move would result in a decline in mission. The latter proved to be right as a combination of theological liberalism, which seemed to doubt the importance of evangelism and maintained a primary focus on social issues, led to a great decrease in missionary activity by most conciliar churches in Europe and North America. Thus the WCC has not succeeded in fulfilling the goal of its early proponents, unity so that the world might believe.'[21]

The position of the Africa Evangelical Church, founded by the Africa Evangelical Fellowship, is more nebulous. Its most recent constitution[22] states that its regional offices will function as liaisons between their 'regions and the following bodies: the Church Board, the Africa Evangelical Fellowship Field Headquarters, Government bodies, local authorities and any agencies within their respective regions; as well as between each region and the other two regions of the Africa Evangelical Church'.

By virtue of the facts that both the AEF and the AEC had little or no involvement in the events surrounding the drafting of certain key declarations

19 Caesar Molebatsi, Interview with author, micro-cassette recording (Rosebank, South Africa: 25 May 1999).
20 Africa Evangelical Fellowship, *Fellowship Manual* (Newbury, England: AEF International, 1996), p. 42.
21 Paul E. Pierson, 'Ecumenical Movement', *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions,* pp. 300-303.
22 Africa Evangelical Church, *The Constitution of the Africa Evangelical Church* (South Africa: Africa Evangelical Church, 1994), Clause IV: Administration, C.6.b.

including the Kairos Document,[23] the SACEL Charter,[24] the EWISA Document,[25] and the Rustenburg Declaration,[26] and have had little involvement with the Association of Evangelicals of South Africa, it is clear that coopera-

23 The Kairos Document was issued in September 1985 and was written primarily by a group of black South African pastors and theologians, addressing themes such as violence, suffering, law, justice, liberty and reconciliation from the perspectives of what was called State Theology, Church Theology, and Prophetic Theology. It called on Christians everywhere to stand with South African Christians in scriptural reflection at that *kairos*, that time of truth, as they wrestled with the issues confronting them.

24 The SACEL Charter was *A Charter for Mobilising Evangelical Unity* and was produced in February 1986 by the South African Conference of Evangelical Leaders (SACEL). Its purpose was to ascertain and express the mind of South Africa's evangelicals concerning their perspectives and what courses of action should be taken in the face of the country's racial tensions.

25 The Evangelical Witness in South Africa (EWISA) Document, issued in July 1986, was a compilation of papers that had been presented by predominantly African theologians to various evangelical churches. Their aim was to help the believers grapple with how to align their lives, their faith, and their ministries with the violence that rocked the country, and to become an active voice of conscience to the government.

26 Compiled in November 1990 by the National Conference of Churches in South Africa, the Rustenburg Declaration unequivocally rejected apartheid as sin, and drew attention to the insufficiency of preaching individual salvation without addressing social transformation. It sought to renew commitment to action on the part of all South Africans, but particularly the church, to set right the wrongs related to land ownership, education, employment, health services, and women's rights.

tive efforts with other churches were a low priority.

Even after the above-mentioned documents were drafted, neither the AEF nor the AEC, like many other conservative groups, officially studied or interacted with them. In fact, many of their members were, and still are, unaware of them. Excluding national or international cooperation, there has been little evidence of cooperation at the local church level. To narrow it down further still, there is not the interaction and cooperation that there could be due to the internal prejudices which exist. Unfortunately, the South African churches are not exempt and noticeable discriminations exist among the churches. These are due to several factors.

Firstly, ethnic prejudices are one cause. Occasionally, for example, church members complain that the Zulus or the Swazis dominate them.

Second, there are geographical prejudices that lead to misunderstandings and consistent friction as the needs, perspectives, orientation, and values differ between the provinces as well as between the urban and rural churches. The 'ragged rural mentality which gives blind allegiance to missionaries', as opposed to the 'maverick urban mentality, which has nothing to do with missionaries' are considered two general categorizations of African pastors. Over the past years, however, certain leaders have attempted to accommodate everybody whose evangelical stand is correct, even though they may disagree politically, ethnically, or by trade union membership. The aim has been not to let those things divide but, rather, to emphasize the very real unity which comes by being one in Christ.

Third, academic prejudices and biases exist in terms of where national pastors receive their training. For instance, some have claimed that 'godly' pastors are trained at particular institutions but 'politically and socially conscious' pastors are trained elsewhere. Additionally, it has been claimed that certain schools produce the 'intellectually quick urban' pastor while other schools produce the 'intellectually slow rural' pastor.

Political party affiliation produces a fourth prejudice. 'Political party apartheid' exists in many of the black areas, creating territorial divides and, therefore, is systematically avoided in any discussion among pastors and church leaders.

There needs to be taught a new biblical understanding of the idea of 'agreeing to disagree', otherwise churches will multiply more by division than by evangelism, a fact already true of South Africa as a whole. As Richard Elphick writes, 'Fission and competition between churches accelerated Christianization in the nineteenth century; this might be even more true in the twentieth. By the 1990s few places in the world, apart from the United States, matched South Africa in the proliferation of Christian denominations and sects—evidence that Christianity has apparently adapted to a striking variety of cultures and social classes, a reason for its dramatic advance.'[27] Issues of tolerance versus intolerance need to be addressed and discussed, particularly as they apply to the church as a whole.

A lack of intergenerational understanding has widened the gap between the old and the young. Both the younger and older generations must be taught biblical perspectives on relating to each other, learning to listen to and understand the viewpoints, values, and concerns of each group. With the changes taking place in South Africa, the older generations may be very confused, puzzled or even angered by them, whereas the younger generation will be adapting to them, thus widening the gap further between the generations. In a culture where the attitude of the older generation toward the younger generation is, 'You are a child, I cannot listen to you, I cannot be told by a child' and where the attitude of the younger generation is becoming less respectful of the older generation, hearing, understanding, and ministering to the disappointments, hurts, and perspectives of everyone will begin to build necessary bridges of trust between the age groups.

All of this points to a serious deficiency that needs to be addressed as both Mission and Church move into the 21st century. 'The diversity of the world we are sent to reach will require the diversity of our cultural backgrounds and expertise. When in unity of purpose and for the glory of God we marshal together our various diverse gifts, we not only demonstrate the oneness of the body of Christ, thus enhancing the credibility of the gospel, but as the Lord said, the world shall see and believe that Jesus is the Messiah.'[28]

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27 Richard Elphick & Rodney Davenport, editors, *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* (Berkeley, California, USA: University of California Press, 1997), p. 7.

28 Tokunboh Adeyemo, 'Profiling a Globalized and Evangelical Missiology', in *Global Missiology for the 21st Century*, p. 269.

Addressing current social and political needs

David Bosch has pointed out: 'Mission is a multifaceted ministry, in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualization, and much more…Our mission has to be multidimensional in order to be credible and faithful to its origins and character.'[29] Accordingly, church leaders, both national and expatriate, will be asked hard questions from time to time about current social and political issues. Now 'is the time to begin to systematically build…a theology…of state—not a time to shy away from it because of some mistaken belief that we have less to worry about in relation to the present state'.[30]

Hibernating from difficult issues, or hiding behind quick answers will not equip the next generation of Christians to meet the growing demands and tensions of the new socio-political scene enveloping South Africa. Differing opinions on how to proceed are undoubtedly affected by the contemporary debate on the merits or dangers of ecumenical theology, black theology, and conservative evangelical theology. Typically for the conservative Mission or Church, De Gruchy observes, 'The gospel has nothing to do with socio-political issues; it is acontextual, "spiritual" and a private matter. This unbiblical understanding of Christian faith derives in large measure from the eighteenth-century Enlightenment with its strong individualism and its separation of reality into the material and spiritual spheres in the interests of scientific progress.'[31]

Yet, as Professor Saayman points out, when it comes to political positioning, 'a supposed neutrality is impossible'. In fact, to take no position is indeed to take a position and, more specifically, to 'write off *this* world',[32] which in the long run means either denying or avoiding an important dimension of responsible discipleship. It is important, therefore, to maintain both a biblical faithfulness and a contextual relevance in approaching the current needs. While both evangelical Mission and Church have been guilty of spiritualizing the gospel to the extent that it is regarded as having no socio-political significance, there are some changes taking place.

One mission leader and long-time resident of South Africa, stated that

> …missionaries are very frightened to say anything about the new government. I have been to African conferences these days and heard

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29 David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), p. 512.

30 Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, 'Truth, National Unity and Reconciliation in South Africa: Aspects of the Emerging Theological Agenda', *Missionalia*, 25 (1 April 1997), p. 83.

31 John W. De Gruchy, 'Theologies in Conflict: The South African Debate', in *Resistance and Hope: South African Essays in Honour of Beyers Naudé*, ed. Charles Villa-Vicencio and John W. De Gruchy, 1985 edn., (Cape Town, South Africa: David Philip, Publisher (Pty) Ltd, 1985), pp. 95-96.

32 Willem Saayman, *Christian Mission in South Africa: Political and Ecumenical* (Pretoria, South Africa: University of South Africa, 1993), p. 51.

some of their leaders stand up and speak about the way they believe the government is moving in the wrong direction with regards to education, moving in the wrong direction in terms of abortion and homosexuality and the death penalty and so on. I think this is the time when we need to allow the Church to face the government. We failed to face the government in our day and I'm surprised, pleasantly surprised, by the fact that some of them are beginning to stand up now and face their own government on some of these issues.[33]

It is believed that if the church stands up against issues it cannot agree with, that if the church attends conferences on such issues which are organized by various government departments or officials, 'Then one day that government will say, "Someone can advise us. It is the evangelical church, because they've got a vision!"'.[34]

Sound theological bases must be established from which Mission and Church will operate. The policies then need to be translated into practice. Actual goals need to be specified and the whole church needs to work through the issues theologically.

However, such a shift towards understanding and addressing the issues more overtly should never mean an abandonment of the personal salvation message of the gospel.

A fuller understanding of discipleship

At the Mission Africa 2000 conference conducted in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, 12-16 May 2000, Chadian Rene Daidanso ma Djongwe, associate general secretary of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa, stated that a major problem for African church leaders is nominalism, and 'pinpointed the biggest problem as lack of discipleship'. General Secretary Tokunboh Adeyemo added, 'We—nationals and expatriates—persuade non-Christians to become Christians, we baptize them, we give them Christian names. But we have not taught them to be disciples. Out of 100 pastors, I doubt that five teach their members to be true disciples of Jesus.'[35]

Both national and expatriate church leaders and workers must keep in mind that evangelism embraces not only church planting but discipling. Hugh Wetmore says,

> the agenda for discipling is as wide as the teachings of Jesus or, can we say, as wide as the Bible. Whereas most of our evangelical discipling has been in the area of how to avoid temptation, how to grow in the Christian life through prayer and Bible reading, fellowship in the church, and occasionally the tithing aspect will be drummed in if the

33 Rev Dr Ronald Genheimer, Interview with author, cassette recording (By telephone between Tahlequah, Oklahoma and Vancouver, Washington, USA: 19 November 1999).

34 Wilson M. Magubane, Interview with author, cassette recording (Harmelia, Germiston, South Africa: 28 January 1999).

35 W. Harold Fuller, 'Mission Africa 2000 Sees Hope for "Hopeless Continent"', *World Pulse* (15 September 2000), p. 7.

minister is particularly hard up. But apart from that, you don't have a broad discipling curricula, and I believe that missionaries and pastors at every level, every department, every church, need to have a broad curricula for discipling that will embrace the issues of health, economics, justice, money, and missions as well. Lots of discipling in our churches doesn't touch on missions and missions is a very important category in the discipling syllabus.[36]

Discipleship must change the dichotomy that sees structures in society, politics, and economics as non-spiritual and structures in the church and Christian family as spiritual. *All* aspects of life are to be influenced by the discipling process, and, by and large, this is what both Missions and Churches have failed to do, particularly Missions. While missionaries seem to have had the time to establish medical clinics and educational facilities, such as technical schools and high schools, they did not take the time for the necessary grounding of believers in the Word or to prepare them for leadership.

While there is a continuing need for training in the basics—for example, how to do evangelism and how to teach—what is needed, according to one church leader, is

to train people to live the Word. The concept of Matthew 28:20, 'teaching them to do what I have commanded', I think that is where

we start. In doing that, of course, you have to ask 'What is it that the Lord taught or instructed or commanded?' He taught how to live with my neighbor. 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' And I think in South Africa that goes a long way because of who my neighbor is. My neighbor is the Hindu, the White, the Black, and the Colored. Everybody is my neighbor. What is my attitude toward them? That's the training we need in South Africa today, and then training people in how to liberate themselves from things like poverty and unemployment, or whatever continues to help them.[37]

A broader discipling curriculum needs to be developed at every level within the church, at the same time keeping in mind the development of the *whole* person, and not attempting to compartmentalize the spiritual from the practical or the social as a westerner would. Instead it is necessary to embrace essential issues such as health, justice, the biblical concept of what a church is supposed to be, marriage and family responsibilities, poverty, employment, principles of giving, and so on.

To do this effectively, the target audiences have to be known well. Bible School principal, Rev Albert Xaba, stated that South African believers often live in 'Christian pockets. Whereas to be effective, we've got to get in among the people that we are sent to reach, and reach them at their

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36 Hugh Wetmore, Interview with author, cassette recording (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: 9 February 1999).

37 W. T. Albert Xaba, Interview with author, cassette recording (Hilton, South Africa: 9 February 1999).

need.' He referred to a visit by Dr Jim Pleuddemann, SIM General Director, during which 'he said, "We take the Bible and we say to the people that this is what the Bible says, so live up to this, instead of going to the people and finding out what their problems are, and then bringing them to the Bible to show them how the Bible addresses the pertinent and relevant problems." We tend to scratch them where they don't really itch. To improve our ministry, we would do well really getting to people, looking to their problems, meeting them, meeting their felt needs and then coming up with answers from the Word of God. I think that increases our effectiveness in reaching out.'[38]

Personnel in both Mission and Church memberships would increase their effectiveness by getting among the people, knowing them, understanding them, and then bringing the Word of God and applying it to their needs. The Mission and the Church can also have a unique and powerful ministry coming alongside and encouraging those who are still struggling with deep emotional pain due to the loss of family members during the years of political turmoil. Furthermore, it is essential that this be modelled by both the Mission and the Church leadership because 'New Christian role models will have to be found, especially in the White, but also in the Black community' in order to correct the 'slanted picture of Christianity in South Africa'.[39]

Strengthening leadership training for both missionary and national

Training institutions have a tremendous influence and need to be considered carefully. Pastors and church leaders who sense the direction of God on their lives either for urban or rural ministries need to be able to obtain training in programs that will give them appropriate tools for the contexts in which they will minister. While all pastors and church leaders need solid biblical and theological foundations, a 'rural ministry track' and an 'urban ministry track' could give specific training for urban or rural ministry contexts that would cover appropriate areas of social, political, and economic concerns, styles of leadership, and cultural peculiarities. In fact, a course on cross-cultural communication would prove helpful. 'I don't treat a person from Gauteng the way I treat a person from Natal. Even if they are black, they are from different cultures.'[40]

Since 'faith missions did not include any definite ecclesiology'[41] when they planted their churches, it is necessary now that 'a conscious ecclesiology which takes seriously the young churches' identities, the missions' doctrinal traditions, and the social and political context in which the churches exist'[42] be clearly and fully understood

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38 Xaba, Interview (9 February 1999).

39 Willem Saayman, *Christian Mission in South Africa: Political and Ecumenical* (Pretoria, South Africa: University of South Africa, 1993), p. 99.

40 Aiken Zondo, Interview with author, cassette recording (Durban, South Africa: 10 February 1999).

41 Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions: From Hudson Taylor to Present Day Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1994), p. 323.

42 Fiedler, *Faith Missions,* p. 401.

by both mission and church leaders in training. They need to understand both in a theoretical and in a more practical way what the church is, and what should be done in the church.

The whole matter of women in training needs to be looked at carefully. It is interesting to note that 'In their first decades, faith missions challenged society in general, and the churches in particular, by their tremendous willingness to give women positions of responsibility and leadership…[Yet although] the missions (and faith missions prominent among them) were—though perhaps unconsciously—in the vanguard of the first feminist movement, today they tend more to make up the struggling rear'[43]—this is no more evident than in the attitudes surrounding the training and use of women. While being encouraged to attend Bible Schools, they are rarely given positions in the church or recognized in any way. Churches rarely ever recommend women 'to function freely in the organization. And yet they keep pumping them into Bible Schools. That is burying people alive!'[44]

Theological training schools are, more and more, becoming affiliated with theological faculties of the country's major universities. This gives both the schools and their graduates greater credibility as uniform standards are applied to the diploma and BTh training programs.

The curriculum of colleges, particularly evangelical colleges, tends to be very traditional and must adapt to the needs of the people. According to the standards set by the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA),

> The curriculum as a whole and the syllabus for each individual course subject should show that the institution has not merely borrowed these from elsewhere, nor simply allowed them to develop on an ad hoc basis, but that the institution has carefully planned the curriculum and each syllabus to meet its own particular objectives, for the specific Christian community it is serving, for the specific vocation for which the students are being prepared, and for the specific cultural context in which the students will minister. Selection of textbooks should also show sensitivity to contextual relevance.[45]

It is important for the curricula to embrace 'the personal and social teachings of the Scriptures so that the whole is conveyed to the students'.[46] Colleges need to be answering the questions which the churches and their memberships are asking, rather than giving answers for issues or problems not needed by anyone. Church leaders and members need to be equipped and prepared to handle current issues and the potential dilemmas arising from them. For example, the whole issue of

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43 Fiedler, *Faith Missions*, p. 395.
44 Wilson M. Magubane, Interview with author, cassette recording (Harmelia, Germiston, South Africa: 30 January 1999).

45 ACTEA, *ACTEA Standards and Procedures for Accreditation at Post-Secondary Level* (Jos, Nigeria: ACTEA Accreditation Services, 1992), Item 4b.
46 Hugh Wetmore, Interview with author, cassette recording (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: 9 February 1999)

AIDS is rarely addressed. It can no longer be sidestepped. Fortunately, a few organizations such as the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA) and the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa (ESSA) are offering conferences and training seminars to deal with them. This has been a determination of the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa based in Pietermaritzburg. While often misunderstood and even criticized because of it, the Seminary seems to have nevertheless succeeded in developing credibility perhaps not accomplished by other similar training institutions.

Ethical issues need to be addressed. When taught in a Bible School, these matters need to be presented in biblical context and also in relation to the spiritual ministry to people in terms of the forgiveness of sins and the salvation of Christ.

Once graduates have completed their training, before going directly into pastoring a church themselves, options need to be set in place for internships. To study under, and submit to, someone who can protect them and guide them as they build their confidence in ministry will weaken the strong temptations to resign when the ministries get tough. A mentoring program set up with seasoned and highly respected pastors who could work with them in terms of their long-term ministry and personal goals would be beneficial. Issues related to personal faith, assurance of the 'call' to ministry, family life, and providing for the family can be handled. It is interesting to note that all schools accredited with the ACTEA are required to give their students a guided practical experience 'in the specific vocations in which the individual students are being prepared'.[47]

The curricula of colleges need, most definitely, to provide for meaningful modelling by way of practical experience in applying the truths being studied. Pastors and their churches need to serve in a holistic way—offering practical and meaningful alternatives to previous lifestyles, giving people hope, and through it all helping them come to Christ. It means getting involved in more than just a social and economic uplifting, not pursuing the uplifting as an end in itself, but using it as a tool to bring people to salvation in Christ.

Missions and Churches could sponsor pastors' conferences to which they could invite a Bible teacher, an experienced churchman from Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia or some other country, not only to study the Word together, but to tackle the kinds of issues being faced in their areas. Furthermore, of course, this would strengthen the ties between evangelical churches across the continent.

Additionally, experienced personnel should purposefully provide vision, insights, strategies and biblical principles for individuals such as church planters in order to prevent meaningless approaches and haphazard outcomes. New systems or tactics can be investigated and attempted to reach the most productive result.

Furthermore, the world is growing ever-more educated. Therefore, opinions that consider advanced education as not 'inherently beneficial for missionary practicioners'[48] or even con-

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47 *ACTEA standards,* (1992), Item 4f.
48 Gary Brumbelow, 'More Musings', *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 36, (4 October 2000), p. 415

tributing to missionary attrition,[49] need to be adjusted. There are both expatriate and African church leaders who would like to pursue advanced degrees and doctoral level research in church-and/or theologically-related matters. Both the Mission and the Church can encourage such potentially enhanced leadership skills by arranging bursaries for candidates to study at both the master's and doctoral degree levels; this would pay rich dividends for both. Such bursaries could be granted on a 'contract' basis, which would require all bursary funds received by the student to be paid back should the degree program not be completed. Also, the contracts could stipulate that the recipient be required to give a certain number of years to the Mission or Church following the completion of the degree before becoming available for other ministry opportunities.

Forgetting what lies behind, we press forward!

One observer of missions history concludes:

> For the African churches today, it is no longer a question of how to get rid of missionaries, but how to get enough of them…The most urgent issue for the church in Africa south of the Sahara in general (and for the great faith mission churches in particular) is how to cope with the tremendous numerical growth which they have experienced since the 1960s and which

they are still experiencing today.[50]

Nevertheless, for a 'moving forward' to be successful, general thinking patterns regarding self and others need to be reformatted. According to Rev Knox Mavimbela, two major sins have covered South Africa—the pride of the Whites and the hate of the Blacks.[51] Yet both must come to a point where the past no longer holds them from moving forward. The time has come 'to look at where we are now and to consider how much of the past practices we are still allowing to inform our decision-making. Please pray with us that God will raise people who will do as He says.'[52] A pastor serving on the east side of Johannesburg declared that it is time to 'travel carefully so as to leave something for the next generation'.[53]

In the final analysis, all that Missions and Churches ever wanted was to see a strong church in South Africa. We can echo the words of Waldron Scott: 'We are not responsible, as individuals, for the success of the Kingdom. But we are responsible, as individuals, to work for the King.'[54]

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49 Frank Severn, 'Musings on Education and Attrition', *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 36 (1 January 2000), pp. 20-1

50 Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions: From Hudson Taylor to Present Day Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1994), p. 89.

51 Knox Mavimbela, Interview with author, cassette recording (Roodepoort, South Africa: 27 January 1999).

52 Faki Bodibe, Interview with author, cassette recording (Roodepoort, South Africa: 3 February 1999).

53 Wilson M. Magubane, Interview with author, cassette recording (Harmelia, Germiston, South Africa: 28 January 1999).

54 Waldron Scott, *Bring Forth Justice: A Contemporary Perspective on Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 239.