



**A SURVEY OF THE FORMATION OF THEOLOGICAL
STUDENTS WITH REFERENCE TO ECUMENICAL,
MULTI-CULTURAL AND GENDER ISSUES.**

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF THEOLOGY

In the School of Theology and Religion

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Pietermaritzburg

2003

ABSTRACT

This thesis comprises a survey and analysis of the 'formation' of students, as part of the curriculum, in theological institutions. It contends that students attending institutions that are heterogeneous in terms of denominations, culture, and gender are not impaired in their formation; on the contrary there are great benefits to be derived from such an environment. This survey has been conducted by means of literature research on formation in North America, Asia and Africa, and personal interviews with staff and students of the Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Institutions that consists of St Joseph's Theological Institute at Cedara, The School of Theology (University of Natal – Pietermaritzburg) and The Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa.

The thesis briefly examines the history of formation from a Christian theological perspective. A cross section of institutions is taken and their various approaches to formation noted. Three issues are addressed namely: ecumenical, multi-cultural and gender questions. This thesis proposes that these issues are integrated through reflection on the image of God and the faith community of God.

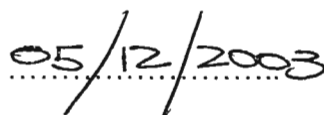
The formators' task revolves around the students' identity in their context. This identity includes three dominant aspects – identity in relation to God, in relation to self, and in relation to society. A practical approach such as mentoring is suggested. The pastoral identity of the graduate is anticipated as it pertains to the role of ordained women and particularly the changing status of clergy in a post-modern world.

The thesis concludes that if the outcome of formation is the integration and establishment of an individual's identity in relation to the image of God, self and community then a heterogeneous theological institution is an enriching environment.

DECLARATION

I, Peter George Russell-Boulton hereby declare that this thesis, unless specified in the text, is my original work. I also declare that I have not submitted this research project for any other purpose at any other Institution or University.

Signature 



Peter George Russell-Boulton

Date

As Supervisor, I agree to the submission of this Thesis

Signature 



Fr Christopher Chatteris S.J.

Date

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SECTION ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF FORMATION

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Today many theological institutions engaged in training students for Christian ministry are no longer homogeneous in terms of Christian denomination. Institutions with students from different church and cultural backgrounds are faced with the challenge of forming men and women for ministry in an ecumenical and multi-cultural milieu. This thesis will attempt to cover a broad field of educational and ecclesiastical concerns, with specific reference to ecumenical¹, multi-cultural, and gender issues.

The formation of students in institutions that are not homogeneous presents its own peculiar challenges. Susan White in her article *Can Spirituality be Taught?* compares her teaching experiences at Westcott House, a Church of England seminary in Cambridge, and Brite Divinity School of Texas. The student body at Westcott was described as demographically homogeneous and the question of teaching spirituality did not arise. Brite Divinity School, on the other hand, is described as being “... theologically diverse. We have only 250 students but they represent thirty-four different Christian denominations” (White1999: 14). White then asks questions that are pertinent to this thesis:

How can we teach spirituality for the ministry without a cohesive community? How do we teach spirituality for ministry without a shared spiritual tradition, or even a shared model for the spiritual life? How do we teach spirituality for ministry when so many of the things that we have traditionally taken for granted as foundations for that study, are no longer in place? How do we teach in the midst of the spiritual smorgasbord that is increasingly ... in the seminary ... (and) ‘out there,’ within the culture at large? (1999:15).

Multi-cultural and gender issues which present their own challenges to formation are also evident at theological institutions. Regarding the multi-cultural aspect there are, among other facets, the design of curricula, and the cultural identity of the student to be taken into account. From: *Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education* the following paragraph on contextualization:

¹ The term “ecumenical” is used instead of inter- or multi-denominational.

Our programmes of theological education must be designed with deliberate reference to the contexts in which they serve. We are at fault that our curricula so often appear either to have been imported whole from abroad, or to have been handed down unaltered from the past. The selection of courses from the curriculum, and the content of every course in the curriculum, must be specifically suited to the context of service. To become familiar with the context in which the biblical message is to be lived and preached is no less vital to a well-rounded programme than to become familiar with the content of the biblical message. Indeed, not only in what is taught, but also in structure and operation our theological programmes must demonstrate that they exist in and for their specific context, in governance and administration, in staffing and finance, in teaching styles and class assignments, in library resources and student services. This we must accomplish, by God's grace (in Stuebing 1998: 69-74).

At the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa (ESSA) the student body consists, not only, of black and white students from South Africa but also students from the rest of Africa and overseas. In this multi-cultural situation certain tensions arise, for example, local black students because of the legacy of Apartheid, particularly that of Bantu Education, are disadvantaged and feel discouraged. The 'International' African students as well as whites and Indians appear favoured by faculty and this apparent discrimination impacts negatively on the formation of South Africans. Also students from different cultural backgrounds need to learn to live and worship together.

In addition to ecumenical and multi-cultural issues there is a need to investigate the gender requirements of students. There is an increasing number of women who are enrolling at theological institutions, seeking a theological education and ultimately ordination to Christian ministry. In a number of denominations the ordination of women may be considered revolutionary, in some anathema. This presents theological institutions with a unique set of challenges.

At ESSA the author is responsible for formation both in and out of the classroom situation. Besides lecturing he facilitates chapel services and formation groups as well as overseeing church placements. This topic *A survey of the formation of theological students with reference to ecumenical, multi-cultural and gender*

issues has been chosen with the express purpose of augmenting the author's knowledge and practice in this field. The hypothesis being that the effective formation of female and male students for Christian ministry in a denominationally and culturally heterogeneous theological institution is both possible and enriching.

Beside the questions raised by White, the author has a number of questions arising from his own experience at ESSA:

- How does one celebrate diversity without losing one's denominational distinctives?
- How does the philosophy of the institution impact on the student and can any particular denomination trust the education institution?
- Can the institution develop forms of worship that transcend the denominational forms represented by the student body?
- What are the attitudes prevailing among students regarding the ordination of women to Christian ministry?
- Does the formation of women students require certain specific considerations, given the feeling surrounding their ordination?

A good deal of research has already been done in this field, as the survey will indicate. Literature on 'formation' in general is readily available but not that much on multi-cultural and gender issues in particular. This study, while encompassing a universal perspective, is attempting to isolate issues that are relevant to ESSA. The literature survey seeks to incorporate the opinions and aspirations of the various denominations of the Church. As an Evangelical I am indebted to the rich vein of Catholic literature on the subject of formation.

This thesis, which is essentially a survey, does not deal extensively with educational methodologies and curriculum planning, nor does it explore psychological and sociological issues. The theological reflection is not fully developed and serves merely to indicate the position taken regarding the process and outcomes of formation.

Two avenues of research are being explored, namely a literature survey and field research:

The field research consists of interviews with the following groups:

- Faculty members of Cluster² – who will be asked to share their understanding of the process of formation. They will also be asked to indicate their involvement in the formation of students.
- Graduates and under-graduates – who will be asked to critically reflect on their experience of formation. Their experiences in terms of the ecumenical, multi-cultural and gender dynamics will also be noted.
- Ordained women – who will be asked to reflect on the adequacy of their formation during their training and studies. They will also be requested to identify those areas that could be added or adapted to improve the lot of women in ministry.

This thesis consists of four sections: One - An Overview; Two - Issues in the South African Context; Three - Theological reflection; Four - Practical considerations.

In the first section there are three chapters including this introduction. Chapter two reflects on the history of formation in the Judeo-Christian context and gives some definitions of formation. The third chapter, which is by no means exhaustive, samples the approach of some theological institutions, Protestant and Catholic, in Asia, North America and Africa, to the formation of women and men for ministry.

Section two focuses on issues that manifest themselves on heterogeneous campuses. Chapter four deals with the consequences of students from various traditions and denominations coming together on one campus; it also notes the relationship that needs to be encouraged between the theological institution and

² Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Institutions consists of St Joseph's Theological Institute at Cedara, The School of Theology (University of Natal – Pietermaritzburg) and The Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa. Although the focus of this thesis is on ESSA, faculty members and students of the Cluster have been included in the field research.

the churches whose members are represented in the student body. The multi-cultural issue is addressed in chapter five; this covers encounters in chapel, classroom and community and is pertinent to the South African context. The sixth chapter faces gender issues; an overview of Church history, as it pertains to the experience of women, is given to provide a basis to redress the sins of the past. The issue of ordination is raised and the chapter concludes with a response from a formation perspective.

A theological reflection is found in the third section of the thesis: chapter seven reflects on the image of God and its impact on the issues raised in the preceding section. The community of God is the subject of the eighth chapter and attempts to draw together the various aspects of the Church into united action as suggested in the biblical analogy of the body (1 Corinthians 12).

The fourth and final section looks at practical considerations. Chapter nine, The formator's task, suggests the need to assist students to establish their identity in God, in themselves, and in the community, to this end certain strategies are proposed with due consideration given to human resources and time constraints. Chapter ten reflects on the pastoral identity in the context of what some describe as the onset of the post-Christian era and certainly post-modernity. This chapter discusses the changes in status and authority that graduates, women and men, can expect to find in a changing world; it also revisits ordination, the clergy / laity division, and the options of full- or part-time ministry. Chapter eleven is a synthesis of the literature survey and the field research and serves as a conclusion to the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO - FORMATION

INTRODUCTION

Formation has a long history and it is important to reflect on it. This overview of the history of formation, which begins in the Old Testament and ends with a reference to Postmodernism, is not comprehensive. Nevertheless this summary of events and periods touches on the essential aspects that are relevant to the subject. Contemporary notions and definitions of formation from various perspectives and traditions will be noted. The chapter concludes with a reflection.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FORMATION

Formation in the Old Testament

The role of parents

How far back can we go to find spiritual formation in the Judeo-Christian context? Banks in his chapter *Ministry Formation Before Christ* (1999:83-93) begins with the foundational role of parents in the Pentateuch and Proverbs:

The home was the place where religious nurture, transmission of tradition, and participation in worship – even vocational preparation – first took place (Deut 4:9; 6:7, 20-25; Exod 12:26-27; 13:7-8,14-16; Prov 6:20-23; 13:1; 23:22-25) (1999:83).

National leaders

Regarding national leaders, the training of Joshua under Moses provides an example. Joshua was a constant companion to Moses enjoying closeness with the older man that others, including the elders, did not have. Thus Joshua had a 'ring-side-seat' at the significant moments of Israel's exodus (Exod 33: 7-11). Further Joshua was Moses' servant or aide (Exod 24:13) yet he was able to express his opinion (Num 11:28). When Moses died Joshua received the promise of God's continuing presence:

No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. (Josh 1:5 NIV)

The training of priests

There is not much information regarding the training of priests in the Old Testament. We do have the instance of Samuel who was entrusted to Eli and resided in the sanctuary. Samuel must have had the best prophetic apprenticeship available at that time (1 Sam 2:11; 3:1) (Banks 1999:86).

The prophets

The prominent prophets of the Old Testament may distract us from the fact that there were large groups or ‘schools’ of prophets (2 Kings 2:7; 4:1). For the sake of this thesis the relationship between Elijah and Elisha is noteworthy. Elisha was the older man’s attendant or servant and was obliged to follow wherever Elijah went (1 Kings 19:19-21; 2Kings 2:2,4,6). When Elijah was ‘taken up’ Elisha took over his mantle with a ‘double portion’ of Elijah’s spirit (2Kings 2:1-14) (Banks 1999:87).

The Wise

Banks also identifies another group of formators he calls *The Wise*:

These were mostly lay people but could also include priests (1 Kings 4:5). Their varied duties included looking after the archives (Jer 36:20-21), doing the work of scribes (Jer 8:8-9), and giving political advice. They taught in the open air, in the city gates, and at the crossroads (Prov 1:20f.). It was partly by this means that the training of future wise people took place. The wise also gathered students around them to whom they gave more regular training (Prov 8:32; Isa 8:16; 50:4) (1999:88-89).

Daniel and his companions provide an example of young people in a Babylonian court under the supervision of an older person.

Their training embraced “academic” learning and, in some cases “charismatic” discernment. It included the study of literature as well as the capacity to interpret visions and dreams (Dan 1:17). Only after a final oral test did they gain a position (Dan 1:19; cf. v. 14) (Banks 1999:89).

Inter-Testament Times

Approaching the time of Christ’s public ministry we find such groups as the Pharisees, the Essenes, the Qumran Community and the disciples of John the Baptist.

The Pharisees

The Pharisees, a male-based movement, formed fellowships that diligently kept the Law and shared a common meal. Respected teachers gathered students around them who assumed a servant status and spent a great deal of time in their teacher's home and accompanied the teacher in his daily round. "So learning was centered on a way of life rather than a set of lessons. Indeed, written texts were not at the heart of this process" (Banks 1999: 90-91).

Jesus and His Disciples

In a footnote Samra quotes George Ladd:

Discipleship to Jesus was not like discipleship to a Jewish rabbi. The rabbis bound themselves to the Torah; Jesus bound his disciples to himself. The rabbis offered something outside themselves; Jesus offered himself alone . . . Discipleship to Jesus involved far more than following in his retinue; it meant nothing less than complete personal commitment to him and his message (2003:220).

Samra concludes that being a disciple in the time of Jesus meant 'literally following Jesus around ... being physically with Jesus' (Mk 1:17-18) (2003:221).

To be a disciple of Jesus entailed a call to be part of a family, a community with Jesus (Mk3: 35; 10:29-39). Unlike the young men in the Old Testament who were servants to the prophets or teachers, Jesus' disciples were called to join Him in working for the Kingdom. To follow Jesus the disciples had to forsake all; here we must differentiate between those who did not follow Jesus continually (Mk 15:40-41; Mt 27:57; Jn 19:38-39), and the Twelve:

Belonging to the Twelve not only involves severing family ties, giving up possessions, and suffering (Lk 14:26-33), but other specific, ascetic demands connected with particular mission journeys (Mt 10:9-16) (Banks1999: 100).

It seems that Jesus provides yet another example of on-the-job training; He used various instances along the way to instruct His disciples.

In the beginning the disciples hear the basic message of Jesus, which introduces them to his view of the active presence of the kingdom. Next they observe, and are drawn into helping with, Jesus' healing – in the

Greek “therapeutic” – ministry, through which they realise the importance of meeting people at their point of physical and emotional need. Then Jesus models for them a ministry of forgiveness, one that is not just conditional on repentance but at times a catalyst for it. Finally, they experience a developing fellowship with God and each other, through which they learn what is integral to the process of discipleship (Banks 1999:104).

After Christ’s Ascension

Hinson in his book *Spiritual Preparation for Christian Leadership* identifies several phases in the history of formation (1999:14-34).

The first phase, covering the first three centuries of Church history, he calls “On-the-job Training in an Age of Martyrs” (1999:15). The persecution of the early Church and particularly the martyrdom of Stephen and James (Acts 7:55-60; 12:2), not to mention the imprisonment of Peter (Acts 12:1-12), registered in the hearts and minds of the early Church and brought its own reality to commitment and Christian leadership. A firm pattern of formation had already been entrenched:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
(Acts 2:42 NIV)

In the middle of the first century Paul, the persecutor turned apostle provides a parental pattern. He refers to Titus, and especially Timothy, as sons in the faith (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2, 2:1; Titus 1:4).

There were two aspects to Paul’s practice of discipleship. Firstly, he treated other believers as equals, “He called Apollos a coworker (1Cor 3:5-9) and Timothy a fellow worker (1Thes 3:2) and a brother (2 Cor 1:1; Col 1:1) even though Timothy was his son in the faith (1 Tim1:2; 2Tim 1:2)”. Secondly, Paul was willing to invite people to imitate him (Samra 2003:229-230).

Samra observes that the use of the word disciple, “except in Acts where it is a technical term referring to all believers”, is limited to the Gospels where Jesus

was physically present with His disciples. In its place is the concept of imitation (2Thes 3:7-9; Heb 13:17; Eph 5:1; Phil 3:17) (2003:223).

Imitation then is similar to discipleship in the sense that it is the process of transferring one's lifestyle to the next generation. Having progressed in the process of imitating Christ, Paul encourages his converts to imitate him (Samra 2003:224).

In the second century some schools emerged. One in Alexandria established by Pantaenus; Justin Martyr founded a school in Rome in ±150 AD, and Origen, when he moved from Alexandria in 232 AD, started a school in Caesarea Maritima.

According to Hinson the responsibility for spiritual formation:

... soon came to rest in the bishop as the chief shepherd of the Christian flock in a city or province. The letters of Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, addressed to his presbyters and deacons while hiding during the Decian persecution [250-51AD], make transparent the kind of training that went on all the time. Cyprian, like Paul, offered a fatherly example as well as direct counsel or instruction. Furthermore, clergy formed a kind of community of faith in which such formation would occur regularly (1999:18).

From Constantine

The next phase begins with the conversion of Constantine in 312 AD, which saw the end of persecution and the rapid rise in church membership. Discipline in these more peaceful times presented a challenge to spiritual formation. The response was monasticism. Ambrose of Milan, who greatly influenced Augustine, embraced the monastic approach. Hinson notes:

Augustine became a presbyter during a period of crisis in North African Christianity. The threat of Manichaeism and the Donatist schism merely added to the crisis of spiritual indifference and moral decay. An important part of the practical response to this situation rested in a committed, well-trained clergy. The obvious model for this lay at hand in monasticism. Thus, when Augustine accepted ordination, according to his biographer Possidius, he soon founded a monastery within the church of Hippo and "began to live there among the servants of God according to the rule and custom established by the holy Apostles" (1999:20).

The Middle Ages

Going on into the Middle Ages we see not only the development of the monastic model exemplified by the Rule of Benedict but also Episcopal or cathedral schools. Out of these the universities evolved associated with monks such as Anselm of Canterbury (ca 1033-1109), Peter Abelard (1079-1142), John Salisbury (ca 1115-1180) among others.

Here a parting of the ways becomes evident:

The universities, although growing out of monastic and cathedral schools, gradually exerted an educational pull away from contemplative piety and toward a more or less rigorous academic training. Although only a limited number of the clergy received this kind of instruction, scholasticism tended to supplant monasticism as a model in education (Hinson 1999:21).

The Reformation

The Reformation, with consequent Catholic and Protestant responses, introduced yet another phase. The Protestants closed the monasteries and filled the vacuum with *devotia moderna* which “stressed the practice of Christianity instead of salvation through the sacraments and the offices of the church” (Hinson 1999:23). Erasmus, the 16th century humanist, who devalued the sacraments and the traditions of the church, and elevated the Scriptures, sought to make the Bible available to the general public. Luther, turning his back on monastic exercises, looked to the Bible alone as the means of spiritual formation. But it was not long before the Reformers saw the need to temper their extreme position and Luther compiled his *Personal Prayer Book* in 1522.

During this period Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, produced *The Spiritual Exercises*. At the Council of Trent (1545-63) Cardinal Ximenes presented the Spanish model of reform which:

... emphasized revival of scholastic theology through establishment of new universities, moral renewal of the clergy, and revitalization of commitment through the Inquisition (Hinson 1999:22).

The 17th century saw the emergence of the Protestant seminary. Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705), the father of German Pietism, declared:

... a young man who fervently loves God, although adorned with limited gifts, will be more useful to the church of God with his meager talent and academic achievement than a vain and worldly fool with double doctor's degrees who is very clever but has not been taught by God (in Hinson 1999:28).

The first Lutheran seminary was founded at Riddagshausen in 1690, followed by Dresden in 1718 and Frankfurt in 1735. In the USA the first seminaries appeared at the beginning of the 19th century and by mid-century there were more than fifty. Hinson attributes the widespread founding of seminaries to a reaction to the rationalism of the Enlightenment. Universities became increasingly secular (1999:28).

The 20th Century

Huston Smith, writing in today's American context, observes:

Only a century ago, almost all state as well as private universities and colleges held compulsory chapel services, and some required Sunday church attendance as well. Today, however, the over-pervasive presence of religion on campuses has all but disappeared (2001:79).

He claims that universities have adopted the European model with its positivistic approach, noting that:

Auguste Comte had laid down the line: religion belonged to the childhood of the human race. It is good to know the facts about childhood, but retention of its outlook shows that you are childish yourself (2001:94).

Smith acknowledges that while positivism as a philosophical position has collapsed, there is still a residual anticlericalism from the German universities of the 18th century and concludes, "Having won its autonomy from the church, the university has become the church's rival for the mind of our times . . ." (2001:98).

Smith blames the increased secularization on "the progressive 'technologizing' of the Western world in the name of progress, and universities have been key agents in that project" as a result "the humanities and social sciences, which study *people*, have been elbowed to the sidelines" (2001:81).

To deflect the university's assault on religion, 20th century theologians:

. . . argue for two kinds of truth . . . On the one hand are the truths of knowledge as these are derived from science and from discursive, empirically grounded reason. On the other hand are the truths that faith, religious experience, morality, meaning, and value put forward. The latter are not grounded in knowledge. They arise out of a blend of feeling, intuition, ethical action, communal convention, folk tradition, and mystical experience . . . The crisis of faith in the modern world derives from the cognitive disparity between these two views of truth. Twentieth-century theology illustrated that disparity; it did not correct it (2001:100).

In today's society there is a notion that the locus of education and also formation should break out of the confines of the campus and ecclesiastical ghettos – the whole world becomes a workshop of learning. This idea has prompted some to suggest, “that ministers should surrender their sheltered and privileged station, perhaps take secular employment and live as people in the world” (Hinson 1999: 30).

The Vatican II document *The Decree on Priestly Formation*, while affirming many features of spiritual formation also sets as a goal of seminary training, “a due degree of human maturity, attested chiefly by a certain emotional stability, by an ability to make considered decisions, and by a right manner of passing judgment on events and people” (in Hinson 1999:32).

Protestants who have emphasised academic formation at the expense of personal spiritual formation are showing a shift, helped by an improved ecumenical climate, that sees Protestants revisiting “traditional elements of spiritual formation discarded by the reformation” (Hinson 1999:34).

Postmodernism

This brief overview of formation through Judeo-Christian history concludes with a reference to Postmodernism. Larry J. McKinney in his article *Postmodernism: ministry implications for Church and educational leaders* observes:

Postmodernism is relativistic in every way. It does not believe in any type of unifying centre or that there is any common body of truth. . . . One

cannot appeal to a text such as the Bible for answers. Any claim to knowledge can be seen as an act of power and dismissed as being intolerant (2003:149).

McKinney describes postmodern students as being uncentred, they do not have fixed reference points and the lack of an absolute also impacts negatively on their morality. They are sensual, particularly in regards to the visual. The third characteristic is, emotive – “Students are not readily persuaded by dispassionate facts but are easily moved by open displays of emotion” (McKinney 2003:150). These students, in response to their inherent loneliness, are communal:

Many students are not as willing or do not have the time to provide broad organizational leadership needed for large student movements on campus. Instead, they do things in small groups and in teams that provide more meaningful relationships and connectedness (McKinney 2003:151).

Finally the postmodern culture is spiritual, “However this response reaches beyond traditional Christian faith to the New Age and other mystical religions” (McKinney 2003:151).

We conclude this historical reflection with an appropriate quotation:

What does Scripture teach us about generational changes? In Acts 13:36, the apostle Paul preached that David ‘served the purpose of God in his own generation’. ... Although the truths of Scripture do not change, educational methodology and forms of student ministry may need to be modified from one generation to another (McKinney 2003:147-148).

CONTEMPORARY DEFINITIONS AND NOTIONS OF FORMATION

Definitions:

In the World Council of Churches’ document *The invitation to the feast of life – resources for spiritual formation in theological education* we find a very comprehensive definition:

Spiritual formation is both the process of *all* of life, and also the very specific, planned experiences in which we engage the thinking-praying-interrelating of our theological students, faculties, congregations, and wider communities (Amirtham and Pryor sa : 4).

This definition includes a number of important aspects. I will enlarge on these aspects by referring to other literature from diverse traditions and backgrounds.

Firstly, that formation moulds *every* part of an individual's life all of the time whether it be intentional or spontaneous. Effective formation programmes need to encompass not only the academic, but also the human, spiritual and religious, and these are to be grounded in the candidate's context (Baudouin 2001:7).

Schneiders sees the goal of formation as the discernment of one's vocation when she states, "it actually begins with entrance and continues throughout the lifetime of the Religious. It is a gradual and ongoing mutual process in which the candidate becomes part of the "body," the living organism that is the congregation and the reality of Religious Life in the Church" (2001:71).

Secondly, there is the need for a well-directed programme that incorporates the intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions. Tamez, wrestling with the gap between spirituality and critical study which creates tension in most theological institutions states:

... that for Christians as they practise their faith, and for theological education in the Third World, which seeks to serve the churches and Christians in that context of oppression and struggle for liberation, this marked division is disturbing. It is disturbing because due to it, in my experience, we find on the one hand, in academic circles a tendency for Biblical study to move away from a liberating practice of the faith, arguing the prime importance of "objectivity"; and, on the other, a tendency for spiritual life in those circles – and outside them – no longer to draw on the Bible as one of its richest sources, so accustomed have they become to treating it as a dead letter (sa:18).

Something of this tension is reflected in this comment by Evangelicals Herring and Deininger:

...academic labels are exalted at the expense of spiritual maturity. At the same time, in other quarters, sponsoring churches, Christian organizations, and the Christian public in general expect graduates of theological institutions to be models of spirituality (2002: 114).

Duke University Divinity School (USA) has attempted to bring some balance by re-emphasizing the fact that:

Theological education ought to be about forming people for ministry, not simply conveying information. Information is important, but theological education must shape ministerial identity. Forming ministerial identity

requires attention to the care and nurture of souls beyond the classroom as well as in it. Education and formation in prayer requires time and focus (Jones and Jennings 2000:124).

Not only do the intellectual and spiritual aspects require full and balanced attention but also the student needs to be able to relate easily in the social and community context. At Iperu, a Catholic institution in Nigeria, the Formation Team describes the ideal candidate (in Iperu's case - male) as:

A strong, mature, intelligent man of faith, who is capable of warm human relationships, eager to learn and able to take initiative, whose life and personality manifest a certain integrity or 'togetherness', and who has a generous, open, and down-to-earth spirit (1995:36).

Stuebing, an Evangelical, in his monograph, *Training for Godliness in African Theological Education*, underlines the importance of relational issues:

The unreflected assumption seemed to be that as long as the graduates knew how to handle the truth in an *academic* sense, their ministries would prosper. Yet many of them struggled to handle the biblical truth in its *relational* aspects, even while they were students, and that deficiency could lead to further difficulties in ministry after graduation (1998:10).

Thirdly, faculties are not only formators but must also see themselves being formed. Hinson uses this quote from *Theological Education 8* (Spring 1972:179), "If anything has emerged from our study of seminaries, it is the conviction that the spiritual development and formation of students begins with and depends on the spirituality of the faculty" (1999:34). Herring and Deininger point out that faculty living on campus has the greatest impact on students, "that potential influence for spiritual formation is directly related to the physical proximity to students" (2002:119). Faculty members provide models for the students to emulate. For Baudouin, a Catholic, formation cannot be rated too highly. Exhorting major superiors and bishops "... to be like elder brothers, desirous of promoting good and assuring the future by investing in formation staff both lay and ecclesiastical, *for on the formation of staff hangs the future of the institution*" (2001:8 my emphasis).

Baudouin also bemoans the fact that the training of formators is done in the West and hopes “Africa will be able to establish for herself such institutions and facilitate a locally adapted formation” (2001:7).

Fourthly, *congregations* and the wider community are involved in the development. Have theological institutions become islands, places of shelter, divorced from the real world? If the institution is not in touch with the outside world and the Church it cannot begin to adequately form students for the ministry. Certainly the theological institution’s interaction with the secular needs a high degree of discernment as indicated by Tamez’s observation:

It is a fact that our increasingly utilitarian and meritocratic society tends to place little value on the human dimensions which are not geared to profit-making. The westernizing influence of our societies has penetrated our seminaries. It is a fact that the “scholar” enjoys greater prestige than the chaplain, and earns a higher salary (sa:19).

But with regard to the Christian community this extract from the *Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education* (Copyright 1990 ICETE) provides a guideline:

Our programmes of theological education must orient themselves persuasively in terms of the Christian community being served. We are at fault when our programmes operate merely in terms of some traditional or personal notion of theological education. At every level of design and operation our programmes must be visibly determined by a close attentiveness to the needs and expectations of the Christian community we serve. To this end we must establish multiple modes of ongoing interaction between programme and church, both at official and at grassroots levels, and regularly adjust and develop the programme in the light of these contacts. Our theological programmes must become manifestly of the church, through the church and for the church. This we must accomplish, by God’s grace (in Stuebing1998: 69-74).

For the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (LTSS):

Christian formation is both personal and corporate, involving our inmost heart, our outward behavior, and the way we live together. Formation is the work of the Spirit who brings us to Christ and joins our lives to his, so that in struggle and newness of life we bear the image of the crucified and risen Lord and make him known to the world (LTSS 1998:353).

For LTSS formation implies discipline. It is also sacramental:

... it is the intentional engagement with what Luther loved to call the “bodily word”, the array of outward words and signs – rituals, discourse, persons, artifacts, and institutions – through which the Holy Spirit makes Christ known in and through the church (LTSS 1998:353).

Notions:

Eugene Peterson in his article *The Seminary as a Place of Spiritual Formation* contends “Seminary does not provide the *materials* for spiritual formation, but a particular *condition* in which the formation takes place for a relatively brief period of time” (1993:5). He describes this condition as being characterised by words whether in writing or reading, speaking or listening. Peterson continues:

The distinctiveness of the particular *word-world* comprised by the seminary has to do with the “Word made flesh,” the *Logos* which Jesus Christ incarnated. *Logos* is God speaking the world into being, Jesus crucified and raised for our salvation, the Holy Spirit shaping a holy life in us. *Logos* is the word spoken personally by a personal God in such a way that persons can respond to it. The personal response is formed through a life of obedience and prayer (1993:5).

Unfortunately we become overwhelmed by the *logoi*, the words about the Word and this situation is the antithesis of life giving (1993:6). Peterson refers to Evagrius Ponticus (died 399 AD) who spent sixteen years in the Egyptian desert, “Evagrius used the word *logismos* for the thought or kind of thinking that gets in the way of, or interferes with, the *Logos*” (1993:6). Students and lecturers can become sidetracked and confused by *logismos*. “Knowledge of God that does not lead to or become prayer to God is, in Evagrius’ analysis, demonic – a spirituality divorced from obedience to God” (Peterson 1993:6).

Gordon Smith of Canadian Bible College and Theological Seminary presents Wisdom as the Goal of character formation. I shall be looking at Smith’s article *Spiritual Formation in the Academy: a Unifying Model* in more detail in the next chapter – here I simply mention his notion that:

Wisdom could serve us well as a unifying principle. The objective of the academy, then, would be to enable men and women to become wise. Wisdom is a helpful point of reference because it incorporates the development of knowledge and understanding as well as the formation of character. Wise people are mature in both their understanding and their

behaviour. Further wisdom assumes the integration and appropriation of truth – we both understand and live the truth (Smith 2001:6).

Smith warns that there are “three critical dimensions of character formation that we cannot neglect in the pursuit of wisdom” -

These are – vocational development; emotional development, and thirdly “we surely need to give special attention to the matter of gender, sexuality and marriage” (Smith 2001:6).

REFLECTION

In the house and on the way

The first mention, in Scripture, of formation is domestic in context. God’s Law being imparted by parent to child in an informal way, whenever opportunity presented itself:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates (Deut 6:4-9 NIV).

The lack of formal education persisted in the Old Testament. Joshua and Elisha accompanied their ‘mentors’ in a servant capacity benefiting from the crumbs of wisdom that fell from the master’s table. Situations developed in the general course of events that became ‘teachable moments’. On one occasion Joshua was up the mountain with Moses when the Law was given (Ex 24:13); another time he was in the valley fighting the Amalekites while Moses was on a mountain praying, nevertheless victory for Israel was dependent on the connection between what Moses was doing and Joshua’s action (Ex 17:9-16). Elisha demonstrates the imperative of proximity especially in the final days together with Elijah and is rewarded for his tenacity, receiving a ‘double portion’ of the older prophet’s spirit (2 Kings ch 2).

Although David is not mentioned above, his formation is experiential as evidenced by his testimony to king Saul on the eve of Goliath's death (1 Sam 17:34-36); and also in the content of Psalm 23. In addition David was required to be in Saul's court and his presence there afforded a great opportunity to observe the inner workings of the kingdom (1 Sam 16:16-21).

This informal in the house and on the way formation or as some authors describe it on-the-job-training which benefited children, national leaders and prophets was also utilized by Jesus, (the Pharisees employed a similar method but because of their approach to God's Law were more rigid in their relationships). The Gospels record many instances that Jesus used to share Kingdom truths and principles with His disciples – at table (Lk 14:7; 22:14ff; Jn 13:1-38); on the road (Jn 4:1-42); during the moments of crisis (Mt 8:24-27; 26:36-46) and times of need (Jn 6:1-13). Jesus involved His disciples in mission (Lk 10:1-24).

What emerges is the vital importance for the learner to keep company with the mature, the mentor, the master, the model. In this way truth and wisdom become indelible though practical experience. In short, more is learnt and retained outside the classroom than inside it. Things inculcated, not so much by words, but through observation of actions and reactions, and manifest faith. It is, therefore refreshing to note that Evangelical authors and academics are beginning to stress the significance of faculty being formators and that formation is more than a cerebral preoccupation.

The post-Enlightenment tension between the academic and the spiritual once again comes to the fore. Reformers abandoned spiritual disciplines and concentrated on the academic. At ESSA, where we talk about head-heart-hand, the head seems to take precedence at the expense of heart and hand. There is a need to make the world, the community, the extra mural, our classroom.

Relationships

Today authority is under scrutiny. An autocratic "because I say so" approach is discredited. Even claiming the absolute authority of Bible truths is perilous. The

Pharisees could not expect a high enrolment in the 21st century. What about Jesus?

Christ came to that place with His disciples where He could say:

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you (John 15:15 NIV).

This appears in the same chapter where Christ calls Himself the True Vine and we are the branches. The intimacy that Jesus enjoyed with the Father and He taught and modeled for the disciples was the relationship that Jesus wanted them to have with Him. This was the subject of his prayer:

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me (John 17:22-23 NIV).

The fact that Jesus cared enough to lay down His life for His friends (John 15:13), the fact that He demonstrated God's love for the marginalized, that He emphasised being a doer and not just a hearer (Mt 7:21-29), would in this postmodern era draw a following.

The implication for faculty is that what we are and what we do is of greater consequence than our academic qualifications and publications. What we are is intrinsic with the image of Christ.

CHAPTER THREE – A SAMPLE OF INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR APPROACHES TO FORMATION

When dealing with the subject of formation in the context of preparing men and women for Christian ministry it is necessary to look at a diversity of denominations and traditions in different parts of the world. We will, therefore, take a sample of mainline Protestant, Evangelical, and Catholic theological institutions in Asia, North America, and Africa.

ASIA

In the Asian context we will note observations regarding formation emanating from two countries, Thailand and the Philippines. Both examples are Evangelical in orientation.

Thailand

Writing in *Educating for Tomorrow: Theological Leadership for the Asian Context* Herring and Deininger note that faculty-student relationships are important (2002:113). They also place a strong emphasis on the fact that formation is, in the main part, a non-classroom process and list the top seven means of formation that have been identified by numerous faculty, alumni, and students in Thailand:

1. Campus Life
2. Worship
3. Faculty-student relationships
4. Field Education
5. Fellow Students
6. Seminars/Camps
7. Student Council (Herring and Deininger 2002:119-122).

Herring and Deininger also identify four major obstacles to spiritual formation:

1. Overworked Faculty
2. Student lack of readiness to grow spiritually

3. Student preoccupation with academic achievement
4. Fuzziness of institutional goals (2002:122-123).

The following suggestions are made for the promoting of spiritual formation:

1. Agree on your goals
2. Recognize the importance of campus life in spiritual formation.
3. Provide students with time for private and corporate worship.
4. Provide training in biblical counseling for faculty members.
5. Encourage each faculty member to assume a pastoral role in student's lives.
6. Remind faculty that students constantly watch and emulate them.
7. Take advantage of 'teachable moments' in spiritual formation.
8. Taking advantage of courses with high spiritual formation potential. (Herring and Deininger 2002:124-126).

I have abbreviated the information above but feel it necessary to enlarge upon two related aspects namely faculty-student relationships, and non-classroom experiences.

Faculty-student relationships feature in all three lists. Perhaps the most telling is the obstacle presented to formation by overworked faculty:

...institutions that are serious about promoting formation should examine themselves to determine ways to reduce faculty workloads in order to allow more time for this important ministry (Herring and Deininger 2002:122).

It is pointed out that faculty living on campus has the greatest impact on students, *that potential influence for spiritual formation is directly related to the physical proximity to students* (Herring and Deininger 2002:119). Faculty members provide models for the students to emulate, "The Association of Theological Schools concluded in a report that, 'The spiritual formation of seminary students begins with, and is dependent upon, the spiritual formation and development of the faculty'" (in Herring and Deininger 2002:125). There are better opportunities

to counsel and for praying together. Training in biblical counseling for faculty members is advocated. The appointment of a chaplain is not necessarily a good idea because: [i] it supports a false dichotomy between gifts of pastor and teacher (Eph. 4:11), [ii] places too much responsibility on one individual (Ex. 18:13-27); [iii] “Instructors other than the ‘Campus Pastor’ may consciously or unconsciously de-emphasize spiritual formation because it would be someone else’s primary responsibility. A more biblical and functional approach is for the Dean of Students, himself one of many ‘campus pastors’, to coordinate the work of all ‘Pastor-Teachers’ who understand clearly their role in spiritual formation” (Herring and Deininger 2002:125).

With regard to the out-of-classroom formation, the authors, whilst not denying the vital formation that occurs through classroom interaction between students and faculty, and students and peers, nevertheless acknowledge:

... students simply spend more time out of class than in class ... the classroom is typically viewed as a ‘sterile’ or ‘unnatural’ environment detached from the ‘real world’ (Herring and Deininger 2002:118).

The locus of formation depends on where the emphasis lies, the academic or the spiritual. If it is the former then out-of-classroom opportunities for formation will be neglected. What is needed is a balanced approach that takes advantage of every aspect of campus life in and out of the classroom. Campus life, especially if the student population comes from different backgrounds, provides for spontaneous as well as structured spiritual development. Given the fact that students spend more time outside the classroom than in it, faculty should consciously direct students’ formation in the broader context. This, according to Herring and Deininger can be achieved through facilitating worship services; field education such as evangelistic endeavors, weekend ministries, semester-break ministries, and extended internships; Seminars and camps – to this they add Student Council (2002:119-122).

Philippines

Dr Lee Wanak in his paper *Rethinking Spirituality*³ contends that spirituality cannot be taught exclusively in a classroom situation. He sees the biblical spirituality as being multi-dimensional and all encompassing including the intellectual, emotional, social, behavioral, volitional and ethical. Collaborating with Bautista, Magalit and Ganibe, Wanak produced a *Proposal for Developing Spiritual Formation at the Asian Theological Seminary*.⁴ This is a comprehensive document that provides definitions, goals and proposals. Spiritual formation is defined as:

... having both a divine and human-ministerial side. It is the redemptive act of the Holy Spirit in all aspects of individual and corporate life to reclaim the rule of God within and between individuals so that they might reflect the glory of God in increasing measure until its perfection at the return of Christ. It is also the ministerial act of mature, gifted and trained Christians in providing sustained companionship, guidance, facilitation, and support to individuals and groups so that they might discern and experience, through the help of Scriptures, authentic interaction with God for the purpose of a fruitful life of service to both God and human beings (p.2)

Among the goals was to help the students gain a better spiritual self-understanding and awareness; develop systematic and workable patterns of spiritual discipline, informed by a sound theology of spirituality and by a sensitivity to both the cultural context and individual profiles of students. The seminary was also prepared to provide facilities for meditation along with printed and audio resources to guide and enhance prayer and meditation.

The following proposals were made:

- The office of the Dean of Students is eliminated and a new position centered on spiritual development be created. Among the suggested titles for the new post were Spiritual director, Spiritual overseer, and Spiritual Formation director. Responsibilities would conclude: leading care group

³ This paper was delivered at an ESSA faculty meeting on 19-11-2001.

⁴ Dated 24-01-1995 this document was a handout at the ESSA faculty meeting on 19-11-2001.

facilitators, facilitating spiritual retreats, coordinating chapel services, providing and directing counseling services, and teaching Spiritual Formation.

- Strengthen and Broaden Care Groups.
- Conduct Counseling and Spiritual Inventories.
- Facilitate Retreats.
- Develop a Spiritual Emphasis Week (p.3-4).

Given both the Evangelical and Asian context I find the provision of facilities and resources for prayer and meditation quite radical. Other terms such as Spiritual director and spiritual retreats indicate a tendency to explore those disciplines and concepts that were abandoned or neglected by the Protestant reformers.

NORTH AMERICA

Duke University Divinity School

Holding onto the Greek Orthodox maxim – “The person who prays is a true theologian and the true theologian is one who prays”, Duke University Divinity School places a strong emphasis on prayer. Jones and Jennings point out:

Theological education ought to be about forming people for ministry, not simply conveying information. Information is important, but theological education must shape ministerial identity. Forming ministerial identity requires attention to the care and nurture of souls beyond the classroom as well as in it. Education and formation in prayer requires time and focus (2000:124).

They have developed a programme for spiritual formation that addresses three pressing needs in their context:

1. The students need to be more intentional in reflecting on the practices of the Christian faith. They are asked to consider the question – “What are the practices and convictions that form, nurture and strengthen Christian identity and life?” (Jones & Jennings 2000:124)
2. Students need to cultivate the interrelation of prayer, study and service, that is, “the deep connections between Christian beliefs and practices” (Jones & Jennings 2000:125)

3. The need to grasp the importance of community life. At Duke University Divinity School they “are keenly aware of the persistent individualism in popular Christian piety” and whilst acknowledging that spiritual life is “profoundly personal involving a person’s relationship with God, any personal relationship is also determinatively communal” (Jones & Jennings 2000:125).

In practical terms students are placed in formation groups of 6-9 persons reflecting the diversity of the student body and the church. These groups meet once a week for an hour. A noteworthy aspect of these formation groups is that they are led by:

... clergy who are recognized in the community for their leadership, their spiritual maturity and wisdom. ... These ministers reflect the diversity of the church in age, gender, race, denominational identity and theological perspective. Included are mainline protestant clergy from a variety of denominations and a Roman Catholic nun and a priest (Jones & Jennings 2000:126).

Although the utilisation of formation groups is not unique, the use that Duke University makes of clergy from the local community is commendable for a number of reasons. Firstly, the students are afforded the opportunity to feel the pulse of the church in the community; this link can also open avenues for wider ministry involvement. Secondly, students are exposed to different denominations and traditions and this through experienced ministers. Thirdly, the clergy themselves are encouraged and their links with the institution strengthened.

Students receive a pass or fail grade based on their attendance of, and participation in these groups. I am not altogether happy with the idea of awarding a grade for attendance. The motivation for attendance should rather arise from a desire to be there. If the felt needs of the students are being addressed in these groups, if there is relevance, people will attend.

The school has also appointed a faculty person to the position of chaplain. In the Asian context we noted a move away from a single chaplain toward a faculty team of formators. The route to take is determined by a number of factors, one being the spirituality of the faculty.

Roman Catholic Women Religious

Here I make reference to the book *Selling All – commitment, consecrated celibacy, and community in Catholic religious life* by Schneiders. For Schneiders the goal of Formation is:

... discernment of one's vocation to Religious Life and, if the decision is to become a Religious, preparation for and incorporation into Religious Life within the particular congregation/community. Although this takes place definitely at a particular moment through the formal act of religious profession ... it actually begins with entrance and continues throughout the lifetime of the Religious. It is a gradual and ongoing mutual process in which the candidate becomes part of the "body," the living organism that is the congregation and the reality of Religious Life in the Church (2001:71).

Schneiders examines some models of formation such as, initiation in a tribal context described by Turner as "a deliberate breaking down or deconstruction of previous patterns, ... Relationships are reconstructed with the tribe rather than parents and siblings becoming the primary context of belonging ... obligations and responsibilities are no longer merely individual but communal" (2001:48). Having also touched on military academies she turns her attention to the school model of formal education which Schneiders described as, "the structured inculcation of information and behaviors deemed desirable for members of society and church" (2001:49). Schneiders concludes that religious formation "is not sociological initiation of adolescents, nor is it boot camp, nor is it a form of postgraduate education" (2001:50).

Using an artistic analogy Schneiders suggests that the candidate for Religious Life is like a musician who believing they have a talent realises the need to develop that gift by seeking out a teacher. This will result in either confirmation with its accompanying rewards or a process that "becomes increasingly stressful, conflictual, distasteful, even deforming" (2001:51). Persevering, the musician, who feels positively stimulated, seeks a master to whom they can submit. "This requires a kind of self-surrender in faith that is well founded on the fact that the master is an accomplished musician and recognized teacher" (2001:51). The

master concerns himself not only with the music but with every aspect of the student's life whether dress, schedules, health, practice etc. Schneiders concludes: "I would suggest that the relationship of artist and apprentice in the process of musical formation could offer an appropriate model of the process of Religious formation" (2001:52).

Discussing the components of the Formation programme, Schneiders offers some general or basic guidelines. The first being in the area of prayer and spiritual direction, for her "the prayer life of the candidate is probably the most important single dimension of the formation program" (2001:55). Second is psychological development and exposure to congregational life. Schneiders warns:

A candidate who makes profession before recognizing and dealing with major psychological dysfunction will spend her life trying to make Religious Life serve her personal needs, and this is as doomed to failure as is contracting marriage for similar purposes (2001:56).

Thirdly, there is intellectual and experiential formation so that the candidate may make an informed decision and this requires adequate knowledge in the areas of theology, spirituality and religion.

Scholars in both theology and spirituality today are increasingly realizing how integral to each other the two fields are. Theology that is not rooted in spirituality, that is, in the personal and corporate religious experience of the Church, is abstract and often barren. But spirituality that is not shaped and informed by good theology is often incoherent, lacking in substance, and insufficiently rooted in a believing community that can guard it against privatistic idiosyncrasy and fanaticism (Schneiders 2001:56-57).

Beside the intellectual and/or academic there is the need to study and internalise the congregation's history, spirit, ministry and life. Schneiders also mentions the challenge of living in community that raises such issues as sexuality and authority.

Like Duke University Schneiders places a strong emphasis on prayer but she also advocates a more comprehensive approach to formation that includes the psychological profile of the candidate. She warns that the failure to discern a psychological dysfunction can lead to life long problems for both the religious and the community.

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (LTSS) USA

In 1998 the faculty of LTSS produced a paper titled *Spirituality and Spiritual Formation*. Referring to Paul's word to the Galatians, "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you," (4:19 NIV) and to the Romans, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will" (12:2 NIV) the authors establish 'formation' as a New Testament theme. They continue:

Christian formation is both personal and corporate, involving our inmost heart, our outward behavior, and the way we live together. Formation is the work of the Spirit who brings us to Christ and joins our lives to his, so that in struggle and newness of life we bear the image of the crucified and risen Lord and make him known to the world (LTSS 1998:353).

For LTSS formation implies discipline and it is also sacramental:

... it is the intentional engagement with what Luther loved to call the "bodily word", the array of outward words and signs – rituals, discourse, persons, artifacts, and institutions – through which the Holy Spirit makes Christ known in and through the church (LTSS 1998:353).

Baptism, in the sacramental context, illustrates both the struggle with the old Adam, and hope in the resurrection; the "primary locus of such formation is common worship, especially the communal celebration of the Holy Eucharist" (LTSS 1998:354).

In this institution the faculty is placing a strong emphasis on the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. They see in the liturgy means by which students are molded and Christ is formed in them.

Brite Divinity School of Texas

I have already made mention of this institution in the introduction, referring there to the challenges faced by those who are endeavoring to establish a viable formation programme for a student body consisting of 250 students representing

thirty-four different Christian denominations (White1999: 14). Here I would simply record some models explored by White:

- Teach a specific set of rules or principles of the spiritual life. The disadvantage of this approach is that not everyone shares these assumptions; it can encourage a spiritual elite, and it is incompatible with post-modern religiosity.
- White speaks about Kraig Klaudt's 'ashram' model – “In this situation, habits such as attentiveness would be encouraged, the religious imagination would be cultivated, the capacity for celebration, thankfulness, joy, hope, charity. And community, as Klaudt emphasizes, in this model both the classroom and the seminary as a whole must become ‘a community of people who will sustain each other during an intense spiritual quest’” (1999:16).
- Providing good role models – “faculty and staff who serve as patterns for ministerial spirituality in their relationships, their persistence in prayer, their character, their holiness of life” (1999:16).
- The skills-building approach – “This basically says that if we teach people to perform the specific functions, to do the things that have traditionally nourished the church’s spiritual life, that spirituality will gradually be infused into the student” (1999:16-17).

In my own context at ESSA the last two models seem to be the most appealing. The lecturers’ provision of authentic role models is imperative, and the facilitation of practical ‘hands-on’ experience is extremely valuable in this post-modern period.

AFRICA

A Roman Catholic perspective

In his article, Formation in Africa – Some Proposals published in *Grace and Truth* (April 2001) Fr Mubesala discusses the need for adequate formation of men and women seeking religious and priestly vocations. Beginning with recruitment he advocates a pastoral approach that involves an intimate knowledge of the

candidate's life situation. Thus the background of the candidate is investigated and something of the experiences, good and bad, is known. This assists in the understanding of the candidate's motives. The formator must possess the non-negotiable virtues of patience, confidence and the capacity to listen (2001:1-5). In addition:

It would not be exaggerating to underline that already, from the beginning, an aspirant to religious life should understand, even minimally, that to which he or she wishes to make a commitment. It will be necessary that aspirants live the reality of the Christian life and know that to become a religious is to walk behind Christ with all the demands that flow from that, and that it is not a career. It is Gospel values which must be put before them from the beginning as the criteria for the informing of their choice. It is thus, therefore, that we appeal to the honesty of those responsible for vocations: be clear with the young (2001:5).

Fr Mubesala goes on to discuss post-novitiate formation under three headings: depth of life; selecting formators, and effective formation programmes. For depth of life he stresses the fundamental value of community life – “It is a witness to the oneness of mind in a common purpose” (2001:5). Fr Mubesala continues, “Community life in African tradition is something essential ... The notion or concept of the family can serve as a point of departure for the education towards community (2001:6).

Regarding the selection of formators Fr Mubesala talks in terms of teams of formators. The individual formator has a threefold responsibility, to the Church, the institute, and the candidate and, therefore, requires “good pastoral experience, a capacity for discernment, a spirit of co-operation, a spirit of openness” (2001:6).

This section concludes with an admonition:

Young Africans are observers: pragmatic rather than speculative. Formators will have to take this pragmatic element into account; and for an effective ministry, it is suggested that that the formator be obliged to get the pastoral experience which will enable him or her to confront reality in a broader context before coming to a house of formation. When it comes to being in charge of people, human qualities are acquired by tackling reality. It might not be out of place to remark here that a brilliant teacher does not necessarily make a good formator (2001:6).

Effective formation programmes need to encompass not only the academic, but also the human, spiritual and religious; these to be grounded in the candidate's

context. Baudouin bemoans the fact that the training of formators is done in the West and hopes “Africa will be able to establish for herself such institutions and facilitate a locally adapted formation” (2001:7).

For Baudouin formation cannot be rated too highly. Exhorting major superiors and bishops “... to be like elder brothers, desirous of promoting good and assuring the future by investing in formation staff both lay and ecclesiastical, for on the formation of staff hangs the future of the institution (2001:8).

Perhaps some of Baudouin’s concerns may be dispelled by the *Formators Hand Book*, which is of particular interest as it deals with the issues faced by the Catholic Church in Africa. Compiled by the Iperu Formation Team in Nigeria, this book is divided into three sections: Selection; The Formation Task During the Novitiate or Spiritual Year, and Beginnings.

Many Protestant and/or Evangelical seminaries do not have an adequate selection process not to mention a probation period or Spiritual Year. While both Catholics and Protestants would acknowledge the vital importance of an authentic call of God, this guidebook, quoting *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, emphasises the role of the community over/against an individualistic interpretation of that call or vocation.

The wider Christian community has a say in the discernment of a vocation, and it does this by laying down certain criteria and objective standards against which the candidate must be judged (p.8).

A thorough selection process may be hurtful to a sensitive candidate and therefore must be administered by those who are experienced and qualified to assist the process of “unearthing the objective material on which any sound discernment of a vocation must be based” (p.10). The fourth chapter (pp 53-64) deals with the stringent training and selection of formators. Formators need to be well integrated in terms of faith, community and vocation, not only being mature and pastorally experienced but also having professional competence.

The Iperu Team notes that the formation programme may not necessarily be deficient but that it is “the quality of the candidates at the time of admission into

formation” (p.15) that affects the programme. The ideal candidate (in Iperu’s case male) is:

A strong, mature, intelligent man of faith, who is capable of warm human relationships, eager to learn and able to take initiative, whose life and personality manifest a certain integrity or ‘togetherness’, and who has a generous, open, and down-to-earth spirit (p36)

Regarding the mechanism of selection chapter three (pp27-52) provides means or instruments for obtaining a clearer picture of the candidate. The content of the interviews investigates the candidate’s history including family, education, health, and personality. Questions regarding the candidate’s sexuality are direct and comprehensive. The final interview follows a written assignment that explores the candidate’s religious background and their preliminary understanding of their vocation. After each interview there is a team assessment; the wisdom of the team approach is amplified later in the document:

It is not expected that each formator will have a fully developed competence in every aspect of the formation task, but it is hoped that each will have some understanding of the processes involved in the whole work, and that collectively they will be adequate to the task in its entirety. The team will, in addition, be able to call on the services of professionally qualified personnel who do not belong to the formation house (p 69).

Part 2 deals with the Formation task. This involves helping the candidate to maturity in the following areas: human, cognitive, emotional, and volitional. The candidate is also assisted in developing competence in ministry (pp67-161)

An Evangelical perspective

For the Evangelical sample of Christian formation in Africa I have chosen an ACTEA (Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa) monograph, namely Richard W. Stuebing’s *Training for Godliness in African Theological Education*. In the words of Stuebing, “The purpose of this study is to analyse how five evangelical theological institutions in Africa have sought to comply with various social, relational and spiritual aspects of accreditation” (1998:9). The five institutions are: Christian Service College (Ghana); ECWA Theological Seminary (Nigeria); Evangelical Theological College (Ethiopia); Nairobi International School of Theology (Kenya) and the Theological College of Central Africa

(Zambia). This 80 page document consisting of five chapters, devotes the third chapter to spiritual formation which Stuebing considers the core of theological education and notes, “for Christian spirituality to be *authentic*, it must be integrated into the lives of the students and faculty and so be *observable*, whether that be in the classroom, the dormitory or the church” (1998:24). Stuebing acknowledges the significant body of literature emanating from the Association of Theological Schools in North America (ATS) (1998:24).

The chapter under review (chapter three) has the following subheadings: Models for theological education; Differences between secular and theological education; The role of the teaching staff; The matter of evaluation; Balancing academic and spiritual concerns; Extra-curricular areas, and Contributions from African writers.

With regard to Models for theological education Stuebing makes reference to Harvey Conn’s pedagogue model in which the teacher-student relationship is seen as moving away from “that of brother to father-son, from fraternal to paternalistic. Measurements were taken in terms of cognitive input rather than ministerial gifts” (1998:26). Robert Ferris elaborated this pedagogue model with two categories. First, pastor = knower; here “it is the responsibility of the seminary faculty to identify what pastors need to know and to determine how that information can best be organized and communicated. When students are able to demonstrate that they know, they are prepared to enter the ministry” (in Stuebing 1998:26). Second, pastor = doer; here pastoral skills are accentuated and students are required to demonstrate proficiency in these skills. Ferris adds the pastor = helper model “in which he integrates an emphasis on spiritual gifts and ‘helpfulness’ into the training programme itself” (in Stuebing 1998:26).

In the section dealing with the *Differences between secular and theological education* Stuebing provides a plethora of pithy quotations. I shall rely on just three to capture the essence. Stuebing often quotes the ICETE *Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education* and here he uses section 7:

Our programmes of theological education must combine spiritual and practical with academic objectives in one holistic integrated educational

approach. We are at fault that we so often focus educational requirements so narrowly on the cognitive attainments, while we hope for student growth in other dimensions but leave it largely to chance. Our programmes must be designed to attend to the growth and equipping of the whole man (sic) of God. This means, firstly, that our educational programmes must deliberately foster the spiritual; formation of the student ... We must devote as much time and care and structural designing to facilitate this type of growth as we readily and rightly provide for cognitive growth (1998:28).

Regarding the distinctives of theological education Stuebing makes use of Hulbert's five distinctives:

1. Responsibility to God. We should respond first to the commands of God, not to the marketplace or to the value system of society.
2. Eternal significance. "The results of our teaching, whether excellent or mediocre, are permanent."
3. Absolute truth. We must "guard against a modern Pharisaism which would emphasize the theological accretions of scholars more than the Word of God itself."
4. Spiritual dynamic. "Without spiritual formation of the student, theological education differs from secular education mainly in subject matter."
5. Centrality of the church. Theological institutions exist in order to serve the churches and must therefore be accountable to them (1998:29).

Something of the emotive aspects of the tension between outcomes of secular and theological education is reflected in the third quote, this time from Gross:

We may graduate students who are intellectually elite, highly motivated academically, prepared for the best graduate schools and successful once there. But if their hearts are not inclined to God, we have failed to realize our vision (in Stuebing 1998:29).

Under the subheading *The role of the teaching staff* Stuebing deals with the selection of the faculty, the standards for the teaching staff, and their individual and corporate responsibility for formation. Again Hulbert is quoted, "The selection of godly faculty and the monitoring of their of their spiritual development and their impact on the students must take precedence over any kind of academic criteria if theological education is to differ from that which is secular" (in Stuebing 1998:31). John Stott encapsulates the responsibility of faculty:

... the seminary is the key institution in the church, and seminary teachers are the key personnel, as they influence for good or ill generation after

generation of the church's future clergy. What is needed, then, is a steady stream of new faculty members who combine academic excellence with personal godliness (in Stuebing 1998:32).

The issue of evaluation is raised. Because of its potentially threatening nature to members of faculty Aleshire has suggested formative evaluation rather than summative evaluation (in Stuebing 1998:34). Formative evaluation surfaces issues and provides direction and counsel without being threatening. The evaluation of students should be broadened to include not only academic grades but also self-evaluation forms and input from teaching staff, counselors and ministry supervisors.

Beside the mutually beneficial experience that chapel provides for students and faculty other activities are suggested in *Extra-curricular areas*. In the words of Wilson Chow:

... Communal activities outside the classroom should be a deliberate part of the program. These include outings, retreats, days of prayer, spiritual exercises week, and communal meals. Such occasions are necessary to create solidarity among faculty and students (in Stuebing 1998:38).

REFLECTION

A common thread running through this sample is the vital role played by faculty in the formation of students and this is exercised mainly outside the classroom setting. I will not enlarge on this as I have touched on it in the reflection on the previous chapter and will be devoting an entire chapter, at the end of this thesis, to the subject of formators. What does emerge is the advocacy of using a team of formators instead of relying on a single individual to undertake this task. Besides providing various professional expertises such a team could better facilitate formation on a campus that seeks to attend to ecumenical, multi-cultural and gender issues. In short such a team could be representative of these elements of the student population.

Another important aspect reflected in this sample is the necessity of a pastoral approach to the selection of candidates. Selection is not simply confined to an individual's sense of calling / vocation but requires a wider testing in and by the

community. This involves not only the personal history of the candidate but also the psychological and intellectual suitability of the candidate; the purpose of this process being to help the candidate to make an informed decision. Unlike Catholic institutions, most Evangelical seminaries do not have a probation period before academic training commences, thus the opportunity for a more thorough selection process is severely limited.

The holistic approach is also present in this sample as expressed by Wanak and Schneiders of the Evangelical and Catholic traditions respectively. While such an approach is not altogether new in Catholic circles it certainly is an expansion of the parameters of Evangelical Theological education. The aversion of Evangelical to spiritual disciplines has been attributed to a Reformation reaction to the perceived *works* of Roman Catholicism. In our present time there is renewed interest in spirituality among Evangelicals and the church in general and this is evident at the Asian Theological Seminary. Not only are aspects of spirituality being introduced but sociological and psychological issues are also being taken into account resulting in a multidimensional approach to formation.

SECTION TWO

ISSUES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

CHAPTER FOUR – ECUMENICAL ISSUES

In this chapter I am not going to discuss the Ecumenical Movement and its universal influence on the Church. Here we will focus on a localized phenomenon – a campus composed of men and women from different backgrounds and traditions. Nevertheless a quote from the anthology *The Ecumenical Movement* edited by Kinnamon and Cope would be appropriate:

The noun “ecumenism” and the adjective “ecumenical” are derived from the Greek word *oikoumene* which is used in the New Testament to mean the Roman empire (e.g., Luke 2:1) or, simply, the whole world (e.g. Matt. 24:14). Gradually, the term came to refer to the whole church, as opposed to that which is divisive, or to the whole faith of the church, as opposed to that which is partial.

It is appropriate, therefore, that the word is now used to designate a modern Christian movement concerned with the unity and renewal of the church and its relationship to God’s reconciling and renewing mission throughout creation. While this movement has its roots in the 19th century (including such developments as the YMCA and the Student Christian Movement), the symbolic beginning of modern ecumenism is the world missionary conference held at Edinburgh in 1910. From that conference flowed streams that carried the movement’s continuing priorities: *Common service ... Common fellowship ... Common witness ... common renewal* (1997:1-2).

At ESSA and at many other theological institutions, that are not homogeneous, we do not have a neatly packaged student population where formation is almost a subconscious imbibing of the ethos. The ecumenical nature of the student body requires a sensitive and conscious effort when it comes to formation. It is here that White's questions resound, "How can we teach spirituality for the ministry without a cohesive community? How do we teach spirituality for ministry without a shared spiritual tradition, or even a shared model for the spiritual life" (1999:15)?

In White's example of Westcott (1999:14), cohesion is primarily based on the fact that the students belong to one single denomination (there are other commonalities such as gender, age, race and residence). The single denominational affiliation diminishes tensions around liturgy, worship, doctrine, and the need to 'defend the faith'. Can any kind of cohesion be found in an

ecumenical context? Can a spiritual tradition be developed that transcends the denominational traditions? Are there models that can be shared that will enhance formation?

On an ecumenical campus such as ESSA I had anticipated the emergence of some difficulties surrounding the differences in doctrine, liturgy and philosophy – my assumptions have been exaggerated.⁵

In interviews with graduates and under-graduates I have not encountered many negative responses, on the contrary, there has been consensus regarding the advantages of training and formation in an ecumenical context. One graduate, Pascal Karemera, having come from the Episcopal Church in Rwanda, found the ecumenical environment of ESSA to be non-threatening. When he was asked if he would have preferred to have attended an Episcopal seminary instead, he indicated that it would not have been his first choice, that the ecumenical environment not only prepared him for post-graduate studies but it “makes you mature.” Pascal stated the following advantages of an ecumenical campus: “I meet different denominations and share different experiences.” He spoke about being no longer ignorant regarding other traditions, and that the use of labels and prejudices are re-examined.⁶

Theodore Burakeye, a Pentecostal from Kinshasa, had entertained negative stereotypes of people from denominations other than his own but he was pleasantly surprised by his encounters at ESSA. He said, “I realised that they were like me ... It helped me not to be judgmental.”⁷

Another student, Russell Pollitt, a Catholic under-graduate at St Joseph’s Theological Institute expressed regret at the lack of ecumenical contact. He

⁵ Concerns raised by interviewees regarding chapel worship and other issues are dealt with in chapters five and six.

⁶ Pascal Karemera, personal interview on 17 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁷ Theodore Burakeye, personal interview on 14 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

mentioned that the Catholic Church had said and written much about ecumenism but had not done much in practice. The contact that he had enjoyed while attending a course at The School of Theology UNP with students from other denominations and institutions had been most helpful and the ‘heated’ debates stimulating. He concluded, “We need formation in a much more ecumenical environment”.⁸

Harold le Roux, a lecturer at ESSA, commenting on the classroom encounters when students from different church backgrounds discussed various issues described them as “fun interaction” and “real learning”.⁹

Central to our discussion on ecumenical issues are relationships. How individuals relate on campus and how the institution relates to the wider church and more specifically those churches sending their members to study theology.

RELATING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Identity and Purpose

Given the fact that the students come from different denominations and traditions perhaps the institution itself needs to have an independent identity, and its own clear-cut goals. By independent I mean that the ethos of the campus should not manifest the character of any particular denomination. This prevents confusion and provides a sense of security. To this end the formators ought to be representative of different churches, for example the present ESSA teaching staff consists of Baptists, Methodists and Pentecostals, with visiting lecturers from other churches including Catholic.

The identity and goals of ESSA are clearly stated in its mission statement:

⁸ Russell Pollitt, personal interview on 23 July 2003 in Merrivale.

⁹ Harold le Roux, personal interview on 29 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

Our mission is to train dedicated Christian leaders, in an urban setting, for the Church-in-Mission by providing quality tertiary education that is evangelical, holistic and contextual.

Although this statement makes no mention of denominations it does stipulate that ESSA is evangelical which implies certain parameters. However this has not discouraged students who are not evangelicals from attending the seminary and they have been fully aware of what ESSA is in name and standpoint.

It is necessary to give a short explanation of what is encompassed in the term *Evangelical* and I therefore make reference to John Stott's *Evangelical Truth – a personal plea for unity*. Stott insists on three disclaimers:

First, the evangelical faith is *not a recent innovation*, a new brand of Christianity which we are busy inventing. On the contrary, we dare to claim that evangelical Christianity is original, apostolic, New Testament Christianity. ...

Secondly, the evangelical faith is *not a deviation from Christian orthodoxy*. Evangelical Christians have no difficulty in reciting the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed *ex animo*, without mental reservations, ...

Thirdly, the evangelical faith is *not a synonym for fundamentalism*, (1999:16-20).

Perhaps it would, for clarity's sake, also be helpful to note Stott's ten tendencies of Fundamentalism in comparison to evangelicalism:

1. In relation to *human thought*, fundamentalists of the old school give the impression that they distrust scholarship, ... some tend toward a thoroughgoing anti-intellectualism, even obscurantism. Authentic evangelicals, however, acknowledge that all truth is God's truth, that our minds are God-given, being a vital aspect of the image we bear, ...

2. In relation to *the nature of the Bible*, ... some fundamentalists are characterized by an excessive literalism. Evangelicals, however, while believing that whatever the Bible affirms is true, add that some of what it affirms is figuratively or poetically (rather than literally) true, and is meant to be interpreted thus. ...

3. In relation to *biblical inspiration*, fundamentalists have tended to regard it as having been a somewhat mechanical process, in which the human authors were passive and played no active role. ... Evangelicals emphasize, however, the double authorship of Scripture, namely that the

divine author spoke through human authors while they were in full possession of their faculties.

4. In relation to *biblical interpretation*, fundamentalists seem to suppose that they can apply the text directly to themselves as if it had been written primarily for them. ... Evangelicals struggle with the task of cultural transposition, in which they seek to identify the essential message of the text, detached from its original cultural context, and then re-contextualize it ...

5. In relation to *the ecumenical movement*, fundamentalists tend to go beyond suspicion ... to a blanket, uncritical, even vociferous rejection. ... Many evangelicals, however, although critical of the liberal agenda and frequently unprincipled methodology of the World Council of Churches, have tried to be discerning, affirming in ecumenism what seems to them to have biblical support, while claiming the freedom to reject what has not. ...

6. In relation to *the church*, fundamentalists have a separatist ecclesiology, and tend to withdraw from any community which does not agree in every particular with their own doctrinal position. ... Most evangelicals, however while believing it right to seek the doctrinal and ethical purity of the church, also believe that perfect purity cannot be attained in this world. ...

7. In relation to *the world*, fundamentalists have tended sometimes to assimilate its values and standards uncritically (*e.g.* in the prosperity gospel) and at other times to stand aloof from it, fearing contamination. ... (evangelicals) seek to heed the biblical injunction not to conform to this world, and are also anxious to respond to the call of Jesus to penetrate it like salt and light, in order to hinder its decay and illuminate its darkness.

8. In relation to *race*, fundamentalists have shown a tendency – especially in the United States and South Africa – to cling to the myth of white supremacy and to defend racial segregation, even in the church. ... Most evangelicals, it can be claimed, proclaim and practice racial equality, originally by creation and supremely in Christ ...

9. In relation to *the Christian mission*, fundamentalists have tended to insist that ‘mission’ and ‘evangelism’ are synonyms and that the vocation of the church is *tout court* to proclaim the gospel. Evangelicals, however, while continuing to affirm the priority of evangelism, have felt unable to sunder it from social responsibility.

10. In relation to *the Christian hope*, fundamentalists tend to dogmatize about the future... Evangelicals, however, while affirming with eager expectation the personal, visible, glorious and triumphant return of our

Lord Jesus Christ, prefer to remain agnostic about details in which even firmly biblical Christians have differing viewpoints. (1999:20-24)

Returning to ESSA's mission statement we note that the seminary is clear about its identity – “evangelical”, and also its stated goal, “to train dedicated Christian leaders”. Further its place and approach – “in an urban setting and is evangelical, holistic and contextual”.

Herring and Deininger commenting on the fuzziness of institutional goals emphasise the importance of clarifying institutional values and then ensuring that these values are reflected in the curriculum, programmes and activities of the institution (2002:122-123).

Faculty needs to strive for consensus regarding goals and particularly to create a profile of the kind of person the institution is wanting to produce (Herring and Deininger 2002:124).

The Bigger Picture and the Bigger Family

A case for a theological institution having a clear cut identity and purpose has been made, yet it must be borne in mind that the student spends a relatively short time at seminary and then graduates into the wider community. Therefore, the bigger picture of Ecumenism cannot be ignored. Our context is Africa and perhaps Gabriel Setiloane's observation is noteworthy:

It may well be that Africa, having inherited the divided church from abroad, has not felt the pangs of this division as deeply as have European Christians: ‘the sin of our divisions’ is not felt as Africa's sin, and therefore there is no inner compulsion to repent of it. Yet tolerance, mutual acceptance and co-operation between the churches are more evident on the African continent than elsewhere, and denominational barriers are crisscrossed with amazing ease, especially at the congregational level (in Kinnamon and Cope 1997:246).

We must not create or import problems where they, in fact, do not exist. There is much to celebrate and affirm in the African context and Setiloane does this by quoting Donald M'Timkula at length:

The social ties binding the African Christian to his extended family and clan have always been stronger than the forces of separation that arise from membership in different congregations. The important family occasions like births, marriages, funerals and clan festivals bring together in one place of worship relatives with different confessional backgrounds. On these occasions they not only share in common acts of worship with gay disregard of denominational differences, but they also take part in symbolic acts of family and clan unity that have their roots in the traditional past. (in Kinnamon and Cope 1997:246).

Mercy Amba Oduyoye, in her paper *The African Family as a Symbol of Ecumenism* talks of the Christ clan and one *KIN-DOM*, she notes:

The traditional African family is an ever-expanding, outward-looking community structured as concentric circles in which relationships are moderated by convention. Bifocal and parallel systems of authority for male and female ensure participation of all. This model of organization and relationship is reflected in traditional political structures and more recently in the African Instituted Churches (AIC). The cohesion of the African family and the quality of relationships expected has become the basis of the whole society. ... The family symbolizes for me a caring community within which I can find mutual commitment. Can this understanding of the family produce elements which could aid our search for a meaningful ecumenism? (in Kinnamon and Cope 1997:456).

Servants in Relationship

Given the affirmation of the African extended family there are nevertheless moments of tension and disagreement. Antagonism is neutralized by a servant attitude and action. The outcome is not only a congenial campus but also the formation and graduation of servant-leaders.

Everyone agrees that there is an acute shortage of trained leadership at all levels in the church in Africa today, especially given the current phenomenal rate of growth in the Christian community on the continent.

...

When one enquires concerning the kind of leaders needed, the models that come to attention are, for example, that of the successful marketing executive, skilled in management, in getting programmes implemented and goals accomplished, or that of the omni-competent pastor whom the congregation must sheepishly look up to and obey! But the model of leadership that the Scriptures consistently commend to the people of God is instead what we may call the 'servant-leader' (Osei-Mensah 1990:8).

Jesus Christ, both in His coming and in His going demonstrated servanthood. The Apostle Paul records:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross! (Phil 2:6-8 NIV)

Preceding this evidence of 'self-emptying' is Paul's exhortation to the church to "be like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose" (v2).

On the eve of Christ's crucifixion, Jesus astounds His disciples by taking upon Himself the role of a servant:

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" (John 13:12-17 NIV).

RELATING TO THE CHURCH

The theological institution is not an island

Ecumenical issues are not limited to student-student, and student-faculty relationships; they must of necessity also touch on relationships between the theological institutions and the churches whose members are on campus. In this regard the *Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education* (Copyright 1990 ICETE) makes an unambiguous statement:

Our programmes of theological education must orient themselves persuasively in terms of the Christian community being served. We are at fault when our programmes operate merely in terms of some traditional or personal notion of theological education. At every level of design and operation our programmes must be visibly determined by a close attentiveness to the needs and expectations of the Christian community we serve. To this end we must establish multiple modes of ongoing interaction between programme and church, both at official and at grassroots levels, and regularly adjust and develop the programme in the

light of these contacts. Our theological programmes must become manifestly of the church, through the church and for the church. This we must accomplish, by God's grace (in Stuebing1998: 71).

Building Bridges

There are a number of ways to bridge the gulf between the institution and the church. One imaginative way employed by Duke University Divinity School was the use of recognised ministers and religious from the community to lead their formation groups (Jones & Jennings 2000:126). Among other consequences from this initiative is this report:

One of the most remarkable stories came from a pastor who said that, when he began working with his small group, he was fatigued and burned out. At the end of the year, we assumed that he would not be interested in leading another small group next year. However once the group ended he realized that it had revitalized him over the course of the year. At the end of the summer, when we were putting together the small groups, the pastor called and said that he would greatly welcome the opportunity to work with students again (Jones & Jennings 2000:127).

Ministers can make a valuable contribution not only in preaching at chapel services but teaching in the classroom and counseling on the campus. In this way students are being exposed to leaders of traditions other than their own and also to pastoral realities. Also the institution and the church inter-face and update each other. Another obvious route is to have ministers and religious serving on the seminary board or council.

Not only the involvement and engagement of clergy from different denominations but also the student's placement in the local churches as well as deputation work in various congregations on behalf of the institution provide them with valuable insights. Some theological institutions have identified 'teaching churches' that adopt and utilize students as part of their programme.

Approaches and Outcomes

A widening gap between what is taught on campus and what is practiced in the church can be an irritant to the relationship between the theological institution and

the church. This can be compounded by an ecumenical milieu; by this I mean the disparate spiritualities of, for example, Pentecostals and Anglicans. Critical studies may be unsettling for students and result in their alienation either on campus or in their congregations. Tamez (sa:18), wrestling with the gap between spirituality and critical study which creates tension in most theological institutions noted that this discrepancy is exacerbated by the expectations of students coming out of a fundamentalist spirituality. They can either become disillusioned with their community or the academic institution. If they face this discrepancy on commencement of their academic career there is a good chance they will face the same discrepancy upon graduation, this time in reverse (sa:18). Severino Croatto appears somewhat unfeeling in this observation:

At the beginning of theological training, critical study of all questions generates concerns, sometime crisis of faith, at other times abandonment of religious formalisms. When confronted by immature faith or a prior formation which is fundamentalist or conservative, this 'collapse' is positive: a new experience and vision of God begins to rise. The old gives place to the new. Crisis is converted into maturity of faith (sa:16)

At an ecumenical institution these issues place a great responsibility on the shoulders of formators. Croatto's tone is unfortunate; we cannot ride roughshod over the faith of immature, fundamentalist or conservative students. Formation needs to take these tensions into account and seek to resolve them both in and out of the classroom with compassion. The sink or swim approach is inappropriate. These students are at the seminary because of a sense of calling but they are at the very beginning of the process of education and formation and therefore not yet capable of defending both their calling and their faith.

There is another problem that affects relationships between the seminary and the churches who send students to them and that is the placing of scholarship above the spiritual dimension, this can be the fault of any one of the parties involved. This may result in a student extending the original intended period of study. They may also abandon their intention to go into the ministry and take up secular employ.

It is a fact that our increasingly utilitarian and meritocratic society tends to place little value on the human dimensions which are not geared to profit-

making. The westernizing influence of our societies has penetrated our seminaries. It is a fact that the “scholar” enjoys greater prestige than the chaplain, and earns a higher salary (Tamez sa:19).

These possibilities need to be monitored and interventions made where and when necessary. Firstly, for the well-being of the student and their vocation. Many students are naïve when they register, they do not appreciate their academic potential on the one hand, and do not have a full comprehension of their calling or vocation on the other – this situation is fraught with temptation. Secondly, the theological institution is obliged to maintain its integrity with the churches sending their candidates to study. Thirdly, in terms of the kingdom of God both student and formator are accountable to Jesus Christ, the head of the Church.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have observed that students at ESSA have responded positively to the ecumenical nature of the campus. They have discovered the wider Christian community and have been challenged by the seminary environment to make appropriate adjustments regarding their prejudices. The students have also found that they can make an edifying and self-affirming contribution in this context. The African sense of family and/or community was noted and, given the predominance of African students, this notion needs to be explored.

The need to integrate the theological institution and the church community is an important one and the utilisation of church ministers in the formation process on and off the campus is essential. Students need to be exposed to other traditions.

A paper entitled *Ecumenical Formation* was produced by the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC, 1993. We note the paragraph *Commitment to learning in community* which spells out some of the steps that need to be taken:

21. While ecumenical formation must be an essential feature in every curriculum in theological training, care must be taken that it does not become something intended for individuals only. There must be commitment of learning in community. This has several components: (a) learning about, from and with others of different traditions; (b) praying for

Christian unity, and wherever and whenever possible, together, as well as praying for one another; (c) offering common Christian witness by acting together; and (d) struggling together with the pain of our divisions. In this regard the participation of different institutions for theological education in common programmes of formation is to be encouraged. Working ecumenically in joint projects becomes another important aspect of ecumenical formation. The reason for such joint action must always be related to the search for Christian unity.

22. Seeking a renewed commitment for ecumenical formation does not imply to gloss over existing differences and to deny the specific profiles of our respective ecclesial traditions. But it may involve a common re-reading of our histories and especially those events that led to divisions among Christians. It is not enough to regret that our histories have been tainted through polemics of the past; ecumenical formation must endeavor to eliminate polemics and to further mutual understanding, reconciliation and the healing of memories. No longer shall we be strangers to one another but members of the one household of God (Eph. 2:19) (Kinnamon and Cope 1997:452-453).

Suffice to say that a student who is secure in their own identity is able to fellowship with others from other denominations and traditions with confidence and openness. In chapter ten we will comment on the vital importance of identity.

CHAPTER FIVE – MULTI-CULTURAL ISSUES

The continent of Africa is experiencing massive movements and migrations of people, whether across international boundaries or in the process of urbanisation. Many of these people are victims of war and economic pressures. On the other hand there is a group who, with the best of motives, is seeking to further their education. ESSA and other institutions are registering an increasing number of “international” students. Both local churches and theological institutions need to accommodate these foreign students.

This is a challenge which will not go away. Worldwide urbanisation and increased international movement will bring together rural and city people, young and old, expatriates and national citizens. All long for Christian fellowship with other believers, but still yearn to be able to express their faith in songs that make them feel at home (Scott 2000:9).

A poignant reminder of the struggle encountered by students in a multi-cultural milieu comes from an African-American experience:

One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (DuBois in Walker and Smith 1998: 320).

And the question:

Is it possible for the African American to acquire a functional theological education through the process of *adaptation* (retaining African identity and culture) instead of *adoption* (surrendering African identity and culture to white / American theological worldview)? (Walker and Smith 1998: 322).

I am indebted to Dawid Venter whose study of intercultural congregations provides valuable insights for theological institutions struggling with multi-cultural issues. Venter notes the current changes in South African urban populations, this results in *mono-cultural* congregations becoming *multi-cultural* institutions (1995:313).

While making reference to literature and experience elsewhere in the world I will limit myself to our experience at ESSA. This will form the basis of my study.

There are three areas at ESSA where multi-cultural concerns arise: The Chapel services, the community, and the classroom. Each of these areas is vitally important and cannot be viewed as being exclusive. On the contrary each is informed by the others. Having said this the disproportionate space given to the section on chapel must not be misconstrued.

Chapel Services

Under the heading *Spiritual Formation* the ESSA student handbook states:

Compulsory chapel services are held every week and are organized by the Religious Life Action Group. These are led by students, staff or visiting speakers and include times of shared worship and communal prayer (p.4).

The Religious Life Action Group's function is to be:

... responsible for assisting with the planning of Chapel activities, which includes arranging speakers .. and co-ordinating a worship team. Any special requirements which the Seminary may have for particular chapel services or activities are directed through this group. Other activities such as the spiritual emphasis week/s are also planned by this action group (p.6).

On the surface the active presence of a student group responsible for chapel services appears to go a long way to cater for the multi-cultural needs in chapel but unfortunately this is not the case. The student body at ESSA is not only multi-lingual and multi-cultural but also represents a number of denominations ranging from Anglican to Pentecostal. English being the medium of instruction it is also the language employed in preaching.

Some have suggested that each denomination represented on campus be given an opportunity to lead a chapel service – though this would be conducted in English. Another suggestion has been that a form of worship be developed that is unique to ESSA and transcends all denominational and cultural diversity. As attractive as this proposal sounds there is the very real danger that the dominant or most influential group, whoever they may be at the time, will assimilate the others.

It is clear that any unilateral decision by formators without community consultation will result in frustration. Referring to 1 Corinthians 12 Morgenthaler indicates, “if we are going to create sacred space in the now, then we have to take absolutely seriously the ‘body of Christ’ imperative. *Worship for the Body of Christ needs to be planned by the Body of Christ. Worship for community is always planned in community*” (2002:15).

Dawid Venter is an excellent source of information regarding the processes of accommodation and assimilation. The fact that he deals with congregations in transition from mono-cultural to multi-cultural institutions will certainly resonate with the ESSA chapel predicament. He suggests a solution in the conscious evaluation of accommodation practices:

Clergy and laity of congregations who wish to respond pro-actively to cultural diversity must deliberately find (a) a means of evaluating current accommodation processes and their future outcomes, and (b) a way of accommodating other cultures so that diversity is expressed in their structures (e.g. leadership) and processes (e.g. worship). “Accommodation” here has two senses: a general meaning of “making room for”, and a second, specific sense of “...in a way that permits cultural diversity to be expressed.” (1995:313).

Venter also discusses assimilation which is a process whereby “culturally diverse groups tend to become indistinguishable from the culturally dominant group in a society” (1995:314). The synopsis of Venter’s concerns regarding accommodation and assimilation is found in Bochner’s four types of cultural contacts and the individual’s response to the “second culture” (in Venter 1995:315). I have adapted Bochner’s table (see next page).

Certainly in the context of formation the best type of contact would be *mediating* because formation outcomes include *personal growth* and *harmony* – the effect of *cultural preservation* is also commendable but requires some qualification. Here I allude to those practices, forms and customs whose meaning may fall outside the parameters of Holy Scripture.

Response	Type	Effect on individual	Effect on society
Reject culture of origins and embrace second culture	Passing	Loss of ethnic identity Self-denigration	Assimilation Cultural erosion
Reject second culture, exaggerate first culture	Chauvinistic	Nationalism Racism	Intergroup friction
Vacillate between the two cultures	Marginal	Conflict Identity confusion Over-compensation	Reform Social change
Synthesise both cultures	Mediating	Personal growth	Intergroup harmony Pluralistic societies Cultural preservation

There is quite a lot of discussion around both the under- and over-emphasis of culture. Regarding the former Venter states, “An under-emphasis of culture will result in the continuing domination of all social institutions – including religious ones – by white, Anglo-Saxon, and Western cultural values” (1995:320). Others feel that any emphasis on culture will only perpetuate division.

A fourfold framework for evaluating how congregations accommodate cultures consists of programme, process, identity and context. Programme refers to what is done and process refers to how things are done. Programme provides insight as to forms of representation and participation of different cultural groups. Process shows how decision-making and conflict-handling impacts culture (Venter 1995:321).

The objective for Venter is “a strategy for avoiding coerced assimilation in congregations by making accommodation a conscious process. A conscious effort should be made to consider whether processes, programmes, and structures are representative and affirming of as many ethnic groups and cultures as possible” (1995:330-331).

Under the heading *A Strategy For Making Cultural Accommodation A Conscious Process* Venter has five subheadings: Preparing the congregation; Dealing with opposition; Accommodating cultures in programmes; Dealing with a variety of languages, and Adjusting the process to different constituencies (1995:331-334). We will confine ourselves to those aspects that relate to the present study namely programmes and languages.

Programmes, in the first instance, need to be negotiated and to indicate an awareness of the different groups' needs. Positive interpersonal relationships can be stimulated through programmes that get people out of their comfort zones e.g. eating in each other's homes, the reversal of social roles, language learning, and celebrating / remembering together important days e.g. Sharpsville. One of the most important aspects of programmes is *ownership* – everyone needs to feel fully included.

The following suggestion is made regarding the variety of languages:

The diversity of languages should be reflected at least in the liturgy. Different language hymns can be sung, and the different styles of singing unique to each culture should be explored and used. This is particularly effective where a worship team containing people from the different cultures can be involved. ... The sermon could be presented with translation, although simultaneous translation is preferable to the alternating style (Venter 1995:333).

Venter concludes his paper:

The price that has to be paid for a unified institution accommodating different cultures is that cultures will not survive intact, that some aspects of the cultures will be lost. Churchgoers of an ethnic group should negotiate among themselves which aspects of their culture are peripheral, and which are not (1995:335).

This last word of caution from Venter may be valid in a city congregation but at ESSA and other theological institutions that are heterogeneous in composition student 'turnover' will mean an annual renegotiation by all concerned. This yearly renewal would be a healthy process, and an educational / formation opportunity, provided the faculty does not become the 'dominant group'.

Music and dance, the experience

Here I am suggesting a possible way forward for multi-cultural communities to more fully enjoy fellowship and worship.

Judo Poerwowidagdo in his paper *Spiritual Formation and the Creative Arts* observes:

Although it is well understood, that dance and music are contextually and culturally bound, nevertheless we also experience the universal character of music and dance. We need to explore our human nature and human character and experience the beauty of dance and the harmony of the music to help us develop spiritually, to help us to grow as human beings, holistically (s.a.:64).

Sally Morgenthaler in her article *The New Sacred Space – Crafting worship in community* speaks about a postmodern context and although we may trail the trends of the developed world, what she has to say is pertinent:

In a postmodern culture worship has to become multi-sensory, holistic and expand the repertoire of engagement beyond print, preaching and music ... Creating sacred space for postmoderns (*those who have moved beyond humanism; beyond “either/or”; beyond print; and beyond information to experience*) means creating fully human encounters with God, ‘multi-dimensional meeting grounds’ that express a wide range of emotions, physical expression and spiritual response (2002:14).

The reason why I quote Morgenthaler is that she opens a window on possible solutions to the multi-cultural situation. What is introduced here are such words and concepts as *multi-sensory*, *holistic* and *multi-dimensional*. All of which offer the possibility of transcending the partitions that separate the cultural groups. In Morgenthaler’s words, “engagement beyond print, preaching and music ...” (2002:14). Can we go there?

Someone more in touch with the African context and particularly its music is Joyce Scott. She spent 28 years in cross-cultural missionary work in East Africa. Her book *Tuning in to a different song – using a music bridge to cross cultural differences* is invaluable to this research. Scott bemoans the fact that music is not a high priority at most South African theological institutions. This may be

acceptable for the “cerebrally oriented Western world” but “in Africa music is, and always has been, central to people’s lives” (Scott 2000:8-9).

It is important for any theological institution in Africa with Western mono-cultural antecedents to understand the central role of music in the every day life of an African –“... every important event in the life cycle is formalized in singing, dance and drama. Life without this connecting fibre of music and movement is inconceivable” (Scott 2000:9).

Inter-cultural music “is not an ‘either/or’ but a ‘both/and’ situation. Not assimilation but accommodation” (Scott 2000:9).

Joyce Scott acknowledges that:

Probably everyone would agree that it is much easier, much more comfortable, to meet and worship in homogeneous groups, all united by the well-known songs of one language. ... It is natural to gravitate to one’s own cosy group and feel at home (2000:17).

We are not in a homogeneous situation and we must find a way of accommodation. To illustrate the problem Scott quotes two university students in a discussion group. A black student observed:

“When I go to that meeting and all the music is white, I can bear it for a while. But after two or three such meetings I just get bored. I do not feel that God is touching me through their songs, so I don’t go back there. I long to sing with my whole body, to dance and know the touch of God in the wholeheartedness of Africans singing together. That’s how we know the Spirit of God is moving amongst us – that kind of singing takes us to heaven” (2000:17).

A white student responded:

“But at your meetings you sing the same words over and over. To me that is boring! I need to express more of what we believe in our songs. Hymns must have real, scriptural content to them. And I like to have slower, quieter songs to express my worship meaningfully, as well as the up-beat contemporary Christian rock kind” (2000:17).

Scott notes that “African music is body music, not book music” (2000:35).

Therefore expression of worship through dance and drama needs to be encouraged, “To use every part of one’s self to express something is a totally

natural concept in Africa. ... This holistic understanding is now being slowly, tentatively learned in the churches of the west, despite ages of negative attitudes” (Scott 2000:63). Africa has an affinity with the Old Testament that is rich in the demonstration of worship and celebration as indicated in Psalm 150 and epitomised by David’s dancing before the Ark of the Covenant (2 Sam. 6:14).

Surely the cornerstone of formation is unity and community, therefore anything that happens in chapel must further these essentials. The evaluation of accommodation as suggested by Venter; and Scott’s emphasis on music plus the notion of radical experimentation introduced by Morgenthaler, combined with a sense of ownership by the whole community will give expression to the aspirations of all cultural groups on campus. I conclude with Morgenthaler’s optimism:

At the very least, crafting worship in the community is an adventure. An indigenous, unrepeatable adventure that affirms that, yes, God does indeed work in the particular. God indeed forms communities of faith as unique as a retinal imprint. And God indeed goes before us, working way outside our plans and strategies. The challenge for all of us is to find out where God is working, and go there (2002:16).

Campus community

Although ESSA campus is exclusively Christian or religious it is not immune to frustrations or irritations arising out of the multi-cultural milieu. Xenophobia would be too strong a word but there is nevertheless an underlying tension that manifests itself from time to time. For example in the classroom local black students, who have been educationally disadvantaged, have a perception that ‘internationals’ are favoured in both classroom interaction with the lecturer and in the assessment of their work.

In the community misunderstandings arise out of different customs and social behaviour. This becomes challenging to the formator especially on a campus where celibacy is not the norm and various cultures have different ideas about male/female relationships.

The *ESSA Community Covenant* (see Appendix A for full text) in its preamble is unambiguous concerning the multi-cultural and international composition of the campus:

In response to God's calling and love and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and out of consideration for our colleagues in this multicultural and international community, we whom God has called to serve Him as students at ESSA humbly make the following statement of commitment to God:

Of the seven paragraphs in this covenant I wish to draw attention to two paragraphs. Paragraph 4 calls for commitment *To community life at the Seminary* and contains the sentence, "We will strive to promote community life and carry our duties as part of the community". Paragraph 7 is more specific, headed *To all those in the community* and states inter alia:

As members of an Evangelical, multicultural and international community, we will honour in Christ the dedication and service of all who come to ESSA as staff, students or visitors and affirm their right to expect the highest standards of life and work in their respective capacities. Remembering that we are one in the Lord, we will endeavor in all things to treat each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of our office or status and with that authority only which comes from imitating our Lord's servanthood. ... We will respect and accept the authority that God has bestowed to everyone in his or her unique role in the community. We will avoid any attitude of superiority, inferiority or discrimination in the community. We will support and encourage one another in all respects and seek to relate to each other in loyalty, good humour and practical love.

Classroom

It has been admitted in a previous chapter that more formation takes place outside the classroom than in it. Nevertheless the multi-cultural issue is evident in the classroom. Here reference is made to courses taught, and to the way they are presented. Not all courses would be adversely affected or challenged by a multi-cultural classroom environment. But in the area of Practical Theology there could be divergence. For example in the course *Congregational Skills*, weddings and funerals are discussed. As a white lecturer the author is immediately confronted with a totally different approach to these events in the congregation's life (*time management* being a predominate issue). His classes have consisted of mostly blacks with a few Indians and whites. The author's primary function is formation

therefore the attitude he displays and the methods he employs will either enhance formation or result in deformation. In this particular instance the author encourages each cultural (in some cases denominational) group to present their particular approach to weddings and funerals while the rest of the class critically evaluate the approach. All this is done in an atmosphere of attention and respect.

In the classroom context of the faith community José R. Irizarry¹⁰ prefers to use the term intercultural instead of multi-cultural as "... individuals bring into the faith community a cultural identity that has been acquired in social interaction, and this identity is pivotal in forming the distinctive character that each faith community will acquire" (2003:370). Irizarry continues:

Due to the fluidity of identity we do not remain the same cultural "self" when we move into new groups of identification. Belonging to a community of faith means that part of the cultural identities we bring into this collective configuration would be challenged and changed through community processes of mediation and negotiation, relation and opposition (2003:371).

To describe the vocation of the religious educator, Irizarry borrows the word *spec-actor* from the Brazilian dramatist Augusto Boal, who coined the word with reference to the ability of the actor "to perform an action and, simultaneously, to observe himself in action"; thus an educator to be a spec-actor must be "a practitioner who constantly assesses his/her own cultural orientations in relation to those of the learners" (2003:365).

Contrastive pedagogy and self-research are advocated, which is, "a deliberate practice whereby the educator is continuously contrasting his behaviors, values, and motivations with those of the learners in the intercultural experience. The image of self that will be seen by the educator is the image of an "other" among the many participants of the educational event" (2003:377).

¹⁰ José R. Irizarry is an associate professor of the Educational Ministries at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

Irizarry proposes four orientations:

1. The close observation of learners that puts aside 'pre-packaged' definitions of their cultures in order to, "know the culture of learners from the perspective of learners" keeping in mind "Jesus' bi-fold question to his disciple Peter: Who do they say I am? and Who do you say I am?" (2003: 377).
2. Being willing to yield to "to ideas and experiences that best fit the learning situation", so that the educator does not assume their contribution to be primary and the "opinion of the cultural 'other' as complimentary" (2003: 378).
3. Taking the emotional responses of the learners into account enables the educator to be positive and constructive in their intercultural approach. "The religious educator may acknowledge that an opinion shared by a learner and experienced by the educator as conflictive, erroneous, or misinformed may be in reality the affective outcome of 'culture shock' by the educator" (2003: 378).
4. The adaptation of the learning profile through the negotiation of the cultural differences on educational expectations and the readiness "to understand and create an atmosphere of respectful tolerance and fair critique" (2003: 379). Irizarry states is:

The purpose is for the educator to practice self-disclosure as part of his pedagogy within the context of intercultural education. This pedagogical strategy is intended so that teachers will not be afraid of letting students know that they are social subjects and that they have a life outside the classroom. In this case, a life modeled by the representations of the educator's cultural identity. The important point is for religious educators to be aware of their of own cultural assumptions as they develop a language of self-disclosure (2003:379-380).

Learning from Multi-cultural contacts in the New Testament

By way of a conclusion I wish to provide commentary on both Jesus' and the apostles' experience with people of other cultures. It should be remembered that God's chosen people, the Jews, held themselves aloof from the *goyim*, the gentiles, the 'untouchables'. Their closest neighbours, beside the occupying

Roman forces, were the Samaritans. We shall reflect on Christ's conversation with the woman at Jacob's well, then explore Peter and Paul's experiences as recorded in the book of Acts. Jesus predetermined the agenda for Acts:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8 NIV)

The object of this commentary is to identify the positive and negative moments of these contacts recorded in the inspired and authoritative Scriptures, and then attempt to apply any lessons to our present situation.

Jacob's Well - John 4:1-42

Two significant things surface in this account. Firstly, a Jew talking to a Samaritan, something which elicited an immediate response from the woman:

The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) (John 4:9 NIV)

Secondly, but not relevant to this discussion, the fact that Jesus, a teacher, was talking to a woman (v27). The Samaritan woman does not back down in the encounter, she brings up the stock issues that separate these neighbours – social contact (v9); a claim on the patriarch Jacob (v12), and the centre of worship (v20). Jesus, who was no doubt thirsty, turns the occasion into a messianic manifestation:

The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he." (John 4:25-26 NIV).

Beside a very personal exchange (vv16-18), and an offer of salvation (vv10-13), Jesus informs the Samaritan of the redundancy of the Temple in Jerusalem. The woman gets a preview of one of the most momentous events in Jewish history, the physical destruction of Temple (which happened in 70AD). This was the end of the focus and locus of Jewish piety and the introduction of a revolutionary new form of worship “in spirit and in truth” (vv21-24).

As a formator in a multi-cultural community three things strike me about this incident. Firstly, the physical well that brought together divergent individuals. Secondly, Christ's single mindedness in sharing the good news, and thirdly, the overflow from this meeting that resulted in the conversion and strong confession of the inhabitants of the town of Sychar.

They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." (John 4:42 NIV)

By way of analogy – the theological institution is a physical place of convergence for individuals from different backgrounds and traditions seeking training in Christian leadership. The formator needs to take into account the students' need for quality training. Jesus refused to be drawn but presented what was essential – here the formator is instructed to maintain the core / essential / orthodox elements of the Christian faith in a loving servant spirit not allowing peripheral issues or controversies to “muddy the water”. Ultimately it is the students' ‘Sychar’ that should benefit from the conversation and the relationship with the formator. The seminary's primary purpose is to bring students to a place of Christ-knowledge (“I who speak to you am he” v26), and self-knowledge (“He told me everything I ever did” v39) but also that their sending communities may confess: “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world" (John 4:42 NIV).

No favourites – Acts 10:1-48

The text clearly portrays the Apostle Peter as a man of strict Jewish scruples. He is appalled, when commanded in a vision, to eat unclean animals, reptiles and birds (vv9-16). His response, “Surely not, Lord! I have never eaten anything impure or unclean” (v14 NIV) . The strict dietary laws were a Jewish cultural distinctive. Now God Himself over rules this religious and cultural divide. This prepared the Jew to respond positively to the gentile invitation. Peter goes to the house of Cornelius and upon entering declares: “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. So when I was sent

for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?" (vv 28-29 NIV).

Then the Jew, Peter, says the 'unthinkable': "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right" (vv34-35 NIV).

All this is crowned by God doing the 'unthinkable' – "The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles" (v45 NIV).

Application is best described by the saying, "keep the main thing the main thing". The main thing is, "go and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28: 19-20). Cultural differences need to be respected on the one hand and on the other they should not be allowed to stand in the way of the Great Commission.

Paul's Experience

The Apostle Paul's ministry, having been set apart by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2), was to the gentiles. This must have been a major departure for this Pharisee of Pharisees and attests to the radical nature of his conversion: "But the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name'" (Acts 9:15-16 NIV)

Beside Peter's foray, and Philip's evangelism in Samaria, it was really Paul's missionary journeys that turned the essentially Jewish Church into a multi-cultural entity. This raised the cultural / religious issue of first importance – circumcision and led to the convening of the Church's first Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-29). The verdict, after the testimony of Peter, Paul and Barnabas, and relying heavily on the witness of the Holy Spirit, was to put aside circumcision. The

significance of this may be lost on the church of the 21st century but for the Jews and gentiles in the infant multi-cultural Church it was a major paradigm shift.

Again, as with the previous instances, there is a need for discernment (as demonstrated by James vv13-19) that relies on prophetic scripture to direct students, in a multi-cultural milieu, in a way that is both liberating and biblical.

At the meeting of the Areopagus Paul acknowledges two things, his audience's spirituality (Acts 17:22-23), and their common humanity (v 26). By way of application, these two constituent elements of students must be respected. They come onto the multi-cultured campus somewhat bewildered and vulnerable – formators acknowledge and build on the students' spirituality and humanity.

As Jewish ways were pervasive in the first century Church similarly Western ways still predominate in the church of Africa and her theological institutions. Dawid Venter has written about accommodation and assimilation. There is no evidence of assimilation in the New Testament examples given above. The Samaritan woman was not referred to the Temple in Jerusalem but instead to worship in spirit and truth; Cornelius' conversion is confirmed by the Holy Spirit; Paul is commissioned by the Holy Spirit to preach to the gentiles, and the decision of the Jerusalem Council was inspired and endorsed by the Holy Spirit. In short the Jewish culture neither accommodated nor assimilated the gentiles, it was the Triune God who reconciled both Jew and gentile to Himself.

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:26-29 NIV)

CONCLUSION

The diversity of cultures remains entrenched in the global community. The migration of people seeking to further their education results in multi-cultural campuses. At a seminary such as ESSA the challenge is to accommodate (not

assimilate) the various cultures in the chapel services, the classroom and the community. A climate of trust and acceptance needs to be encouraged. Students need to feel free to express themselves without fear of contradiction or prejudice. This is by definition a fluid situation as the demographics of the student population, in terms of culture, changes on an annual basis. The process of accommodation cannot be undertaken by the formators alone, it needs to engage the whole community. The New Testament experience of the apostles indicates that any valid hope of success can only be achieved in and through the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER SIX - GENDER ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

Foremost in the author's mind is the question, "Am I, as a male, in any way qualified to speak about gender issues?" Indeed such a question, if not in the same league, is not out of place for Rosemary Ruether asked, "Can a male saviour save women?" (in Rakoczy 2003:86). While gender issues embrace both female and male concerns this chapter focuses more on women's issues. This is an emotive issue and we do not want to appear dismissive nor do we wish to enter an exhaustive theological debate. The author's concern is formation; as a formator he needs to serve the best interests of an increasing number of women who are registering for theological training and are seeking ordination.

To begin to understand gender issues it is necessary to review history starting with the first century CE. up to the present day. The parameters of this thesis do not allow for an adequate review of the events and personalities relevant to our subject. Three books written by Ruth Tucker have been the major source of information regarding the role of women in church history – *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya* (1983); *Daughters of the Church* (1987 co-written with Walter Liefeld), and *Women in the Maze* (1992). History casts its long shadow into the 21st century.

Reference will also made to some issues namely, Baptism / Conversion; Vocation / Calling; Ordination, and inclusive language. A response from a formation perspective concludes the chapter.

HISTORY

This history section contains an abbreviated account of the treatment and estimation of women during the Christian era from the New Testament to the present day. The object is not so much to provide a critical analysis but to take cognizance of the backdrop against which the formation of women theological students takes place.

Jesus, the Apostles and the Early Church

Women feature prominently in the Gospels, especially in Luke. This gospel begins with Mary's song:

"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed," (Luke 1:46-48 NIV)

Luke ends with the women discovering the empty tomb and reporting the resurrection to the eleven (24:1-9). These women are not anonymous, "It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles" (24:10 NIV).

Between the parenthesis of annunciation and resurrection Luke, the Greek, populates his gospel with women. He acknowledges one of his primary sources – "But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart" (2:19 NIV).

It was not only a man, Simeon, who recognised the infant Messiah in the Temple but the widow "a prophetess Anna" (2:36). Then there was the widow of Nain (7:11-15); the sinful woman who ministered to Jesus' feet and was forgiven much (7:36-50); Jairus' dead daughter, and the unclean woman who dared to touch the edge of Jesus' garment (8:40-56); the good domestic fellowship with Martha and Mary (10:38-42); A crippled woman is healed on the Sabbath (13:10-17), and finally the poor widow's "two very small copper coins" are lovingly accounted by Christ (21:1-4).

Women feature significantly in the parables and the teaching of Jesus Christ – "Queen of the South" (a gentile) is evoked to admonish the Jewish crowd (11:29-32); then there are parables of the woman who took yeast (13:20), the woman who lost a coin (15:8-10), and the persistent widow (18:1-8).

It is abundantly clear that Jesus acknowledged and affirmed women, and there is no doubt that the author of this gospel, the Apostle Paul's physician, did not

entertain any illusions about the emancipation of women in the first century as a result of the words and deeds of the Incarnate Word of God – “the things that have been fulfilled among us” (1:1).

Susan Rakoczy confirms this interpretation of the Gospels:

It is in the Gospels and their description of Jesus’ ministry, interactions with people and the content of his preaching that we find a positive answer to the question, “Can a male saviour save women?” The Scriptures provide us with encouraging descriptions of Jesus’ attitudes towards women and the role of women in the life of the early Christian community which form the basis of a “hermeneutic of liberation” for women Christians (2003:91).

In the book of Acts Luke gives an account of the expansion of the Church, having its catalyst in the Upper Room where, “They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers” (1:14 NIV).

To explain the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the startled Jerusalem crowd the Apostle Peter quotes, what can be described, in our context, as an inclusive prophecy:

... this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons *and daughters* will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men *and women*, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy”(2:16-18 NIV my emphasis added)

In *A Pentecostal Spirituality* the author offered this comment:

Breaking the bounds the Spirit of God is no longer confined to mature, masculine prophets, priests and kings of the Old Testament but He (sic) is at work in and through “Sons and daughters ... young men ... servants ... and women”. Here, I believe, is the key to understanding the enthusiastic spiritual growth of the Pentecostals who are mostly drawn from the ranks of the unsophisticated. The individual, regardless of gender, social background or education is engaged, not as a spectator but as a participant, in the corporate working of the Holy Spirit (Russell-Boulton 2000:127).

The ministries of the Church are listed in Ephesians 4:11 – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers with the purpose of preparing “God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up”(v12 NIV). The question must then be asked, is there biblical evidence of women functioning in any of these ministries?

With regard to apostles, and given the affirmation of women in the Gospels why did women not feature among the Twelve? Tucker and Liefeld suggest the following reasons:

First of all, from a practical standpoint, it would have been logistically difficult for a woman to travel alone as an itinerant missionary in the first-century world. Second, from a social viewpoint, a woman would not have been accepted as a religious teacher in most areas. ... There were women involved in religious cult leadership, but their image was that of emotion and frenzy. Third, women were not accepted as witnesses. The basic function of the apostle was to witness to the words, deeds, resurrection, and person of the Lord Jesus Christ (1987:46).

Can we accept Tucker and Liefeld's reasons? A closer examination of Scripture indicates that beside the Twelve there were others who were designated *apostles* and among them were Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7). Rakoczy notes:

Junia was a common feminine name in Greek during Paul's time and the efforts by male commentators to change this name form are attempts to obscure the fact that women too shared the ministry of apostle with men (2003:177).

Other women mentioned in Romans 16 are Phoebe, Priscilla, Mary, Tryphena and Tryphosa – all of whom who were highly commended by the Apostle Paul.

Philip the evangelist's daughters were recognised prophets (Acts 21:9), and the gift of prophecy was exercised by women in the Corinthian church as evidenced by Paul's instruction (1 Cor. 11:5).

It is not conjecture to assume that women were actively involved as evangelists, Philippians 4:2-3 places Euodia and Syntyche in this category.

Priscilla, mentioned before her husband Aquila, is seen in the role of teacher (Acts 18:26).

There is mention of women deacons for example Phoebe. Rakoczy referring to Tetlow notes:

Paul calls Phoebe a *diakonos* of the church at Cenchreae (Rom. 16:1). The masculine form of this office is used for her (the same word as Paul used for himself and Apollos in 1 Cor 3:5-9), not the feminine form *diakonissa* which was used in patristic literature to describe the role of a deaconess (2003:180).

Were there pastors or elders of the feminine gender? The “Elect Lady” in John’s second epistle presents an interesting case – some speculate that the ‘lady’ is the local church itself but the text does not allow this assumption. Tucker and Liefeld make the following observation:

The word translated “lady” is *kyria*, the feminine form of *Kyrios*, “lord” or ‘sir’. Several women ... had churches in their homes. This lady seems to have been in the same position. If all these women had the same function as Phoebe – that is, as a *prostotes* - they may well have been far more than merely hostesses in their relationship to the Christians who gathered in their homes (1987:74-75).

What was her role, was she a pastor who presided at the Lord’s Table? We cannot be sure. It is important to a Catholic woman like Rakoczy to discover whether women presided at the Eucharist. To this end Rakoczy seeks some evidence of women being present at the Last Supper; seeing ordination as being post-gospel, she then looks at the eucharistic assembly described in First Corinthians – not much to go on but she quotes Tetlow:

“... it is quite possible that women were among the first Christian ministers of the Eucharist. There is no evidence to exclude the possibility of presiding at Eucharistic worship until the close of the New Testament period” (2003:179).

In New Testament writing and particularly that attributed to the Apostle Paul the question must be asked, what happened between Gal. 3:28, and Eph. 5:22-23 and Col. 3:18-4:1? In the Galatians letter baptism introduces a revolutionary fact, namely the submergence of all social / cultural distinction and the emergence of one new people; whereas the passages in Ephesians and Colossians, the household codes, seem retrogressive and women are called upon to submit. As strange and

disturbing as this may seem to the modern reader and particularly the feminist, Tucker and Liefeld indicate:

A first-century reader would have recognized these words as being part of the familiar “domestic code.” Scholars today call the various series of ethical injunctions found in and outside of the New Testament by the German name *Haustafeln*, “household tables [of rules].” These go back to the time of Aristotle (1987:81).

Rakoczy’s reaction to the household codes is not as passive, she interprets them as a compromise with Greco-Roman culture and describes the consequences:

This same literal reading of the Colossian and Ephesians texts continues today in some Christian communities, including those in Africa. The model of headship and subordination finds fertile soil in patriarchal and hierarchal African cultures. Culture and scripture collude in women’s misery, especially today in the growing epidemic of sexual violence against women. Women who protest are told by their husbands “that the Bible tells you to obey me”. Such are the bitter fruits of the first century accommodation of the gospel to Greco-Roman culture (2003:184).

Church History – A Broad Sweep

For the sake of brevity reference is made to the early Church Fathers, medieval Catholicism, the Reformation, and the missionary movement of the 19th and 20th centuries. Not one period in history is insignificant but the above are judged to be relevant to our subject. The period spanning the 17th and 18th centuries will be treated cursorily.

In the first centuries following the death of the Apostle John two things happened to women – they were martyred for the faith and they were vilified by the Church Fathers.

A letter written by Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia, to Emperor Trajan (in ±112 A.D.) has as its subject the punishment of Christians. He wrote that it was “necessary to enquire into the real truth of the matter by subjecting to torture two female slaves who were called ‘deacons’; but I found nothing more but a perverse superstition which went beyond all bounds” (in Tucker1992: 144).

Eusebius records the horrific martyrdom of Quinta and Apollonia in the persecution in Alexandria in the middle of the 3rd century (Tucker 1992:144).

Perpetua, who died in North Africa in the 3rd century, is perhaps the best known of early women martyrs.

Women, who together with men, were targeted by ‘non-Christian’ persecutors had their security and humanity further compromised by the Gnostics and the Montanists. Women in these heretical groups, such as the two prophetesses Maximilla and Priscilla who accompanied Montanus, exhibited extreme fervor which did not do the cause of women’s ministry any good in the eyes of the orthodox Church.

Tertullian (c. 160-220) declared, “No woman is allowed to speak in church, or even to teach, to baptize, or to discharge any man’s function, much less to take upon herself the priestly office” (in Rakoczy 2003: 184). Tertullian made other pronouncements about women:

You are the devil’s gateway; *you* are the unsealer of that [forbidden] tree; *you* are the first deserter of the divine law; *you* are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. *You* destroyed so easily God’s image, man. On account of *your* desert [i.e. punishment], that is, death – even the Son of God had to die (in Tucker and Liefeld 1987:103).

These harsh words could well have set the tone for the centuries of denigration of women. John Chrysostom (c. 345-407) succinctly said, “Among all savage beasts, none is found so harmful as woman” (in Tucker 1992:149). Not exactly the words one would expect from a ‘golden mouth’! John of Damascus (c. 700-753?) did not improve matters by observing, “Better is a man’s wickedness than a woman’s goodness” (in Tucker 1992:149).

In this brief overview of the period of the Church Fathers the author is painfully aware of having cited the grotesque and by way of balance concludes with Elizabeth Clark’s general comment:

The most fitting word with which to describe the Church Father’s attitude toward women is ambivalence. Women were God’s creation, his good gift to men – and the curse of the world. They were weak in both mind and character – and displayed dauntless courage, undertook prodigious feats of scholarship. Vain, deceitful, brimming with lust – they led men to Christ, fled sexual encounter, wavered not at the executioner’s threats, adorned themselves with sackcloth and ashes (in Tucker and Liefeld 1987:90).

The Medieval Period (± 500-1500)

The outstanding feature of this period is monasticism, which opened up a new horizon for many women:

For many women in the Middle Ages, the convent was an appealing alternative to the rigors of married life. It offered opportunity for education that otherwise was not available, and it allowed women to savor the satisfaction of serving God (Tucker 1992: 150-151).

Unfortunately the hopes generated by this opportunity, which presented prospects of development and a relevant vocation, were dashed. Clare of Assisi, who founded an order – the Poor Clares, in association with the Franciscans, is a case in point. While Franciscan brothers freely engaged in public ministry the Poor Clares were cloistered. Pope Gregory wrote to the abbess Clare in 1228:

Remember that of your own free will you have followed the divine call, that you have enclosed yourselves in these poor cells to the end that being free from the tumult of the world, and preserved from the snares of earthly vanity, you may unite yourselves by a pure and holy love to the heavenly Bridegroom, Whom you have preferred to all others until He shall introduce you into His eternal dwellings (in Tucker and Liefeld 1987:155).

Ruth Tucker in her book *Women in the Maze* wrote:

In most instances these women resided in cloistered settings entirely apart from the general population and were bound by vows to remain in their convent as long as they lived. It was this isolation that most profoundly characterized female monasticism. Indeed, in my mind, one of the saddest aspects of women's ministry during the medieval period is that it was so inwardly and vertically focused that it offered little benefit to those who were most needy (1992: 151).

Another distinctive characteristic of the medieval Church was its devotion to Mary. Don Sharkey describes the extravagance of this veneration:

The palaces of earthly queens were hovels compared with the palaces – churches and cathedrals – of the heavenly Queen. ... Nearly every great church of the Middle Ages belonged to Mary. If it was not dedicated to her outright, it contained a Lady Chapel (in Tucker 1992:154).

Tucker suggests that the veneration of Mary, and the influx of women into monasticism may have resulted in an emergence of feminine aspect of spirituality; There was, at this time a greater, emphasis on the experiential, visions, raptures, miracles, and the contemplative (Tucker 1992:153).

With regard to the charismatic and mystical, Caroline Bynum, according to Ruth Tucker, “suggests these visionary charismatic experiences authenticated women’s roles in the church – particularly priestly roles that were denied them. Thus from God – if not man – they acquired ‘direct authorization to act as mediators to others’” (1992:158). Notable women of this category were Hildegard of Bingen¹¹ (1098-1179) and Catherine of Siena¹² (1347-1380).

One cannot conclude this section on the medieval church without mentioning the precursors of the Reformation namely Peter Waldo and John Huss whose followers were called Waldensians and Taborites respectively. These groups underwent severe persecution from the Church. In the 13th century eighty Waldensians were burnt at the stake in Strassburg, twenty-three of them were women. We note that among these ‘heretical’ groups women served as preachers and according to ‘orthodox’ sources women of the Waldensians officiated at communion and baptisms (Tucker 1992:157).

The Reformation

What did the upheaval of the Protestant Reformation achieve for the cause of women in the church? At the time very little but later the consequences of the Protestant Reformation would register globally in the missionary efforts of many Protestant women during the 19th and 20th centuries. In the 16th century the Reformation allowed clergy to marry and this opened up a new avenue of ministry for women, “as wife of the pastor, his assistant and helpmate in the home and with women and children of the parish” (Rakoczy 2003:204). Katherine von Bora (1499-1550), a former nun who married Martin Luther ministered tirelessly to the

¹¹ Tucker notes, “It is important to point out that many of these medieval mystics were reformers in the church and their visions and revelations were often aimed at church leaders and laity who were involved in corruption and other sins” (1992:158).

¹² Walker describes Catherine of Siena as, “...a practical leader of affairs, a healer of family quarrels, a main cause in persuading the papacy to return from Avignon to Rome, a fearless denouncer of clerical evils, and an ambassador to whom Popes and cities listened with respect” (1959:285).

many guests that stayed in their home, looked after their home in Wittenberg and operated a small farm in Zuhlsdorf. Another woman, who also offered hospitality to refugees and many houseguests, was outspoken and able to hold her own in a theological discussion was Katherine Zell (c. 1497-1562) (Tucker and Liefeld).

Luther's view of women may have been ambivalent but he highly commended Argula von Stauffer:

The Duke of Bavaria rages above measure, killing, crushing and persecuting the gospel with all his might. That most noble woman, Argula von Stauffer, is there making a valiant fight with great spirit, boldness of speech and knowledge of Christ. ... She alone, among these monsters, carries on with the faith. ... She is a singular instrument of Christ (in Tucker 1992:161).

In Luther's opinion of women and public ministry he conceded that women may preach in situations where men did not have access, otherwise in normal circumstances he held to the Pauline injunction against women teaching - only men could preach and administer the sacraments (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:175)

John Calvin was not averse to utilizing women with political influence to further the Protestant cause. Calvin appeared to be less rigid than Luther as is seen in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 14:34 – “The discerning reader should come to the decision that the things which Paul is dealing with here are indifferent, i.e., neither good nor bad; and that none of them is forbidden unless it works against decorum and edification” (in Tucker 1992: 162). Jane Dempsey Douglas comments on Calvin's approach to this issue:

... something quite new in systematic theology of his day [in the *Institutes*] by shifting Paul's advice on women's silence in the church from the context of eternal, divine law to the context of Christian freedom, of human law which is open to change. ... he certainly makes clear that no eternal law of God requires women's silence in church, and that customs which serve the edification of the church in one era can well be changed in another if they cease to serve the edification of the church (in Tucker and Liefeld 1987:175-176).

Something needs to be said about the Catholic Reformation. Two luminaries of this period were Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) and Teresa of Avila (1515-1582). Ignatius has been criticized for prohibiting a female branch of the Society of Jesus

– this did not mean that he was insensitive to the needs and aspirations of the women of his day. On the contrary his deep concern for women prompted the funding for the establishment of the House of St. Martha for the rehabilitation of women who had fallen prey to the evils of that day (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:200-201).

Teresa of Avila, a Carmelite reformer and mystic, faced strong opposition from certain church officials. Sega, the papal nuncio investigated Teresa because her drive to reform houses reflected badly on the Church and also raised questions about her allegiance to the Church, he wrote, “She leaves her cloisters against the orders of her superiors contrary to the decrees of the Council of Trent. She is ambitious and teaches theology as if she were a doctor of the Church in spite of St. Paul’s prohibition” (in Tucker and Liefeld 1987:203).

The 17th and 18th Centuries

The Reformation resulted in the ‘decentralisation’ of the Church and dissenting religious movements presented opportunities for women to express themselves. In the secular sphere Queen Elizabeth I demonstrated the ability of women to hold their own in public life. Unfortunately she was followed by James I who not only targeted witches but made some very unkind comments about women, “... to make women learned and foxes tame had the same effect: to make them more cunning” (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:208).

The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church suppressed women. But there were women who protested and demonstrated in a prophetic manner, one being Lady Eleanor Davis whose epitaph reads: “in a woman’s body, a man’s spirit” (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:209). Other prophetic women who caused a stir were Jane Hawkins and Grace Cary. Mary Ward, a Roman Catholic, did not endear herself to the English civil authorities when she envisioned giving all English girls a good Catholic education – she had to flee to the Continent (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:212).

On the Continent we find the French Roman Catholic, Madame Jeanne Guyon, a mystic, traveling preacher and healer. She authored some forty books, a twenty-volume commentary on Scripture and an autobiography of seven hundred pages. She had an early influence on John Wesley who wrote: “We may search many centuries before we find another woman who has such a pattern of true holiness” (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:214).

In the two centuries under review we have the emergence of, among others, the Puritans, Nonconformists, Baptists, Quakers, the Great Awakening and the Wesleyan Revival. In all these events women were involved to various degrees. We can only make mention of a few. Among the Quakers there were many courageous women, for example Mary Dyer who had been influenced by Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643) a preacher in New England. In 1659, after a persistent public witness to her faith and Christian principles, Mary Dyer was arrested, tried and convicted by the General Court in Boston and sentenced to death by hanging (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:228). With the noose literally around her neck she received a last minute reprieve. Flouting the law that forbade Quakers entry to the Colony she was again arrested in Boston and hanged on May 31, 1660 (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:229).

One of the many great women of this period was Susanna Wesley, her prayerfulness and her intelligence which bore fruit in the education of her children, not only produced John and Charles but greatly influenced the Wesleyan movement, and particularly the use of lay preachers.

John Wesley wrote a number of letters to Methodist women actively and successfully involved in preaching. Reference is made in these letters to Margaret Davidson, Mary Fletcher and Sarah Mallet. He gave practical advice, at first cautious, to these women preachers – in 1769 he wrote a letter to Sarah Crosby:

In public you may properly enough intermix *short exhortations* with prayer; but keep as far from what is called preaching as you can: therefore never take a text; never speak in a continued discourse without some break, about four or five minutes (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:241).

Later in the 1770's John Wesley had to acknowledge the extraordinary developments that appeared to fly in the face of *St. Paul's ordinary rule*:

I think the strength of the cause rests there – on our having an *extraordinary* call. So I am persuaded has every one of our lay preachers. ... The whole work of God called Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of His providence. Therefore I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under the ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was, "I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation." Yet in extraordinary cases he made a few exceptions; at Corinth in particular (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:241).

The 19th and 20th Centuries

Here we wish to salute the resolute courage and enterprise of women, many of them single, who ventured into the unknown to bring the Good News to the ends of the earth. Yes, there were some notable wives of missionaries but in this particular chapter we will mention only single women missionaries.

From about the 1820s single women started going overseas. The first single (not widowed) American woman to serve on the foreign field was a black former slave, Betsy Stockton. Although the American Board allowed her to go to Hawaii as a "domestic servant" she was considered qualified to teach and conducted a school (Tucker 1983:232).

There was the problem of sponsorship for single women missionaries; with a few exceptions this was not forthcoming and this prompted the establishment of women missionary agencies.

By 1900 there were more than forty women's mission societies in the United States alone. Largely because of the "female agencies," the number of single women in missions rapidly increased, and during the first decade of the twentieth century women, for the first time in history, outnumbered men in Protestant missions – in some areas by large proportions (Tucker 1983:232).

Lottie Moon (1840-1912), known as the "Patron Saint of Southern Baptist Missions," worked in northern China (Tucker 1983:235). Amy Carmichael (1867-1951) born in Northern Ireland was the founder of the Dohnavur Fellowship in India; her dangerous work involved the rescue of children sold to

the Hindu temple, many of them girls who became temple prostitutes – after twelve years Carmichael had 130 children in her care (Tucker 1983:241).

Helen Roseveare, born in 1925, qualified as a medical doctor and in that capacity served as a missionary in the Congo. She built a hospital and medical training centre in Ibambi. She was relocated to Nebongo and built another hospital and continued training nurses. Hard working and perceived to be strong willed she was a threat to her male colleagues:

So in an effort to keep her in her place, it seems, a decision was made at the annual field conference in 1957 to relocate John Harris, a young British doctor, and his wife to Nebobongo and to make him Helen's superior. Helen was devastated ... (Tucker 1983:256).

Discouraged and ill she returned to England. Then in 1960, the time of independence, saw her back in the Congo. During the violent uprising in 1964 Simba rebels ran amok and Roseveare was brutally beaten and raped. She was rescued and taken to England. Once again, in 1966, she came back to the Congo to continue her medical work and training of nationals.

Tucker sadly records:

Despite her remarkable sacrifice and great accomplishments ... Helen left Africa in 1973 broken in spirit. Students had rebelled against her authority, and even her colleagues questioned her leadership ability. It was a tragedy, at least in human terms, that her twenty years of service in Africa ended in such a way (1983:259).

The Contemporary Scene

In recent years gender issues have occupied centre stage both in the Church and in the secular context. Ruth Tucker advocates a differentiation between biblical feminism and social and liberal feminism, she argues:

To understand biblical feminism, we must first of all recognize that it is not a position that has suddenly arisen with the advent of the modern feminist movement. From the time of Jesus and the apostle Paul the Christian faith has been a liberating force for women, and women have found this to be a great consolation (Tucker 1992:216).

Claiming to have anticipated the modern feminists is not appropriate given the failure of the Church to sustain the first century revolution. Feminism in the

Church raises a number of issues related to theology, hermeneutics and ecclesiology – these are touched on elsewhere in this thesis.

The women who have already been mentioned in this broad sweep of history have been disciples, apostles, evangelists, mystics, martyrs, reformers' wives, activists and missionaries – in this last and contemporary context women are prolific writers and recognised theologians confronting feminist issues. Some of these authors are: Mary Daly who published *The Church and the Second Sex* in 1968, in which she observed, "... those engaged in the struggle for the equality of the sexes have often seen the Catholic Church as the enemy. This view is to a large extent justified, for Catholic teaching has prolonged a tradition of woman which at the same time idealizes and humiliates her" (in Tucker and Liefeld 1987:407); Daly also wrote *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (1973)¹³ and more recently *Quintessence: Realizing the Outrageous Contagious Courage of Women. A Radical Elemental Feminist Manifesto* (1998).¹⁴

Rosemary Radford Ruether is very prominent in feminist theology and a prolific writer; she has published a number of books including *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (1983); *Women-Church: Theology and Practice of Feminist Liturgical Communities* (1986); *New Woman New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (1995).¹⁵

Ruether defined the task of the feminist theologian:

The sexist bias of patriarchal theology ... must be evaluated as blasphemous ratification of sin in God's name ... Feminist theology engages in a systematic reconstruction of all the symbols of human relation to God to delegitimize sexist bias and to manifest an authentic

¹³ Rebecca Unsoeld, 'Feminist Theology On Line Bibliography' 27 November 2003. <http://www.dike.de/hulda/fembib.html>

¹⁴ Mary Daly, 'Bibliography', <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/Daly.html>

¹⁵ 'Feminist Theology On Line Bibliography' 27 November 2003. <http://www.dike.de/hulda/fembib.html>

vision of redemption as liberation from sexism (in Tucker and Liefeld 1987:424).

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza wrote *In Memory of Her* (1983), using feminist hermeneutics she seeks to reconstruct Christian origins:

‘...all early Christian texts are formulated in an androcentric language and conditioned by their patriarchal milieu and histories.’ Yet she also contends that “feminists cannot afford to disown androcentric biblical texts and patriarchal history as their own revelatory texts and history” (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:446).

Some of Schüssler Fiorenza’s other publications include: *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (1992); *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-ology of Liberation* (1994), and *Jesus: Miriam’s Child, Sophia’s Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (1994).¹⁶

As ours is the African context I conclude by making reference to *The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians* which was officially inaugurated in 1989 with Mercy Amba Oduyoye of Ghana as convener. The Circle’s main purpose is the production of “theological literature by women of Africa and the willingness to change the situation” (Kanyoro 2002:17). In 1996 the Coordinating committee meeting in Nairobi identified four study commissions:

1. Cultural and Biblical Hermeneutics
 2. Women in Culture and Religion
 3. History of women
 4. Ministries and Theological Education and Formation
- (Kanyoro 2002:29).

Amba Oduyoye has written *Daughters of Anowa. African Women and Patriarchy* (1995) and *Introducing African Women’s Theology* (2001).¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

The African Experience

Before looking at the African scenario we need to be reminded that the denigration of women is a feature in most cultures. Lutz provides some alarming statistics:

Women in every culture struggle with feelings of inferiority and self-worth – no wonder when an estimated 25 percent of women (as high as 80 percent in Pakistan) are battered in their marriages; when in many countries women work 16-18 hours of mind-deadening physical labour just to keep themselves and their children alive; when 57 percent of all women in the less-developed world are illiterate; when 75 percent of all refugees are women and children, without home or security. In many cultures women are told they are inferior to men. Wives are bartered for dowry; passed from the control of father or older brother to husband and finally to eldest son, with little to say about where or how they want to live (1997:218)

Susan Rakoczy, in an unpublished manuscript *In Her Name*, paints the background to women's experience in Africa. She refers to the East African context and quotes Chinchin:

The Nandi of Kenya regarded women as so inferior that "it was believed that they did not possess a spirit" ... Thus it was imperative that all women be married so that she could share her husband's spirit. ...

Women are regarded as inferior by the Maasai people of eastern Africa "because of physical and intellectual weaknesses and polluted by the blood of childbirth and menstruation. ..."

The influence of the inferiority of women is pervasive amongst African Christian men. When a pastor from western Kenya was asked how many people traveled with him, he replied, "There were two people and three women in the group" (2003:32).

The patriarchal worldview was indigenous to Africa and the introduction of Christianity by missionaries did not initially do anything to dismantle these structures that impeded the New Testament inspired development of women to their God-given potential. Rather the Church and its agents reinforced a male orientation in its structures and liturgy. This has persisted to the present day.

Rachel Nyagondwe Fiedler reports on the situation of the Baptist Convention in Malawi over a forty year period (1961-2001). Women pastors responsible for mixed congregations of women and men, and who have proved themselves in the work, are challenging "the missionaries' notion that leadership within the church

should only be restricted to men (2002:190-191). Theological training has become an issue:

...the Southern Baptist missionaries' policy concerning theological training for women has constantly been to train women either for support roles within the church or for leading fellow women, the emergence of women pastors within this period has remained a challenge for the church. What is interesting is that none of the women pastors were theologically trained. By being pastors those women have challenged the syllabus at Baptist theological seminaries that sidelined women students at the level of Certificate and Diploma from studying leadership-related courses, such as Ethics and Preaching. (Fiedler 2002:190).

Although the first women pastors were effective but not theologically trained, Fiedler notes that the trend today is for more women to seek full theological training which undermines the notion "that only men can be pastors of a congregation" she continues:

Some Baptist women are currently doing theological training as individuals without being pastor's wives or aspiring to be one. These winds of change are also evident in other churches such as the Presbyterian churches of the Blantyre synod and Livingstonia Synod. However, the pioneers of such theological training are women from Pentecostal and Charismatic churches (2002:194).

Fiedler expresses some surprise that, given the Baptist tradition, there should be opposition to women taking a leading role in the church :

Among distinctive features, such as belief in the Lordship of Jesus, having a regenerative church membership, and insistence on the separation between state and church, the tradition's emphasis on the priesthood of all believers should be persuasive enough to permit women to occupy any leadership role within the church (2002:199).

Isabel Phiri, telling the story of Victory Nomvete Mbanjwa a member of the United Congregational Church in Southern Africa who had to wait forty-six years to be ordained, highlights the injustice of the situation by quoting Joseph Wing:

Women constitute two-thirds of the total membership of the UCCSA. At the level of the local church council many of them are exercising an important leadership role, but in the policy-making and committee structures of the Church their participation is not commensurate with their involvement in the worship life and practical programmes of the Church (2002:123).

Progress in the ordination of women is evident in a number of denominations in Southern Africa including the Methodist, United Congregational, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Anglican and Dutch Reformed churches (Rakoczy 2003:205-206). The ordination of women should go together with deep theological reflection and be validated by the inclusion of women in all decision-making structures of the church.¹⁸

There is no ambiguity in the Roman Catholic Church regarding the ordination of women in Africa and elsewhere in the world; Rakoczy states that the “male leadership continues to maintain that it is impossible to ordain women” (2003:208). To show how intransigent the Catholic Church is Rakoczy refers to a letter written in 1995 by Cardinal Ratzinger to the presidents of the episcopal conferences:

... the teaching that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women ... requires definitive assent since, founded on the written Word of God, and from the beginning constantly preserved and applied in the tradition of the Church, it has been set forth infallibly by the ordinary and universal magisterium (2003:212).

We began by noting that cultures in Africa have a patriarchal orientation, which the church has, until recently, aided and abetted. It is, therefore, noteworthy that African Traditional Religions and African Indigenous Churches both admit women and men with equal status and authority to their respective spheres of influence (Rakoczy 2003:198-199).

SOME ISSUES

Here we wish to comment on some of the issues that are pertinent to the gender issue in the church and theological institutions. We will discuss these issues in a particular sequence: baptism / conversion, vocation / calling, and ordination. In addition we will comment on inclusive language.

¹⁸ Beverly Haddad, personal interview on 08 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

Baptism / Conversion

We need to distinguish between baptism and conversion. For example Catholics and Anglicans see baptism as a sacrament that ushers the infant (and in some cases the adult) into the Church, the Body of Christ, the locus of salvation. Baptists and Pentecostals see baptism as an ordinance, a sign that follows an individual's confession of faith in Jesus Christ, their conversion. It is not within the scope of this thesis to debate the merits and demerits of these approaches to the biblical injunction. What is common in both cases, baptism and conversion, is the acknowledgement that an individual, having undergone this spiritual experience, is the recipient of charisms which need to be 'discovered' and developed. What is of particular importance in this chapter is the fact that baptism and/or conversion do not make a distinction between female and male, or any other social difference for that matter (Gal. 3:28).

Here we may make mention of circumcision, as some claim that baptism has supplanted circumcision. If ever there was a sign that differentiated Jew from gentile, and male from female it was circumcision. It is, therefore, significant to note that circumcision has been relocated from the external and masculine to the heart (Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 5:6, 6:15; Col.2: 11).

Baptism provides women with a starting point in their advocacy for equal opportunity in ministry. Rakoczy quotes Mary Hilbert, "baptismal dignity has stood in tension with presumptions about anthropology and female sexuality that denied full baptismal dignity and responsibility to women" (2003:39).

The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are symbolized in baptism (Rom. 6:1-11) and graphically demonstrated in the Baptist and Pentecostal practice of baptism by immersion. Resurrection and the putting on of a new life is the outcome of baptism. Rakoczy notes:

Because of the Resurrection, we no longer know Jesus in the particularity of his male humanity but in the glory of his risen life. ... The Christ is not only the glorified Jesus, but he is the glorified Christ, giving life to all who share his Spirit. Christ is no longer exclusively male and Jewish, but he embraces all the particularities of humanity: male and female, African, Asian, old, young.

If this were not true – if women could not put on Christ and share his risen life – women could not be baptized. But there is no historical evidence that there was a dispute in the early Christian communities over whether women could be baptized, in spite of the fact that in Judaism only men were full members of the covenant through circumcision. Now in Christ “we were all given the same Spirit to drink (1 Cor. 12:14) and this Spirit has created a new relationship between men and women. We form Christ in each age as we extend his liberating message ... (2003:94-95).

Embedded in Susan Rakoczy’s argument is the challenge that the Catholic Church ought to ordain women priests. Another Catholic scholar, Thomas O’ Meara, in his book *A Theology of Ministry* notes:

In the United States perhaps seventy percent of the ministry is being performed and has been performed by religious women who have not been officially in the ministry. Because real ministry through jurisdiction is tied to ordination, women's roles have been subordinated. They are canonically laity but formally ministers (1999:179).

Later O’ Meara gives the following definition of ordination:

Ordination is a sacramental liturgy performed by a Christian community and its leaders during which a baptized, charismatically called, and professionally prepared Christian is commissioned into a public ministry within and on behalf of the local church (1999:218).

Surely women can satisfy these requirements: baptized, charismatically called, and professionally prepared?

The focus of Evangelical women would perhaps not be so much on baptism (though the above commentary is vital to their motivation for ministry), but on the conversion experience and the concept of believer priesthood. Conversion is inclusive, Scripture declares, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Peter in Acts 2:21 is quoting Joel). The Apostle Paul repeats this identical invitation:

As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile-- the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Rom 10:11-13 NIV)

Jesus demonstrated the inclusiveness of conversion when He encountered the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well (Jn. 4:1-42), and in His commissioning of the

disciples (Matt. 28:19-20 and Mk. 16:15-16). In the NIV Bible “all nations” is used in Matthew and more significantly “all creation” is used in Mark. In Acts we have the conversion of Lydia and the delightful, “‘If you consider me a believer in the Lord,’ she said, ‘come and stay at my house.’ And she persuaded us” (Acts 16:15).

Conversion means a break with the old order, more specifically with that order which has resulted from the Fall when a wedge was driven between the female and the male components of the image of God (Gen. 3:16). Conversion means *a new creation* and Paul is unequivocal in describing the impact of the new creation (we note the exclusive language):

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:16-19 NIV).

This theme of a new creation is also found in John’s gospel, it echoes Genesis 1:1 in its first verse “In the beginning”, and in the third chapter we find the imperative of being “born again” (v 3), concluding with an allusion to Genesis 2:7 – Jesus breathing on the disciples (19:32) and commissioning them (note the gathering of disciples in 19:19 cannot be construed as being exclusively male, see Acts 1:14).

Conversion makes us *all* priests, whether we are distant gentiles or alienated women:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy (1 Pet 2:9-10 NIV).

(Using this quote is a little disturbing given what the Apostle Peter later writes about wives as weaker partners submitting to their husbands 3:1-7).

This notion of a believer priesthood first appears in Exodus 19:6 after Miriam the prophetess had led the women in worshipful dance (Ex. 15:20-21) and before the

construction of the Golden Calf (Ex. 32) which precipitated the masculine Levitical priesthood (Ex 32:26-29). In the New Covenant the Apostle Peter refers to the believer priesthood in relation to a “spiritual house,” the cornerstone of which is Christ (1 Peter 2:4-11), and the Apostle John in Revelation testifies that Christ “has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father-- to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen” (1:6).

In my comment on 1 Peter 2:4-11 I have focused on *priesthood*, Grace Eneme looking at the *living stones* relates a custom of the Bakossi tribe of the southwest province in Cameroon. They classify stones into two categories: living stones and dead stones. Living stones are moveable and have many domestic uses including the tripod stones for cooking, whereas dead stones are embedded or too large to use. The tripod stones are very important to Bakossi women, as these stones form the centrepiece around which hospitality and family discussions take place. Grace Eneme then describes the laying of these three stones at the time of a couple’s marriage:

The first stone is pitched by the bride and her husband, signifying oneness in building up their home.

The second stone is pitched by the bride and the eldest woman in the family, signifying her acceptance and integration into the family and village community. It also signifies her active participation in family affairs, mutual respect, and sharing with others.

The third stone is pitched by the bride and her chaperone (sister or aunt). It symbolizes a bridge of contact for the two families ... By that stone the bride is assured solidarity by her family members in both good and bad times (1994:215).

Eneme admits that the image of the tripod stones is not the same as the biblical ‘living stones’ she notes that as each stone is important to the walls of the ‘spiritual house’:

... so is each Christian in the community of believers. The appeal to build up Christ’s Church is an open invitation to all, male and female, young and old.

As the tripod stones integrate the bride into the family, so does Christ, the foundation stone, integrate each Christian into the family of God. Christ’s family is bigger than any human family. It includes people of all races and colors, and it is bound together by his Spirit (1994:215-216).

Fiedler, quoted above, expressed amazement that the Baptist tradition, which among other things, emphasises the priesthood of all believers, should have difficulty in accommodating women in the ministry (2002:199).

The New Testament provides ample evidence of women engaged in meaningful ministry, including the apostolate. The starting point, depending on one's tradition, is baptism or conversion.

Vocation / Calling

The use of the terms vocation and calling is to a large extent a matter of semantics. Nevertheless there is a diversity of charisms and ministries and these are categorized in various ways by different traditions. O' Meara, a Catholic writes, "Ministry has moved from being a vocation for the few to being a gift and work of many, a facet of baptized life" (1999:5). O' Meara is critical of the Protestant affirmation of the secular vocation, "the Protestant church had difficulty with halting the identification of ministry with Western professions, difficulty with keeping a transcendence in the sacrament and service of its minister. A certain secularity and bourgeois ethos was a fallout from the Reformation" (1999:113). It is also necessary, according to O' Meara, to clarify and state that, "We cannot continue the past theory of ministry in which every legitimate and moral human enterprise is ministry" (1999:190).

What we are dealing with in this section is not the servant lifestyle of the believer or the wonderful array of spiritual gifts that are spontaneous in certain gatherings of the church as described by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians chapters 12 and 14; at issue here is a more permanent ministry beginning or recognised at ordination.

Are women called to ordination? The issue of ordination that is contentious not only for women but also for the church as a whole will be discussed below. Suffice to say that the questions, "Does ministry arise from a private vocation akin to a conversion experience? Or is ministry solely constituted by an episcopal ritual?" (O' Meara 1999:199) expose the real problem for women and men, both

Catholic and Protestant, who might see the ordained ministry as a career choice. In the author's opinion, full-time ministry is not a career choice but a heavenly call (at conversion or later) and this should be open to scrutiny by the community.

In the author's own tradition it is not ordination (we do not distinguish between clergy and laity, nor do we wear vestments or a clerical collar) but recognition of ministry and this is done through the laying on of hands (2 Tim. 1:6). This may be followed by a decision to become a full time minister. Beverley Haddad (personal interview, 08/08/2003) challenged the author regarding the role of women in his denomination, particularly with regard to decision-making. He had to admit that beside some highly effective women missionaries and some deacons, the Assemblies of God in South Africa could not identify any Pastors (that would correspond with what other traditions would call ordained). The author could defend himself by saying that women in his church community have not hitherto been called or that they do not have a sense of vocation. This would not be an accurate assessment of the situation, perhaps the answer lies in the fact that there is a particular mindset that prevails, in men and women in our assemblies, which perpetuates an uncritical reading of those passages of Scripture that subordinate women in the home and in the church.

Wilma Jacobsen in *Women and Vocation: the "if" question* captures something of the unresolved aspects surrounding a call to the ministry:

At first appearance, the answer to the question, "Are women called?" would seem to be as easy as the answer to the question, "Are women human?" One wants to answer, "Of course women are human" and, "Of course women are called – they are called into all spheres of life and society and the church." But if one pauses to reflect on the ways in which women have been treated in society and the church, the attitudes about women which prevail, the barriers and opposition which face women, then the "yes-answers" are not quite so obvious (1991:241).

The crux of the matter is not just the exercising of ministry and charisms or even ordination. The bottom line is the participation of women in decision-making structures. The injustice of this exclusion of women is illustrated by Grace Eneme's report:

In the African Protestant Church women constitute 85% of the membership. They are very active, contributing to the building of chapels and the maintenance of churches. They pay for the training of pastors. But in leadership, decisionmaking (sic), and the management of funds, they have no part. Quite often, the funds they provide are misappropriated by the elders and pastors (1994:217).

Women are in the majority, women are actively contributing energy and resources and they do not have a say. “The church wants women to do the work men will not do, the behind-the-scenes work of cooking, cleaning, arranging flowers etc and to disappear when decisions are to be made” (Rakoczy 2003:192).

The fact that women are called or have a vocation is clearly indicated in history, and the contemporary evidence documented in such volumes as *Her- Stories – the hidden histories of faith in Africa* edited by Phiri, Govinden and Nadar - an outstanding example in this book being that of Rev. Victory Nomvete Mbanjwa (2002:119-138).

I would suggest that more women would aspire to the ‘ordained’ ministry i.e. taking up an office that is in every way equivalent in status and function to that of a male priest or pastor, but they are deterred by their communities’ hermeneutics and cultural idiosyncrasies.

Ordination

In their book *Daughters of the Church* Tucker and Liefeld encapsulate something of the divergent views surrounding the meaning and implications of ordination:

Is it recognition of spiritual gifts? Is it permission to preach or to teach? Is it permission to preside at the Lord’s Supper? Does it bestow a rank and grant authority over the church? Who should be ordained – pastors, bishops, elders, Sunday-school superintendents, missionaries? Can a female commissioned missionary carry on a teaching ministry not allowable by ordination to woman at home? (1987:440).

O’ Meara points out that the words *order* and *ordination* were appropriated from the political and social life of the Roman Empire. After the peace of Milan *ordo* was applied to the Church, “It referred to the bishops, and soon to the church’s hierarchy over against the faithful (*plebs*) (1999:151-152).

Rakoczy indicates, “In the early church the development of ministries took place organically and it is an anachronism to project ‘ordination’ back into the events of the Last Supper and say that Jesus ordained twelve male apostles. Jesus never ‘ordained’ anyone ...”(2003:179).

O’ Meara admits the dangers of a “nominalist - ecclesiological mind set” that orchestrates the eternal and “reduces ordination to a liturgical exercise of episcopal power” which excludes the “realities of the Spirit, and community” (1999:55).

What emerges here is the application of secular terminology and structures to the ministry of the Body Christ of which Christ is the only head; the imposition of liturgical exercises to the exclusion of the sanction of the Holy Spirit, and the unbiblical creation of two classes in the Church namely clergy and laity.

Class distinctions come in pairs. While the clergy became an elevated, sacral state, the laity became a passive group. The first Christians saw themselves as the people of God, a people open to all, male and female, slave and free, Jew and Greek (Gal. 3:28 f.). God’s people, a universal people, had access to the Spirit through Jesus (O’ Meara 1999:176).

O’ Meara acknowledges:

The Reformers rightly spoke of the priesthood of all Christians, but did not succeed in developing a praxis of universal ministry. Luther’s conservative reform, frightened by Calvin and the enthusiasts, hesitated and then returned to the single pastoral office (1999:177).

It may be suggested that the pursuit of ordination is not the way to go for both women and men. Ordination is part of a hierarchical structure and foreign to the New Testament. Ordination is open to abuse by the person seeking it through unscriptural and unrealistic expectations of the office / ministry. There is also the possible incompatibility of the person and the office. It must be admitted that some women are trapped by the *modus operandi* of their traditions and ordination is the only option open to them. But in an ideal situation women and men ought to be recognised and appointed because the community affirms the gift of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, that women should not be excluded from any of the decision-making structures in the Church.

Inclusive Language

This issue revolves around the use of masculine terminology in Scripture, hymnology, and by extension, liturgy and preaching. The controversial *Inclusive-Language Lectionary* was produced in 1983 by the National Council of Churches with the purpose of substituting inclusive language for masculine terminology thus:

Wherever the term *Father* is used for, or in connection with other terms for, *God*, the *Lectionary* has “[God] the Father [*and Mother*].” (The italics are not for emphasis but, as in some versions of the Bible, to indicate added words.) “Lord” becomes “Sovereign”; “Son of God” is now “Human One.” In addition, “Kingdom,” because of the masculine, “king-,” becomes “Realm”; “Brethren” (which, as an address usually applies to both men and women) is variously translated “Sisters and Brothers,” “Friends,” or neighbors.” Where a man’s name is used in connection with the birth or descent of children, the wife’s name is added to the text. Thus Matthew 3:9 becomes “We have Abraham as our Father [*and Sarah and Hagar as our mothers*]” (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:425-426).

We need to remind ourselves that God transcends all our points of reference. “Pagan deities were either masculine or feminine. God is infinitely greater than such categories” (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:450).

Rakoczy points out that words about God are and can only be symbolic, and are by their very nature evocative so, “God as Mother awakens a different set of thoughts and feelings than does God the Father” (2003:61). Thus Rakoczy advocates the use of many words and images for God lest the Christian community becomes fixated on one set of names, words or images and robs itself of something of the fullness of the transcendent and present Sovereign of the Church (2003:62).

In Africa there are male and female names for God and Rakoczy would encourage the use of these female names by women, “to expand their consciousness and imagination in prayer, worship and theological reflection” (2003:61).

The following question should give us pause:

[1] How far can one remove or minimize certain expressions, such as “Father,” without distorting the nature of God? [2] What does one’s view of the inspiration and the authority of the Scripture say to the proposal that biblical language descriptive of God ... reflect, not immutable truth, but patriarchal ideas? [3] Where is the boundary between metaphorical language that helps us understand God in terms appropriate to our own sphere of reference and language that conveys absolutes about the nature of God? (Tucker and Liefeld 1987:450).

Again it is not within the purview of the thesis to venture into the territory of hermeneutics and theology. Rather, in terms of formation, the author would prefer to emphasise the symbolic value of the whole range of words, names and images that enrich us all as a community of God. A manifest sensitivity, in every facet of the institution’s activity and being, to the need for inclusive language will encourage and affirm women

FORMATION – A RESPONSE

I begin this response with a quote from the *WCC Programme of the Ecumenical Decade, 1988-1998: Churches in Solidarity with Women*:

1. Empowering women to challenge oppressive structures in the global community. Their country and their church.
2. Affirming – through shared leadership and decision-making, theology and spirituality – the decisive contributions of women in churches and communities.
3. Giving visibility to women’s perspectives and actions in the work and struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.
4. Enabling the churches to free themselves from racism, sexism and classism; from teaching and practices that discriminate against women.
5. Encouraging churches to take actions in solidarity with women (in Kathindi 1991:255).

Formation is about empowerment, affirmation, enabling and encouraging. Given the historical background and the issues that surround the gender issue, the formation of women will be discussed under the following subheadings: profile, programme, preparation, and partnership. It should be kept in mind that the context of this formation is an ecumenical, multi-cultural and mixed gender campus.

Profile

The background to the gender issue both in the Church and in society is such that the profile of the women's contribution to the community needs to be enhanced, affirmed, and acknowledged. A simple and effective means can be employed to achieve this aim:

- Emphasise the role of women and the theological validity of women's ministry as demonstrated in the Bible and throughout Church history.
- Provide female role models by ensuring that women are not only on faculty, but are actively involved as formators, preferably as part of a multi-disciplinary team.
- Listen to the hitherto suppressed women's voice.

As we have listened for centuries to the voices of men and the theories of development that their experience informs, so we have come more recently to notice not only the silence of women but the difficulty in hearing what they say when they speak. Yet in the different voice of women lies the truth of an ethic of care, the tie between relationship and responsibility, and the origins of aggression the failure of connection" (Gilligan 1993:173).

- To consciously use inclusive language and making its use mandatory in the institution.

Programme

The curriculum should reflect gender issues. The concerns and contributions of women should be raised in subjects such as Biblical Studies, Theology, History, Missions, and Ethics. Not only in the classroom but also in chapel services and other activities on and off the campus should include women students in their planning and execution.

Preparation

At an ecumenical and multi-cultural institution women are exposed to an array of different expectations regarding the ordained ministry.¹⁹ This could result in

¹⁹ See chapter eleven for the responses of interviewees to questions related to the ordination of women.

frustration and disappointment with their own particular denomination. Formators should assist women students to:

- Explore and understand their particular denomination's gender attitudes.
- Discover and develop their charisms.
- Develop gender theology.

Partnership

The holistic formation of women cannot take place in a vacuum or in isolation. Men also need to be sensitized and educated regarding gender issues. Formators need to facilitate the collaboration of women and men in redressing some of the imbalances and injustices of the past.

The synergism of male and female working together represents the completed creation of God, when he looked at male and female and saw that all he had made was 'very good' (Gn.1:31). Thus when men and women work together they combine their strengths and can more quickly and effectively work through solutions. Ingrid Kern, who serves as the chairperson of her church board in Berlin, sees a difference now that men and women are working together. 'Men discuss things at great length; everything must be very clear before they make a move. Women, who are more sensitive to the needs of women and children, say, "Let's not talk so long. Let's do something.'" (Lutz 1997:235).

Lutz exhorts men to check their own preconceptions and start listening to women and receiving their spiritual gifts:

Unfortunately, when women say that they feel left out or like second-class citizens, they are often labelled radical feminists, aggressive or just plain unspiritual. You can help women understand their feelings and how they can use their gifts if you listen sympathetically. This is not a minor issue that affects a radical fringe in the church. This is an issue that concerns more than half the body of Christ (1997:242).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter emphasis has been placed on the history of women in the church, and the ordination of women. Two thousand years of women's experience in the church, not only underscores the tyranny of patriarchy that left countless women abused, neglected and frustrated, but also highlights the brave contributions to and

timeous interventions in the life and well being of the Christian community. It is this latter aspect that requires reiteration in theological institutions.

In addressing the issue of women's ordination I have sought to expose the contradiction that manifests itself between conversion (baptism) / calling (vocation) and ordination. Regarding conversion (baptism), females and males enjoy equal status before God and the Christian community but ordination introduces a dissonance in a number of traditions, even those who have formally accepted the ordination of women. The same can be said for calling (vocation) and ordination. With the increase in the number of women registering at theological institutions and seeking ordination these contradictions and tensions need to be addressed and resolved.

Formators can play a leading role in raising the profile of the women's place in the church by introducing programmes and courses emphasising the women's role in the life and history of the church; preparing women for ministry, and facilitating the collaboration of women and men students in redressing some of the imbalances and injustices of the past.

SECTION THREE
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

CHAPTER SEVEN – THE IMAGE OF GOD

The purpose of this chapter is to draw together in theological reflection the three issues that are the concern of this thesis namely ecumenical, multi-cultural, and gender considerations. After comment on the doctrine of the image of God we shall deal in some detail with application of the image of God to the three issues. The chapter concludes with a comment on the relevance of the subject to formation.

THE IMAGE OF GOD

Three Important Instances in Scripture:

The image of God is an important and recurrent motif in Scripture. It is first mentioned in connection with the creation of humanity:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Gen 1:26-27 NIV)

The second significant reference to image is in the Decalogue – these are images in contradiction of the image of God.

"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below." (Exodus 20:4 NIV)

It should be noted that the Decalogue is prefaced with "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." (Exodus 20:2 NIV).

The divine motivation is deliverance and salvation. To turn away from the Genesis Image of God and make our own images / idols is "exchanging the Glory" (Ps 106:20). Such rejection of the Image of God visits judgment "to the third and fourth generation" (Exodus 20:5 NIV). The Apostle Paul, in Romans 1:18-32, explicitly describes the consequences of "exchanging the Glory" (Rom. 1:22-23) – beside the lawlessness described in verses 28-32 there is the perversion of human sexuality:

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. (Rom 1:26-27 NIV)

Brunner speaks about the male and female aspects of the Image of God in terms of “existence-in-community” and to be truly human “man (sic) has to be created as a *pair* of human beings. He cannot realize his nature without the “Other”; his destiny is fellowship in love” (1952:64). The *pair* in the Image of God is male and female. Homosexuality does not honour God’s original purpose and is, according to the Apostle Paul, a result of idolatry.

The third, and most important, reference to the Image of God is in connection with Jesus Christ. “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor 4:4 NIV).

The Greek word for ‘image’ is *eikon*, which in the common usage of the day meant, “no more than a copy or reflection” (Hughes 1989:24). Concerning the above Scripture Hughes insists, “The glory of Christ is not a mere reflection or copy of the glory of God; it is identical with it (1989:26). This is corroborated in the following verse: “The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (Heb 1:3 NIV).

The phrase “exact representation”(NIV), other translations render it “express image” (NKJ), “very Stamp” (RSV) is from the Greek *charakter* which only occurs once in the New Testament (Hughes 1989:45). Commenting on Colossians 1:15, Hughes states that there can never be “a pictorial copy of the invisible ... within the mystery of the infinite Trinitarian being of God it is the Son who authentically reveals the divine nature and gives effect to the divine will” (1989:28).

Humanity is restored, and reconciled to the Creator through the Image of God, which is Christ Jesus, “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Rom 8:29 NIV). Again Hughes provides commentary, “From eternity to eternity Christiformity is God’s purpose for his creature, man (sic)” (1989:27).

The Image of God and Humanity

What exactly is indicated by image? Can we utilize anthropomorphic terminology? What about the male and female aspect found in Genesis 1:27?

Jeffrey T. Tucker notes:

Although Gen. 1:27 provides an apparent rationale for anthropomorphic imagery, the inherent danger is that such figurative language, employed to express how humans have experienced the transcendent God, is mistaken for literal language, particularly with respect to God’s gender. ... The supreme anthropomorphism is the NT claim that God entered human flesh in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth (in Freedman 2000:66)

Emil Brunner comparing humans with animals concludes that humans ‘respond’ while animals ‘react’, therefore, humans are ‘responsible’ (1952:56). Brunner points out that this aspect of the image of God cannot be erased by sin it is indelible. Responsibility is only one facet of the image of God as manifest in humanity. The full expression of the *Imago Dei* is found in Jesus Christ, who according to Brunner is the ‘centre’ around which any discussion on this topic must revolve (1952:55). What is required of humanity is a faith response to Jesus Christ:

True humanity does not spring from full development of human potentialities, but it arises through the reception, the perception, and the acceptance of the love of God, and it develops and is preserved by “abiding” in communion with the God who reveals Himself as Love (Brunner 1952:59).

Another manifestation of the *Imago Dei* in humanity is the ‘existence-in-community’; this is not only a reflection of the Trinity, it is also a consequence of responsibility:

... the distinctively “human” element, as such, does not appear in the individual: for existence-in-*community* is part of true humanity. Hence from the outset man (sic) has not been created as an isolated being, but as a “twofold” being; and not simply as two human beings, but as two beings who necessarily belong to one another, who have been created for this purpose, and whose whole nature is ordered in that direction, that is, as two beings who cannot *be* apart from each other (Brunner 1952: 64).

According to Brunner the image of God, at the human level, is only fully apparent in the unity of female and male together in the common purpose of fulfilling God’s will.

There are a number of other features that make humans distinct from other living creatures. Hughes names six: personality, spirituality, rationality, morality, authority, and creativity (1989:51-64). For the sake of this thesis attention is drawn to three: personality, spirituality, and morality.

- Personality – humans are personal because they are created in the image of a personal God who “is personal because his unity embraces the threefold interpersonal relationship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Hughes 1989:51-53). The creation of humanity as male and female indicate the intention for them to be communal and enjoying personal fellowship (Hughes 1989:52). Person hood has been “choked by sinful individualism” and now requires the “reintegration of the image in which man was originally created,” and this image, according to Hughes is the Person of the Son of God – “it is in him that the vertical I-Thou, person-to-Person, relationship with God is restored, and also, as a necessary consequence, the horizontal I-thou, person-to-person, relationship with our fellow human beings” (1989:54).
- Spirituality – created in the image of God, humanity is “inescapably a religious being” and needs to worship someone or something, the latter could be idols, ideologies, sport, wealth etc. (1989:55-56).
- Morality – in the context of formation this is a priority. Hughes states that incorporation into the Christ “brings not only the restoration of right thinking but also the restoration of right living and the reestablishment in his heart of concern for the divine standard of holiness” (1989:59).

Humanity, created in the image of God, is a moral being and is answerable to their Creator. Hughes sees this answerability as authenticating humanity and the survival of humanity depends on it (1989:60).

THE IMAGE OF GOD AND ECUMENICAL ISSUES

By ecumenical we are not referring to the movement but to a multi-, inter-denominational context such as the ESSA campus. The purpose of this section is to emphasise the imperative of unity. Students are being formed for ministry and the opportunity should be taken by formators to eliminate prejudices and negative assumptions that would perpetuate division.

First, we need to be reminded of Christ's prayer in John 17. A number of things emerge but unity is primary:

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:20-2 NIV).

Jesus likens this unity of the Church to the his unity with the Father and indicates that the reception of the truth of the Incarnation is dependent on the manifest unity of the Church.

Secondly, God calls us to be conformed to the image of Jesus.

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Rom 8:29 NIV)

How do we achieve this? [i] Conforming to the image of God begins with receiving and believing Christ (Jn.1:12); believing in your heart and confessing with your mouth (Rom. 10:10); outcome – conformed to Christ's likeness (Rom. 8:29); [ii] this is not only an exercise of faith, which is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8), but also an act of obedience through Baptism, which is the burial/submergence of the old nature and the taking/putting on of Christ (Rom. 6:1-12, Eph. 4:22-24); [iii] Holy Communion, where we together affirm the New Covenant in the

partaking of one cup and one loaf; being called upon to discern the body of Christ (1Cor 11:23-34).

All is summed up in the scripture:

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph 4:3-6 NIV)

It is God who so loved the world (Jn 3: 16); it is Jesus Christ who has broken down the dividing wall (Eph. 2: 14); it is the blood that draws the strangers near (Eph.2: 13 and 19); it is by the Holy Spirit that we are born again and all cry Abba Father (Rom.8: 15 and Gal. 4:6); it is Jesus who taught us to pray "Our Father ..."(Matt. 6:9); it is love that distinguishes the disciples from the rest of the world (Jn. 13:35).

It is therefore abhorrent for any church, denomination, sect, or cult to claim that salvation is exclusive to them and God's favour rests only on them – a point Jesus made in his day:

I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed-- only Naaman the Syrian." (Luke 4:25-27 NIV)

We, the Church, have attempted to evade the witness of Holy Scripture and our Creed by either using the fanciful Protestant notion of the 'Invisible Church', or the dogmatic Roman Catholic *Una Sancta* which forgets the schism of 1054 that resulted in the Roman, and Greek Orthodox churches (Brunner 1962:127). Then there are those Evangelical and Pentecostal 'born-again', who discount mainline churches. Beside the efforts of the Ecumenical Movement, there appears, in recent years, to be a dismantling of denominational divisions.

Scriptural evidence indicates:

- Our Lord Jesus prayed for unity.

- That conversion / baptism introduces us to the one family.
- That Holy Communion reminds us, under threat of judgment, of our oneness in Christ.
- Our love for each other is proof that we are Jesus' disciples.
- The Great Commission unites us in the common purpose of reaching the lost.

THE IMAGE OF GOD AND MULTI-CULTURAL ISSUES

What is being attempted in this section is a differentiation between the visible and the invisible, between images/forms, which are more open to prejudice, and language (more precisely the language of proclamation – *kerygma*). It is contended that we are distracted from the task of proclaiming the Christ, the image of God, by our over attachment to our culture and its outward manifestations e.g. circumcision or our language.

But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. (Col 3:8-11 NIV)

In Athens the Apostle Paul is engaged in cross-cultural mission. He makes a connection with his gentile audience at two levels, the spiritual or religious (Acts 17: 22-23), and the anthropological, “From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth” (Acts 17:26 NIV). If Old Testament scripture led Jews to believe that they were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) the apostle now extends this fact of creation to all of the inhabitants of the earth even though they are gentiles and unconverted. If the unconverted are unconsciously united in this image how much more the members of the Body of Christ who have responded to the Word (Rom. 10:17).

The image of God referred to in Scripture is not anthropomorphic, therefore graphic or concrete images (two and three dimensional) are not as evocative or

effective as language (which is also limited). In multi-cultural encounters, whether mission or fellowship, language is the better medium. Paul said to the Athenians:

For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown *I am going to proclaim to you.* (Acts 17:23 NIV my emphasis added)

The images and altars of Athens left spiritual truth unknown. What was needed was the language, the Word of God, to be proclaimed to them. The accuracy of this language was demonstrated to the Galatians: “You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified” (Gal 3:1 NIV).

Paul was not using visual aids, but preaching. Elsewhere he describes his method of proclamation:

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power (1 Cor 2:1-5 NIV).

Is it because of the impact of language that Paul even refers to poetry? “... As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring'” (Acts 17:28 NIV).

More precisely it is not the preoccupation with the visible externals, whatever cultural form they may take, but the heart which only the Incarnate Word can address. Jesus said to a doubting Thomas, “blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”(Jn.20: 29). The Apostle Paul again alludes to creation, this time to the Corinthians, he talks about the new creation and we note that the perspective is not a “worldly point of view”:

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the

world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. (2 Cor 5:16-19 NIV)²⁰

To the unconverted Athenians it was a reference to the original creation; to the converted Corinthians it is a reference to the new creation with a strong emphasis on reconciliation. Both creations have to do with the image of God.

The prophet Samuel was reminded, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Sam 16:7 NIV).

Jesus focused on the heart or the inward aspect, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean" (Matt 23:27 NIV).

Returning to the centrality of language, there is the spiritual (theological and poetic) and the natural. Concerning the latter, one sees, in practical terms the advantages of inviting students of different language groups to pray and sing in their own language in multi-cultural services. Acts 2:5-13 describes the impact of languages (unlearned by the believers but known by the audience): "... God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ... because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ... how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ... we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" (NIV)

²⁰ John Calvin commenting on this passage and particularly on v16 states, "Since we ought, all of us, to be dead to the present life, nay more, to be nothing in ourselves, no one must be reckoned a servant of Christ on the ground of carnal excellence" (translation by Pringle 1979:231). The author of this thesis, while accepting Calvin to mean the exclusion of any natural attributes, argues that cultural traits, whether commendable or not, should not obscure the acceptance of one another in a multicultural context.

If God's judgment on a monoculture's construction of a tower was the scattering of people through a multiplicity of languages (Gen. 11:1-9), then the restoration of fellowship can only be through God's last Word, Jesus Christ, the image of God.

...but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. (Heb 1:1-3 NIV).

In sociological terms (as noted in chapter 5) there is the danger of assimilation on the one hand, and the need for accommodation on the other. From the theological perspective the problem of syncretism and compromise is ever present and one must constantly hold up and present the image of God, Christ Jesus, as revealed in the New Testament. Cultural forms and images are constantly evolving and the communication of the Gospel makes necessary inculturations but the foundation and "language" (proclamation) remains the same. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Luke 21:33 NIV). Paul confirms this:

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 3:10-11 NIV).

In the multi-cultural context various cultural customs and forms provide a superstructure but Jesus Christ the image of God provides the stability. The possibility of using the wrong building materials is always there (1 Cor 3:12-13 NIV). Integrity is positively maintained by a theology, lifestyle, and proclamation that constantly evaluate themselves against the image.

THE IMAGE OF GOD AND GENDER ISSUES

The fact that the image of God is reflected in male and female is indisputable (Gen. 1:27). Can we presume to enter the realm of pre-existence and attribute to the Creator gender? Holy Spirit inspired the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16) but the personality and the context (worldview) of the human authors is clearly evidenced

by the styles adopted in the various books, prophets, gospels and epistles, not to mention apocalyptic literature.

The point being made is that we cannot discount the possibility that the written Word of God was adapted (not maliciously) by a patriarchal milieu. The Incarnate Word of God cannot be treated ambiguously, Jesus was a male, a circumcised Jew.

The identity of the Son as both Son of God and Son of Man is displayed in the New Testament as a perfectly natural fact. In St. Peter's historical confession at Caesarea Philippi, for instance, the response given to the twofold question of Jesus, "Who do men say that the *Son of Man* is? ... But who do you say that I am?" is, "You are the Christ, *the Son of the living God*" – a truth Jesus applauded as revealed from above (Hughes 1989:33).

In an attempt to redress the damage done to the Church of Jesus Christ, as a result of patriarchal domination, feminist theologians have proposed the use of inclusive language in Bible translations/versions. While sympathetic to the Christian feminist's cause I think the emphasis, when it comes to the image of God, should not be on gender but on God's purpose, and this Brunner identifies as "existence-in-community".

Because God is Love, because in God's very Nature there is community, man (sic) must be able to love: thus "man" has to be created as a *pair* of human beings. He cannot realize his nature without the "Other"; his destiny is fellowship in love.

This twofold character of man in the Creation Story is in contrast to the world-wide myth of androgyny. The latter is necessarily connected with rational thinking ... Androgyny is the ontological basis of narcissism (1952:64-65).

It may be suggested, with regard to Genesis 1:27, that too much emphasis is placed by theologians on gender, and that a polemic was not originally intended. Behind human labels is God's purpose of love and community, which were perverted and divided by the original pair's disobedience and rebellion; sin shattered the image, one became two and gender, among other things, became an issue exacerbated by a patriarchal society. Hughes sees only one solution to this catastrophe:

The recovery of personhood that has been choked by sinful individualism requires the reintegration of the image in which man was originally. Because that image is in fact a Person, the Son who is the image of God, it is in him that the vertical I-Thou, person-to-Person, relationship with God is restored, and also, as a necessary consequence, the horizontal I-Thou, person-to-person, relationship with our fellow human beings (1989:54).

Jesus' masculinity ought not to be an issue, the Incarnate Word of God had to be male *or* female. Given the prophetic Old Testament scriptures (e.g. Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6; Micah 5:2-5), and the Jewish context at the time of His birth – Jesus' gender had to be male. Our focus should not only be on the pre-Easter Jesus but also on the Resurrected Jesus (who rose physically in a glorified body). Susan Rakoczy celebrates this fact:

Because of the Resurrection, we no longer know Jesus in the particularity of his male humanity but in the glory of his risen life ... Christ is no longer exclusively male and Jewish, but he embraces all the particularities of humanity, male and female, African, Asian, old, young (2003:94).

It is as a direct consequence of the resurrection that the baptism practiced by the early Church endorsed the fact that, in Christ, the distinction between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female had disappeared (Gal.3: 28). These biblical truths and theological facts are self-evident but do not always find practical expression in the Church. Even in His earthly ministry Jesus demonstrated the status quo was discontinued in the Kingdom of God and He attracted to Himself a broad spectrum of people, including those who had been marginalized (see chapter 6).

Feminist theologians, like all theologians, make maximum use of words and names; one of these is *Sophia* – the creative energy of God (Prov. 7; Eccl. 24:3-5), teacher (Prov. 8:1-11), mother, lover and teacher (Eccl.4:11-16), and Rakoczy notes that female imagery is remarkable given Israel's absolute monotheism (2003:62-63). Rakoczy draws a distinction between *Sophia* and *Logos*, stating that the latter is derived from Platonic and Stoic philosophy with its emphasis on mind and reason which was then identified with men – women, slaves and children were considered deficient in this area (2003:97). Understanding Rakoczy's reservations around the use of *Logos* it can nevertheless be pointed out

that the liberation effected by the Word Incarnate, in spite of patriarchal oppression, has produced women who have eclipsed men in many areas of mind and reason.

In reflecting on gender issues we have elected to focus on community whether expressed in the original pair or in the baptized *ekklesia* and so doing sought to move beyond the issues surrounding gender. We therefore conclude with reference to the Trinity. Susan Rakoczy addressing issue of women's partnership in ministry finds in the Trinity:

...an appropriate theological model ... Because the life of the Christian community flows from our relationship personally and corporately in God, leadership in the community must reflect, however imperfectly, the dynamism of the Trinitarian life. ... Ecclesial leadership which is wholly male reflects a fragmented church and undercuts the Trinitarian theology of God in relation with humanity, both female and male (2003:194-195).

THE IMAGE OF GOD AND FORMATION

We have reflected on the image of God as it relates to ecumenical, multicultural, and gender issues. What emerges is the need to focus not only on issues that are currently crucial but also on the deeper concerns that are common to humanity. Formation literally needs a radical approach which emulates Jesus, not only in His approach to the Pharisees but also to His disciples; Jesus went to the heart of his audience (Matt. 5:8 & 28; 6:21; 12:24; 13:15 & 19; 15:18 & 19; 22:37).

Formators need to address personality, spirituality and morality as they relate to the image of God. Another important aspect, which features in this reflection, is the sense of community over against individualism – this is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT – THE COMMUNITY OF GOD

Reflection on the image of God sees the Church as divinely ordained and transcending the natural differences so clearly visible in the multiplicity of denominations, and the divergence in cultural and gender contexts. Reflection on the community of God is an attempt to illuminate the dynamics of the Church. In short, chapter seven dealt with the identity of the Church, this chapter deals with the activity of the Church - how it functions. The Church is not static she is a living organism.

The Christian community is more than a voluntary association of individual Christians. She is a body, a living unity. She has an organic and corporate character. We are not Christians by ourselves, but members one of another and knit together in one body (Rom.12; 1 Cor.12; Eph.4). To be “in Christ” means to be part of His body (Gish 1979:31).

Theologians, in seeking to describe the nature of the Church have adopted various approaches. Hans Küng, in his tome, *The Church* (1971) begins with the historicity of the Church; then the Kingdom of God; followed by the Trinitarian structure of the Church - as the people of God, the creation of the Spirit, and the body of Christ; utilizing the Creed Küng describes the dimensions of the Church, and concludes with the ministry or offices of the Church. David Watson in his popular book *I believe in the Church* (1978) also has a Trinitarian approach although he is much more expansive including such aspects as the Building, the Bride, the People, and the Army of God. Watson devotes the final section of his book to the life of the Church dealing extensively with the worship, preaching, sacraments, ministry and leadership, and the mission of the Church.

The Bible describes the community of God in a number of different ways but we would limit ourselves to just three: the Body; the Building, and the Bride. Each of these models describes a particular dynamic and aspect of the community.

The Body

The Apostle Paul is consistent in the use of this analogy of the Body and we find it in his letters to the churches in Rome, Corinth and Ephesus. In each case the

reference to the Body is in the context of a plurality of ministries, gifts and charisms (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-11; Eph. 4:11). It is also noteworthy that in each case there is an explicit reference to *love* (Rom.12: 9-21; 1Cor.13; Eph. 4:15-16). There is also an appeal for unity and cooperation for the overall benefit of the community of the Spirit under the headship of Christ.

- Romans 12:1-21 – Body is mentioned twice in this passage. Firstly, as a sacrifice of an individual’s life (v1), and secondly, as the body of Christ (v5). There is the dynamic of letting go of one’s own agenda to be included in the community’s agenda “each belongs to all the others” (v5). While the unity of the members is recognised, so is the diversity of gifts acknowledged (v4). There is a caution against pride (v3). What is significant is that each listed gift is preceded with the phrase “let him” (vv6-8). There is a need to actively release the latent gifts in the members of the body otherwise members could atrophy. Paul encourages, “Love must be sincere” (v9), this love must be exhibited to everyone whether a member of the body or a persecutor (vv9-21).
- 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 – Paul emphatically states, “the body is a unit” (v12). This has come about because, “we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free-- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.” (v13). The Apostle reminds his readers that the Sovereign God has placed each member in a specific place and function (v18), therefore, no one should feel misplaced (v15-17), nor should members look down on other members (vv21-24). God’s purpose is “that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it” (1 Cor 12:25-26 NIV). The nine gifts of the Spirit are listed in verses 1-11 and Paul concludes "All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines" (1 Cor 12:11 NIV). Later we read, "Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build

up the church" (1 Cor 14:12 NIV). But the Apostle strongly warns that any gift of the Spirit is compromised by a lack of love (1 Cor 13:1-3).

- Ephesians 4:1-14 – Paul appeals, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit” (v3). As with Corinth, Paul makes reference to Baptism (vv5-6). The ministry gifts (v11) are not the same as the *charismata* found in 1 Corinthians 12. Paul states the reason for these gifts:

... to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Eph 4:12-13 NIV)

David Watson offers this comment:

It is a travesty of the true nature of the church to think of the ministry only in terms of the theologically trained leaders. All saints, or Christians, are to be involved in the work of the ministry. All are called to serve within the body of Christ. There are some specialist gifts and ministries, certainly, but these are simply to equip everyone for a definite role and task within the church. No one is to be a passenger. All belong to the crew (1978:101).

Love is the medium for communicating truth and the means by which the body “grows and builds itself up” (vv15-16).

Reviewing these passages we can conclude that the dynamic of the body is found in the charisms orchestrated by the head, Jesus Christ, and energized by the Holy Spirit, united in love for the purpose of growth unto maturity.

The Building – A Spiritual House

The Apostle Peter is not the only apostle to use this metaphor; Paul writing to the Church in Corinth speaks of teachers building on the foundation, which is Christ Jesus (1 Cor 3:10-15). The Apostle John refers to Jesus speaking of his own body as the Temple, which could be destroyed and then raised up in three days (Jn 2:19-22). In 1 Peter 2:4-11 the Apostle talks about a “spiritual house” (2:5), the basis of this community of “living stones” is the “cornerstone” – Jesus. The context is holiness - “Be holy, because I am holy” (1:16) and “a holy nation” (2:9). The Church, in this text, appears to be a bastion in a hostile world,

described as “aliens and strangers in the world” (2:11). A negative reading could be dangerous and we would do well to note the concluding words, “that ... they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us” (2:12b). Paul reminds the Corinthians that their bodies are the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19-20). The Church is the community of the Spirit and it is in the midst of the world - a city on a hill that cannot be hidden (Mt 5:14). The Church’s role can be analogous to that of the Franciscan brothers or the Poor Clares, either engaging in the world or withdrawing from it. Peter is advocating an active and attractive holiness. The community he envisages has three elements: structure, service, and sacrifice:

- Structure – consists of living stones being bonded and built up on the foundation of Christ (2:6). John later, in apocalyptic vision, expands on this foundation to include the Twelve Apostles (Rev 21:14). Not only are the members of the Church to relate and fit together well, but the community’s stability and survival depends on active obedience (2:8), a hearing and doing of the Word of Christ and the teaching of the Apostles which results in a building on the rock (Mt 7:24-29). Service and sacrifice are contained within this structure.
- Service – A priesthood does not mediate on its own behalf but on behalf of the people. Who are the people in this context? Not the *ekklesia* but what Peter calls, not unkindly, ‘pagans’ (2:12). What service does the community the ‘spiritual house’ render? Beside the proclamation of Good News Jesus provides a list in his parable of the Sheep and the Goats: feeding the hungry, quenching thirst, practicing hospitality, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and those in prison (Mt 25:35-36). How does the community do this? Sacrificially!
- Sacrifice – Regarding the sacrifices of the Old Testament Calvary climaxed and fulfilled them all (Heb 9:11-15). Peter now speaks of “spiritual sacrifices” (2:5). Paul is more specific "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices,

holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship" (Rom 12:1 NIV). As the Lord gave Himself so we give ourselves for the sake of the world.

The community of the Spirit, the Building of God, is not static but dynamic in the world. David Watson observes that God, in the Old Testament, "deliberately chose a *tabernacle* as the symbol of his presence among his people because of its mobility" (1978:118). Regarding physical church buildings, Watson then quotes Howard Snyder quite extensively:

First, church buildings are a *witness to our immobility* ... Christians are to be a mobile people ... The gospel says, 'Seek the lost,' but our churches say, 'Let the lost seek the church'.

Second, church buildings are a *witness to our inflexibility* ... The Sunday morning service allows the direct participation of only a few – dictated by sanctuary layout ... Communication will be one-way – dictated by architecture and the PA system ...

Thirdly, church buildings are a *witness to our lack of fellowship*. Church buildings may be worshipful places, but usually they are not friendly places. ...

Fourth, church buildings are a *witness to our pride*. We insist that our church structures must be beautiful and well-appointed – which usually means expensive – and justify this on the grounds that God deserves the best. ...

Finally, church buildings are a *witness to our class divisions*. ... A sociologist can take a casual look at ten church buildings and their denominational brand names and then predict with high accuracy the education, income, occupations, and social position of the majority of their respective members (1978:119-120).

The purpose of the above quotation is not to denigrate the architectural splendor of various edifices that bear mute witness to the glory of God but to emphasise the dynamics of the community. The community of God does not consist of bricks and mortar but of interacting people, living stones who are in an intimate relationship with their Lord.

The Bride

This picture of the community's relationship with God, her husband / bridegroom has its roots in the Old Testament.

"For your Maker is your husband-- the LORD Almighty is his name-- the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth" (Is. 54:5 NIV).

There are other instances in Jeremiah (3:1-14), Ezekiel (16:32), and notably Hosea. The Apostle Paul, pastorally frustrated with the Corinthian Church, reminds them of his part in the spiritual matchmaking:

"I hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you are already doing that. I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him" (2 Cor 11:1-2 NIV).

The Apostle John describes the vision of the New Jerusalem, "I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" (Rev 21:2 NIV). The last invitation in the Bible reads thus:

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life (Rev 22:17 NIV).

The community of God, as bride, is an eschatological sign. If the building spoke of holiness the bride speaks of fidelity, a waiting community that will not compromise its virtue and its values. But this devotion is not one sided, in fact God's love for his people far exceeds our relatively feeble response, "We love because he first loved us" (1 Jn 4:19 NIV). Watson identifies three features that typify this picture of the bride: moral purity, doctrinal purity, and love (1978:131-139), to which I add anticipation/expectation.

- Moral purity – Watson distinguishes between Jesus and the Pharisees, saying that the latter were “quick to judge and slow to forgive” by contrast, the sinless Jesus was “immensely attractive to sinners,” turning to the Church, Watson continues, “the moral purity of the church must never become critical and censorious, ... it should be unashamedly a fellowship of sinners who have learnt, or at least are learning, to forgive and to be

forgiven” (1978:132). Küng notes, that to the chagrin of the pious, Jesus reached out to “those whom the righteous reject and cast out” Jesus opens the way for them “eating and drinking with notorious sinners” (1971:330). The pious of Jesus’ day were further scandalized when Jesus took it on Himself to forgive sinners,

By doing this Jesus opposes the law then in force, which called for the punishment of sinners; moreover, he lays claim to what for Judaism was a prerogative of God alone: “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mk. 2:7 par.; Lk. 7:49) (Küng 1971:331).

The Bride of Christ exhibits a moral purity, not in a self-righteous or legalistic fashion, but modestly and compassionately.

- Doctrinal purity – Paul’s complaint to the Corinthians, as he reminds them of the fact that he had promised them to one husband (2Cor 11:2), is that they have allowed themselves to be seduced by “super-apostles” (2 Cor 11:5 NIV). Doctrinal purity means an aversion to a “different spirit” and “different gospel” (2 Cor 11:4).
- Love – Christ rebukes the Church at Ephesus because they had forsaken their first love (Rev 2:4). Watson observes:

The church at Ephesus had for years been one of the showpieces of the Christian faith. Their activities and maturity had proved an inspiration for many. Yet in spite of all this, they were nothing without love. ... Can the marriage ever take place if the bride has lost her love for the bridegroom? (1978:136).

There is no excuse, for the Holy Spirit pours God’s love out into our hearts (Rom 5:5) and love is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). If under performing sportsmen / women are exhorted to get-back-to- the-basics, the Bride needs to guard against the modern super-apostles and constantly reflect on the orthodoxy of the Faith.

- Anticipation / Expectation – The Church is a community waiting for the return of her Lord, anticipating the marriage supper (Rev 19:9). Jesus and the Apostles counsel the community of God to be ready and alert (Mt

chapters 25 & 25; 1 Thes 5:1-7; 2 Pet 3:10-11). If the Church – the Bride loses this urgent expectation and becomes lukewarm (Rev 3:16) and closes the door on the Bridegroom (Rev 3:20) she will lose her effectiveness in the world.

CONCLUSION

From the point of view of formation four words surface: unity, gifts, love, and holiness. These loaded words cannot be separated from each other to be defined and examined in isolation. Upon reflection it would be better to use the analogy of a string of beads. The beads being unity, gifts, and holiness, and the string holding them together – love.

Unlike the previous chapter, dealing with the image of God, I have not devoted three separate paragraphs to ecumenical, multi-cultural, and gender issues respectively (each needed to find their identity in the image of God); here reflecting on the community of God where unity, gifts and holiness are part of the dynamics of the Church, these aspects are subsumed in the activity of the community of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13).

Unity has been stressed in the previous chapter as a response to Christ's prayer (Jn 17), as an outcome of baptism (Gal 3:27-28), and ultimately as a reflection of the Trinity. In the community of God unity is manifest in the activities of the Church, this is especially evident in Paul's teaching on the body (1 Cor 12 and Eph 4). Every member is part of this activity, whether presentable or unrepresentable, whether an eye or a hand (1 Cor 12:21-24). Whether in defeat or victory all the members are equally touched (1 Cor 12:25-26). Formators should help students to appreciate each other's strengths and weaknesses, to encourage team building and mutual edification, and to discourage individualism.

Formators ought to facilitate the discovery of charisms, recognizing and emphasising that these gifts have their origin in God (1 Cor 12:18), that these ministries should be for the benefit of the whole community (1 Cor 14:12), and

there should be no place for conceit (Rom 12:3). Also these gifts are subject to the scrutiny of the community (1 Cor 14:29).

Someone once said that Evangelicals are known for what they are against. No doubt the Pharisees of Jesus' day had a similar reputation. The word *holiness* has an unfortunate negative ring about it but in 1 Peter 2:12 this notion is dispelled. Peter talks about *good* actions that lead people (pagans) to *glorify* God, rather than be terrified of God. Formators should encourage a concept of holiness that does not stagnate in superficialities (no smoking, no alcohol, no dancing etc.) but dynamically deepens into social action within and without the Church which Paul indicated when he wrote to the Ephesians, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph 2:10 NIV).

SECTION FOUR

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

CHAPTER NINE – THE FORMATOR’S TASK

Notwithstanding the reality that formation is a lifetime process the formator at a theological institution must have some outcomes for those students in his/her care. One cannot, after a relatively short period of time, deliver a finished product, indeed is it possible to measure or quantify seminary ‘products’? To talk like this is spiritually dehumanizing for we are not looking at a subject like mathematics where the answer is either right or wrong, we are dealing with unique individuals who can be as different as Peter the fisherman and Paul the Pharisee yet both were effective in the kingdom of God.

It is precisely in this uniqueness of the individual that the challenge for the formator lies. This uniqueness has to be incorporated in the community otherwise it will remain meaningless. It is the formator’s task to assist in the weaving together of the individual’s uniqueness and the community. How can this be best achieved? Can one design a well-structured programme with measurable outcomes? I would suggest that ‘framework’ (parameters) is a better term than programme. There should be some broad goals. These goals could be grouped under one heading *identity*. The student needs to know who they are in relation to God, to themselves, and to the community and the world. To achieve a degree of success formators, particularly Evangelical formators, must admit that the academic/classroom approach has to be seen as only one part of the formation process. Community life both on and off the campus *in the company* of formators will greatly enhance the students’ formation. To this end I would suggest an approach that has been variously described as spiritual direction, mentoring, discipling, and master/apprentice relationship.

Identity as an Outcome

The primary concern for the formator is not the excellent grades, or lack thereof, in a student’s seminary career. It is not the degree, diploma or certificate received at graduation. It is the question whether the student is adequately (not fully)

equipped to face themselves, the Church and the world. In the words of the Apostle Paul:

... be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power ... Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand (Eph 6:13 NIV).

Paul's worldview encompasses a spiritual conflict that requires the full armour of God, Steven Garber talks about a worldview that provides coherence to every part of life:

The challenge for the contemporary college student – especially the Christian student whose creedal commitments are rooted in the possibility and reality of truth – is to form a worldview that will be coherent across the whole of life because it addresses the whole of life (1996:124).

Beside the struggle with the spiritual forces, and the need for a coherent worldview there are also the subtle snares of status to be contended with. Mary Anne Coate in her book *Clergy Stress – the hidden conflicts in the ministry* (1989) writes about a number of strains: the strain of caring, of relating to God, of proclaiming, and of 'being'. I quote from the chapter on 'being':

Being a minister or Religious can also seem automatically to confer a status on the person which he or she might not easily have acquired otherwise. It can provide a safe sanctuary or 'raised ground' away from some areas of humanness, for example sexuality. ... in reality the 'self' living underneath a vocation to ministry may be rather frail and vulnerable, not able to stand up very well to criticism if it is justified, or to attack if not.

... It is hard for them to admit anxiety, depression, deprivation, anger, resentment at a low salary or almost any other feeling, for to let such feelings in might overwhelm them. And so it is just these sorts of feelings that can be *projected* out on the congregation and others to the ultimate detriment of all (1989:142-143).

I will now briefly comment on the individual's identity – these are merely facets and therefore do not comprise the whole picture:

- Identity in God – The Scriptures state that one's relationship with God is not ambiguous, that assurance of salvation is a reality (Rom 8:16-17; 1 Jn 5:13). The Apostle Paul exemplifies this in his own life and ministry (Rom 8:38-39). Students who register at ESSA are required to have a testimony of conversion or a vital commitment to the local church. Our

experience indicates that many students have not worked through their own testimony and come to a place of strong conviction on the one hand, nor on the other, do they have the ability to articulate that conviction. Formators having themselves worked through their own testimony need to help the student unpack his/her spiritual experience. By conversation, reflection, and exposure to various situations the student may graduate with at least a solid personal spiritual foundation. The establishment of one's identity in God does not only revolve around a personal conversion experience but also emerges in the rough-and-tumble of community living, just as the true colours of semi-precious stones only come to light through the process of being tumbled *together* in an abrasive solution. Formators should monitor this process. Garber notes:

Community is the context for the growth of convictions and character. What we believe about life and the world becomes plausible as we see it lived out all around us. This is not an abstraction, though. Its reality is seen in time and space, in the histories and circumstances of real people living real lives (1996:146)

Berger states:

To have a conversion experience is nothing much. The real thing is to be able to keep taking it seriously; to retain a sense of its plausibility. This is where the religious community comes in (Quoted in Garber 1996:159).

- Identity and self – The student is not just a convert and a candidate for the ministry. Andrew Irvine in his book *Between Two Worlds – understanding and managing clergy stress* (1997) reminds ministers:

All components of an individual's life are important and equal. Although certain areas may seem to dominate more of our time than others, all are essential to the functioning of the total system. ... There is a symbiotic flow between components and, again as the Apostle Paul points out, any action of a part affects the whole. Therefore, although we may examine specifically the component of the spiritual we recognize that this is a part of and affects all of being (1997:182).

Irvine identifies six areas that comprise his *total assessment concept* namely: spiritual, physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and vocational (1997:183). These six elements form the matrix of the student's self-identity. Formators should not focus on one aspect at the expense of the

others. It is hoped that the brevity of this paragraph will not create the impression that a holistic approach to formation must take second place to a purely spiritual approach.

- Identity and community – Every student should have a latent or potential ministry, and charism/s. This potential can be discerned, and also discovered through utilising a number of instruments or psychometric tests. If these tests are conducted during the orientation of new students formators can then relate to individual students with the express purpose of developing the candidate for the ministry so that their identity in the community, church and society, will be functional, fulfilling and with minimal frustration. An individual's identity in the community is determined by their gifting whether 'natural' or 'spiritual' (these are not mutually exclusive).

The Formator as Mentor

A number of books have been written on the subject of mentoring and spiritual direction. For this particular section I have consulted Anderson and Reese *Spiritual Mentoring* (1999); Garber *The Fabric of Faithfulness* (1996) and a booklet produced by Rose Dowsett for OMF²¹ International's Personal Development Program, *Mentoring for the Kingdom* (2003).

I would differentiate between formal and informal formation i.e. programme driven, and spontaneous formation respectively. At present ESSA's formal formation consists of classroom, chapel and small groups. Given the need to graduate students with a sense of identity an intentional mentoring framework needs to be advocated. Immediately the problem of time restraints and lack of human resources are raised as obstacles in the way of such a proposal – at the conclusion of this chapter I will attempt to respond to these concerns.

²¹ Overseas Missionary Fellowship.

- Definitions of Mentoring – A number of definitions present themselves, I have chosen three that capture something of the essence of the process. The first is offered by Thomas Merton and focuses primarily on spiritual direction and deals with the peeling off of those layers that obscure the real person within, the likeness of Christ:

The whole purpose of spiritual direction is to penetrate beneath the surface of a man's (sic) life, to get behind the façade of conventional gestures and attitudes which he presents to the world, and to bring out his inner spiritual freedom, his inmost truth, which is what we call the likeness of Christ in his soul (quoted in Anderson and Reese 1996:33).

Another definition which brings out the all important relational aspect of mentoring as well as the idea of empowerment, is Stanley and Clinton's definition, "a relational experience in which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources" (quoted in Dowsett 2003:5). That mentoring is not an aimless process is stated in Anderson and Reese's definition:

Mentoring has a trajectory, an aim, a target and a purpose. It is not mindless or soulless meandering but a journey that recognizes itself as pilgrimage, a journey with a spiritual or devotional purpose. The trajectory is purposive but not prepacked. Our spiritual journeys are not given to us complete with road map, trip outline or itinerary, only an invitation to discover what God has in mind for our particular excursion through time and space. It is the task of the mentor to help us sink deep into our lives to discover that purpose (1999:48).

In our case the aim is for the student to more fully realise their identity in all spheres of life.

- Types and Styles – Dowsett (2003:26), drawing on Stanley and Clinton, lists nine mentoring styles with their basic functions (see following page):

Mentoring Styles	Basic Function
Intensive	
1. Discippler	Enablement in basics of following Christ
2. Spiritual Guide	Accountability, direction, and insight for questions, commitments, and decisions affecting spirituality and maturity
3. Coach	Motivation, skills, and application needed to meet a task, challenge
Occasional	
4. Counselor	Timely advice and correct perspectives on viewing self, others, circumstances, and ministry
5. Teacher	Knowledge and understanding of a particular subject
6. Sponsor	Career guidance and protection as leader moves within an organization
Passive	
7. Contemporary Model	A living, personal model for life, ministry, or professional who is not only an example but also inspires emulation
8. Historical Model	A past life that teaches dynamic principles and values for life, ministry, and/or profession
9. Divine Contact	A special experience of God intervening in a believer's life, giving spiritual insight and direction

- **Movements and Methods** – Anderson and Reese see five movements in the mentoring process:
 1. **Attraction** – We define attraction as the initial establishment of the mentoring relationship. The tone is set by Augustine's challenge to the mentor, "Attract them by your way of life."
 2. **Relationship** – We define relationship as the nurturing hospitable space of trust and intimacy.
 3. **Responsiveness** – We define responsiveness as the sustaining of a responsive spirit of teachability.
 4. **Accountability** – We define accountability as growth through exercises of grace facilitated by the mentor.
 5. **Empowerment** – We define empowerment as the discovery of one's unique voice for kingdom service that derives from intimacy with God and ultimate identity as a child of God (1999: 13).

Regarding method, the *Fifteen Steps for the Mentor* suggested by Bill Fietje (in Dowsett 2003:59-60) give very practical advice:

1. Be responsible to develop your spiritual gifts that lead to enhanced ministries of counseling.
2. Develop your listening skills to become an active and dynamic listener.
3. Be prayerful in seeking spiritual direction from the Holy Spirit in identifying potential mentorees and establishing mentoring relations.
4. Develop the skills of feedback necessary to ensure you have understood the specific problem, context and need of the mentoree.
5. Do not assume responsibility for the reaction or the action of the mentoree subsequent to the counselling (sic) session.
6. Be available to potential mentorees.
7. Develop the mentoring attitude and be ready to seek out mentorees and share timely advice.
8. Be clear on the expectations of the mentorees towards you and towards the counselling (sic) situation.
9. Be open to an ongoing relationship with the mentoree, but understand the consequences of moving from occasional to intensive mentoring.
10. Know what resources are needed and available, or who to approach in order to find those resources.
11. Link mentorees to resources.
12. Organise and impart knowledge to mentorees.
13. Show relevance of knowledge to mentoree's situation.
14. Show how to use perspective, from which to make proper assessment.
15. Motivate mentorees to continue learning.

Dowsett introduces a necessary caution to those operating in cross-cultural situations:

Some of us come from cultures where we may feel comfortable with entering into a formal contract between mentor and mentoree. ... On the other hand, some of us come from cultures where such practices are unfamiliar, and seem artificial. Here, people might be very happy to rely on trust and meaningful relationships, and are not accustomed to entering into formal agreements in most areas of their lives (2003:19-20).

Time Restraints and Human Resources

By way of conclusion I return to the matter of not having enough time, and not having enough staff to provide effective mentoring. I would suggest that it is a

misconception that can be corrected if formators move away from a concept of formal structures, and also understand that there are different types or approaches to mentoring. Also that everything is negotiable or flexible according to the needs of the participants.

- Being a Contemporary Model – Formators need to be conscious of their own lifestyles as well as their own convictions. In *On Christian Doctrine* Augustine wrote, “For boys do not need the art of grammar which teaches correct speech if they have the opportunity to grow up and live among men who speak correctly” (quoted in Garber 1996:136).

Cardinal Newman said:

The personal influence of the teacher is able in some sort to dispense with an academical system, but that system cannot in any sort dispense with personal influence. With influence there is life, without it there is none; if influence is deprived of its due position, it will not by those means be got rid of, it will only break out irregularly, dangerously. An academic system without the personal influence of teachers upon pupils is an arctic winter; it will create an ice-bound, petrified, cast-iron University and nothing else (quoted in Garber 1996:140).

- Discerning the Type or Style of Mentoring Required – The needs of individual students are unique; some may require intensive mentoring while others may need occasional or passive mentoring. Formators must not feel obligated to provide intensive mentoring to every student. Nevertheless the aim should be to provide all students with some form of mentoring, and formators ought to develop sensitivity and awareness to this need.
- Developing Accountability – A number of questions can be asked of the mentoree to assist accountability, and they do not have to be time consuming, for example:
 - What were the highs and lows of your week?
 - Were you faithful to follow the disciplines to which you committed yourself?
 - What have you heard God saying to you in the experiences of your week? (Anderson and Reese 1999:130).

Wendy Miller in her book *Learning to Listen: A Guide for Spiritual Friends* gives a longer list of questions to help mentors and mentorees:

What is my prayer experience like?
 What happens when I pray or meditate on Scripture?
 What areas of my life is God touching?
 How am I experiencing God's grace?
 What is God like for me – in Scripture, in times of prayer or other times?
 How have I cooperated with God this week (month)?
 What am I not openly bringing before God (for example, anger or fear)?
 Where have I missed experiencing God's grace or love?
 What do I need to confess?
 What is changing within me as I listen to God?
 What attitudes am I experiencing as I relate to others in my life?
 (quoted in Anderson and Reese 1999:148).

James Fowler offers another interesting set of questions:

What are you spending and being spent for?
 What commands and receives your best time and energy?
 What goals, dreams or institutions are you pouring out your life for?
 As you live your life, what power or powers do you fear or dread?
 What powers do you rely on and trust?
 With whom or with what group do you share your most sacred and private hopes for your life and for the lives of those whom you love?
 What are those most sacred and compelling hopes and purposes in your life?

(quoted in Anderson and Reese 1999:148).

Formators can develop their own questions – the point I wish to make is that even *one* question can make the difference between accountability and no accountability at all, but the question needs to be more than, “How are you?” The quality of the relationship should be such that the mentoree can respond openly to any question.

- Working with a Team – Mentoring is ordinarily considered a one-on-one process but mentors should themselves be part of a multi-disciplinary, representative team. This will provide a broader resource base for the individual formator.

- Keeping Company – Biblical models from Moses, Elijah and Jesus show, what I described in chapter two as ‘in the house and on the way’ - they offered companionship and instruction. Naoyoki Makino reported:

For Japanese, mentoring is leading and training someone more by life than by words. Therefore living together is one of the essentials. (Almost all Bible colleges and seminaries are doing in-house training.) One cannot be a mentor, though he/she is in the position of mentor, unless he/she wins the other’s respect and is recognised as a mentor in practice by others. Mentors should be respected for their Christian lives, particularly in the area of purity, thoughtfulness and sacrificial way of living. In Japan they do not care so much about academic degrees, but commitment and faithfulness are more valued (quoted in Dowsett 2003:21).

With the exception of one faculty member, not one ESSA staff member lives on campus. Nevertheless a conscious effort can be made to invite students home for a meal or to attend some social event.

Students should also be given opportunity experience in-service pastoral mentoring. This can occur during vacations, weekly church placements or a six month internship.

I believe that, in the face of time restraints and staff shortages, it is not only possible but it is imperative for the graduate’s well being that an effort is made to mentor and/or direct students.

CHAPTER TEN – PASTORAL IDENTITY

The clergyman (sic) seems to me to be constantly involved in his environment in a way that does not characterize any other profession or vocation. He develops an overworked sense of identity with his clerical role. He cannot be anything but a clergyman at any time, whether he is on vacation or at work or in the privacy of his room. A physician, a lawyer, a bricklayer, a carpenter ... can be anything else, can get completely away from his profession or trade.²²

We have, in the previous chapter, established the importance of identity as an outcome of formation. There we dealt briefly with the individual's identity in three areas: in God, in self, and in community. In this chapter the focus is on pastoral identity, making reference to socialisation; the restrictions imposed by roles; women in ministry; the impact of the post-Christian era on the ministry, and finally revisiting the expectations around ordination, as well as the dichotomy between clergy and laity.

Socialisation and Identity

The term socialisation has different nuances depending on whether it is being employed by psychologists, sociologists or anthropologists, Groome, whose particular field is Christian religious education concludes, "all of these scientists understand socialization as the process by which people come to be who they are by interaction with other people in their social environment" (1980:109).

Our subject is identity and particularly pastoral identity and we look at Groome's findings to better understand the formation of identity. Groome combines *self* and *identity* (normally separated when discussing socialisation), to form one word *self-identity*. The term *self* includes "three related aspects of a person, namely, one's self-image, one's worldview, and one's value system. *Identity*, on the other hand, is the experience of continuity and sameness we have of ourselves" (1980:109).

²² Observation by psychiatrist Robert McAllister in Irvine 1997: 28

Socialisation, the establishing of one's identity, is an ongoing process. Being ordained to the ministry and taking up pastoral responsibilities introduces the individual to a new identity and she/he needs to be informed, prepared, and vetted for this identity. Groome talks about three interrelated movements in the process of socialisation: externalization, objectification, and internalisation.

Externalisation – Groome states that we cannot exist as “self-contained units ... We have an inner necessity to move outside ourselves and enter into relationship. As we externalize ourselves, our needs, desires, capacities, and possibilities, we enter with other people into a collectivity” (1980:110). This movement is followed by *objectification* in which the ‘world’ created by externalization takes on its own objective reality. This reality has an inherent cohesion - “Since the collectivities we form are based precisely on expectations and agreements for the well-being of the group, these expectations and agreements must be met by the groups members” (Groome 1980:111). *Internalisation* The individual's sense of belonging is connected and validated by the collectivity – “the objectified culture and society created by us and our predecessors become internalized as the basis of our own self-identity” (Groome 1980:112).

Aspects of Pastoral Identity

The Changing World²³

Irvine deals with the stress of a lost identity, pointing out that many nations are being described as post-Christian. We can concur, South Africa since 1994 has become a secular state and democracy has removed the shield of state protection and media exclusivity from the Church so that other belief systems can have their rightful place in society and its institutions. Irvine observes (in the global context), “The church, once a force with which to be reckoned, has become a subculture in a post-Christian era. The clergy have moved from a position of considerable status and sway to one of marginal value and importance” (1997:63).

²³ Irvine in his book *Between Two Worlds* discusses identity in four sections: Section One – An historical identity; Section Two – A vocational identity; Section Three – A relational identity; Section Four – The quest for identity and wholeness.

Irvine continues, "When the identity of the individual is so tied to the profession, as we have proposed is the case with many clergy, the re-establishment of professional relevance in the world is akin to redefining one's personal identity and value" (1997:63-64). This is more pertinent to ministers who have already been some years in the ministry. Nevertheless the rapid changes on the global stage and particularly in Southern Africa make it imperative for formators and students to have a clear understanding of what is happening and how they should respond to change.

The two questions asked by Jesus, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" and "Who do you say I am?" (Mt 16:13&15 NIV), can be used to discuss vocational identity from a societal and church perspective respectively²⁴. Candidates for ordination need to face certain realities as Irvine reminds us:

Ordination does not negate our humanity. We are not, for all our outward piety, any less human and therefore we suffer the turmoil of those factors within us that vie for dominance. So it is that, as the individual seeks to lead the church, all the human dynamics of emotion: the anger, the fear, the desires, the greed, the lust, the competitive spirit, the fear of failure and so many more, are evident and real within (1997:50).

Not only do clergy face a battle within regarding their identity, they are also being judged by society. Extraordinary technological advances have brought society into the "age of virtual reality" but the church, "Like a horse and buggy on the information highway it relies on yesterday's technology to interface with today's world" (Irvine 1997:53). The Church's roots are 2000 years old and the world, according to Irvine, has the right to question the relevance of the Church for the 21st century; in the post-modern world clergy, together with doctors and educators and other professionals are experiencing a great loss of authority:

The doctor is no longer god, but is essential to the well-being of every person, as is the educator and, in this day of increased litigation, the lawyer. All of these are still seen as essential and as having expertise in their discipline, an expertise necessary for the health and continuance of life and society. This is not the case with society's opinion of the clergy (Irvine 1997:55).

²⁴ Andrew Irvine expands on these perspectives in his aptly titled book *Between Two Worlds* pages 49-76

Then there is relativism that also undermines the authority and status of the clergy. A proper response to this requires a stepping down from superior isolation and taking other major belief systems seriously. This further compounded for, “Along with the inclusive and relative world view has come the concept of political correctness” (Irvine 1997:60).

Some clergy, in seeking relevance, engage in community activities and projects outside the church, but this, according to Irvine further weakens the church:

The clergyperson is being fulfilled, not by those to whom he/she is called, but rather by persons and activities outside the church. The church supports financially one who serves as a volunteer elsewhere. They do not provide mutual support for each other (1997:63).

Looking at the minister’s identity from the church’s perspective, clergy should be asking the question Jesus asked, “Who do you say I am?”(Mt 16:15 NIV). We have already noted the diminishing authority of the clergy in society and now in the church clergy face a similar situation, Irvine makes the following observation:

Given the nature of training for ministry and the human limitations of the individual, it quickly becomes obvious that the laity are far more capable of running the church than the clergy. The wide diversity of experience and training in the pew is substantial. Modern, competitive techniques soon make the structure and functioning of the church, laden down with the philosophy and technology of yesterday, appear anachronistic. Often the running of the church soon moves from being clergy dominated and sacred to being controlled outside the ministerial office (1997:68).

In the Church we also face relativism in terms of beliefs and lifestyle, “The church, as the transmitter of yesterday’s values and standards, is at odds with the reality of the individual’s experience. This is amply evident in the area of sexuality” (Irvine 1997:69). Add to this the supplanting of the needs of the group by those of the individual, “It is believed, by some, that the twenty-first century will see the demise of denominationalism. This is not implying that denominations will cease to exist as such, but rather that the individual’s loyalty to the denomination will not be the governing factor in choice of church” (Irvine 1997:70).

Irvine refers to other areas of change that today's clergy face: - *service structure* – what worked a century ago is not meaningful today, "... for a participatory generation, anxious to contribute, searching more for application than exposition, looking for joy more than sobriety, affected more by emotion than the cognitive, it does little to nurture a yearning spirituality" (1997:73); another contentious issue is *church music* evident in a congregation consisting of young and old people; *Clerical dress* may be important to traditionalists or insecure individuals but "today's generation may see the garb of office, however defined, as archaic and expendable" (1997:74).

Candidates for the ordained ministry need to be aware of the changing world and the changing expectations of the church or they will be faced with an identity crisis.

Women in Ministry

Research in other professions and among white-collar workers has shown that there are substantial differences in the way that women experience vocational stress. Studies show that while women experience all the stressors of the workplace along with their male colleagues, they incur others unique to women. These are often societal and culturally imposed stressors and cannot simply be reduced or eliminated by the individual's wish or action. Similarly, the management of the stress that develops is often more complex, dealing with deeply rooted issues of identity both within the individual and the culture (Irvine 1997:77).

Irvine points out that women face considerable stress – in training they study subjects that have evolved under male scholarship for centuries, it is only recently that feminist theology and perspectives have come to the fore. Women face male theorists, models, practitioners and literature (1997:79).

Upon entry into the ministry a woman is encountering not only a potentially resistant atmosphere but may have a completely different approach to the task:

The more collegial/ co-operative approach means that the acquiring of job skills in such areas as conflict, power dynamics and issue resolution will be different for women than for men. Stress intrinsic in the job for women

in the ministry is due in part to basic training which is not modified on a gender basis (Irvine 1997:79).

Then there is the element of competition or the need for women to prove themselves, “The need to achieve at a level comparable to male clergy may lead some clergywomen to set unrealistic expectations for their own performance in ministry” (1997:80). The organization / denomination itself will not, at this present time, present too many female leadership role models. There is also the incidence of tokenism status – Irvine gives an example of a theological college principal’s introduction of a clergywomen about to address the students, he spoke of her as, “one of our most capable women pastors.” Would the principal have introduced a male pastor in the same way? The conclusion is, according to Irvine, “a desire to make women in ministry visible to a group of students and, thereby, to demonstrate the inclusive nature of the college and the denomination” (1997:81).

Women clergy face all kinds of impediments – in joint ministry situations they are placed in an associate or assistant role; when occupying leadership positions they are subject to greater scrutiny than their male colleagues; they are not treated as equals, “their input is not taken seriously and there is a patronizing attitude” (Irvine 1997:81). In sole ministry positions “there is often difficulty around collegial relationships between the women and others in the diocese or presbytery” (Irvine 1997:82); within the local church there may be a variety of responses, from the patriarchal to protection, “sometimes well-meaning, but discriminatory, attitudes. In all these the woman minister faces the stress of being considered less than equal to the task because of gender (Irvine 1997:82.).

The area of work overload occurs when women are married and have a family

Studies have shown that married working women, with or without family, tend to have a higher overall work load than their male counterpart. Much of this is due to the expectations that women are still the primary nurturer in the home. The end of the day in the work place may become the beginning of the role as wife and mother (Irvine 1997:83).

Ordination, Clergy and Laity, Full-time or Part-time

Ordination

It could be said that the 'job description' of an ordained minister is too broad. That ministry is treated as a profession (in the secular sense) and that the individual, whether gifted or not, is expected to do well in all departments of the church. This could be seen to be an unbiblical and dangerous approach.

This approach is unbiblical because the teaching of the New Testament indicates that there are a number gifts or ministries operating at different levels in the church (Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:1-12; Eph 4:11). Paul's teaching on the body clearly shows a division of labour (1 Cor 12:14-31). At ministry level we have Apostles, prophets, Evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph 4:11); Paul asks, "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?" (1 Cor 12:29). At the level of charismata the same applies, "Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?" (1 Cor 12:30). The identity of a minister can only be secure if she/he is operating within the parameters of their gift/ministry. Here we take issue with the "magic"²⁵ of ordination which forces men and women, willingly or unwillingly, into roles for which they are not suited. Irvine making reference to Jung notes that an individual can "become trapped behind the mask of the persona ... The identity of the individual can become to some degree synonymous with the 'role' of office, from which many cannot escape" (1997:28).

There is also a lack of discernment or a blatant neglect of the individual's *charisms*. In this context it would be remiss of formators to overlook O'Meara's

²⁵ This word is used advisedly and is implied in O'Meara's comments on certain approaches to ordination, "A nominalist - ecclesiological mind set selects certain rites, devotions, and phrases and decides they are eternal. ... The nominalist worldview reduces ordination to a liturgical exercise of episcopal power. The role of the bishop seems cut off from the realities of the Spirit ..." (1999:155).

observations concerning the connection between charism and personality, he maintains:

My charismatic identity is not utterly different from my personality. Charisms find in people potentialities they can draw forth, for the Spirit does not ask people to be what they cannot be, to exist as they do not in the mind and plan of God. Charism will not lead me in a way that is destructive of my given personality, nor will spiritual gifts utterly transform my one identity” (1999:205)

The dichotomy between clergy and laity²⁶

At stake is the dynamic unity of the body of Christ. The Catholic scholar Thomas O’ Meara in *A Theology of Ministry* devotes quite some space to the issue of the laity. This dichotomy between clergy and laity must impact on the pastoral identity and we shall deal with it in three areas: - hierarchy, passivity, and baptism, which are summed up in this statement, “In the Christian community, a living organism, there is no inactive group nor spiritual elite” (O’Meara 1999:27).

With regard to the hierarchal aspect the newly ordained person may develop an inflated opinion of themselves over against the rest of the body of Christ. This hierarchal structure is a product of history not of New Testament ecclesiology. In tracing this history of hierarchy in the Church we note the following moments – at the end of the first century there was a growing emphasis on the ministry of leadership, a leadership more and more drawn into the office and the term *bishop* (O’Meara 1999: 92). O’Meara notes, “It was the third century that spoke of a laity apart from active clergy (before that time one finds few references to this dyad)” (1999:174).

As feudalism developed in the West, “the clergy were constituted a separate social class endowed with religious and civil privileges” (O’Meara 1999: 175). With the

²⁶ The term ‘laity’ is used here to indicate those members of the congregation who have not undergone theological training and consequent ordination. O’Meara points out that the term is also used in other professions for the unqualified, and that, “In France for the past century and a half, the term *lay* has meant aggressively secular, even antichurch” (1999:156). Yves Congar wrote: “To look for ‘spirituality of lay people’ in the Scripture makes no sense. There is no mention of laity. Certainly the word exists but it exists outside the Christian vocabulary” (quoted in O’Meara 1999:181).

Reformation there came a downplaying of ordination and episcopal power. From 1700 to 1950 O' Meara notes an extensive expansion of movements of Catholic action, in the 20th century these movements, "while indications of the Spirit's intention of wider ministry beyond the ordained, were inevitably frustrating, ... They were marked by a clear exclusion from the sacral and liturgical" (O' Meara 1999:131). The priesthood in the Catholic Church is exclusive – laity (women and men), do not fully participate in the sacramental life of the Church.²⁷ This state of affairs is not limited to the Roman Catholic Church but is also found in the Protestant churches where members are excluded from certain functions or roles in the congregations because they are not ordained (ordination following theological training). Pentecostals and Charismatics have aspired to reinstating the believer priesthood with limited success.²⁸ Pastoral identity for candidates entering the ministry should not depend on a hierarchal structure that results in the dichotomy clergy/laity. Hierarchy may hinder the facilitation of servant-leadership, a recognised need in the Church universally and in its African context.²⁹ Hierarchy may prevent the recognition and utilisation of charismata in the body of Christ. Ultimately this current dichotomy leaves the majority of the members in the Church's congregations passive spectators.

Passivity in the majority of the Church places enormous strain on the clergy to perform, to over reach the bounds of their personal charisms and consequently to experience loneliness and stress, Rutz notes, "Modern pastors are overworked and imprisoned in a highly demanding system" (1992:151). Coate links loneliness and overwork:

Blurring the boundaries between work and personal life may by(sic) a way of staving off loneliness in terms of time and can mask a sense of personal worthlessness and emptiness. 'If I stay in the role, people will want me;

²⁷ We should note O' Meara's declaration, "The setting forth of the clergy was not first aimed at a caste nor at producing a passive people watching a priesthood, but at giving reverence to the sacramental presence of the Spirit and at taking seriously the forms of liturgy and church life" (1999:28).

²⁸ James Rutz addresses this in his popular book *The Open Church*.

²⁹ For further reading: *Wanted: Servant Leaders* by Gottfried Osei-Mensah.

they might not just for myself', goes the inner, often unacknowledged dialogue (1989:994-95).

O' Meara discerns remarkable trends in the Catholic Church in the United States of America, "Now, more and more Christians serve the Gospel and the church. We have an expansion of priesthood into several full-time ministries; we have hundreds of parishioners who wish to work not simply in church social life but in the ministry as well" (1999:63); later he states, "People are never purely receptive: their dignity as images of God and temples of the Spirit make them much more" (1999:212).

Pastoral identity is not encapsulated in the person of a lonely priest/pastor; pastoral identity is discovered in the body of Christ, formators need to point their disciples in that direction.

When or where does the "laity" (the majority) receive their ministry? Depending on one's tradition, either at conversion or at baptism. "Godfrey Diekmann saw the greatest achievement of Vatican II to be 'the restoration of the baptismal dignity of the laity, an achievement even greater than episcopal collegiality'" (O' Meara 1999:210). One of the five trajectories of Christian motifs and forms defined by O' Meara is the reappearance of baptismal ministry:³⁰

In the 1970s, parishioners' activities underwent a pneumatic metamorphosis as men and women (and permanent deacons) became active in liturgical ministries during and outside of mass, as well as in services of education, liturgy, peace and justice, music, and ministry to the sick and dying (1999:32).

The status of part time and full time

The final aspect regarding pastoral identity has to do with part-time / full-time. Is the time spent in ministry a determinant of its status and validity? Certainly in some quarters a part-time minister does not have the same aura as that of his/her full-time colleague. This is a social perception and does not have Scriptural

³⁰ O' Meara's five trajectories being: *The body of Christ*; *Beyond the distinction of clergy and laity*; *Women and ministry*; *Passing beyond the recent past*, and *The reappearance of baptismal ministry* (pages 27-32).

support. The Apostle Paul engaged from time to time in his trade as a tentmaker (1 Cor 4:12; 2 Thes 3:8).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SYNTHESIS OF LITERATURE SURVEY AND FIELD RESEARCH

In this final chapter the findings of the literature survey and the interviews are brought together. It is hoped that this synthesis will indicate the validity of the hypothesis – “The effective formation of female and male students for Christian ministry in a denominationally and culturally heterogeneous theological institution is both possible and enriching”.

The interviewees are, in the main from ESSA but there is a faculty member from each of the Cluster institutions who has been interviewed as well as some undergraduates. In addition, two ordained women have consented to being interviewed.

Formation

In the matter of formation we will proceed from the perceptions of undergraduates and graduates to the understanding of faculty members.

Undergraduates – When asked what their initial expectations of formation were three words emerged: growth, equip, and mould. Matebe was very aware of his immaturity and saw spiritual growth as the primary purpose of formation; he said that there was “pressure because I’m young to live up to the standard of the seminary.”³¹ While Matebe saw formation as providing immediate benefits in terms of his integration at the seminary, other undergraduates spoke about being equipped for service and being able to “grow deeper in the Word”.³² Mkhize, not only spoke about being moulded but also referred to identity, “I would be moulded so that I can preach the gospel – to be identified as one who has been trained”.³³

³¹ Simphiwe Matebe, personal interview on 22 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

³² Sandra Reian, personal interview on 13 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

³³ Sthembile Mkhize, personal interview on 14 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

The same students were then encouraged to share their present understanding of formation at ESSA, having been at the seminary for almost a year and in some cases almost three years. The third year students stated their appreciation of being part of a formation group.³⁴ Some valued the practical assistance given by their formation group during times of illness and food shortage. Mkhize, who saw unity as a very important aspect, felt that the formation groups facilitated communication especially in the multi-cultural context, she emphasised, “praying together ... sharing experiences so that others could grow”.³⁵ Formation groups also provided a sense of belonging “a substitution for family”,³⁶ and a “new tribe”.³⁷ Matebe now understood the process of formation as being “to mature in the Christian faith, in calling, dedication and commitment”.³⁸ Reian, who described formation as a “grooming” process, saw formation in holistic dimensions that included not only the academic but also every facet of the student’s life and faith – negative things were identified as being part of the growth process.³⁹

The circumstances of undergraduates at St Josephs are different, unlike ESSA students who meet only once a week in their groups, St Joseph students live together in houses with their formators. An undergraduate from St Josephs was asked about the negative side of living in a formation house, he responded that it was at times difficult “you have to take eleven people into account – it’s give and

³⁴ At ESSA all students and staff (teaching, administration and maintenance) are placed in formation groups that meet once a week on Thursdays for at least an hour. There are approximately ten members per group. Each group is led by a formator who is part of the teaching staff.

³⁵ Sthembile Mkhize, personal interview on 14 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

³⁶ Sandra Reian, personal interview on 13 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

³⁷ Sthembile Mkhize, personal interview on 14 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

³⁸ Simphiwe Matebe, personal interview, Pietermaritzburg, 22/08/03.

³⁹ Sandra Reian, personal interview on 13 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

take – you confront yourself and you can't escape into your academic work". It is a matter of "knowing one's own limits and weaknesses".⁴⁰

Graduates – ESSA graduates, all of whom are now studying at the School of Theology, were also approached for their opinion. Of the seven graduates interviewed, three expressed concern regarding the lack of practical experience at the seminary. One student attributed the deficiency to the fact that the faculty consisted of academics that had no pastoral experience.⁴¹ This criticism is justified but in the past four years two mature pastors with a combined field experience of forty-seven years have joined the faculty.

Two of the group under review are white South Africans and for them the multicultural dimension of ESSA was both daunting and stimulating. One reported that the formation groups were "a good way to ease into the cross-cultural shock".⁴²

Another graduate who described her background as being "narrow minded and uncritical" found that her ESSA experience gave her a new perspective that helped her to relate to people of other denominations; it also established her in her own faith and prepared her for post graduate studies at the School of Theology.⁴³

Faculty members – The three institutions that constitute Cluster may be described as being divergent in their approach to formation. St Joseph's, given the Catholic tradition of formation as background, depends for the most part, on the various formation houses to address the students' personal formation. Rakoczy pointed out that St Joseph's responsibility is "professional formation".⁴⁴ ESSA aspires to a holistic approach to formation that occurs both inside and outside the classroom;

⁴⁰ Russell Pollitt, personal interview on 23 July 2003 in Merrivale.

⁴¹ Theodore Burakeye, personal interview on 14 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁴² Mark Wortmann, personal interview on 07 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁴³ Beatrice Okyere-Manu, personal interview on 18 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁴⁴ Susan Rakoczy, personal interview on 09 October 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

Harold le Roux makes a strong case for out-of-class person-to-person contact, this he described as an “undervalued aspect of our teaching, there is not enough emphasis on person-to-person, individual, talking, caring and concern for where people are and what they are thinking and feeling – allowing them to bounce ideas off you.”⁴⁵ The School of Theology does not have an intentional personal formation programme; Patricia Bruce reported that they see formation as the primary responsibility of the denominations whose members are registered students. Bruce added that opportunities and issues do arise in the classroom and impromptu formation happens; “If we set out to deliberately shape and mould people we would undermine our strengths”.⁴⁶

The above educators were asked what they believed the essential elements of formation to be. Rakoczy listed the following in this order: a real Christian commitment, “you can’t give what you don’t have”; growth in prayer life, an appreciation of scripture, an appreciation of religious tradition, a psychological maturity (appropriate to one’s age), self-awareness, becoming reflective not just active, and the need for theological and pastoral formation appropriate to ministry situation and context.⁴⁷ Bruce described the School of Theology as being academic, contextual, and involved in the community, the latter being community Bible studies and various projects addressing such issues as economic justice, and violence against women; two years ago chapel services were introduced, once a week on Thursdays. Bruce insists “We don’t check up on our students’ spirituality” and she quotes Gerald West as saying the aim of the School of Theology is for students to graduate not with “a bag of knowledge but a bag of tools.” Bruce added that the School of Theology has developed Capstone courses, which integrate various issues raised during time of study and thus prepares students for the real world.⁴⁸ Le Roux, having clarified the point that

⁴⁵ Harold le Roux, personal interview on 29 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁴⁶ Patricia Bruce, personal interview on 25 September 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁴⁷ Susan Rakoczy, personal interview on 09 October 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁴⁸ Patricia Bruce, personal interview on 25 September 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

students who were undergoing formation were in fact committed Christians, stated that the formation's basic aim is to bring the student to a place where they adopt and live kingdom values.⁴⁹

The interviewees were then asked how they as educators were actively involved in formation. Bruce clearly indicated that the School of Theology was essentially academic in its approach and that it did not want to alienate the churches or compromise the School's perceived strengths (i.e. the ecumenical, multi-cultural and contextual aspects) with an intentional formation programme. Nevertheless she is not averse to taking advantage of opportunities that arise in the course of teaching.⁵⁰ Rakoczy spoke about a "style of teaching which is theology and spirituality simultaneously"- strong emotional reactions in the class are seen as part of the process.⁵¹ Whatever course he is teaching at ESSA, le Roux said he tries to promote a "Christian worldview ... reflecting kingdom values". As indicated above le Roux places a high premium on out-of-class contact, as a leader of a formation group he advocates hospitality, inviting students to one's home and thus demonstrating the kingdom value of generosity and at the same time allowing students to see their formators interacting in a domestic context. The one-on-one contact is vital according to le Roux "Often an academic problem is presented but there is a deeper issue."⁵²

Certainly what emerged in chapters two and three in this thesis is the importance of informal out-of-classroom relationships with students. The quality and type of

⁴⁹ Harold le Roux, personal interview on 29 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁵⁰ Patricia Bruce, personal interview on 25 September 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁵¹ Susan Rakoczy, personal interview on 09 October 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁵² Harold le Roux, personal interview on 29 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

relationship is exemplified in the ministry of Jesus Christ who called his disciples friends not servants (Jn15: 15). Jesus employed a practical approach which we have described as ‘in the house and on the way’ and had its origins in Deut 6:4-9 and was modeled by Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha. A survey, regarding formation outside the classroom, conducted among students of an Evangelical seminary in Thailand, placed faculty-student relationships third on a list of seven (Herring and Deininger 2002:119-122). Herring and Deininger encourage faculty to assume a pastoral role in student’s lives and reminded faculty that students constantly watch and emulate them (2002:124-126). In the African context, Baudouin makes the same point, “Young Africans are observers: pragmatic rather than speculative” (2001:6). The Association of Theological Schools concluded a report with, “The spiritual formation of seminary students begins with, and is dependent upon, the spiritual formation and development of the faculty” (in Herring and Deininger 2002:125).

Unlike St Joseph’s with its formation houses, the School of Theology and ESSA have faculty that live off campus in their own homes. In order, therefore, to address formation needs, identified in terms of relationships and practical experience outside the classroom (we are not minimizing the importance of classroom interaction) some suggestions have been made in chapter nine of this thesis. Formation, we have concluded, has to do with the individual’s identity in God, in themselves, and in the community (seminary, church, society). Mentoring, in its various styles and functions, as described by Stanley and Clinton (in Dowsett 2003:26) is suggested as a means of assisting students to find themselves in their context and calling. Given the time restraints of campus life, the flexibility of Stanley and Clinton’s approach, namely intensive, occasional and passive mentoring allows students and staff to adopt the most suitable approach for their relationship. Another important aspect is the development of a system of accountability, Anderson and Reese (1999:130-148) suggest some questions that may be asked which will assist the mentor and the mentoree to reflect on their lives, it is not time consuming and is most effective.

Ecumenical Issues

Regarding ecumenical issues only ESSA graduates⁵³ were questioned as well as Cluster faculty members.⁵⁴

Of the questions put to the graduates two related to the options of attending an ecumenical institution or a denominational institution. They were unanimous in their choice of an ecumenical institution seeing the denominational institution as a post-graduate possibility. The stated advantages of attending an ecumenical institution can be summarized as being the breaking down of denominational prejudices and a deepening appreciation and acceptance of fellow Christians.

Wortmann was enthusiastic about an ecumenical institution, “Absolutely, I think it is vital especially in South Africa ... others are Christians as well ... differences can be celebrated”.⁵⁵ Karemera said that the shortcomings in his own spirituality were addressed by observing and sharing with others and being no longer ignorant he felt it would allay any future tensions in the ministry.⁵⁶ Burakeye perceived the relevance of an ecumenical campus only if one was going to minister in an inter-denominational context but admitted that ESSA had “helped me not to be judgmental”.⁵⁷ Okyere-Manu felt challenged by the ecumenical context but conceded, “No, I’ve been enriched in the ecumenical context where the challenges are beneficial”.⁵⁸ Weir learned to value people as Christians and not to be blinded by denominational labels.⁵⁹

²³ This sample consisted of Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal Church (Rwanda) and Assemblies of God.

²⁴ This sample consisted of a Roman Catholic, a Methodist, and a Baptist.

⁵⁵ Mark Wortmann, personal interview on 07 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁵⁶ Pascal Karemera, personal interview on 17 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁵⁷ Theodore Burakeye, personal interview on 14 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁵⁸ Beatrice Okyere-Manu, personal interview on 18 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁵⁹ Roxanne Weir, personal interview on 19 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

From an educator's perspective Bruce saw, given the power dynamics in a class, that the ecumenical dimension was a positive experience in the Biblical Studies class.⁶⁰ Le Roux spoke about the "fun interaction" in and out of the classroom and called this "real learning".⁶¹ Rakoczy endorsed the Cluster concept and expressed regret that there was not enough cross registration in the courses offered.⁶²

The students interviewed indicated that attendance at an ecumenical institution was advantageous and would be their first choice and that their experience at ESSA had been enriching. The seminary is evangelical in name and purpose and this is clearly understood by all who register as students, and those from other traditions do not seem to have any significant difficulties on campus. The student body at ESSA has an African majority and the words of Donald M'Timkula appear credible, "The social ties binding the African Christian to his extended family and clan have always been stronger than the forces of separation that arise from membership in different congregations" (in Kinnamon and Cope 1997:246). Perhaps those with European antecedents and who are in a minority should respond to Mercy Amba Oduyoye's comments and question:

The cohesion of the African family and the quality of relationships expected has become the basis of the whole society. ... The family symbolizes for me a caring community within which I can find mutual commitment. Can this understanding of the family produce elements which could aid our search for a meaningful ecumenism? (in Kinnamon and Cope 1997:456).

We have prescribed, as an antidote to any antagonism arising in an ecumenical context, that students become servants in relationship, this was taught and demonstrated by our Lord (Jn 13:12-17). This has to do not only with campus relationships but also with the wider community, there is the need to build

⁶⁰ Patricia Bruce, personal interview on 25 September 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁶¹ Harold le Roux, personal interview on 29 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁶² Susan Rakoczy, personal interview on 09 October 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

bridges. The *Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education* (Copyright 1990 ICETE) is clear on this issue:

Our programmes of theological education must orient themselves persuasively in terms of the Christian community being served. . . . At every level of design and operation our programmes must be visibly determined by a close attentiveness to the needs and expectations of the Christian community we serve (in Stuebing1998: 71).

Chapter four of this thesis concludes by quoting a paragraph from a paper entitled *Ecumenical Formation* produced by the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC, 1993, addressing the need for ecumenical formation and identifying four components: learning together from different traditions; praying together for Christian unity; acting together as a common witness; and “struggling together with the pain of our divisions”, concluding, “No longer shall we be strangers to one another but members of the one household of God (Eph. 2:19)” (Kinnamon and Cope 1997:452-453).

Multi-cultural Issues

Under-graduates, graduates and faculty members were approached to comment on the multi-cultural aspects of a heterogeneous campus. Questions put to students related mainly to chapel worship services and to living and studying together. Reflecting on the chapel services the students made a number of observations. The experience of ‘white’ students will be grouped together, followed by that of Africans from beyond South Africa’s borders (referred to as internationals), and concluding with comments from Zulu students.

Wortmann, a white South African, initially found it all new and exciting but then grew to dread chapel feeling that he would not be spiritually fed. Ongoing contact with students from other cultures helped and by the third year he was enjoying chapel.⁶³ Reian, a Swiss national, said that she enjoys African worship because she feels it is close to her charismatic roots. She noted that people need to understand what they’re singing and the English words need to be made

⁶³ Mark Wortmann, personal interview on 07 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

available.⁶⁴ Weir, a white South African said, “People of different nationalities leading chapel made you think about others” and noted that Zulu culture presented a problem in terms of assimilation.⁶⁵ Internationals offered the following comment: Karemera, from Rwanda, with English as a third language, and not being able to understand Zulu, found that it was a struggle in the beginning, praying in his own language was a great help, formation groups aided integration as well as the ‘cultural evening’ (when students wear their national costumes and share their traditional food).⁶⁶ Okyere-Manu, from Ghana, thoroughly enjoyed worship at ESSA and did not see any problems.⁶⁷ Burakeye, a Congolese, noted that the term ‘multi-cultural’ had a different connotation in South Africa because of the Apartheid past, he counseled the need to be genuine and to have a good understanding of the situation.⁶⁸ The impression may be given that the Zulu culture predominates on the ESSA campus despite the fact that Zulu students are in the minority (32 percent). This perception is not altogether false but the response of the Zulu students interviewed is encouraging, Matebe acknowledged the fact that any one culture could not assume a dominant role, “I have learnt that I do not have a choice – but ESSA gave me the heart to accommodate people from other nations”.⁶⁹ With regard to a dominant culture it should be noted that chapel services are conducted in English with songs from different language groups, mostly Zulu, therefore, the service must be influenced to some degree by the culture of the English language and church. Mkhize says she has become a “stranger” in her home church because of the influence of ESSA chapel services and asks the question, “where do I belong?” – coming from a rural background Mkhize is experiencing a positive change in perception of and attitude toward

⁶⁴ Sandra Reian, personal interview on 13 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁶⁵ Roxanne Weir, personal interview on 19 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁶⁶ Pascal Karemera, personal interview on 17 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁶⁷ Beatrice Okyere-Manu, personal interview on 18 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁶⁸ Theodore Burakeye, personal interview on 14 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁶⁹ Simphiwe Matebe, personal interview on 22 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

other cultures.⁷⁰ Mkhize suggested that every one should be included in the service and all cultures represented in the worship team.⁷¹

The Cluster lecturers interviewed were positive in their comments on the multi-cultural nature of the classroom. According to le Roux the “back home” reflections, proverbs and values shared have made the multi-cultural nature of the campus helpful and have provided “new insights so rich and positive”.⁷² Bruce did, however, indicate that there have been times when xenophobia has surfaced but the faculty of the School of Theology has emphatically stated that such attitudes would not be tolerated.⁷³

Although the focus in the interviews has been mainly on worship in chapel, the chapter dealing with ecumenical issues has three subheadings: Chapel services, Campus community, and Classroom.

In regard to chapel worship it is imperative to break out of one’s cultural enclave, Joyce Scott notes that it is “much more comfortable to meet and worship in homogeneous groups” (2000:17) but the reality dictates radical action. For Scott the way forward is through music, dance and drama, “To use every part of one’s self to express something is a totally natural concept in Africa.” (2000:63). Scott states inter-cultural music “is not an ‘either/or’ but a ‘both/and’ situation. Not assimilation but accommodation” (2000:9). Dawid Venter advocates accommodation over against assimilation and cautions:

The price that has to be paid for a unified institution accommodating different cultures is that cultures will not survive intact, that some aspects of the cultures will be lost. Churchgoers of an ethnic group should negotiate among themselves which aspects of their culture are peripheral, and which are not (1995:335).

⁷⁰ Sthembile Mkhize, personal interview on 14 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Harold le Roux, personal interview on 29 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁷³ Patricia Bruce, personal interview on 25 September 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

An exclusively Christian campus is not without tensions but the *ESSA Community Covenant* is explicit in stating: “As members of an Evangelical, multicultural and international community, we will honour in Christ the dedication and service of all who come to ESSA as staff, students or visitors...” (See Appendix A for full text). Certainly Jesus and his apostles overcame any tensions e.g. Jesus and the Samaritan women (John 4:1-42), Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48), Paul and the Galatians (Gal 3:26-29).

In the classroom the presentation of subject material requires sensitivity to different cultural perceptions.

Gender Issues

The focus in regard to gender issues, when eliciting a response from students, has been on the ordination of women. The assumption is that women attending ESSA are, in most instances, preparing for ministry. References to other facets of the gender issue have been made in this thesis. Suffice it to say that the Cluster of theological institutions does have an agreed general policy stated in a document dated 3 April 2003:

All communication by staff and students, both oral and written, should be marked by respect for others. Language should be inclusive of both women and men. No language should be used which discriminates on the basis of race, gender, culture, class, sexual orientation, physical disability or religious affiliation. Each Cluster institution is responsible for drawing up guidelines for the implementation in academic and liturgical contexts.

Each Cluster institution has appointed members (male and female) to the Cluster Gender Committee (Total of twelve members), which in turn reports to Cluster Council.

Responding to the question, do you think women should be ordained? – all the students responded in the affirmative, with some qualification. Practical problems were raised, for example the husband’s role and place in the church, what happens if the minister gets pregnant, and how do male members of the congregation feel

in a counseling situation?⁷⁴ There are also cultural considerations, Karemera referred to the patriarchal disposition of Africa but nevertheless expressed agreement “I don’t have a problem with women preaching ... if they are called they should be encouraged”.⁷⁵ Okyere-Manu also alluded to the cultural situation in Africa stating that in the pastoral situation you get people who say, “I don’t want to talk to a lady” and that it is “worse if you are not in your own country and you don’t speak the language”.⁷⁶ One female undergraduate while saying that a “gifted” woman with a “divine call” should be ordained went on, in apparent contradiction, to state, “But I wouldn’t want a woman pastor or to be a pastor myself – it is the role of men”.⁷⁷ Mkhize, who after graduation and a two year probation period, hopes to be ordained to the ministry in the United Congregation Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) said, “I see the responsibility women have ... they are in the majority in the UCCSA” - she maintains that the “oppressors” choose Bible texts to serve their own ends.⁷⁸ Burakeye, a Congolese male, did not have any objection to women being ordained but he did point out that in his cultural context men must take the lead, referring to Deborah in the Old Testament he concluded, “If there is no able man the woman should take the lead”.⁷⁹

Another question asked was related to the formation of women. Male graduates acknowledged the need to address gender issues and to empower women: Karemera spoke about, “equal training equal opportunity” and the need for a gender course emphasising the role of women in the Bible;⁸⁰ Wortmann observed that male lecturers have no real experience to talk from when addressing women;

⁷⁴ Mark Wortmann, personal interview on 07 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁷⁵ Pascal Karemera, personal interview on 17 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁷⁶ Beatrice Okyere-Manu, personal interview on 18 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁷⁷ Sandra Reian, personal interview on 13 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁷⁸ Sthembile Mkhize, personal interview on 14 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁷⁹ Theodore Burakeye, personal interview on 14 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁸⁰ Pascal Karemera, personal interview on 17 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

he also noted the difference between campus ideals and church realities;⁸¹ Burakeye noted that if you are giving special formation to women then you must take men aside and focus on relevant issues.⁸² Female students advocated gender courses for both women and men, Okyere-Manu insisted on empowerment for women in the home and in the church noting, “Once ordained they don’t have anyone around”.⁸³

As referred to above the Cluster theological institutions are addressing gender issues. Speaking to faculty members did produce the following comments: Bruce spoke about the educator’s approach to gender issues saying that if one adopted a “strong line” it resulted in a negative response;⁸⁴ le Roux reported that, at ESSA, gender issues are being practically addressed and women on campus are exhibiting leadership;⁸⁵ nevertheless there have been distressing moments, Rakoczy was told that she, “has no right to be at a male seminary and she should go home!”⁸⁶ In spite of this Rakoczy’s stated intention is to see more women registering and she makes a point of affirming her present female students by telling them that they are the “pioneering generation of Africa”.⁸⁷

We conclude this section on gender issues by reflecting on the experience of two ordained women. They were asked to reflect on their student days, particularly with reference to the adequacy of their formation and also to any negative incident in the context of gender. It is regrettable that a more representative sample of ordained women was not interviewed but due to time and other restraints this was

⁸¹ Mark Wortmann, personal interview on 07 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁸² Theodore Burakeye, personal interview on 14 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁸³ Beatrice Okyere-Manu, personal interview on 18 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁸⁴ Patricia Bruce, personal interview on 25 September 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁸⁵ Harold le Roux, personal interview on 29 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁸⁶ Susan Rakoczy, personal interview on 09 October 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁸⁷ Ibid

not possible. Beverly Haddad⁸⁸ was ordained into the Anglican ministry in Cape Town in 1993, her ministry experience had begun in 1980 among students and to this she attributes a great deal of her formation. Haddad attended St Paul's College, Grahamstown in 1991-1992 and felt that the college reinforced what she had already gained in the field. At that time the student body consisted of fifty mostly 'black' students of which there were only five females (all 'white'). Haddad noted that St Paul's College had deepened her awareness and appreciation of Anglican spirituality and she had benefited from the discipline of chapel attendance twice daily, the liturgy, and the priesthood. She also noted that the cross-cultural experience was helpful but that too little attention, at that time, was given to gender issues. When asked if women training for ministry required any additional input Haddad felt that, with the exception of seminars dealing with particular issues, women and men should be taught and formed together, care should be taken that if there is a male majority intervention be made to prevent the tendency of males to dominate. Haddad indicated that women students (and ordained women) presently find themselves in the minority and therefore require particular support. She did not report any negative experiences at St Paul's College although subsequent to ordination she has sometimes felt discriminated against because of her advocacy role in gender issues.

Tracy Bell,⁸⁹ an ordained Anglican minister, who graduated from Rhodes University in 2000, was resident at the College of Transfiguration; she was on two campuses at the same time. Like Haddad, Bell saw the necessity of the regular worship at the college; she also saw the importance of creating a support structure. She described post 1994 College of Transfiguration as quite a "politicized environment to come into" she continued, "I found the college very masculine ... the style of worship very loud ... masculine African ... because I was a young white woman I wasn't afraid to say what I thought ... I was immediately

⁸⁸ Beverly Haddad, personal interview on 08 August 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

⁸⁹ Tracy Bell, personal interview on 18 July 2003 in Pietermaritzburg.

classified as this radical feminist”.⁹⁰ Bell, who believed in taking the initiative and creating safe spaces, met with other women at the college every two months to share experiences because, “Women relate to one another”.⁹¹ At Rhodes Bell was with about fifty other students from various denominations, they had six lecturers, “Each of those lecturers, in their own way, took a special interest in the students to the extent that I spent time in their homes.”⁹² When asked about the need for any addition formation for women who are preparing for ordination Bell said, “It would be inappropriate to separate out the women ... the reality of ministry is that we work together ... we compliment each other, and it is not just along gender lines ... together we offer a package”.⁹³

In addressing formation and gender our approach has been, in the first instance, to survey the experience of women throughout Church history. It is reasoned that the positive and pivotal role of women in the life of the Church should be acknowledged as a means of affirming female theological students, and informing and sensitizing male students to the contribution made by women to the extension of God’s kingdom. Also those male students may be challenged to repent of the sins and excesses of a patriarchal past. However, formation should also be forward looking and the advice of Lutz should be heeded:

The synergism of male and female working together represents the completed creation of God, when he looked at male and female and saw that all he had made was ‘very good’ (Gn.1: 31). Thus when men and women work together they combine their strengths and can more quickly and effectively work through solutions (1997:235).

Ordination of women has been, and still is in some traditions, controversial. In this thesis ordination is perceived to be central among the gender issues on the formation agenda. It is argued that ordination is last in a sequence of events: conversion / baptism – calling / vocation – ordination. If females can be converted, and baptized and history bears witness to women having a vocation,

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Ibid

what prevents ordination? This thesis does not allow for an in depth discussion on the various arguments for and against the ordination of women, it simply asks the question. O' Meara gives the following definition of ordination:

Ordination is a sacramental liturgy performed by a Christian community and its leaders during which a baptized, charismatically called, and professionally prepared Christian is commissioned into a public ministry within and on behalf of the local church (1999:218).

We responded with the question, surely women can satisfy these requirements: baptized, charismatically called, and professionally prepared? At the start of his book *A Theology of Ministry* O'Meara observes, "Ministry has moved from being a vocation for the few to being a gift and work of many, a facet of baptized life" (1999:5). The early baptismal formula employed by the Apostle Paul in Galatia appears unambiguous in its eradication of the social discriminations of the day including those between women and men (Gal 3:28). Another argument has been advanced which in terms of the clergy / laity division⁹⁴ dismisses ordination in favour of the community's recognition of spiritual gifts regardless of gender. It is acknowledged that many traditions inhibit such a notion, even though scholars like the Catholic, O'Meara, have noted the secular origins of the concepts of ordination (1999:151-152), and laity (1999:156, 174-175).

The formation response to gender issues should be the affirmation, enhancement and acknowledgement of women's contribution to the community; this can be achieved by providing historical and contemporary female role models. Learning to listen to women's voices - Carol Gilligan encouraged, "As we have listened for centuries to the voices of men and the theories of development that their experience informs, so we have come more recently to notice not only the silence of women but the difficulty in hearing what they say when they speak" (1993:173). Using inclusive language in speaking and writing. The institution's curriculum and programme should not only reflect on gender issues but women should be involved in the decision making, planning and facilitation of these courses and activities.

⁹⁴ For further reading on the subject see R. Paul Stevens *The Abolition of the Laity* and JH Rutz *The Open Church*.

CONCLUSION

The ecumenical, multi-cultural and gender issues are subsumed in the Resurrected Lord Jesus Christ; unity can only be found in him. Paul writes,

“My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you” (Gal 4:19 NIV). Christ is both the image and the community of God; in him we find our true identity, which transcends denomination, culture and gender without trivializing the material issues.

In the introduction to this thesis a number of questions were put:

How does one celebrate diversity without losing one’s denominational distinctives?

How does the philosophy of the institution impact on the student and can any particular denomination trust the education institution? These questions relate to the ecumenical nature of the campus. Interviews with students and staff did not expose any threat or difficulty; on the contrary those interviewed spoke positively about being together with people of other denominations stating that an ecumenical campus was preferred to a denominational one and that they had learnt much about others and themselves which would benefit them in the future. The Evangelical philosophy of ESSA has not dissuaded students of other traditions from registering nor have the sending churches found cause to object to the institution’s way of working or to withdraw their candidates for ministry from ESSA.

Can the institution develop forms of worship that transcend the denominational and cultural forms represented by the student body? The answer is no, because worship, by definition is ascending from the congregation to God and is therefore contextual in nature. The implication being that the form/s taken by worship in the chapel is/are dependent on the current cultural mix. The danger of assimilation must constantly be kept in view and the process of accommodation, though never universally satisfactory, regularly reviewed. Student bodies undergo

annual changes due to graduations and registrations therefore with accommodation, as a goal in chapel, classroom and community, there is a need for annual negotiation and adjustment. The use of other forms of worship and languages was acceptable to students as long as there was an explanation or interpretation. Aside from the initial culture shock reported by some students, which was remedied through developing relationships, most students found the experience edifying.

People interviewed were asked about the attitudes prevailing among students regarding the ordination of women to Christian ministry and whether the formation of women students required certain specific considerations, given the feeling surrounding their ordination?

Students from denominations as diverse as Anglican and Pentecostal as well as different cultural backgrounds did not express any strong opinions against the ordination of women. There was some residual cultural or patriarchal reservation about women assuming leadership roles; one 'white' female respondent stated that men and women have distinctive roles and being a pastor is not a women's role. With the exception of some gender specific topics that could be dealt with in separate seminars or retreats, it was felt that women and men should undergo formation together; this was also the opinion of the ordained women who were interviewed. There is a need for programmes, courses and activities that will address gender issues.

If the outcome of formation is the integration and establishment of an individual's identity in relation to the image of God, self and community then a heterogeneous theological institution is an enriching environment.

APPENDIX A

ESSA COMMUNITY COVENANT¹

In response to God's calling and love and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and out of consideration for our colleagues in this multicultural and international community, we whom God has called to serve Him as students at ESSA humbly make the following statement of commitment to God:

WE COMMIT OURSELVES

To God: Recognising that He is the Maker and the Master of the earth and everything in it, and the Lord of the Church, and that ESSA entirely belongs to Christ; we commit ourselves to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in this place, the Holy Spirit enabling us, to the glory of God the Father.

To the Church: Recognising the role of ESSA in A training Christian dedicated leaders for the Church-in-Mission@ for service all over Africa and beyond, we will endeavour to be informed and prayerful regarding both the local and international Christian community.

To personal holiness: As members of a community of prayer and faith, we will strive for personal growth in Christ and will seek to live lives that are characterised by purity, integrity and godliness. In this respect, we will endeavour to be diligent in our own devotional lives, in the reading of Scripture and prayer.

To communal life at the Seminary: We will seek to be faithful in observing worship and devotional life at ESSA. We will seek to be diligent in our studies and/or work, and will allow others to do the same. In our relations with others we will endeavour to be loving and forgiving and should we have grievances or criticisms against anyone, we will seek to voice these in Christian love. We will strive to promote community life and carry our duties as part of the community. We will abide by the Constitution of ESSA and or other rules and regulations existing at the Seminary and accepted by ESSA Council, since these are designed for a happier and more productive work and study environment.

To families: Recognising our responsibility to our families, we will endeavour to see that our work and ministry are not to their expense.

To integrity in word and deed: We will endeavour to attain honest and accurate communication, to speak the truth in empathic love, and to keep confidentiality and avoid gossip. In this regard, we will seek to keep information obtained from ESSA confidential and use it only for the purpose for which it is intended. In accordance with this principle, we commit ourselves, during or even after our studies at ESSA, not to divulge to any organisation, person or persons any secret or any professional information that is confidential to the Seminary or its members, unless, one is instructed to do so by competent authority in accordance to the law, provided this is not harmful to ESSA or any of its members. As good stewards and stewardesses in the things entrusted to our care, we will strive to

¹ This covenant appears in the Student Handbook (January 2003) and is quoted without correction.

achieve financial integrity in all affairs. We will seek to be wise, honest and trustworthy in the use of the Seminary=s property and resources. We will treat the assets and property of ESSA with the same respect as if they were our own property. We will refuse any gift that could be regarded as an attempt to exert undue influence over ourselves and bring the matter to the attention of the Seminary authorities. We will equally strive to perform our duties with integrity and honesty and to the best of our ability. In all things, we will endeavour to accept accountability for our actions and decisions.

To all those in the community: As members of an Evangelical, multicultural and international community, we will honour in Christ the dedication and service of all who come to ESSA as staff, students or visitors and affirm their right to expect the highest standards of life and work in their respective capacities. Remembering that we are one in the Lord, we will endeavour in all things to treat each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of our office or status and with that authority only which comes from imitating our Lord=s servanthood. We will seek to respect everybody=s particular calling, thanking God for the rich variety of character, gifts and experience. In this regard, we will endeavour to treat people as we would have them treat us, viz. with fairness, respect, courtesy, and respect for their rights, dignity and consideration for their well being. We will accept and respect the authority that God has bestowed to everyone in his or her unique role in the community. We will avoid any attitude of superiority, inferiority or discrimination in the community. We will support and encourage one another in all respects and seek to relate to each other in loyalty, good humour and practical love. We will endeavour to see that the resolution of any arising conflict is done on the basis of scriptural teaching. We will strive, through friendship and practical love, through teaching, spiritual formation, through competent administration of affairs at the Seminary, through faithful prayer and positive example, to make sure those we send out for service are equipped for the cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in personal wholeness and spiritual endeavour. In this regard, we will ensure the standards of all professional institutions are upheld at all times. In all our word and deed, we will seek to be good examples to others, internally and externally.

May God Almighty help us to abide by this Covenant!

APPENDIX B

A list of people interviewed:

Interviewee	Date	Place	Status
Bell, Tracy	18 July 2003	Pietermaritzburg	Ordained Minister
Bruce, Patricia	25 September 2003	Pietermaritzburg	Faculty - SOT ²
Burakeye, Theodore	14 July 2003	Pietermaritzburg	Postgraduate - SOT
Haddad, Beverly	08 August 2003	Pietermaritzburg	Ordained Minister
Karemera, Pascal	17 July 2003	Pietermaritzburg	Postgraduate - SOT
le Roux, Harold	29 July 2003	Pietermaritzburg	Faculty - ESSA
Matebe, Simphiwe	22 August 2003	Pietermaritzburg	Undergraduate - ESSA
Mkhize, Sthembile	14 August 2003	Pietermaritzburg	Undergraduate - ESSA
Okyere-Manu, Beatrice	18 August 2003	Pietermaritzburg	Postgraduate - SOT
Pollitt, Russell	23 July 2003	Merrivale	Undergraduate -- SJTI ³
Rakoczy, Susan	09 October 2003	Pietermaritzburg	Faculty – SJTI
Reian, Sandra	13 August 2003	Pietermaritzburg	Undergraduate - ESSA
Weir, Roxanne	19 August 2003	Pietermaritzburg	Postgraduate - SOT
Wortmann, Mark	07 August 2003	Pietermaritzburg	Postgraduate - SOT

² School of Theology, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. These students graduated from ESSA

³ St Joseph's Theological Institute - Cedara

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