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InSights Journal for Global Theological Education

www.insightsjournal.org

Purpose: The InSights Journal for Global Theological Education provides a forum for scholars and practitioners to address issues broadly related to theological education. We are particularly interested in engaging non-Western voices in the global conversation. The journal's audience includes faculty, administrators, resource and funding agencies, accrediting bodies, and other researchers in the field of theological education.

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Submission Guidelines

Format: The InSights Journal is currently published semi-annually online. Articles focus on matters related to the theory and practice of theological education, including but not limited to teaching, curriculum design, educational models, sustainability, administrative and organizational issues, and theological and societal engagement.

Each issue features four to five articles, editorial essays, and book reviews. The journal is published digitally, with all articles available for download in .pdf format. In addition, the website provides space for conversations and resources pertinent to global theological education.

Articles and Essays: The InSights Journal invites submissions consistent with its purpose and mission. Unsolicited articles and essays will be reviewed by at least two members of the editorial board for recommendation and by an editor for readability. The board will not consider articles or essays submitted simultaneously to other journals.

1. Recommended length: 2,000-5,000 words
2. Authors should follow the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th Edition, using one-inch margins, left justification, and endnote citations. Convert all footnotes to endnotes.
3. Write in the third person whenever possible.
4. Where appropriate, utilize headings to organize text, following the style dictated by the Chicago Manual of Style.
5. When quoting Scripture, include the Bible translation with each reference.
6. Include a one-paragraph abstract (100 words max.) at the beginning of the article.
7. Include a one-paragraph biography at the end of the article that identifies the author’s institution or organization, position, and relevant experience.
8. Submit as .doc files to facilitate the editing and formatting process.
9. Send all submissions to editor@insightsjournal.org.
Book Reviews: The *InSights Journal* includes reviews of books that are new or important to the field of global theological education. To propose a book for review, email the bibliographic information and a brief (80 words max.) description to editor@insightsjournal.org.

1. Maximum length: 1,500 words
2. Each review should include a summary (~500 words), followed by a critical assessment (~1,000 words) of the book’s argument and contribution to theological education.
4. Direct quotations from the book should include only page numbers in parentheses. Do not include “p./pp.” or the author’s name.
5. Cite additional references, if any, as endnotes.
6. Submit as .doc files to facilitate the editing and formatting process.
7. Send all submissions to editor@insightsjournal.org.

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Distribution for *InSights Journal for Global Theological Education* includes administrators, educators and those providing resources for theological education globally. Institutions, libraries and individuals can subscribe to the Journal for free by visiting the Journal website – www.insightsjournal.org.

Continue the Conversation

*InSights Journal* seeks to increase communication, sharing and conversation about issues pertinent to theological education.

To continue discourse about topics contained in the articles of this issue, or others presented by members of the community, visit the Conversations tab on the *InSights Journal* website – www.insightsjournal.org.
The Purpose of the Journal: For Such a Time as This

“For such a time as this.” When asked why we would start a new journal at this time, the answer may be found in Mordecai’s words to Esther: we hope that the Journal may, in fact, be just the right resource “for such a time as this.”

The church has overused these words, sometimes appropriating them as a slogan for conferences and theme for Vacation Bible Schools. Yet, they capture the idea of hopeful expectation. They point the church toward the theological concept of kairos time – an appointed time. Beyond a mere counting of minutes and hours – kronos time – there are moments that deserve notice – and action. They indicate that perhaps God is at work in this moment.

When Mordecai speaks these words to Esther, he indicates not only that there are a unique set of circumstances at hand, but also that the moment includes the opportunity for action. Alignment of context and opportunity for action moves the phrase “for such a time as this” from trite slogan to a statement of hopeful anticipation. As this new journal begins, it does so in recognition of a unique moment in the history of global theological education. It also begins as one response to the opportunity for action. Launching a journal obviously cannot compare to the deliverance of God’s people from the hands of a maniacal vizier, nor to the ultimate salvific work of God through Christ Jesus in the fullness of time. But it does come as one opportune action at a unique time in the history of the church and for this reason it begins perhaps “for such a time as this.”

The Purpose of the Journal

When Theological Education, the journal of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the United States and Canada, began fifty years ago, it did so expressly to increase communication among schools (Ziegler 1964, 1). In a way,
the purpose of this journal is similar, but with a much broader scope. We need
greater communication among schools globally. We need to learn, to share, and to
engage in discourse in order to continue developing both the theory and practice
of theological education in light of global realities, including those outside the
traditional centers of education in the West.

The purpose of the *InSights Journal for Global Theological Education* is to provide
a platform for scholars and practitioners to address issues related broadly to
theological education. In response to the context and the arising opportunities of
the moment, particular attention is given to voices from non-Western contexts as
they engage the global conversation.

For Such a Time as This: The Context of the Moment

**A Time of Growth**

In the last decade and a half, many have noted the demographic shift in the church
due to the rapid growth of Christianity in the non-Western world. This growth has
moved its center from the West to the Global South (Jenkins 2002; Sanneh 2009;
Robert 2000). As the church has grown, so too has theological education, albeit
at a much slower rate (Bowers 2007). Hundreds of Bible schools, seminaries,
divinity schools, and Christian training centers exist in the Majority World today.
While the vast majority of schools train pastors and Christian workers at diploma
and undergraduate levels, the number of institutions with viable graduate and
postgraduate programs has continued to increase rapidly. For example, since
2004, more than twenty reputable PhD programs have been established in
non-Western schools associated with the International Council for Evangelical
Theological Education. Scott Cunningham of Overseas Council has described
this maturation in educational programs, particularly at the doctoral level, as
the “third stage of development” in evangelical postsecondary education (2007,
134). In many cases, these schools offer globally competitive programs that are
contributing to theological reflection on contextual issues, as well as preparing the
next generation of theologians and leaders who will guide the church in their own
contexts and likely beyond.

**A Time of Significance**

Wright (2006) describes the role of theological education as correcting error,
responding to and driving mission, and helping to guide the church into maturity.
Most theological schools have as their express mission the preparation of pastors,
missionaries, and other Christian leaders so that the church can grow in both
breadth and depth. Bowers’ (2007) comments about the critical role of theological
schools in Africa apply across much of Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe,
and the Middle East – the so-called Majority World. Building on Andrew Walls’ metaphor of monasteries in medieval Europe, he describes theological education as the backbone of the church, providing cohesion and vitality:

*Just as the great monastic centres spotted across Europe held things together for the Christian movement through those centuries of chronic disruption and confusion, could it be that today in Africa our theological schools are playing a similar role? Amidst all the heady vibrancy and growth of Africa’s Christian communities, but also amidst all the debilitations and disorders of this continent, the theological schools have remained linked together as beacons of steadfastness, and hope, and constructive engagement. It has been these schools, and their stream of graduates moving out into leadership roles across the continent, that have anchored, and sustained, and equipped, through circumstances not so dissimilar from those of the medieval monasteries, with survival ever threatened, but nevertheless surviving and conserving and rejuvenating (Bowers 2007, 2).*

Theological schools, and their faculty and students, reflect biblically and theologically on the issues arising in particular contexts to make sense of the chaos, and to help the church respond in meaningful ways with hope and grace.

As the church in the non-Western world continues to grow, it requires strong theological schools to equip kingdom laborers to meet the resulting demand for leadership. In addition, theological schools outside the West will serve the global church by offering and even leading important perspectives on some of the most pressing issues of our day, such as poverty, suffering, reconciliation, corruption, and Christian engagement with Islam. These issues – and many others – hold global significance, but they are particularly urgent and consequential for churches in the Majority World. Therefore, we need to encourage institutions and leaders who can best contribute to the global discourse on these matters to do so at this time.

*A Time of Change*

The growth in theological education comes as higher education in general and theological education in particular are facing considerable pressures and undergoing shifts in enrollment, delivery modes, and economic sustainability. Across disciplines, educators have called for more “useful and efficient” degrees to meet the needs of an increasingly globalized world (Nerad and Heggelund 2008). Within universities, this has led to questions regarding degree purpose, vocational preparation, and assessment standards (Walker 2008). This time of questioning traditional methodologies creates new opportunities for alternative
approaches to higher education (Maki and Borkowski 2006). These same pressures and opportunities exist for theological schools, particularly those outside the West.

In addition to pressures related to enrollment, faculty development, and economic sustainability that challenge all schools, theological institutions must also address questions related to serving the church and engaging society. Theological schools continually wrestle with the relationship between the church and the academy as they prepare leaders for both global and local contexts. Caldwell (2010) and Higgs (2008) are just two voices among many reminding schools that geographic location within a context alone does not guarantee relevance. Rather, contextual relevance requires engagement with the issues, theoretical concepts, and distinctive pedagogies found within a particular cultural milieu.

As the winds of change continue to stir, many theological schools have opportunities to adjust their approaches and curricula to meet new needs. While longevity and stability can help some traditional institutions remain steadfast, the younger and less rooted schools can become more nimble in times of change. They can recognize and respond to new opportunities to engage societal issues and help the church to continue growing amidst pressing challenges.

A Time of Ongoing Theological Development:

Theological schools play an obvious and important role in ongoing theological development. They serve as intellectual communities that conduct research and reflect theologically on issues that matter to the church, in both its local and more universal expressions. They develop leaders who can help the body of Christ live out its kingdom calling in this particular moment in time and space. As the center of the church has shifted from the North and West to the South and East, greater attention has been given to understanding theology and its connection to cultures within specific contexts. Non-western voices have helped the church move away from a paradigm of viewing Western theology as normative and all others as “contextual” (Kang 2010).

Theological schools serve as centers for such culturally-engaged theological reflection, bringing the truth of Scripture to bear on the issues faced by the church within their particular situations. Their insights contribute not only to the theological discipline but also to the educational process. Theological schools outside the West have the opportunity to significantly shape the field of theological education, rather than follow what is “merely derivative of ‘northern’ ideas, models and pedagogies” (Aitchison and Paré 2012, 12).

Several writers have observed the “polycentric” nature of the global church's
missional activity today (Shaw 2012; Wright 2006). Mission no longer originates from a single focal point, moving to receptive peripheries. Rather, centers of missional activity can be found throughout the geographic dispersion of the church. The church’s polycentric reality requires increased dialogue among theological schools so that new ideas can be shared, critiqued, and refined.

A Time of Challenge

Most schools face both internal and external threats to survival. Acute financial stress, low student enrollment, faculty development challenges, and accreditation pressures endanger some institutions. External forces such as warfare, insurgency, sectarian violence, and political limitations of freedom may also affect student enrollment, faculty recruitment and retention, and even the very existence of some schools. At a recent meeting with leaders from schools in fifteen countries, all but two had experienced violent unrest in their countries. Whether currently, in the recent past, or as anticipated in the very near future, instability is the norm in many parts of the world.

Economically, tuition-based models of income have reached their limits. Often, institutions must not only seek additional funding through donations or alternative revenue sources, but also raise money for scholarships to help students cover their contribution to the overall budget. Campuses often require investment to upgrade or expand facilities in order to remain competitive or meet increasing demands. Evolving student demographics and contextual engagement may require new curriculum models. Alternative delivery modes require evaluation and potential financial investment. Many schools with a rich missionary heritage face challenges of departing missionary faculty, and the financial and governance questions that emerge from the transitions. Many schools are seeking regional and governmental accreditation, sometimes requiring changes that impact mission.

Some of these challenges are not new to theological education, and some are common to all schools, including those in the West. However, many institutional leaders in the Global South find that these challenges are exacerbated in their contextual realities. In addition, the relative frailty of their institutions often means that decisions must be made, sometimes quickly, with little margin for error. Many non-Western schools do not have deep reserves in funds or personnel that can mitigate risk, cover mistakes, or allow for slow processes of change. Furthermore, many who lead theological institutions find themselves having to operate far beyond their experience or academic training in areas such as finance, organizational leadership, and management.

Most of the challenges faced by institutions and academic leaders will increase
rather than dissipate in the coming years. Many leaders express gratitude for resources such as the Overseas Council Institutes or ICETE Program for Academic Leadership that support them in their roles. Others are looking for additional help, sources of shared wisdom, colleagues along the journey, and research to inform important decisions.

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**For Such a Time as This: An Opportunity for Action**

These unique times also come with an opportunity for action – in this case, the opportunity to increase communication and to share ways of engaging realities confronting the church today. An opportunity now exists to create space for conversations that acknowledge and value voices from all directions. The *Journal*, therefore, has been created for such a time as this.

**The Opportunity for Multilateral Exchange**

In recognition of the generative work being done, both in theological reflection and within the practice of theological education, the *Journal* will provide a forum for exploring ideas and sharing insights. Although, recent history shows that this sharing has predominantly happened in one direction, the time now affords the opportunity for that sharing to be multi-lateral, from West to South, South to West, and South to South. No one region is simply a receiver of information; rather, generative centers exist in both the traditional sending regions as well as the traditional mission fields.

Wuthnow (2009) has observed that while the church in the Majority World has grown considerably, most of the resources – both material and intellectual – remain in the West. Although certain resources continue to exist in an unbalanced way within the global body of Christ, intellectual resources – including reflection on the doctrine and practice of the Christian faith – are now more broadly generated and distributed. The church needs more platforms for engaging these resources, and connecting the wells of knowledge that have emerged and that continue to deepen throughout the global church.

To borrow language from Sanneh (2003), the shadow of the West “looms large” over theological education in the Majority World. The influence of the West is undeniable as much of Majority World theological education derives from the global missionary movement. Yet, these schools, many birthed and nurtured by Western involvement, have continued to grow on their own. Their maturity helps to undercut what Caldwell has termed “subtle colonialism,” which implies that all good training must take place in the West (2010, 33). Theological education in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East has proven to be innovative, attentive to context, and effective. The *Journal* seeks
to provide a platform for sharing valuable insights so that the global practice of theological education can be enhanced by voices that have hitherto remained at the periphery. The conversation will broaden and the shadows will shorten as we collectively learn from various innovations, strengths, and challenges from non-Western perspectives.

The Approach of Insights

The InSights Journal seeks to encourage non-Western voices in the global conversation on theological education. Our Editorial Board features accomplished theological and academic leaders from across the Majority World. They hold degrees in a variety of theological and related fields, including but not limited to education. More importantly, all bring experience as practitioners of theological education through their roles as professors and administrators. Theological education is a field in which experts in a variety of disciplines are called to engage.

The Journal, therefore, seeks to share from this broad experience. Some of the articles will focus on developing the field of theological education, addressing learning theories, curriculum development, and the like. Others will focus heavily on the practice of theological education, as authors share from their personal and institutional experience. Some articles will be grounded in primary research. Others may reflect on a theme to model dialogue and the fruitful learning that can result from collaborative scholarly engagement.

The Journal is rooted in the evangelical tradition of the global church. However, the Journal is not limited to that tradition. The practice of theological education rightly reflects the theology of particular schools, but is not bound to any one tradition. As an ecumenical space for learning, dialogue, and mutual understanding, voices from Catholic, Orthodox, and other Protestant traditions are welcome.

In addition to publishing semiannual issues that include articles, essays, and book reviews, the InSights Journal website will host an area for Conversations. This online platform will provide space for ongoing dialogue about articles, as well as topics introduced between publications. The online forum will allow for the sharing of additional insights by an even broader range of stakeholders in the practice of theological education. It will also provide a venue for the sharing of resources.

Over the coming months and years, the Journal will seek to address issues such as the economic sustainability of institutions, challenges related to contexts of change and uncertainty, innovative educational models that meet contextual needs, curriculum development to meet various needs of the church, pedagogical concerns, learning needs and instructional design, partnerships, alternative economic models, academic leadership and administration, and more. These
issues are of interest and concern to theological educators regardless of location. However, they take on complex forms in non-Western contexts that deserve fuller exploration. It is our hope that the Journal can highlight innovative practices, scholarly research, theological reflections that will stimulate conversations influencing the future of theological education for the benefit of the church.

Overall, our purpose is to create a platform that will generate conversation. Some of those conversations will take place within the published pieces of the Journal. Others may take place through the online platform. Perhaps some of the most important will take place in the hallways and faculty rooms of schools, as individuals discuss together ideas sparked by something here.

Concluding Thought

The church has entered a new global reality. The center of gravity has shifted, and the generative centers for theological reflection and innovative practice are following suit. One implication is the increasing need to learn from one another and to create space for more voices to enter into the global conversation, bringing their expertise, experience, and findings. A unique context, coupled with an opportunity for action, is why we have begun this endeavor. It is our sincere hope that it will serve the church by strengthening theological education, for such a time as this.

References


Evan Hunter has worked with ScholarLeaders International since 2004, currently serving as Vice President. He earned his PhD in Educational Studies from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School where his dissertation explored contextual engagement of evangelical PhD programs located in the Majority World.
Leadership development is a buzzword found in the vision and mission statements of many evangelical theological institutions in Africa. The irony, however, is that the more theological institutions claim to be developing transformational leaders for the African church, the more leadership crises the church continues to encounter. Elliston (1988) used graphic words like over-functioning, non-functioning, undertrained, over-trained, inappropriately trained, dropout, overextended, and springboard to describe the perilous state of leadership in Africa. The phenomenal growth of the church in Africa further aggravates the situation.

The disconnect between the leadership training paradigms, especially the clerical paradigm, adopted by theological institutions and the contextual leadership realities facing the church in Africa continues to be the Achilles’ heel of theological education. The clerical paradigm — plagued by the clericalism, professionalism, and elitism — has struggled to produce the types of leaders required. It reinforces the notion that professional training for ministry happens only in theological institutions and that whoever darkens the doorways of such an institution ought to become a church leader. It is also mostly insensitive to leadership contexts. It inculcates students in skills and competencies that become outdated fairly quickly due to rapid cultural and social changes. The professional training paradigm assumes a fairly stable context, and defines competencies in terms of specialized skills and knowledge presupposing neat divisions and hierarchies of labor. Such a paradigm may suit bureaucratic, service, and commonweal (public-at-large) organizations, but may not in all aspects suit the African church, which is by and large a mutual benefit, faith-oriented, and culturally tinted institution. As Kelsey
(1992) concluded, “[E]ducated on the clerical paradigm, church leaders end up being ill-equipped to provide the most important sort of leadership worshiping communities require” (162).

The failure of our curricula to consider the African context in leadership formation may be due to scanty and inaccessible research. Consequently, leadership curriculum development has often been intuitive, mostly derived from imported practices instead of being grounded in relevant research findings. Such curriculum practices have been grounded in an epistemological framework assuming that leadership practices are not context-related, and that there is instead a fixed body of leadership knowledge that all leaders should know and apply. Consequently, the framework erroneously assumes that leadership development material constructed in Europe or the United States is suitable for the emerging African leader. Evidence of this assumption is noted in the number of “quick fix” leadership materials in deep and wide circulation, and in the type of leadership materials African leaders read (Priest et al. 2013).

Literature on leadership development has moved away from Platonic philosophy and trait theory to the intentional development of leaders. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) posit that leadership traits can be learned and improved upon. Max DePree (1989) indicates that leadership is an art that anyone can practice. If leaders are in fact made, then social, cultural, political, and economic contexts play a significant role in leadership development. Unfortunately, most theological curricula used to develop leaders in Africa do not consider seriously these contexts partly because educators lack primary data. Consequently, they end up designing curricula that do not equip people to handle issues arising from these contexts. This has caused acute leadership crises in Africa as our leaders from theological institutions do not know how to adequately handle corruption, negative ethnicity, globalization, social media, dysfunctional families, or witchcraft, to name a few societal maladies. Therefore, the question of concern is: “What do Christian leaders do and how can they be trained properly for ministry?”

The aim of this article is to apply the findings of the Africa Leadership Study (ALS) to curriculum development and review processes for theological schools. In doing so, it will underscore for institutions the value of implementing research-based

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1 Between the fall of 2012 and spring of 2013, researchers of the Africa Leadership Study designed a survey that was administered to 8,041 African Christians from three countries in three languages: Kenya (English), the Central African Republic (French), and Angola (Portuguese). The completed surveys were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The survey sought to identify the leaders and institutions creating significant positive impact in their communities (Phase 1) and to identify, through intensive interviews with the leaders and organizations identified in Phase 1, some of the factors and situations that have facilitated the impact (Phase 2). Data from the ALS is being used in a variety of ways, including the curriculum-related purposes here.
curriculum review in order to connect their curricula with the realities of those they serve.

Definitions

“Leadership” and “curriculum” appear extensively in this article and require precise definition. This article adopts the conceptual understanding of leadership that has been defined by the Africa Leadership Study as “influence that transforms people and their communities.”

“Curriculum” includes all institutional macro- and micro-processes involved in developing leaders for African churches and societies. The institutions in focus are theological colleges, Christian liberal arts universities, and church leadership training institutions.

Importance of Impact Assessment

Findings from the Africa Leadership Study indicate that the leaders creating the most significant positive impact in their communities are involved in either service (schools, hospitals, not-for-profit institutions, etc.) or mutual benefit organizations. These organizations have not received much attention in previous studies of organizations and leadership. Often, research findings involving commonweal or business organizations are applied uncritically to these organizations with unpalatable consequences. For example, students who have learned bureaucratic principles of leadership may want to run their churches like bureaucracies or service organizations. Thus, their leadership principles violate the nature of the organizations they were trained to serve.

The situation is compounded when it comes to African leadership. African forms of and perspectives on leadership practices have often been ignored in leadership studies. Only recently have autobiographies of African leaders emerged and, with the exception of Nelson Mandela’s *Long Walk to Freedom*, they do not receive as much readership as biographies of non-African leaders. Thus, the leadership principles being taught in our theological schools to would-be leaders of service and mutual benefit organizations are derived from research on other forms of

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2 Types of organizations discussed in this article include: (a) mutual benefit organizations that focus on the welfare of their members (e.g., political parties, religious bodies including churches, unions, etc.); (b) business organizations that focus on the organizations’ own welfare (the primary concern is to maximize gain at a minimal cost so the organization can survive and grow in a competitive climate); (c) service organizations that focus on serving clients (e.g., schools, social work agencies, hospitals, etc.); and (d) commonweal organizations that exist to serve the public at large (e.g., parastatals, the police, the military, etc.).
leadership and involving non-African leaders. The absence of authentic and credible research on African leadership may have contributed to this scenario.

In the last fifty years, research on leadership in service and mutual benefit organizations has accelerated. However, this research is still in its cradle phase, especially as it relates to Christian leadership. Institutions invested in leadership training need to consider data from the available research when developing their curricula. Unfortunately, the limited research data is often inaccessible to practitioners of leadership education or irrelevant to needs of African churches. Consequently, much of the curriculum development for leadership formation in Africa is guided by intuition, which Barlex and Welch (2000), writing in another context, would describe as a “‘seat of the pants’ response to limited piloting and anecdotal evidence from enthusiastic teachers.” Decisions about what to include and remove from the curriculum are based on what teachers “think” students should know and not on the findings of credible research. In addition to “enthusiastic teachers,” enthusiastic missionaries, board members, and other interest groups have also used a few isolated instances to inform and influence curriculum development processes at our institutions. One effect of this intuitive approach to curriculum development is a bloated and heavily fragmented curriculum as each stakeholder insists that his or her viewpoints be represented in the curriculum.

Redefining Success

It is of interest to note how churches in Africa are receiving graduates from our theological institutions. It is common for pastors to enroll in leadership development courses after graduate theological training, suggesting that our curricula are not as effective in leadership development as we may claim. Our curricula may provide good theological, historical, and biblical knowledge, but they leave graduates chasing after leadership development programs. We may surmise that African forms of leadership practices have often been omitted from curriculum design and implementation due to the dearth of research. The non-alignment of leadership training and contextual realities has led to dire consequences, but we hope to reverse this trend.

Data, such as that found in the ALS, should encourage theological schools to redefine their measure of “excellence” in leadership development. Over the years, institutional excellence or success in leadership training has been defined in terms of output (e.g., headcount of graduating students) and input (e.g., quality of the staff, faculty, library, etc.). The ALS research highlights the importance of impact assessment in curriculum renewal. Excellence should not necessarily be described in terms of input and output, but rather in terms of the positive community impact created by alumni. Impact assessment requires dialogue with the constituencies
served by alumni. It requires a deep and cordial relationship between the academy and the community. Such relationships will require mutual support between the church and the academy, with the church providing both financial and moral support to the institution, and in return, the theological institutions responding appropriately to the intellectual and ministry needs of the church. A relationship like this would provide institutions with a research constituency that could offer insight into the work of the leaders they have trained. It would also allow churches to provide feedback concerning curriculum matters in view of what they need from their leaders. Communication from the churches will be used to adjust the inputs, processes, and outputs to form excellent leaders of impact.

Research Shaping Curriculum

The ALS survey results revealed that “African Christians are exercising energy, initiative, [and] vision in responding to African realities and felt needs.” This revelation counteracts “the widespread perception that Africans are doing little to change poverty, conflict, violence and foreign dependency. African Christian leaders are creatively and energetically working to address a wide variety of local problems and opportunities with[in] the framework of Christian understandings, communities and resources” (ALS Report, November 2013). As educators at schools with an express purpose of developing leaders, we can benefit from these findings.

The survey reveals the importance, influence, and breadth of Christian leaders in the church and in society. Findings pertinent to theological schools focused on developing leaders include:

1. Christian leaders in diverse contexts, including churches, have significant influence in Africa, especially regarding spiritual and ethical issues. Pastors and church leaders continue to have the most influence in the lives of the respondents, albeit only in areas related to personal spirituality.

2. Christian leaders in diverse contexts are using their secular training to play strategic roles in the transformation of their communities.

3. Gender continues to play a major role in leadership. Though men continue to dominate the scene, women have a strategic influence and role in contemporary Africa. Respondents frequently named women as effective leaders, despite their underrepresentation in leadership positions.

4. Churches are recognized for their strategic roles in the lives of African Christians and communities, and are listed frequently by respondents as among the most effective organizations they know.
5. Successful parachurch organizations are central to evangelism, discipleship, and social engagement, and have strong African leadership.

6. The Bible as the word of God is important in the lives of African Christians and a significant number of those surveyed read the Bible more than any other text.

7. Many of the Africans surveyed read books, especially those that are motivational, practical, or oriented toward achieving success; however, many of the Africans surveyed do not have favorite African writers and hardly read books authored by Africans.

8. Relational networks within organizations provide the basis for achieving success.

Research such as the Africa Leadership Study unearths strategic issues that leadership development institutions need to consider with regard to the classic curriculum.

**Leadership Beyond the Church**

Christian organizations creating a positive impact in Africa provide a gamut of services. In Kenya, the Christian Partner Development Agency is addressing the problem of drought in diverse ways through sustainable agriculture, community health measures, political activism, promotion of gender equality, water and environmental conservation, and institutional development. In the Central African Republic, the Christian Embassy provides services that range from professional skills training and micro-financing to water provision. In Angola, the Conselho de Igrejas Cristãs em Angola executes programs related to evangelism, assistance and development, theological education, healthcare for HIV/AIDS and malaria patients, peace and reconciliation, and personnel training (see Bowen’s 2013 ALS report on the “Range of Services Offered by African Organizations of Impact”).

Such diverse ministry engagements raise the question of whether theological schools know what their graduates do. The popular understanding is that theological institutions exist to provide leaders for churches. However, if they are filling diverse leadership roles, then questions concerning how seminaries are preparing them for such ministry are warranted. Most often, leadership training in theological institutions focuses on one type of leadership — pastoral leadership — that focuses on spiritual issues of importance to the congregation. Research can help schools evaluate their curricula and make adjustments to address the broader fields they serve. Schools seeking to meet broader leadership needs might want curricula that include other disciplines — such as psychology,
business, governance, etc. — to prepare holistic African leaders who can serve as resources for multiple community concerns (see Ngaruiya’s 2013 ALS report).

Leadership Development Beyond the Classroom

Not everything can be taught in the classroom. The ALS shows that leaders who have created a significant positive impact point to the strong influence of mentors in their leadership formation. Current training models, however, emphasize classroom interactions between students and teachers, and allot no time for the leaders-in-training to taste what leadership really requires. Instead of learning on the field, students spend most of their time in classrooms.

Yet, the Africa Leadership Study reveals that fewer than 10% of respondents in all the countries surveyed (8.3% in Angola, 7.7% in the CAR, and 9.9% in Kenya) indicate that their teachers have significantly influenced them. As most respondents were not pastors, this finding refers to teachers generally and not necessarily those at theological schools. All the same, the numbers are stark especially as teachers are expected to be role models and shapers of students. Yet, these reports suggest that those who influence leaders are probably not their teachers. Instead, the findings reveal that those who influence our leaders the most are typically elderly authority figures, especially religious leaders whose influence was noted by over 30% of the respondents (35.3% in Angola, 50.2% in the CAR, and 55.8% in Kenya).

Influence may be coming from people who are not directly or necessarily connected to theological institutions. Thus, leadership curricula should include ways for students to seek out and interact with such people. They should allow students to spend time with leader mentors for a protracted period. This would help students to integrate the theoretical knowledge obtained in class into the practical realities of life.

Holistic Engagement

The ALS research also reveals that African Christians have a passion for social justice and poverty alleviation; therefore, the curricula of our theological institutions must address the unhealthy dichotomy between the Social Gospel and evangelism. This brings to the table this question: “Whom does theological education serve — the church, society, or both?”

The common belief is that theological education serves the church and that anyone not serving within a church is not worthy of theological education. This thinking assumes that lawyers, architects, and engineers, for example, who wish to undertake theological education, should give up their professions and become pastors after their training. We need to reexamine our definition of theological
education. Wood (1985) defines theological education as “the cultivation of theological judgment.” Wood did not limit his definition to judgment involving situations in the church, but also those in the community and society. Theological education should help people to cultivate theological judgment in all facets of life be it social, political, or economic. Believers should exercise the “mind of Christ” in all things.

Bringing Formal and Nonformal Training Together

If, as the ALS research indicates, teachers, especially in classroom settings alone, have limited impact on developing leaders while mentors, including religious leaders, have significant impact, then theological schools should ask how mentoring can be incorporated effectively into their curricula. Mentoring may be part of the formal curriculum, but more often, it takes place outside of structured teaching. Thus, schools should also consider nonformal learning opportunities based on activities, relationships and patterns of life that extend beyond the classroom. Activities may include discipleship groups or service opportunities that include both faculty and students.

Theological institutions must overcome the polarization between formal and nonformal education. Coombs et al. (1973) defines formal education as “the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded educational system running from primary school through university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programs and institutions for full-time technical and professional training” (11). Kleis et al. (1973) defines nonformal education as any intentional, systematic, and goal-oriented education (normally outside of traditional schooling) “in which content is adapted to the unique needs of the students (or unique situations) in order to maximize learning and minimize other elements, which often occupy formal school teachers” (6). Formal education can be understood as highly content-sensitive and nonformal education as highly context-sensitive. Formal education tends to be teacher- or institution-centered, while nonformal education tends to be learner- or context-centered. The ALS research indicates that theological schools would do well to examine the impact of both on student experience in their degree programs.

The ALS findings suggest that leadership training should not be compartmentalized into formal versus nonformal modes. Each mode of training

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3 Note that Kleis et al. have not used a hyphen in “nonformal.” The renderings of these two models in educational literature and popular usage indicate that one is the antithesis of the other. However, the intention here is not to present one as the opposite of the other, as hyphenation may suggest, but rather to present each as a legitimate mode of education with its own philosophy, methodology, purpose, and research procedures. One curriculum paradigm that I have seen that tries to fuse both models in leadership development is the More than a Mile Deep Curriculum Project (www.entrust4.org/about/our-ministries/africa).
augments the other and both are needed to train leaders. One is not the opposite of the other, as they seem to overlap in very significant ways. They can complement one another. The Pastoral Trainers Declaration of Cape Town (2010) noticed the unhealthy dichotomy between these modes of leadership training and thus declared:

*Since the formal and non-formal sectors of pastoral training have knowingly and unknowingly allowed ourselves to be divided in heart and efforts, we declare together that we shall endeavor to build trust, involve each other, and leverage the strengths of each sector to prepare maturing shepherds for the proclamation of God’s word and the building up of Christ’s church in all the nations of the world.*

In our training institutions, we must intentionally use both formal and nonformal training modes, leveraging the strength of each, in the preparation of leaders. The focus should be on neither teacher nor learner. The focus should be on learning. If the question “Is the student learning?” becomes the focus, then at any given time, both formal and nonformal modes may be necessary. We must intentionally weave deep theoretical reflection with opportunities for hands-on experience so that would-be leaders can learn from both. We must move away from the old paradigm of “theory, then practice” (application from theory) to “theory-building through practice.” We must move away from the paradigm of “training for the ministry” to the paradigm of “training in ministry.” We must allow our students to reflect on their practice, instead of only reflecting on what is presented in the extant literature or in class lectures. Our curricula should ensure that the life of the student is the laboratory of learning. Thus, our curricula should, with great intentionality, seamlessly fuse the explicit and implicit forms and bridge the artificial gap between the formal and nonformal modes in the quest to enhance learning.

**A Framework for Leadership Curricula**

Many suggestions have been made regarding how leadership curricula should respond to the research findings from the Africa Leadership Study. The type of curriculum that accommodates these suggestions will differ from the current curricula in our theological institutions. It is at the risk of drawing fire from those who believe that our present leadership-training paradigm is God-inspired, time-tried, and wholly trustworthy that I present five proposals, informed by the ALS findings, for a curriculum that fosters competent leadership training:

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4 Don Browning’s “The Revival of Practical Theology” (www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1373) succinctly summarizes various arguments about the role of practical theology within the fourfold model of theological education.
1. Reconsider perpetuating the fourfold division of theological education rooted in the Enlightenment. Schleiermacher’s *Brief Outline of Theological Study* (1811) gave rise to the standard fragmentation of theological education into biblical studies, church history, systematic theology, and practical theology. Three of these (biblical studies, church history, and systematic theology) are viewed as distinct disciplines in theological education. Practical theology is viewed as the application of the other three to concrete situations in the church or in individual lives. However, we must be reminded that this fourfold division, which subsequently led to the fragmentation of the present theological curriculum, was not designed with ministerial training in mind. Rather, it was an attempt to help theological studies gain acceptance into the emerging university model during the 19th century.

A more effective, research-based curriculum, aiming to combine formal and nonformal training, would not keep practical theology at the receiving end of biblical studies, church history, and systematic theology. Rather, practical theology should serve as the unifying force for the once-fragmented curriculum. Most of the non-clergy leaders surveyed are providing practical theological leadership without formal training in biblical studies, church history, or systematic theology. Those who have had formal training were quick to recognize that it is in their ministry practice that biblical studies, church history, and systematic theology come together and come alive. Thus, practical theology should emphasize public engagement to help leaders to consider the church’s role in the world beyond the church’s internal needs.

For example, a Christian educator should not only be trained to lead Sunday School and adult Bible classes. His training should also empower him to help the church understand governmental educational policies that affect the people of God. He should be able to challenge these policies or help the church adapt to them, using his training in theology and perhaps social science. When our curricula take practical theology into serious consideration, then they will begin to respond appropriately to the needs of our societies. When practical theology is taken seriously, then curriculum development will likely take contexts and the role of leaders in these contexts seriously.

2. Reconsider the current paradigm of integration. This point is related to the first. Integration, in most cases, takes the form of “bringing the silos closer” without demolishing the separating walls. This is evident in cases where academic departments cooperate to offer a program, but require
students to take a given number of credit hours in one department and then in the other department. This type of cross-disciplinary integration is not what I have in mind. Rather, the proposal is for a model of integration that centers on the output of multidimensional leaders. Instead of approaching leadership training from discrete courses of study, themes and issues relating to leadership are identified so departments can work together to provide avenues for students to study the intricacies and dimensions of the issues. Students will then be able to access resources from multiple disciplines as they strive to understand the issues. If this model of integration is adopted, then traditional course titles that are department-specific will disappear, as the focus will be on the issue and the content will be designed to address that issue.

Let me illustrate what I mean with a course I will call “Leadership Integrity.” The student may want to explore what the Bible says about this issue and study the Book of Daniel intensively. She may want to explore the effects of leadership integrity by examining leadership during the Dark Ages, studying biographies of contemporary leaders of integrity, investigating the political ramifications of integrity in leadership, etc. She brings all of these resources into the study of this concept over an extended period. By the time the study is over, the study will have covered several materials that hitherto have been fragmented in the classic curriculum. An integrated curriculum would serve well in training such multidimensional leaders.

3. Reconsider assessment strategies. Testing how much our students remember is the norm in learning assessment. Students who can reproduce our materials in forms that are very close to how we had previously presented them are considered excellent students. However, if we want to concentrate on impact assessment, then the most important consideration is what our students do with the materials given to them. This may have implications for how we frame our learning outcomes. I suggest that these be framed in terms of achievement outcomes that focus on what students will have done by the end of the learning engagement, rather than what they should be able to do after the learning engagement. For example, a course focusing on leadership in church planting could have this as an achievement-based outcome: “By the end of this session, the student will have formed a group of church planters.” Contrast this with the most common form of learning outcome: “By the end of this session, the student should be able to form a group of church planters.” In the second case, the student’s potential ability is tested while in the first case, the actual accomplishment is assessed.
The focus on traditional assessment, and the desire to get A’s and B’s have led to unwholesome competition among students. This competitive attitude has a spillover effect, as few organizations surveyed by the ALS claimed to have viable partnerships with other organizations performing the same task. While many organizations cited “competitors” performing similar services, only two organizations reported partnerships with other organizations. However, this trend is reversed when it comes to interpersonal relationships among impactful individuals in African leadership (see Rasmussen’s 2013 ALS report). Yet, in our schools, we assess individual work and often discourage cooperation among students. A curriculum that aims to develop leaders should encourage more cooperation among students. If students are encouraged to collaborate on academic exercises and work together on projects of mutual concern, then they may keep working together in the future.

Conclusion

The research data from the Africa Leadership Study provides insight into many relevant areas — such as technology, the importance of female leadership, and the importance of pedagogy, among others — that have not been covered here. In this paper, I have sought to apply findings from the ALS to offer an example of how leadership training in Africa can be informed by research so that the resulting curricula will produce effective leaders on a very large scale — much larger than the group identified in the ALS research. The promise of capable African leadership already evident in the lifestyles and practices of emerging leaders will be greatly enhanced and multiplied if our leadership curricula are informed by research.

References


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**John Jusu**

Born in Sierra Leone, John served as professor and Dean of the School of Education, Arts and Social Sciences and taught in the Educational Studies Department at Africa International University in Nairobi. He now serves as the Regional Director for Africa for Overseas Council. John earned his PhD in Educational Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.
Leaders rightly focus considerable energy upon the financial stability of their institutions. According to a 2013 survey conducted by The Chronicle of Higher Education and Maguire Associates, fundraising and balancing budgets occupy the greatest amount of time in the daily schedules of University Presidents in North America. For many leaders of theological schools, keeping their institutions financially afloat requires significant effort as well.

In the following essays, three leaders reflect on the economics of theological education. First, ScholarLeaders President Larry Smith describes the fiscal reality and proposes four considerations for administrators. Two leaders then respond to his analysis with reflections from their own contexts. Dr. Marcos de Almeida from Brazil discusses the delicate balance and awareness of economic variables required in financial leadership. Dr. Desta Heliso shares from the experience of the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology in developing a third stream of revenue beyond student tuition or outside donations.

The dialogue begun in these articles will continue in the Conversations section of the InSights Journal website.

References:
Olive Oil, Theological Education, and Economics

LARRY A. SMITH
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Our town in Italy is famous for the flavor and quality of its olive oil. A neighbor has 3,000 mature trees, well-spaced and perfectly pruned, located on a hillside with ample sun exposure. He is experienced and competent, and his family has been producing oil for generations. Yet he loses an average of €8 per tree every year. There are just not enough customers willing and able to pay premium prices for premium oil, and the cost of harvesting a hillside orchard is high. The more he produces, the more he loses.

So too is the plight of theological schools.

Even the most successful Western theological institutions run operating deficits, covered by fundraising and endowments. In the West, tuition typically exceeds the total cost of teacher salaries, course materials, and other direct expenses. So, when students are added, the school deficit is usually reduced.

Not so in the Majority World. In our work over the past few years with three schools in Africa and Asia, no significant program has generated cash. The direct costs of providing classes, excluding fixed and overhead expenses, exceed tuition proceeds. Thus, every academic program requires the administration to raise support. More students mean larger deficits.

Leaders at these schools do not believe it is possible to significantly alter these economics. Raising tuition is unrealistic because courses draw mostly poor students and prepare them for professions that do not pay well. Faculty salaries, a primary cost factor, are already low and, in some cases, unsustainably so. Technology might help, but carries incremental costs that will not be quickly amortized. Use of technology is also limited by infrastructure and the need for instructors to work one-on-one with students.
Given these economic realities, what should administrative leaders consider?

**First, adding students rarely improves cash flow.** Administrative leaders can easily miss this fact because all costs seem fixed at any point in time. No school wants to lose *any* indigenous faculty or give up *any* facility. Consequently, *any* student who provides fees seems to contribute cash to the institution. Thus, new programs that attract potential students often seem like a good idea. Ironically, they can just as easily endanger the institution, since each new group of students actually adds to the operating deficit. For example, at one school we considered increasing the residential student body by 25% and concluded that we would not only require significant capital investment upfront, but also incur an incremental cash deficit of more than 13%.

**Second, revenue estimates for new programs tend to be overstated while cost estimates are understated.** Programs in areas outside of theology – psychology and counseling, teacher education, community development, business and leadership – present a particular challenge. This is not to diminish the importance of these programs, of course, but only to point out that their economic impact must be fully anticipated and is not likely to be beneficial. Some even muddle the distinctive identity of the theological school. Funding theological education with these programs is, at best, difficult.

**Third, alternative delivery models may offer new ministry opportunities as well as improved economic prospects.** The best examples may be hybrids of technology-enabled distance education coupled with intense periods of residential instruction and community development. At one school we analyzed a possible hybrid program for underserved students from another region and concluded that the program could operate at breakeven with modest capital investment.

**Fourth, the time and talent of institutional leaders and faculty is at least as scarce a resource as funds.** And like funds, they should be directed at the core mission of the school, not at peripheral goals in the hopes of funding theological education.

No one goes into Majority World theological education for lucre; we are in it for the mission of the church. And none of this is to discourage that mission on account of its poor economics. It is simply to observe the economic reality in hopes of encouraging realism and credible planning, which would enable leaders and faculty to focus on the needs of students and the church.
For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish’ (Luke 14.28-30 NRSV).

Larry Smith

Larry Smith, President of ScholarLeaders International, spent years counseling multi-national corporations on strategy and organizational effectiveness.
Economics are always a problem for theological schools in the Majority World due to various historical, cultural, and structural issues. In addition, factors such as lack of resources, little financial support from churches, and enrollment of mostly poor students make the management of a theological school particularly challenging.

Schools must consider internal factors, such as program efficiencies and the total cost of training a student in any given program. Smith (2015) has detailed these well in his article. However, external factors are also important. In economic terms, schools need to understand the market demands and how their product — the training programs they offer — meets those needs. This is not to commodify the training we do for ministry, but rather to better understand some of the economic forces in play for theological schools today.

As an example of internal economic ramifications, schools offering residential programs that require housing on campus or nearby will incur greater costs as student numbers increase. However, schools with programs that do not require housing may strengthen their sustainability with increased numbers of students, unless the increases necessitate acquiring more buildings or hiring more teachers. These schools may improve their ratio of expenses to revenue by offering more programs and services, again, without personnel or infrastructure changes. This happens only because the fixed costs do not grow in proportion to the number of students. Of course, these assertions are simplistic because administrative considerations differ for each type of institution and program, and for each context.
What catches my attention is that theological education is a delicate enterprise in which one must consider the product. How do we define the product? Would it be the teaching of some particular content or model? Would it be the formation of leaders or clergy for the church? Would it be the formation of citizens based on Christian values?

We must also ask, “Who decides what is the appropriate product?” Would it be the institution itself? — its customers? — the church? — God? Should this decision be made unilaterally or dialogically? Once a decision is made, would it be static or dynamic, with respect to time and context? We must consider factors that directly influence how we respond to these questions.

In the case of theological education, we cannot forget that this product will necessarily vary. For each theological stream or tradition, we will have a different particular output, even though these outputs may share common elements and purposes. Historically, every evangelical denomination has started its own school with its characteristic product. Only in rare exceptions has there been consumption by customers from another denomination.

As denominations and independent communities have multiplied, non-denominational schools have also appeared, enabling the offering of a different product, attracting new customers, and at the same time, facing resistance from others. One of the biggest challenges for these schools is offering a product that meets the needs of the greatest number of potential customers. Without the a priori guarantee of customers, these schools will require skillful management to remain competitive and sustainable. The leadership at these schools must understand factors such as efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and market perception.

From the business perspective, there are some typical situations that affect companies. For instance, managers may decide to offer a “basic need” product that all customers want. Therefore, they will not need to worry too much about quality or customer relations. They can assume they have something that will always be in demand. Such a company will only be concerned with quality and customer loyalty when a competitor arises, offering a similar product and threatening its business.

I am not saying that the products of those who fit this model are of a poor quality. What I am suggesting is that concern for quality is not a major factor in their business operations. In a way, denominational schools have historically followed this model as they have a more-or-less built-in market preparing pastors for
existing (or newly planted) churches. On the other hand, non-denominational schools will always have to attract customers by convincing them of the quality of and need for their product. To do this well, they should formulate a clear pedagogical vision and recruit appropriate faculty.

There are also companies that have a product that no one else produces and that many customers want. In market language, these companies are “sailing the blue ocean.” However, this does not seem to apply much to theological schools, particularly non-denominational schools that do not have a predetermined clientele. These theological schools face the most common type of marketplace scenario: free competition with similar institutions. Survival in the marketplace depends on administrative actions that differentiate their product, either by quality or by association with some other benefit or service.

### Shifting Paradigms

The current scenario faced by theological education does not allow schools to continue as though they were in the Middle or Modern Ages. It is critical to understand that theological education is no longer the simple transmission of a fixed content. In the Middle Ages, theological education was structured to transfer the tradition of the church, mainly represented by the Apostolic Fathers’ writings and the ecumenical creeds. Later, during the Modern Age, theological knowledge was divided into a group of disciplines that tried to systematically explain human and divine phenomena. Following the Enlightenment paradigm, theology was treated as any other science, expected to propose objective, mechanistic, correct, and final laws concerning God and his revelation.

As we move through a new time, challenged by Postmodern paradigms, theological schools must consider this new environment. The church is already facing a multiethnic, multicultural, pluralistic, Non-Western-dominant world. She is also dealing with a growing urban, virtual, and cyber reality in which new generations are willing to speak, dialogue, and participate in constructing human knowledge.

In order to survive and maintain relevance, each school needs to understand its market and customers, which vary for each context. Each school needs to understand the demands of its context and discern trends in order to adapt its product to new realities. As churches increasingly invest in the in-house training of their leaders, schools need to think creatively about how to establish partnerships and offer new products that match this new reality. Distance learning programs have become a very interesting, flexible, and attractive way to address this challenge. With a small investment in equipment and faculty training, a school can offer diverse courses varying in subject, enrollment size, and length. Course
material can be conveyed using videos, text, and other resources according to the needs of clients and partners, or to the creativity of the faculty.

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### Moving Forward

Economic awareness and administrative astuteness are needed to address the issues treated above. Here, we have a very delicate situation. What I observe about theological schools in the Majority World, particularly in the Latin American context, is that they are led mostly by well-intentioned people who are passionate for the gospel, but have little skill in management. Many financial problems are caused by naïve administrative approaches that disregard resources and techniques related to planning, budgeting, quality control, efficiency, productivity, evaluation, and the like. When weak management skills meet the structural economic difficulties of particular countries, the result is catastrophic, threatening institutional survival.

Assessing and accounting for the variables involved in providing theological education (distinctive output, product quality, market demands, management, finances, etc.) is an interesting and complicated task for which there are no easy and ready formulas. It relates directly to the mission and calling of the school and responds to external economic factors, which include the demands of the marketplace, the church, and the broader body of Christ. As the context changes, so must the leadership be constantly aware of how to adapt the school in response. The adaptation process should include the contribution of many minds from all levels of the administrative hierarchy. Structural changes also require flexibility and timeliness. If we look around in Latin America, the schools that are still open and healthy are those that have paid attention and responded to contextual demands. Shrewd management requires a careful and collaborative approach aimed at the future and sustainability of theological schools.

### References

Third Stream Income: The Case of the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology

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The Challenge

When the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST) was established in 1997 as the first and only graduate theological institution in the Horn of Africa, the founders did not plan for it to have its own campus, faculty, and full-time staff. The plan was for all teaching activities to take place at the two undergraduate theological institutions, the Mekane Yesus Seminary (MYS) and the Evangelical Theological College (ETC). In a way, EGST was established as the graduate programme of ETC and MYS.

Although the founders — the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church (EKHC), and the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE) — decided to make annual owners’ contributions from the outset, they did not anticipate huge salary burdens, utility costs, and the like. For one, EGST originally had only two staff members, one of whom was a missionary who did not cost EGST anything! For another, the entire EGST faculty came from ETC and MYS: 80% were missionaries and the remaining Ethiopian faculty received salaries from their respective undergraduate college. But it quickly became clear that this was not sustainable. Not only did the EGST Board and Administration add more Ethiopian staff, but they also decided that EGST should have its own campus. Despite its mere 17 years, EGST’s student body of fifteen has grown to 230, twelve graduates have become 387, one programme has multiplied into five, one small rented facility has been superseded by a 9,207m² campus, and lone full-time Ethiopian staff member is not part of a 47-member cohort of faculty and support staff. As a result, EGST faces the challenge of sustaining itself through viable financial income streams, challenges that face many schools as outlined by Smith (2015).
Ethiopia is a low-income nation, EGST charges very low tuition fees, the owners’ contributions are very small, and theology is not the chosen academic path for the vast majority. Thus, the establishment and development of EGST to date has required significant dependence on external partners, both academically and financially. Given the economic and educational landscape of Ethiopia, no other beginning would have been possible. Although EGST will always be grateful to all who have invested in and sustained the institution over the years to make EGST what it is today, the school’s leadership has always recognised that theirs is not a sound long-term model that would move EGST towards growth, stability, and sustainability.

By sustainability, I mean neither self-sustainability nor self-sufficiency, but rather long-term viability that is underpinned by continuity of ownership, enduring purpose and mission, and dependable financial resources that can cover at least the core EGST activities. It seems that in order to fund even part of EGST’s core activities, students should be charged higher tuition fees (e.g., $100 per credit hour rather than the current $30). However, that would prevent most good students from joining EGST. Providing full scholarships through funds raised mainly from overseas could be proposed as an option, but this could endanger the future of the institution. If or when donor support reduces or stops due to changes in policy, the financial situation of donors, or global financial crises, EGST would have very few or no students, and would not be able to cover salaries and other costs. The most desirable approach would be to obtain regular subsidies from churches and individuals within Ethiopia, but the majority of church members are poor and church leaders generally lack interest in sending students for higher theological education. Also, giving towards theological education does not seem to be a priority for many wealthy individuals. These and other reasons would not enable us to secure regular subsidies from churches and individuals.

Without substantial support from churches and individuals within Ethiopia, long-term overseas donations that cover full scholarships, or reasonable tuition fees and sufficient owners’ contributions, EGST’s future would be in jeopardy. Furthermore, EGST owners are often connected to multiple theological colleges, and when it comes to making financial commitments, they give priority to institutions that are directly owned by them, rather than to the jointly-owned EGST. In order for EGST to achieve its future goal of growth, stability and sustainability, the Board and Administration needed to come up with a new vision: the Campus Development Project.

The Campus Development Project

The purpose of the Campus Development Project is to ensure that EGST would have quality facilities and a sustainable source of funding through renting
its buildings. The income would contribute towards the growth, stability, and sustainability of EGST. The simple logic is that the growth of EGST would correspond to schemes that ensure its stability and sustainability.

**Growth**

EGST’s aim to become an academic institution of international standing includes strategic objectives to Ethiopianise faculty, increase student numbers, continually review and add programmes relevant to the changing needs of the church and society, increase library holdings to 40,000 titles by 2022, open centres for academic research and development, and facilitate and host community and church engagement programmes, which include projects, workshops, and lecture series. The Campus Development Project would ensure that EGST has quality facilities for the future to further these ends.

**Stability**

Developed in 2007, the Faculty Development Plan (FDP) is the core of EGST’s strategy for academic stability. Historically, EGST has been up to 80% dependent on expatriate faculty. 2008 was a critical year for EGST when nine expatriate faculty, from both ETC and MYS as well as EGST, left Ethiopia in the same year. Picking up afresh the vision conceived at the founding of EGST, the leadership of EGST recognised the importance of having a predominantly Ethiopian faculty to support the academic development and stability of EGST. To this end, EGST created the Faculty Development Plan with the objective of recruiting a faculty that would be 70% Ethiopian. This goal will be fully realised in 2018 or 2019 when the last three of the ten candidates sent overseas since 2009 to undertake doctoral studies return. But academic stability cannot be achieved only through having well-qualified Ethiopian faculty who have committed to living in Ethiopia and working at EGST for at least 15 years. As will be discussed below, the faculty will also have to be fully supported. Academic and institutional stability, therefore, depends on stable and dependable financial resources, which the Campus Development Project aims to supply.

**Sustainability**

As indicated above, sustainability has to do with long-term viability undergirded by continuity of ownership, enduring mission, and dependable resources. Institutional growth and stability require all three ingredients. EGST’s ownership arrangement is exemplary, but ensuring that the original arrangement continues to be workable and sustainable is somewhat of a challenge. The sustainability of the current mission of equipping Christ-like women and men through theological and related studies, and stimulating research for the service of church and society...
in Ethiopia and beyond must also be assessed continually. In all this, the financial resources must be dependable. Sustainability is broader than self-sustainability or self-sufficiency since both concepts imply exclusion of partnership, interdependence, and support; yet, one has to accept that in a country like Ethiopia, institutional sustainability requires increasing financial *self-sustainability*.

Ethiopia is a poor country. As aforementioned, tuition fees need to be kept low in order to ensure a strong student body from across the country. Suppose, for example, that EGST is a fee-driven institution. Low tuition fees would mean low income. If EGST cannot afford to cover its costs, then, God forbid, it would have to terminate its services. Even if tuition fees were higher, sufficient income for maintaining the faculty and staff could never be generated from tuition fees alone.

Moreover, Addis Ababa, where EGST is located, is also home to the Headquarters of the African Union (AU), as well as more NGOs and UN organisations than in Washington DC. This means that personnel attraction and retention requires competitive salaries and benefits. Of course, EGST cannot offer comfortable salaries and benefits. Nor can it attract and retain its faculty by offering only tolerable salaries and benefits. EGST must be able to offer liveable salaries and benefits to its faculty. Since EGST cannot depend fully on local or external financial partner support, or higher tuition fees for salaries and administrative costs, the Campus Development Project must bring significant additional income and ensure that EGST has greater financial self-sustainability for the future.

### Building Income

In 2013, EGST finished constructing a 9,207m$^2$ five-floor single-winged and seven-floor double-winged complex. The anticipated additional income will come from the anterior *business building* (2,384m$^2$), which has been rented out in its entirety. That means that much of what is now happening in the rear *academic building* (6,823m$^2$) depends on income from the business building. In addition, most of the facilities within the academic building — the auditorium, seminar rooms, meeting hall, dormitories, and faculty flats — can be rented out when not required by the school. The cafeteria, run by EGST or outsourced, can generate some income as well.

Fortunately, EGST is situated in a prime location and has therefore become hugely attractive to businesses and various organisations seeking a venue for important meetings and workshops. In addition, EGST has purchased a 450m$^2$ property located less than a mile away. The owner has very generously allowed EGST to make the payment over a period of four years. Half of the amount has already been paid using income from rentals. Currently, there is a villa with service quarters on
the property. One of the EGST faculty and his family is renting it at a discounted rate. If this property is developed, then its potential for income generation would be enormous, as it is located in a very expensive part of the city.

What is clear from all this is that if the existing facilities are well-managed, then EGST should have no problem keeping the business building fully rented out at market value and receiving reasonable income from renting facilities in the academic building. If the new property is developed, it would boost income even more. These combined income streams would enable EGST to carry the heavy salary burden it is now facing due to increased numbers of Ethiopian teaching staff, along with inevitable rising costs of running an enlarged campus.

Reversing the Trend

With the business building fully rented out since 2014, the rental income currently covers 30% of EGST’s operational budget. Once the plan to also rent out facilities within the academic building is fully operational, an additional 10% is anticipated. Then EGST would be able to cover 40% of its operational costs through internally generated income. Another 40% of EGST’s income would come from fees, owners’ contributions, grants, and incidental incomes. 30% of this income is estimated to come from scholarships. This means that EGST would be 50% dependent on partner funding.

Five years ago, EGST was 80% dependent on partner funding for its operational budget. EGST now has a real chance to reverse this trend if it continues to work at reducing further its dependence on partner funding. In order to achieve this, the following actions, among others, would need to be taken: revising the existing level of owners’ contributions, developing diverse strategies and methods for generating income from churches and individuals within Ethiopia, increasing student numbers, revising fee structures, increasing rent based on inflation and rising market value, maintaining good relations with existing donors and attracting new donors, developing viable project proposals, working with donors to secure endowment funds, strengthening the fundraising office, developing viable short- and long-term investment schemes and strengthening existing ones, and developing the property recently purchased.

“The Main Thing is that the Main Thing is the Main Thing!”

EGST has a clear purpose. It is an academic institution, not a property management company. Its academic work and development must be the main focus. The property management and income-generation activities are only a means to this end. Nevertheless, EGST must ensure that it reaps full value from its property rentals. To ensure that the academic priority is maintained and the commercial benefits maximised, EGST has recruited a Property Management Officer and is planning to recruit an Events and Cafeteria Manager.
This “third stream income” model is now the financial backbone supporting the growth, stability, and sustainability of EGST into the future. It has great potential. But equally, it could also be EGST’s Achilles’ heel. First, EGST’s academic growth, stability, and ability to carry out its purpose are now inextricably linked to the success of this third stream income. If it fails, then EGST too stands to fail. Thus, EGST will need to work harder at diversifying income streams. Second, the level of facilities management required to ensure the necessary success could distract EGST from its mission. The EGST Administration must make sure that all income-generating activities undertaken serve the mission and vision of EGST, rather than the other way around.

Therefore, along with EGST, any theological educational institution that may be thinking about following this third stream income model must mitigate these potential threats in order to maximise the opportunities.

Concluding Thoughts

It would not be an overstatement to say that running a theological institution in a Third World country is a very difficult, if not impossible, task particularly if the institution, like EGST, is indigenous, interdenominational, and exclusively graduate-level. Therefore, the theological educators and leaders of such institutions should be completely faithful to their callings, and passionate about the mission and vision of their institutions. In my own experience, although the challenges of financing EGST are multiple, the rewards of serving at such an institution are equally great. In order to reap the rewards, however, one must be painfully aware of the limitations of being a biblical scholar or theologian, as opposed to a business expert. Thus, a theological educator who assumes a position of leadership must have clear vision coupled with strong self-understanding.

References


Dr. Desta Heliso

Dr. Desta Heliso studied at the London School of Theology and King’s College in London, UK. He has worked at the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology since 2003, serving as lecturer, Dean of Studies, and, since 2008, Director. He finishes his term as Director this year, and will return to teaching and research at EGST.
If we imagine the great Church Fathers and ancient theologians graduating *summa cum laude* from the most prestigious seminaries of the ancient world, then Justo González has a surprise for us. Seminaries are actually a recent development, established less than 500 years ago to prepare those called to ministry. How in the world did the church survive over one and a half millennia without our darling theological schools?

Four premises underlie the fascinating history of theological education that Cuban American historian Justo L. González recounts in his book: 1) theological education is part of the very essence of the church, 2) it has been in crisis for the last few centuries, 3) some progress has been made nonetheless, and 4) studying its history will provide guidance for the future.

With these premises in mind, González delineates the development of theological education through the different eras of church history. The book explains the importance of the catechumenate, monastic and cathedral schools, and Medieval Scholasticism, as well as the impact of the Protestant Reformation and Modernism on theological education. At the end, González provides a sharp analysis of the current state of theological education, pointing out its strengths and weaknesses. He concludes by proposing clear ways to improve our theological programs.

For most of Christian history, notes González, only a small percentage of church leaders have had any formal theological training. However, this does not mean the church drifted along aimlessly without any way to sift candidates for the pastorate.
From the beginning, churches held ministers to certain requirements (cf. 1 Timothy 5 and 1 Peter 5). Despite the nonexistence of seminaries during the first centuries of the Christian era, churches provided some form of theological education to all believers, including, but not limited to, candidates for church offices.

In the eighth century, formal theological curricula started developing, mostly in the monastic context. Monasteries became study centers keen on preserving ancient writings, copying biblical texts in their original languages, and passing on the traditions of the church. They provided a combination of character formation in community and theological instruction.

Facilitated by the scholasticism of the Middle Ages, a university system grew out of the great cathedrals of the West to prepare candidates for ordination. Nevertheless, very few pastors actually had university training. “Therefore,” González explains, “monastic, diocesan, and parochial schools continued being the place where the vast majority of pastors were formed” (47). The seminary (a word originating from the Latin for “seedbed”), grew out of the Council of Trent (1545-1563) as a strategy for forming more ministers in response to the swift spread of the Reformation. In this environment, formation of candidates for priesthood was a combination of devotional and community life, together with an emphasis on reading and analyzing classical and patristic texts, preferable in Greek and Hebrew. This seminary model “continued almost unchanged until the time of the Second Vatican Council” (85).

In his concluding chapters, González evaluates seminary-based theological education, and delineates some proposals to change and adapt it to make it more effective today. Since theological education, over time, became more academic and lost its relevance for the church, he calls for a “radical transformation in theological education – a transformation that cannot be limited to curricular matters or to means of communication and evaluation but must be grounded on a renewed vision of theological education. In this vision, all Christian life is, among other things, a life of theological study and reflection” (119).

In order to avoid what González calls “the canonization of ignorance” and “biblical imperialism,” theological education today should prepare candidates to enter into dialogue with all areas of human knowledge, and to respond to evolving contemporary contexts theologically and biblically (112). In a prophetic fashion, González predicts that “if we do not prepare such leaders, when those circumstances and challenges arrive the church will not know how to respond to them, and in consequence it will seem irrelevant and will be increasingly marginalized” (121).
Among the new challenges theological education faces are the “expansion of knowledge and its ensuing specialization” (120), a dangerous emphasis on separation from the world during the seminary years which makes it difficult for the candidate “to return to the wider community in which ministry takes place” (123), and the tendency for theological training to became “a matter of instruction and not of formation” (123). Also, the arrival of the Internet, which González compares to the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, has wrought radical changes not only in theological curricula, but also in pedagogical processes. Teaching biblical languages, for example, looks quite different now with so many digital resources available.

Even though González primarily analyzes the Western model of theological education, his book will benefit greatly theological educators in the Global South nonetheless. After all, most institutions outside of the West have been developed after the Western model and therefore suffer the same maladies. In addition, González’s proposed changes encourage the adoption of practices and values that resonate with non-Western cultures, such as mentoring by elders, communal over individualistic emphases, and holistic approaches, among others.

González provides plenty of food for thought and rings key bells for anyone involved in theological education. These are times for a “total reorientation and redefinition of theological studies” (127). Seminaries either keep adapting or run the risk of falling behind. We hope this book will challenge all of us to take seriously leadership development, bringing honor to God and radical change to the world.

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Book Review: Shaw, Perry. *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning*


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In *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning*, Perry Shaw, Professor of Christian Education at Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) in Beirut, Lebanon, addresses problems familiar to theological educators around the world. These challenges include providing alternatives to the classic tripartite curriculum (i.e., biblical, dogmatic, and practical theology), overcoming an almost exclusive reliance on lecturing by professors, and integrating theory and praxis in the educational experience.

This book is a theoretical reflection on the process of curriculum revision undertaken by ABTS to address these common educational challenges. The still-ongoing process, which involves stakeholders including faculty, administrators, and students, is designed to enhance teaching and learning processes at the school. The book serves as a guide and reference for those dealing with similar challenges.

What makes *Transforming Theological Education* an invaluable resource for theological schools, however, is not only the answers or suggestions provided, but also the methodologies presented. The author constructs a path toward integrative learning that is solid in structure and makes the journey possible for the reader.

Formally, the book is divided into two sections. In the first section, Shaw addresses curriculum and institutional development, proposing fundamental
questions for strategic planning before exploring deeper issues, such as the effects of the null curriculum, assessment, and the promising possibilities of multidimensional and deep learning. In the second section, the author addresses more concrete topics, from designing courses that address different learning styles and cultural contexts to addressing daily challenges within the classroom, such as lesson planning, the formulation of appealing questions, and even classroom management. Overall, the author’s holistic proposals reflect a deep understanding of educational theories and the theological curriculum, employ a wide variety of learning strategies, and address with intentionality the affective and behavioral dimensions of learning.

The strongest characteristic of the book is Shaw’s ability to intertwine three elements: educational theory, contextual relevance, and impactful application. First, while avoiding extensive theoretical discussion, Shaw still grounds his work solidly in advanced adult education theory. Thus, even a reader who is not familiar with the theory can engage the conceptual elements invoked. Second, the theory is embedded within the practical context of curriculum development, specifically the work undertaken by the author and his colleagues at ABTS. By testing his proposals against actual challenges, Shaw manages to escape the realm of abstraction and resonate with his practitioner readers who likely face similar dilemmas. Third, Shaw applies his own suggestions throughout the book: the reader is treated as a learner and is invited into an active educational experience, guided by questions and exercises that go beyond mere retention and comprehension activities. Plenty of sample documents and examples are provided, and all the main points defended by the author are reflected in the activities he proposes.

One example of this intertwining is found in the final part of Chapter 7. Shaw first addresses theoretical concepts and their implications for curricular elements outside the classroom, such as field education and mentoring. He then calls upon the reader to reflect on the potential consequences of applying these concepts to their own contexts. Exercises include invitations to integrate the theoretical concepts into the reader’s prior experiences, as well as into case studies presenting new situations. At the end, the author offers sample syllabi for actual credit courses that incorporate or are based exclusively on activities outside the classroom – these syllabi also clearly display elements discussed in other chapters. Such an attention to detail and internal coherence enhance the credibility of this work.

Since integration and intentionality are key concepts for Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education* would benefit from greater attention to at least two areas dealing with the integration of education and theology.
First, considering contextual theological methods is crucial for going beyond fragmentation in the theological curriculum, which is one of Shaw's central concerns. In the Preface, he acknowledges that Western systematic theological methods have roots in Greek philosophy, but fails to explore the link between this traditional theological approach and the traditional teaching methods that he considers ineffective. Yet, there is a strong link between the way teachers think theologically and the instructional approaches they choose. The inclusion of contextual theological methods into the discussion could have shaped a framework for a theological, rather than exclusively educational, integration among disciplines in the theological curriculum, affecting not only classroom situations, but also the assimilation and reconstruction of theological knowledge.

Second, the author adopts a church-centered language and approach, evident especially in the examples and samples provided. Although this may be suited to ABTS' context, stakeholders, and values, considering the broader category of the Kingdom of God would have allowed for wider applications to Christian ministry, and to public faith and service.

Despite these issues, Transforming Theological Education is still an encouraging book for theological educators around the world, and an excellent resource for reflection and practice as they develop leaders for the church and the kingdom.

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