

# Leaders Who Look for More: Barriers and Supports to Majority World Leaders' Successful Advanced Theological Training

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## Abstract

Majority World leaders seeking advanced theological education face daunting barriers. We who teach must understand the dynamics that shape who will pursue, persevere at, and fruitfully apply that investment. Among other challenges, leaders seeking fresh skills and perspectives confront ingrained cultural narratives regarding education. This study utilizes growth versus fixed mindset theory as a paradigm for how shared beliefs impact success. It proposes that those who leave home for training share traits detailed in third culture/cultural hybridity theories. It draws upon the experiences of numerous international students. Insights from seasoned trainers augment these perspectives, yielding recommendations for selecting leaders for training, and for supporting them through the process. These recommendations will be of value to Majority World students and to the professors who have the honor of teaching them.

## Introduction

*“Do not let my enemies exult over me... Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me... Consider how many are my foes!” Psalm 25:2, 4, 19 (NRSV)*

Psalm 25 is shaped like a long, sunlit plateau in the midst of two bleak valleys. As the psalm opens, David asks God to rescue him from violent thugs. He ends it with cries for God to untangle his feet from the vicious trap they have set for him (v. 15). He is in serious trouble. So it is striking that at the center of the psalm (vv. 4-14), he pauses for an extended, even leisurely reflection on the goodness of *learning*. Specifically, he seeks to learn the ways of God. After David asks God to lift his soul

above the current fray, the psalm becomes at its center the prayer of someone pursuing theological education *while* facing scarcity, fierce enemies, and a plethora of other troubles (v. 22). The timing seems all wrong.

However, might these be the very conditions that prime certain leaders to seek education? In the midst of protracted battles, some leaders simply trudge on, but others grow hungry for wisdom, perspective, and vision. They become animated by the question, “Could we be fighting this battle a different way?” Some learner-leaders realize that the battle for the Church’s flourishing in their contexts is not a quick skirmish. They make the counterintuitive choice to leave the fight and climb onto a metaphorical plateau for a season of reflective learning. There, they gain tools that enable them to return invigorated and equipped for a lifetime of fruitful leadership.

As we seek to connect gifted Majority World leaders with theological and pastoral education, this psalm should encourage us. Learning can happen in situations of extreme struggle and scarcity. Providing that plateau for reflection and development can be a huge and welcome gift to leaders slugging it out on the ground. The psalm also promises that God is highly invested in and committed to that process. God is the consummate educator, teaching the humble his ways and making his covenant known (vv. 9, 14). The psalm also sounds a note of realism for our enterprise. Enemies lurk, and not far off. We are always on some level engaged in what C.S. Lewis called, “Learning in Wartime.” As he reminded students in a sermon he preached in Oxford on the brink of World War II, “The only people who achieve much are those who want knowledge so badly that they seek it while the conditions are still unfavorable. Favorable conditions never come” (Lewis 1939).

The psalmist fits Lewis’s model of the motivated, diligent learner. He never releases the tension on either end: He doesn’t lift his soul to such lofty conceptual heights that he forgets his context or the troubles of his people. Nor does he fixate on the struggle and mess to the point that he fails to pursue learning. David is both aware of reality and able to transcend it enough to pursue his study of God’s ways. This is our ideal for the global leaders who seek advanced degrees, whether abroad or in their own countries – that they be rooted in and mindful of their local contexts while availing themselves of global thought and practices. They must be hungry enough for intellectual development to pursue it, disciplined enough to persist at it, and resilient enough to weather the inevitable setbacks. This article will first explore the internal and external barriers that leaders in Majority World countries face as they seek further training (in aeronautical terms, the headwinds), then name the traits that make them more likely to seek out and complete a course of study (the tailwinds), and finally, detail the support they need to thrive. It contends that our lens for prediction and evaluation of the success of training

must encompass a leader's community rather than exclusively assessing a leader's giftedness.

As a professor of homiletics with an eye toward strengthening preaching globally, I have taught students in intensive courses in various countries as well as many students who have come to the United States to study. Increasingly, I teach students from around the globe who are taking courses online. Nothing inspires me like a student from China who has to leap nimbly over state firewalls to post her sermons online for the rest of the class, or one from rural Mexico who has to wait out patchy internet access to post his. Nothing discourages me like the Central American student whose pastor tells him he is stifling the Spirit by pursuing an "academic" approach to preaching, or the international student who struggles dejectedly because her prior education simply didn't equip her for graduate-level work.

This article reflects on those students' successes and failures. It also draws from interviews with high-level trainers in four organizations and with the growth versus fixed mindset theory of psychologist Dr. Carol Dweck. (The author interviewed trainers from Langham Preaching Partnership (Langham), the Global Training Network (GTN), the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES), and the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller (SIS).) It highlights patterns regarding cultural narratives (here taking the term "culture" to mean the norms, shared beliefs, values, etc. of an organization as large as a nation or as small as a congregation) about education and leadership. Some of the barriers named by these seasoned trainers were surprising; some were even contradictory. The picture that emerges is of struggle and of gritty determination to overcome it. How can those who seek to equip leaders better discern the most likely candidates to succeed, and how can we partner with them along the way as these emerging leaders prepare to lead Christ's Church around the globe?

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## **Headwinds: Barriers to Theological Education**

On one level, anyone pursuing seminary education today is a living minor miracle, given the costs in dollars and time. But those doing so within or coming from the Majority World face much stronger headwinds. We will consider three barriers to theological education: scarcity of funding and intellectual preparation, prevailing cultural narratives about education and development, and losses to leaders and organizations.

## *Scarcity of Funds*

It is always more difficult to dream big dreams in settings of scarcity or ongoing trauma. A telling study was done in Pakistan after the devastating floods there in 2010 (Izenman 2017). Eighteen months later, ambition levels of those who had endured these floods had plummeted to the levels of those with half their income in terms of how much seed they hoped to plant the following year, their hopes for their children's education, and even whether they planned to vote in the upcoming election. This was so even though they had recovered their losses in financial terms. Trauma, hardship, and scarcity tend to shrink our horizons.

Funding is the most obvious scarcity headwind for leader development. Few who are living in economic scarcity have the vision even to consider higher education. It sounds as ambitious as attempting to jump to Mars, even though funding may be more available than they can imagine. Not only does it seem out of reach, but it seems audacious and extravagant. As one parachurch leader reflected on his choice to pursue a degree, "In my country, anyone being able to be full time in ministry is a huge luxury. Taking study leave away from that ministry is an *unimaginable* luxury. For that very reason, it had never occurred to me. I had plenty of drive, but no initiative or vision for advanced training. It took someone else having that for me" (Rautmanis 2019).

## *Scarcity of Educational Preparation: The Hidden Cost of Corruption*

Deficiencies in the educational systems of the home countries of those who attempt further theological study may be an even harder shortfall to overcome. Often, education offered in Majority World countries falls far short of Western standards. The resulting lack of intellectual preparation leaves Majority World Church leaders struggling behind their Western peers when they seek higher education. Recognizing this situation does not discriminate against Majority World learners – it simply acknowledges the reality of the state of Majority World education.

What causes this massive intellectual shortfall? When one trainer of leaders in many countries was asked what he thought the biggest barrier was to obtaining higher education, he answered with one word: "Corruption." Corruption costs countries at every level of the educational process. It affects not only the quality of education but also the subsequent confidence level of students. They know that their education is inferior because they were coerced to pay one price for an A and another for a B. In countries where this occurs, confidence in the system plummets. Students do not dare to set their sights on a degree in a culture where educational standards are more rigorous. This scarcity of structural integrity in

the foundation of one's education can be very difficult to overcome, and partner institutions (especially in the West) must think through the scaffolding required for students from such backgrounds to thrive.

### *Cultural Narratives Regarding Education*

Carol Dweck has developed the theory that individuals and cultures carry conceptions of intelligence and talent either as innate, unchanging traits, or as malleable ones. She labels these as growth versus fixed mindsets. In her words, "In a fixed mindset, students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb. In a growth mindset students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence" (Morehead 2012). Her research across many cultures has demonstrated that fundamental beliefs about talent and intelligence dramatically impact learners' abilities to tackle new challenges, persevere through failure, and even tell the truth about their test scores (Dweck 2016). She broadens her theory from individually held beliefs to shared ones when she notes, "Children come to adopt beliefs about themselves within a broader cultural context...some East Asian cultures put more value on effort and persistence after failure...than Western European cultures" (Haimovitz and Dweck 2017, 1855).

Her work with incremental versus innate conceptions of intelligence is useful in itself, but here its importance is as one model of the way that cultures (be they ethnic or denominational – or even congregational or familial "micro-cultures") share beliefs about education that can foster or hinder its attainment. Within one congregation that I observed in Eastern Europe, the pastor explained that it was a dramatic shift for him to empower women to pursue their own vocational development rather than simply serve in the ministries that most needed help, as his predecessor had done. These gifted young women lacked belief in their talents as developable entities and consequently did not seek out training.

### *Shared Narratives Regarding Education as Dangerous Endeavor*

While the stated value of every culture is that education is valuable, lurking beneath that veneer may be implicit narratives of education as a threat.

First, communities suspect, sometimes from painful experience, that newly trained leaders may threaten the community's identity and stability. At a fundamental level, education prepares learners to ask questions. Down in the trenches, leaders just fight on, but up on the plateau, they get a chance to consider strategies,

notice the faultiness of current weaponry, and weigh the costs of continuing to do things the way they have always been done. But cultures differ in their level of openness to questioning the *status quo*. For example, while a missionary in Kazakhstan, Dr. Erik Aasland was intrigued by the reluctance of the Soviet-influenced generation to interact critically in training sessions, which contrasted with the openness of those more rooted in Kazakh culture. He analyzed Kazakh and Russian folktales and found that in Russian ones, people who asked questions often got executed. In Kazakh ones, people who asked questions received a blessing (Aasland 2019). This is but one example of how a culture's narratives can support the process of education or suppress and even thwart it.

Second, communities may fear a loss of honor for senior leadership as young leaders return with fresh ideas. Congregational cultures that value unflinching respect for senior leadership can impede the flourishing of a learning culture, as the social cost of questioning one's elders in those settings climbs precipitously. Dr. Siew Pik Lim describes this dynamic in high-control church leadership settings: "The mere act of questioning or diverging takes incredible courage, and signifies that the relationship between leader and follower has been strained" (Lim 2014, 111). The newly-trained leader, abuzz with a new set of categories, perspectives, and questions, presents a threat to the community's hierarchy, just as young Moses did to the Israelites.

Sadly, though, sometimes the blame lies with the pride or poor articulation skills of the overzealous young leader, as when young Joseph's arrogance earned him his brothers' scorn. The leader may also return with a highly-trained head and a (seemingly) dampened passion for the Gospel. This is a fear articulated in many Evangelical and Pentecostal circles when they contemplate sending their most gifted leaders away for higher education.

Third, the community may (sometimes rightly) harbor fear of the changes the newly trained leader may suggest. To adapt Steven Covey's now-dated analogy of investment in one's education as "sharpening the saw," leaders whose homes are settings of scarcity leave the forest with a dull hacksaw and come back with a chainsaw. They bring it back with high hopes that their fellow loggers will love it, but more often than not, its sound alone is terrifying. It threatens comfortable, if less effective, ways of doing things. Used poorly, it could even cause real harm, and it may not be appropriate for the context. Whenever a community sends a gifted leader elsewhere to gain new tools and perspectives, that community is taking risks, as is the emerging leader. All the stakeholders must name those risks at the outset, commit fiercely to the leader they are sending, and prepare for some inevitable turbulence upon his or her return.

## *Shared Narratives Regarding Honor*

Highly egalitarian, individualistic Western cultures have much to learn from the gracious practices of honoring elders and leaders that prevail in more collectivist cultures. But that emphasis on honor can create difficult and conflicting dynamics for young Majority World leaders seeking development outside their cultures. Sometimes, the scarcity of honor felt by elder leaders is transferred down to emerging leaders. The above-mentioned Central American student whose pastor resented his pursuit of theological education is not alone. One would hope that congregations and organizations would be delighted to have their leaders as well-trained as possible, but in fact, communities sabotage that process for all sorts of reasons. Older leaders often feel threatened by younger leaders with more education. They may also resent that this generation of leaders is not enduring the suffering they did. They may fear the disruptive ideas they will bring. At the deepest level, they may fear being replaced or shown to be deficient, thus losing honor and status. Younger leaders must behave with humility and gracious, intentional honor in order to quell these fears.

On the other hand, sometimes we see senior leaders cutting a wake in this area, sharing and multiplying honor. These gracious leaders speak and act with rare magnanimity in order to create a culture where development can flourish. I think of a pastor I met in Nepal who was pursuing a BA in Bible. His daughter had attained a college degree elsewhere and was in my class, pursuing an MDiv. He would likely never get an MDiv., but his eyes shone with pride as he stood beside his daughter and they told their story together. He models a capacity to celebrate and nurture the gifts of those who will replace him. He gains honor in her success.

Sadly, communities more commonly suppress the younger generation so as not to dishonor the older. Seminaries and other training programs usually do not prepare young leaders to navigate the path of honor with patience and wisdom. They too often load young leaders with concepts and vision without concomitant formation of character in humility. Thus, young leaders' congregations reject both them and their new ideas. A trainer in Kazakhstan reflected, "We selected leaders to train who were too young – they did not have the status of a leader in their communities. In Kazakhstan, a leader's highest stage begins at 40." This reflection is somewhat at odds with that of a Langham Preaching trainer who lamented that pastors over forty were unlikely to seek out or persist in their lengthy training process. In either case, dynamics of power, rank, age, and education level can impede excellence in ministry. All involved must learn the delicate dance of honor – of offering and receiving gifts in love – that must happen if newly-trained leaders are to benefit the Church.

On the other hand, sometimes the community's honor is too bound up in the one person being sent for training. They represent the best of that community, and the pressure on them not to fail, and indeed to excel, is immense. An educator taught a course in the fall of 2019 at a Majority World seminary. Its denomination had paid for each region of that very poor country to send one student to his course and then to several subsequent ones. Two students had clearly earned failing grades, but the dean beseeched him to pass them. The dean explained, "If you fail that student, you are failing the bishop of that region who nominated him, and he will no longer send students to our school" (Phiffer-Houseman 2019).

### *Loss of Position: Challenges to Career*

Those who pursue education incur a set of immediate losses, especially displacement from loved ones and the comfort and familiarity of home. But another significant potential loss is their loss of the place within organizations in which they may have been deeply embedded. A leader in a large Majority World Evangelical ministry narrated the risk of loss he felt as he pondered advanced training. If he removed himself from the organization, he would lose his place on the ladder for promotion. In a young organization with rapid turnover, he would quickly lose his relational currency – that stash of trust and authority that is only accumulated face-to-face in real time. "I had to lose my identity within my organization," he said. "It was a risk to leave, because I was at the helm of the ship." The task before him seemed urgent; time away seemed far too costly. Yet he ultimately risked his present security for a hoped-for gain in long-term leadership capacity. That risk has borne fruit one hundredfold, as his reflection makes clear:

It expanded my horizons – before, I was constantly comparing myself and my organization to the one organization I'd worked for previously – that was the extent of my horizon. Blind spots were never challenged. I never thought of a new way of doing things beyond what had always been done. Time away let me look back at my organization and culture from a distance. Getting new content, tools, resources, perspectives, and processing, and a new set of questions to ask, gave me so many new angles. Hearing others' stories was also crucial. It opened my mind. (Rautmanis 2019)

Clearly, increasing the capacity of gifted leaders like this man carries tremendous benefit. Education allows such leaders to reflect and gain new tools. A season of training can be a life-giving antidote to burnout for a battle-weary leader; upon his or her return, it can breathe fresh life into an entire organization.

## *Loss of Home: Challenges from Cultural Hybridity*

However, even among equally gifted leaders, not all will pursue education, and not all who pursue it will persist at it enough to complete a program. Leaders who pursue higher education face culture clashes as another barrier to persistence and thriving. Some leaders can make the move away from their culture of origin but do not successfully make the move back. They have glimpsed a vision of better ways but struggle to translate that vision into their context. To be clear, this article does not at all assume that those better ways are being *practiced* in more developed countries, simply that they may be eloquently articulated as aspirations in books and lectures. This gap between vision and reality causes a tension that can lead to impatience with one's national culture. Returning leaders in this situation may feel like the magi described poignantly in T.S. Eliot's poem. Upon their post-epiphany return, they lament,

We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,  
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,  
With an alien people, clutching their gods. (Eliot 1974)

This is not cited to imply that a visit to a more developed country is akin to a sighting of the Messiah. It simply captures well the poignancy of no longer feeling at home in one's homeland. In a similar vein, sociologists Ruth and John Useem first coined the term "Third Culture Kids" to describe children who have grown up in a culture other than the one suggested by their passport. Studies have shown that these children share a set of strengths and struggles. They are unusually resilient, flexible, curious, and intellectually agile. They can make relational connections quickly. Yet they can struggle to form deep attachments, and they wrestle with feelings of rootlessness and restlessness (Mayberry 2016).

Interestingly, these very qualities are some of the ones that can predispose a leader to leave the "local battle," to return to the imagery of Psalm 25, and seek out a new land, a plateau on which to grow. But that very season of learning and reflection imprints them even further with some of the challenging traits of belonging "everywhere and nowhere." The "third culture" for these leaders becomes the vision of God's Kingdom that exists only in glimpses, foretastes, and hopes. Their challenge is to live within the tension of multiple cultures with agility and grace.

Sociologists and others have popularized the related term, *cultural hybridity*, to refer to the fusion of cultures that emerges through encounters across and between cultures. The *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* notes, "The most developed theorization of hybridity by Homi Bhabha (The Location of Culture,

1994) does not consider it as merely fusing existing cultural elements. Rather, hybridity refers to the process of the emergence of a culture, in which its elements are being continually transformed or translated through irrepressible encounters” (*Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* 2020). Emerging leaders who make the sacrificial choice to explore new paradigms and strategies will return different, and this difference will sometimes be a source of inward pain. They will need to endure being misunderstood in both settings, and the work of contextualization will take great effort at times. Yet the potential gain for the Global Church in deepened vision, clarified strategy, and galvanized hope is immense.

## Tailwinds: Traits of Successful Leaders

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This article has explored barriers to emerging leaders’ education – scarcities, cultural narratives, and losses. Those are the prevailing headwinds. Can we identify some of the tailwinds that propel the journey forward, predictors of success in theological education? The article will name five key characteristics: desire, curiosity, resilience, agency, and vision. This article argues that it is as important to assess the health and vitality of sending communities as it is to assess the giftedness of individuals when discerning the likelihood of a given leader to thrive in higher education. It may be as crucial to discern underlying shared beliefs that shape learning as it is to see a GPA or test result. The following, then, are traits that will support individuals who embark on the journey of theological education and the communities that send and receive them.

### *Desire*

C.S. Lewis was right – leaders must want education badly enough to pay a high price for it. They must be ravenously hungry for more and better for themselves and for their organizations. That holy ambition may be enough to catapult them into a new setting, but it must then become a *disciplined* desire that motivates them to guard their time and manage limited resources well so as to protect that investment. This capacity has a communal dimension: sheer determination is honed when it becomes *shared* desire. Successful students always have strong relational support, a team that values and guards their investment alongside them. It is hard to sustain desire in isolation when the inevitable setbacks come. A community that desires alongside these learners creates an ecosystem in which they can thrive. A seminary student I know who sought out strong involvement in a church small group from week one of his education found that when a number of challenges hit, to the point where he considered quitting, this group rallied around him with resources he had not known existed, tapping into funding, housing, and emotional support that pulled him through that hard

season and enabled him to persevere.

### *Curiosity*

Scrappy leaders are always asking, “Is there another way we could be doing this?” They are aware that there is much more to learn than they have learned. They possess an inner dissatisfaction with the status quo that makes them wonder if there is a better way. Curiosity is usually rooted in humility, which breeds the capacity to learn from others. Teachers can nurture curiosity about new models while guiding students to continue to honor the strengths of their context rather than abandoning it dismissively. Congregations that allow questions to be asked at every level of faith development and of organizational decision-making will foster curiosity in their emerging leaders.

### *Resilience*

Every leader will hit setbacks; some will press through them. A promising Majority World student came to Fuller Theological Seminary in the fall of 2017 ready to plunge into a full course load, only to learn that his English score indicated he would need a remedial quarter to get his English writing and reading retention skills up to speed. He was initially deeply discouraged about this and tempted to be defensive and impatient with this requirement. Yet he ultimately chose to embrace this setback as part of God’s path for him and persevered. Tests like these can prematurely end the process for some, sadly, so finding ways to assess resilience and increase likelihood to persist is an ongoing challenge for organizations of higher education. Trauma endured can reduce resilience capacities, so it is important for those of us who walk alongside these learners to know their stories and know what extra support they will need to weather the inevitable setbacks they will face. Here again, community is crucial. The Langham trainer interviewed for this article stressed the power of relational cohorts for helping new leaders persevere through their training (Orjuela 2019).

### *Agency*

Successful intercultural learners come with a solid foundation as practical theologians and seasoned leaders in their own contexts. They are not empty receptacles of ideas; rather, they bring the capacity to interact critically and creatively with new ideas. They have sufficiently strong personalities to push back against new concepts rather than just receiving them. They can grasp a model conceptually and then test it against practices in their own culture, often emerging with a synthesized, hybrid new model or practice that can transplant well into their own context. Teachers in those moments must avoid the “bank

transfer” model of education, where they are merely depositing Western paradigms into Majority World minds. Rather, skilled educators will foster interactive settings in which students can bring the strengths of many models into critical and generative conversation.

### *Vision*

A trainer of Majority World leaders lamented the scarcity mentality among pastors in his region. Because of this mentality, leaders had trouble getting off what he called the “hamster wheel” of pressing ministry demands and committing to long-term training. This is not cause for judgment but for awe at some leaders’ remarkable capacity to lift their heads above the fray enough to pursue development. It highlights as well the need for intentional mentoring, for educators who have a vision beyond what a leader may have for him or herself. Just as the leader mentioned above reflected that further training would never have occurred to him, many leaders will need a sponsor who can envision a path s/he cannot imagine. Vision is not only located within an aspiring individual, though. It can often be a gift given by a discerning community to an individual. That leader could have had a fine, faithful, local ministry for decades, but he may in the future influence hundreds of key leaders across countries with the tools he gained from stepping away and investing in his own development.

### **Conclusions**

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At this writing, the landscape of education is undergoing a dramatic and unprecedented shift thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. International travel has nearly ground to a halt, many physical classrooms have moved online, and economies that funded global scholarship have suffered. This may be an opportunity for rethinking how education is done, and it may yield exciting new access to education for many more leaders. More and more students may find that they can study online, without having to leave their ministries and cultures. However, many will still choose to pursue education in a cross-cultural context. The following recommendations can improve the chances of success for those who do.

First, the potential student should undertake a clear-eyed assessment of his or her capacity. Too often, intelligence alone is evaluated, whereas the much more crucial factor may be the ability to guard and devote time to the endeavor. Other evaluative tools, such as a StrengthsFinder test or a Five-Factor assessment, which evaluate levels of openness to new ideas, could predict a student’s ability to interact fruitfully with fresh paradigms (Rath 2007).

Second, students must cultivate strong ownership from their sending community. Even small financial contributions can make the local congregation or parachurch organization an active stakeholder in the endeavor, as can regular prayer and regular communication. A visionary, dedicated senior leader in the sending community will keep that mindset alive at home.

Third, students must seek to enter the “land of their sojourn” as strong networkers, confident that they bring gifts to the seminaries, churches, and residences they join. Yet they also need to be able to ask for the help they need. Students who can share their struggles and seek help will find themselves able to thrive.

Fourth, they must maintain a long-term perspective, especially during the setbacks that come early in the process. I have counseled several international students who hit unanticipated barriers that they perceived to be insurmountable. One particularly discouraged student on the verge of returning home said, “I guess this is just a story that is going to end badly.” I countered, “This is only the first chapter!” He has gone on to thrive as an outstanding Ph.D. student and will undoubtedly be a key leader in his country for decades to come. Faculty who can offer such encouragement and back it up with concrete expressions of help can make the difference between success and failure for students.

Psalm 25 closes with a terse, poignant cry: “Redeem Israel, O God, from all its troubles.” That is the cry of a leader who loves Christ’s people deeply and sees their plight with clarity and compassion. The goal of theological education is not training for the leader’s sake alone but for the sake of the Church. Through theological education, leaders should grow in deep love for their nation and for the people of God in that nation. They should develop a heart that cries out to God for redemption. Whether intentional investment involves travel to a distant land, online coursework, or accessing local informal education, it is costly but well worth doing. A deeper awareness of the headwinds new leaders face and the traits that will give them tailwinds for flourishing can enable those of us who champion their development to do so with greater wisdom and love.

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