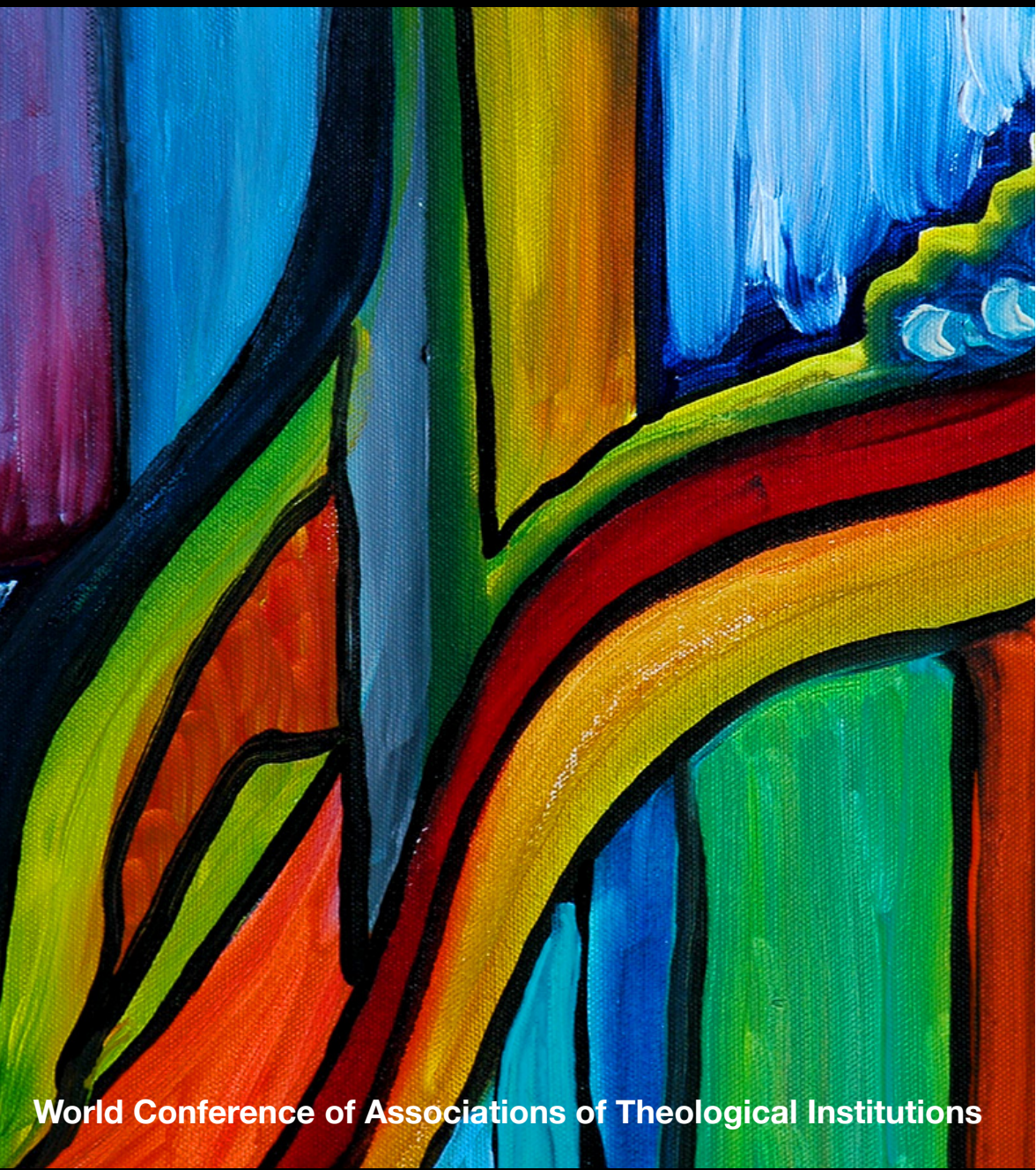
Challenges and Promises of Quality Assurance in Theological Education:

Multicontextual and Ecumenical Inquiries



World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions

CHALLENGES AND PROMISES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: MULTICONTEXTUAL AND ECUMENICAL INQUIRIES

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Acknowledgements

The WOCATI (World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions) held its 2011 Consultation in Johannesburg, South Africa during July 4-8, 2011, at Lakeview Airport Lodge (Previously Kempton Park Conference Centre) with the theme "Challenges and Promises of *Quality Assurance* in Theological Education: Multi-Contextual and Ecumenical Inquiries." Participants focused on supporting, enhancing, and assessing the quality of theological education both within regional contexts and across contexts through presentations, roundtable discussions, and breakout sessions.

This book is a collection of presentation papers from various regions. We hope that this collection of the consultation papers can be helpful in promoting academic, professional, and ecumenical conversations between and among associations from different contexts and in helping us thoroughly reconsider the role of associations of theological schools in assessing and promoting the *quality* of theological education.

WOCATI members from around the world gathered together to discuss how to assess, enhance, and support the quality of theological education worldwide. Given that the quality of theological institutions varies widely from one region to another, the consultation addressed important issues in theological education in the contemporary world.

On behalf of the Executive Committee members, I thank Dr. David Brockman, who worked as Project Director of WOCATI and helped WOCATI in preparation for the consultation and onsite overseeing during the consultation. My deep thanks also goes to Mr. Adam DJ. Brett, WOCATI Webmaster, for his crucial

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Introduction: The *Quality* of Theological Education Reconsidered

Namsoon Kang

> The task facing the Christian world today is the recovery of its universalizing function without any colonial, imperialist, or Eurocentric implications.
> --Gianni Vattimo[1]

Since the 1980s, a large number of theologians have pointed out the crisis of theological education. However, the "crisis" they respectively identify is hardly unitary because their positions differ from one another in terms of their angles and approaches. Those crises of theological education relate to such issues as the "widespread discontent with the schools" from the "main-line Protestant churches,"[2] the current organization of the curriculum, the issue of Christian identity and of theory and praxis, especially in the schools with ecumenical spirit,[3] and the problem with the specialization of disciplines, or clericalization of theological education, banishing the classical sense of *habitus*--theology as wisdom and science.[4] Feminists from various racial/ethnic backgrounds have also indicated that although the number of women seminarians has been growing substantially in theological schools and seminaries, theological education has not fully reflected feminist perspectives and approaches into the curriculum and teaching, which claim women as the subjects of theological education.[5] All these crises call for a transformation of theological education that requires critical thinking and reflection on the very concrete context in which we operate.

During the 1980s, an extensive literature critical of theological education appeared. It challenged basic and widely accepted premises of theological study: its orientation toward clerical tasks, its conception of theory and practice, and the way people structured theological studies in a fourfold pattern of Bible, Theology, History, and Practice.[6] Deploring the fragmentation that clericalism, theory-practice dualism, and disciplinary dispersion had produced, many called for a unifying theological emphasis, by which they meant that theological studies should form habits of intellect and character that enable a person to make theological judgments. In the same period, however, social trends and developments pushed theological schools to diversify, offering new specialized programs for ministers and laypersons as well as new program formats for older, less mobile students.

The emergence of new discursive and geopolitical trends urged theological educators to revisit and reexamine the content, methodology, and pedagogy of theological education. The emergence of the women's movement, feminist theologies, liberation theologies, globalization, religious plurality, ecotheologies, peace movements, queer theologies, or postmodern discourses, for instance, challenged EuroAmerican ethnocentrism, geocentrism, androcentrism, heterocentrism, or Christiancentrism in the construction of knowledge in general and theological education in particular. In this changing context, theological educators in the world need to revisit and fundamentally reexamine the traditional paradigm of theological education.

Another significant aspect in addressing the quality of theological education is how it should address multireligious/ interreligious encounters that can be vital aspects of constituting *quality* in theological education. In the global context, theological educators today, wherever

they are located in the world, share an interest in constructing new models of theological education to prepare leaders for service in a religiously plural and culturally diverse world. One of the critical challenges that such new models of theological education must address in the contemporary geopolitical context is a severe lack of shared international standards and means for ensuring uniform quality in theological education.

Theologians lack a shared understanding of what constitutes *quality* in theological education, a shared understanding that various denominations and church traditions in various regions of the world can share and implement. Theological educators need to take into their consideration one's geopolitical location, cultural context, or religious ethos in a given society in the process of coming up a shared standard for the quality of theological education. It is not surprising that most resources for theological education in terms of human resources, financial resources, and institutional resources have resided in the glocal North, while the need for theological education has been drastically growing in the global South.[7] EuroAmerican models for theological education become universal regardless of one's geopolitical, sociocultural, and religious context. Here, I am not however proposing simply to dismiss the European heritage out of a "desire for postcolonial revenge."[8]

Replacing the models of theological education from EuroAmerica by the non-West does not bring the necessary transformation of theological education that we need today. Furthermore, one cannot deny the reality that it is impossible to construct new models for theological education anywhere in the world without engaging and invoking the intellectual genealogies and theological traditions of Europe. Such significant concepts as legal equality, sociopolitical justice, individual freedom, democracy, rationality, and so on,

have come from Europe. Wherever one lives, one needs to engage the intellectual and theological tradition of Europe, affirmatively or critically, because "this [European] heritage is now global."[9] Korea's Minjung theology and Latin America's liberation theology, for instance, owe a great debt to Marxist thought from Europe, and feminist theologies/theories owe a debt to the Enlightenment's conception of freedom and equality, despite the Enlightenment's epistemological and sociopolitical limitations. The very vision of human beings of the theological and intellectual tradition of Europe laid down the groundwork for theological discourses of justice and equality, although it has failed in practice through colonization of the other, denying its own vision of humans as free and equal fellows. Franz Fanon, a postcolonial thinker, acknowledges that the Enlightenment idea of the human being has become a part of the universal, global heritage.[10]

What we theological educators in the world need to do in constructing new models for theological education and reconstituting the nature of the *quality* in the theological education is to engage the *universals* of justice, equality, freedom, human rights, but we need to do so "without any colonial, imperialist, or Eurocentric implications."[11] Only then can the new models for the theological education become mobilizing and effective *tools* that will promote the fundamental religious values of dignity, equality of every individual human being regardless of one's race, ethnicity, gender, class, ability, sexuality, nationality, or religious affiliation as "God shows no partiality" (Romans 2:11).

Standards for Quality Assurance in Africa: Enhancing Quality Training in African Independent Churches

John Gichimu

The president, vice president and the executive members World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI), the Global coordinator World Council of Churches program on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE), the local hosting committee, esteemed delegates ladies and gentlemen. We bring greetings from Organization of African Instituted Churches head office in Nairobi, Kenya.

I. Introduction

As we all know the theme of this conference is "Challenges and Promises of Quality Assurance in Theological Education: Multi-Contextual and Ecumenical Inquiries," – the call to write on standards for quality assurance in Africa. A brief history of quality on education in Africa will be given followed by definition of accreditation and quality assurance. The Organization of African Instituted Churches continental office is located in Nairobi, Kenya and issues of quality assurance and standards of education must subscribe to the Ministry of Education of the hosting country, as the accrediting agent. Hence, the presentation will briefly discuss the policies of standards of quality assurance by the Ministry of Education in Kenya.

The presentation will then attempt to discuss theological training in African Instituted Churches by the

umbrella body Organization of African Instituted Churches. A brief on OAIC and Africa Independent churches will be given to introduce the constituency of the presentation. It will then delve on historical training in AICs and discuss an individual AIC example trying to show what was perceived as the benchmarks of quality assurance. A background of OAIC theology training will be given chronologically beginning with TEE, the curriculum model and the recent plan to develop guidelines and the need for reviewing and launching a new curriculum. This in it self is a move towards accreditation and for measuring quality in AICs training programmes. It will discuss 'founding visions" a model developed by OAIC for articulating or doing AIC theology. The presentation will sample standards of quality from one AIC training programme in Kenya affiliated to OAIC and from a full fledged AIC seminary and college in Ghana. Finally, the presentation will give a conclusion or is it a way forward.

II. A Brief History on Standards Quality Assurance in Africa

Early Tertiary education in Africa was began by the colonial masters. In fact there are some universities in Africa, South of the Sahara, that are over 70 years old. As we will find a little later formal schooling system in Kenya was established by 1927.

The universities were affiliated to western universities, thus, ensuring quality education. Affiliation Was the First Form of Quality Assurance in African Higher Education. The history of quality assurance in higher education in Africa goes back to the founding of the first universities in Africa (for example, Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone in 1827), all of which were affiliated to partner universities located in the colonizing countries (the

United Kingdom, France, and Portugal). The University of Dakar, now Cheikh Anta Diop University in Senegal, was regarded as an integral part of the French higher education system as late as the 1960s.[12]

Many post-independent African Governments have stressed the need for quality education. This has brought to the fore the establishment of Accreditation institutions that ensure that tertiary institutions delivers quality curricula. In some countries, like Ghana Nigeria and Kenya to mention but a few, non-accredited tertiary institutions are closed down (where corruption no longer rule, the rulers). In Ghana, for instance, even accredited institutions are requested to be affiliated to Chartered institutions for a mentorship till they are considered for Charter status. Mentoring may be at the individual or institutional level. At the individual level, the young academic staff or a newly appointed vice-chancellor may opt to be mentored by a senior academic or vice-chancellor, respectively who serves as a role model to the mentored. At the institutional level, a new university may elect to be mentored by an older and more experienced university in the development and operation of its structures.[13]

However, out of fifty-three African countries, only seventeen had set up national quality assurance agencies, by 2008, and many depend on different levels of internal institutional quality assurance practices. Hence, all countries in Africa have a system for quality assurance.

Each of these countries has a national quality assurance agency with the responsibility to coordinate quality assurance activities in their respective countries. Nigeria has the National Universities Commission; South Africa, the Higher Education Quality Committee of the Council of Higher Education (CHE); Kenya, the Commission for Higher Education (CHE); Tanzania, the Tanzania Commission for Universities; and Ghana, the

National Accreditation Board. Each of these agencies is set up by law and they are fully functional.[14]

Regarding Theological Education, the efforts of ACTEA to set standards and the rush to be accredited are an indication that Theological Educators in Africa cherish high standards of quality assurance. I believe most of us gathered here from Africa know about Accrediting Council for Theological education in Africa (ACTEA). For ACTEA standards and procedures for accreditation at secondary level, include the following:

1. Administration
2. Teaching staff
3. Facilities
4. Educational programmes
5. And students[15]

Accreditation is a process of self-study and external quality review used in higher education to scrutinize an institution and/or its programmes for quality standards and need for quality improvement. The process is designed to determine whether or not an institution has met or exceeded the published standards (set by an external body such as a government, national quality assurance agency, or a professional association) for accreditation, and whether it is achieving its mission and stated purpose. The process usually includes a self-evaluation, peer review and a site visit. Success results in the accreditation of a programme or an institution.[16]

It is clear here that whenever an institution embarks on accreditation demands for quality start to indicate. Then what is quality assurance? Quality assurance is a planned and systematic review process of an institution or programme to determine whether or not acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being met, maintained and enhanced. A tertiary

institution is only as good as the quality of its teaching staff – they are the heart of the institution that produces its graduates, its research products and its service to the institution, community and nation.[17]

III. Categories of Quality Assurance

Quality is a multi-dimensional concept, with no commonly accepted definition but generally measuring the level of realization of set standards or targets.[18] Quality assurance can be either external or internal process. External quality assurance refers to the review by an agency (e. g. a national quality assurance agency) or body (e.g. a professional body), which evaluates the operations of a university (institutional) or of its programmes to ascertain the level of compliance with set minimum standards. External quality assurance is mainly carried out through the instrumentality of accreditation and involves as mentioned earlier (in accreditation), self-study, peer review and reporting system. Internal quality assurance, on the other hand, refers to internal policies and mechanisms of a university (institution) or programme for ensuring that it is fulfilling its purposes as well as the standards that apply to higher education in general or to profession or discipline, in particular.[19]

IV. Quality Assurance and Standards of Education in Kenya

The quality assurance and standards in education in Kenya, is a function of the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards which is the professional arm of Ministry of Education. Though there existed a supervisory system during the colonial period on the formal schooling system which was established by 1927, the modern Inspectorate in independent Kenya was

initiated through the recommendations of the Kenya Education Commission of 1964. The Directorate was set up over 30 years ago. The Ministry of Education Kenya is mandated to provide quality assurance and standards services to all education and training institutions, with the sole mission to establish, maintain and improve educational standards.

The objectives of the Directorate are as follows:

1. Regular reporting to the Ministry of Education on the general quality of education in Kenya.
2. Monitor the performance of teachers and educational institutions in accordance with all-round standard performance indicators.
3. Ensure the equitable distrubution of tutors by working out the curriculum based establishment.
4. Carry out regular and full panel quality assurance and standards assesment of all education institutions.
5. Advise on the provision of proper and adequate facilities in all educational institutions.
6. Ensure that appropriate curriculum is operational in institutions.
7. Organize and administer co-curricular activies with a view to developing an all-round person.[20]

V. Organization of African Instituted Churches

The Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) is an association of AICs that was founded in Cairo in 1978.[21] The International Headquarters of the OAIC is located in Nairobi, Kenya. It works in seven African Regions: East Africa, Southern Africa, Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of Congo, West Africa Francophone, West Africa Anglophone and Nigeria. These Regions are represented on the governing body, the General Assembly, and on the Executive Committee, which meets annually. At country level,

OAIC works through Chapters.

A. OAIC Vision and Mission

The OAIC vision is:

The people of God who are:

- building on their African cultures and values
- transformed by the Good News of Jesus Christ
- blessed by the Spirit of God

so they can create an abundant life in community for their children and the world.

From a theological perspective, this vision highlights:

- a positive valuation and critique of African culture as the inescapable, God-given, historical context for the reception and interpretation of the Gospel, and the creation of the original AIC theologies (known in OAIC as 'the Founding Visions')
- the power of the gospel to continuously transform people, theologies, and churches so that the challenge of the gospel remains fresh and focused on contemporary realities
- an understanding of church as *movement* – of the people of God called by Him and empowered by His Spirit to undertake new initiatives in mission, and especially to:
  - the building of *ubuntu* (i.e., *shalom)*, a humane society without poverty, exploitation, or disease
  - the articulation and communication both within Africa and globally of this AIC vision of the human community under God.

B. OAIC Mission

The OAIC works to bring Africa Instituted Churches together in fellowship, and to equip and enable

them to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

C. African Independent Churches

The terms African Independent or African Instituted Churches (AICs) are used for a large number of heterogeneous faith communities across Sub-Saharan Africa. The OAIC understands an AIC as a church that acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord, and which has either separated by secession from a mission church or an existing African independent church, or has been founded as an independent entity under African initiative and leadership. The first AICs were formed as popular Christian movements to preach the Gospel and to protect African values and forms of society against the impact of colonialism, and negative and overly restrictive aspects of the missionary-founded churches. They saw their churches as forerunners of a new, reformed, and more humane form of society that was both African and Christian, and would replace the colonialism that had deprived African people of their initiative, freedom, and sense of self-worth. Recent estimates put the total number of members of these churches at 55 – 60 million across the continent.[22]

The categories of AICs are as follows:

- 'African', 'Ethiopian', 'Independent' – churches that sought as a divine mandate the removal of colonial government or missionary control of the churches – (hence they are regarded frequently by historians as being part of the African nationalist movement.).
- 'Spiritual', 'Aladura', Zionist', 'Apostolic', 'Roho', 'Akurinu' – churches close to African culture and inspired by the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit, often also following strict laws of

ritual purity.

- African Pentecostal – indigenous Pentecostal churches placing a high value on African culture.
- Prayer and prophetic – great emphasis on prayer and predictive prophecy.

D. Historical Methods of Training in African Independent Churches

In discussions and interactions with leaders and elders of African Independent Churches it is clear that there is a great deal of similarity between the spirituality so evident among them and what is taught about Christian faith.

In the African Independent Churches the act of worship and faith required of most to be seen and perceived within the context. Leaders therefore needed to be trained, through learning how to use traditional stories, proverbs and rituals.

There was no formal (in the perception of outsiders as for AICs there was no distinction between **formal and non-formal) method of training.**

The first method through which training was done in AICs and even in some up to the present is **apprenticeship/mentorship**.

In this method the leader of the church automatically becomes the tutor or trainer of the personnel. Although, there was no understanding how such a leader got trained it is obvious that it was through oral tradition method which at its best required listening and doing. In this method knowledge is handed down by word and not by documents or reference books.

The other method of training was by **occasional meetings-cum-seminars** which were arranged for any person, who demonstrated mastery in mass communication and acceptance by the congregation. In

this understanding charisma was preferred more as a qualification for training. For example someone who was well versed in mastery of traditional stories and proverbs was qualified for leadership and preaching. Such a person could use the many stories and proverbs to illustrate the Bible text which one had chosen to preach about in order to bring the point home.

In some AICs, training is done through **weekly sessions** on a given course/subject and the candidates are given certificates of participation after successful completion. For example stewardship is picked as a course to be done for a week of candidate's facilitator/ tutor learning contact and at the end of the contact period they receive certificates for that course.

Recently, some AICs have adopted distance learning where a tailor-made curriculum is developed and used to train personnel.

The AICs did not have institutions of theological training to train their personnel and even those that were willing to train in institutions sponsored by mission churches were not allowed by those churches owing to rivalry of secession.

Secondly, the clergy of these churches were involved in other employment as a way of support for the ministry, which denied them to train formally even if a chance for such arose. To the AIC personnel engaging in business as mission was the order of the ministry, and they objected to the notion of being referred to as part-time clergy.

E. Quality in AIC Training

According to a bishop of African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA), which was founded in 1920s during the Gikuyu nationalist movements in central Kenya, quality was attuned to the experience of the leader responsible in offering tutelage.[23]

The bishop would talk big about the fact that he was trained by one of the most experienced archbishop of the church and such translates that he received quality tutelage. Interestingly, when you prod further to know how the setting of training was done, he is quick to say such things like, you know I was carrying the leaders (tutors) bag or I was serving him in this or the other way.

Consequently, an individual leader becomes the reference point for quality. As Paul would say, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under **Gamaliel** I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today" (Acts 22: 3). Just what is in the name as emphasized **Gamaliel**? Bishop Kigunda however, recalls that the founders of the church were seeing quality training in the then existing theological institutions sponsored by mission churches. Hence, around 1932 the elders sought for training of the church ministers in an Anglican theological college in Mombasa. The request was not granted by the church probably as a result of mass exodus of people from the church to form the AIPCA.

When in 1932 this request was not successful, the elders approached Bishop Daniel Alexander William, a South African of Mauritian origin, and asked him through James Beuttah to come and train their ministers. Daniel Alexander William had been consecrated bishop on 11th September 1927 by Bishop George Alexander Mcguire, from Antigua, who was Primate in America and Patriarch in the world of the African Orthodox Church.[24]

F. Background to OAIC Theology Training

The OAIC has been running a **Theological Education by Extension (TEE)** programme since 1980,

on an **informal and Freirean model**. This was done by developing a method of lower-level contextual TEE, which lacked a formal curriculum and was learner-led[25] From the mid 1990s attempts were made to renew the programme by introducing a curriculum that could be accredited by a local university, but the process was never completed. The curriculum that was designed takes twelve weeks spread in a period of twelve months. The major modules are: Biblical theology, historical theology, dogmatics and pastoral/practical theology. While, the above was taking place their was a concern that what had been proposed as theological content of the new programme was not AIC theology, but rather a somewhat contextualized form of Western ecumenical (predominantly evangelical) theology. In an attempt to finding an appropriate method and material to train theology in AIC's, a concept paper was developed in 2004/5 for the then OAIC Theological Education by Extension Department which changed to OAIC Department of Theology and lately to Programme for Theology and Ministerial Formation.

The concept paper heralded OAIC to discover and pursue the great need to develop an **appropriate theological education for AICs,** to enable them serve the masses effectively.

The AICs are practicing ministry in an environment that is saturated with multiple theologies disseminated through the media and any available means of communication. In such setting AICs are faced by the challenge of external influence on one hand, and on the other hand the opportunity of harnessing their potential of technological advancement. The AICs may not succeed well in the ministry without an appropriate process of theological education training.

They have to be ready to deal with issues of disease, HIV/AIDS, violence, generational, gender relations, hunger,

environment, unemployment, youth, youth militia, drugs and young population.[26]

In such environment the AICs need to practice theology that meets with the needs of people in this life and life hereafter. Theology as practice and not intellectual structure, "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" John 13: 17.

G. Articulating African Independent Church Theologies

As training continued in several churches (in East Africa) through TEE methodology and by using the curriculum developed in 1990s, questions arose on whether articulation of AIC theologies was feasible. AIC theology is essentially oral. It is found 'embedded in songs, stories, forms of worship, dance, church uniforms, flags and names; in laws of purity, concepts of evil, and the practice of exorcism; in uniforms, traditions, and narratives of preaching and prayer; in dream interpretations and prophesies and in understandings of healing and salvation.[27] The message carried by these means and practices forms what OAIC call the 'founding visions' – that is, the AIC original founding visions, created during long process of reflection on the biblical texts, and on their concrete historical experiences, in order to make sense of God's work in the world at a time of often intense conflict with the realities of colonial oppression. However, these visions have rarely been fully articulated so that they are accessible to academic analysis. For this reason the original and deeply Christian faith of the AICs remains unappreciated by the world at large.

Though the original TEE model had the articulation of AIC theology as one of its goals this rarely happened. Moreover, it recognized that if AICs are awakened from

an oral unconscious memory of their being, then surely, the product would figure their theology. 'Unconscious' here refers to the AICs' tendency of doing theology orally and in praxis, but lacking the ability of theorizing the same and putting it in print. Furthermore, the Batlles are not said to have been experts in AIC theology, but their approach allowed the grassroots people to state their own needs which determined what course needed to be taught.[28]

The reasons for this were various. First, in the 1970s and 80s AICs expressed a strong and understandable need for acceptance by other churches. This meant that many AICs and AIC students experienced a powerful underlying pressure from non-AIC to acquire a 'correct' theology, either ecumenical or evangelical, but at all events a theology with strong western presuppositions, epistemology and biases. Some funding of OAIC/TEE was actually tied to the promotion of particular western theological stances. In this way, OAIC/TEE students sometimes internalized a split theological position; partly western, partly African, with no proper engagement between the western tradition (that of the 'uppers' North) and the African (that of the 'lowers' South).[29] At times this mental and psychological split had led to a form of deceit and dishonesty, in which AICs and individuals actually and consciously mould themselves on external models, usually from Europe or North America, and lose the ability to engage effectively with their Christian tradition and the grassroots members of their congregations. Moreover, AIC members enter non-AIC colleges as members of what are essentially Christian *movements* and have come out as leaders of Christian *institutions*.

Secondly, the TOTs selected for training by OAIC had already undergone a theological formation in non-AIC bible and theological colleges that was

fundamentally unsympathetic to the project of 'doing' theology from within an African world-view. They could not adjust easily to articulating such a theology without special training and OAIC did not offer such training. Because AIC theologies are essentially oral, the process of articulation first requires documentation.

H. Pursuing the Vision

In 2006 workshops were held in Nairobi Kenya and Iganga Uganda respectively with an agenda to enable AIC leaders and workers to learn how to articulate, and to own, the founding visions of their own churches. Participants were drawn from three groups: church leaders, trained theologians and in development projects. The objectives of the workshop were to give participants tools to recover, understand and write down the visions. The second process (re-envisioning) was to look at recent changes in African society which challenge the values of AIC visions. In this way we hoped that AIC leaders would be become conscious of some of the theological and ideological forces around them, and would be able to reflect on whether the founding visions needed to be adapted in order to communicate the gospel to contemporary society.

In this re-envisioning process we hoped that the AIC leaders would learn to draw on the strengths of the founding visions while correcting and revising whatever in the original vision hinders our communication of the gospel today. We hoped that this re-envisioning process would provide the foundation for the future writing of theologies of our churches.[30]

The strategic framework for OAIC, *Visions for a Better World: 2009-2013,* identifies the following broad objectives for the OAIC Programme for Theology among others:

1. Strengthen the OAIC Programme for Theology to become an effective tool for policy development and implementation.
2. Facilitate the articulation, communication, and renewal of AIC founding visions and the development of AIC theologies.
4. Sharpen and re-focus OAIC distance education methodology and practice.
5. Facilitate the strategic growth of AIC theological institutions.[31]

It is in this context that the OAIC in 2009 called together a consultation to deliberate on appropriate training process on theological education for African Independent Churches.

The goal of the consultation being to advise the OAIC International Secretariat on the key directions that the OAIC Programme for Theology should be taking over the next five years.

To do this, the consultation's objectives were:

1. Clarification of approaches and methodologies to be used in articulating / doing AIC theology (the Founding Visions).
2. Identification of preferred methodologies for theological education for AICs:
    - Development of an OAIC Theological Training Institute at Postgraduate level
    - Distance Education
    - Lower level Theological Education by Extension
    - Support of AIC residential and non-residential Theological institutions
    - Facilitation of staff and AIC students at non-AIC residential theological institutions.
3. Develop guidelines & plan of action for reviewing and launching a new curriculum.
4. Develop guidelines and criteria for building

country / regional / international resource teams which will be responsible for

- Overseeing the training Programme at country levels.
- Representing OAIC in theological fora including ecumenical dialogues

5. Plan for the future development of modules in distance education (TEE) with accompanying training manuals.[32]

To bolster the first objective of the 2009 consultation, OAIC West Africa (Nigeria and Ghana) held a theological writers workshop on documenting AIC theologies in Ghana in 2010. The South Africa region workshop will be held this year (2011). Moreover, (on the third objective of the consultation) OAIC has planned to hold a Workshop on curriculum review to enhance quality training in African Independent Churches. The objectives for the workshop will be as follows:

a. To strategize on how to offer quality training to AIC leaders.
b. To review & develop a curriculum for theology training in AIC's.
c. Put mechanism in place for accreditation of the developed curriculum.

VI. Experiences of OAIC and AICs Training Initiatives

A. Theological Education by Extension

The OAIC/TEE marks of quality were established in the three months training that was done at the headquarters of OAIC in Nairobi. Some AIC members from other African regions who had already received theological or biblical training were invited to Nairobi for

periods of three months to study the Kenyan model, learn its educational philosophy and methodology, write a TEE text and translate it in their mother tongue, and to plan for the introduction of the programme back in their respective countries. They became TOTs – Trainers of Trainers. In this way – and on minimal budget – OAIC/ TEE was introduced into Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Madagascar, DRC, South Africa and Botswana. The content of the course included the following:

- TEE, what it is and how it works. This gives the history of TEE, the context and work methods.
- Writing to be understood. Gives introduction, understands audience, simplified expressions, conciseness and objectives of writing.
- Seminar leader or enabler. It gives the seminar leaders' profile and role.
- Communication and group dynamics. This discusses various ways of communication in relation to group.
- And TEE and self evaluation.[33] Methods and objectives of self-evaluation, advantages and consultancy.

OAIC theology programme supported centres of learning with mini libraries and kerosene lamps for usage to study at night. Thorough observation of the above sustains the assumption that those that went through the training as Trainers of Trainers (TOTs) would give quality training at that level.

B. A Case Study of African Independent Pentecostal Churches of Africa (AIPCA)

The origins and development of the AIPCA are closely linked up with the nationalist movements that

flourished among the Gikuyu especially from 1921. These developments were part of the wider political reaction among the people of Kenya which was in response to the intensification of various colonialist vexations especially between 1915 and 1921. Similar manifestations were taking place in Western Kenya, as is evidenced by the formation of the Kavirondo Tax Payers' Welfare Association, and later, in the 1940s, that of the Young Buu Association in the Tana River district.[34]

A.I.P.C.A Theological College was started in 2008 to provide world class training for clergy and church leaders in African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa and other like-minded organizations. Since its inception, it has attracted a group of 50 clergy with 17 of these graduating with a diploma in Bible and Theology. Our mode of training is run in Modules. Each module has four core courses. For one to graduate, they have to cover 7 modules spread over two years. How are we ensuring that we maintain standards of quality assurance in A.I.P.C.A Theological College? We do this at four levels:

1. Students' recruitment process

   For one to qualify to join our institution, first priority is given to those already in a leadership role. We specifically ask for a minimum of 3-year ministry experience. In addition, individuals are accepted upon recommendation of their local parish or diocese. As a result, only tested candidates find their way to our institution.

2. Content and teaching methodologies

   Our curriculum compares favorably with that of other institutions offering similar credentials. We did engage a consultant to write our curriculum to ensure that we are consistent with all the necessary requirements. We do also conduct classroom lecturers, sit-in examinations and field projects for each course taught. This

ensures that a student relates knowledge with ministry needs found on the ground. Lastly, every student is required to write a project before they graduate.

3. Lecturers

Lecturers form a central part of our program. For this reason, we intentional recruit from different denominations, and institutions of learning. We do insist that only those from institutions recognized by the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) are eligible to render their services with us. We also assign mentors to walk with our students.

4. Environment

Our learning environment is a big priority. We expose our students to a relaxed and serene environment. This provides an opportunity for the students to interact with others but have time for personal reflection.

VII. Conclusion

Theological training is more than transmission of information. It is a creation of a new worldview. We hope that as the spiritual leaders engage is such a process, the impact would be felt in the wider society.

A. Good News Theological College & Seminary, Accra, Ghana

The Good News TheologicalCollege and Seminary is an instution that was founded in 1971 to provide theological and ministerial training primarily for leaders and members of African Independent Churches. Missionaries from the Mennonite Mission Network, leaders of AICs in Ghana, and some scholars and pastors

of mainline western founded churches colloborated to establish the seminary, which was previously known as Good News Training Institute.

The Good News Theological College and Seminary began by offering certificates in Pastoral leadership but today it offers a two-year Diploma in Pastoral Ministry and a four-year Bachelor of Theology programmes. These two programmes have been accredited by the National Accreditation Board of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Ghana. Majority of the lectures are either leaders or members of AICs. In fact the minimum academic requirement for lecturers of the College and Seminary is a Master of Arts degree or its equivalence in a researchable subject. The seminary publishes a periodic academic journal, called, *Journal of African Instituted Church Theology.*

The accrediation of the College and Seminary and her programmes are indications of the high standard of education among AICs. In this regard Good News Theological College and Seminary is affiliated to the Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture, a reputable educational institution that places high premium on educationa standards. AICs are proud of the Good News Theological College and Seminary for being able to go through the rigorous academic and quality assurance requirements of a national accreditation board and be accredited.

B. Conclusion

The African Instituted Churches process of training has moved from non-formal training though observed as formal internally. There may not have been awards in print in the former but now it is a requirement to a candidate who has under gone training (for the individual and for the church). The requirements of governments

from church institutions seeking for accreditation (as in many countries in Africa accreditation is done by govenrmet) comensurate with meeting standards of quality assurance.
Consequantly, the direction taken by OAIC to enhance quality training in AICs demands that policies to safegurd quality are developed and observed. It is for this noble purpose that the OAIC has endeavoured to accompany the AICs to realise appropriate and quality training.

A journey of hope though bumpy will never tire one determined to reach the destination. Those that have travelled ahead on the journey are worthy to give support and advice in the space as this one created by WOCATI in this conference (sharing).

Standard of Quality Assurance in Asia

Ravi Tiwari

I. Preamble

There are many associations/ organizations/ institutions/ universities/ deemed universities in Asia that are also involved in theological education, we can only note of their presence, and their part of contribution can only be noted here, and a discussion can be suspended over them. Theological Education in World Christianity, a joint report of ETE-WCC and WOCATI-2009 noted that there are 50 affiliated institution of SSC (Senate of Serampore College), 100 to ATA (Asian Theological Association), 105 to Association of Theological Schools in south East Asia (ATESIA) and 70 to Indian Institute of Missiology (IIM). I am told that there are more than 2000 theological seminaries/colleges/bible schools/ missionary training institutes in India alone. It may be helpful if we take a note that this presentation is centered on Serampore experience, and it does not cover other regions in Asia.

Serampore is an university which is established under a Danish Charter (1827), and an Act of the State Assembly (1918), with power to award degree in any branch/branches of knowledge. It now offers degrees only in Christian Theology, thus it is only university in India which offers degree in theology. Serampore College as University has to follow, as a general policy, the norms and rules applied in sister universities in India. Serampore is an affiliating university system under a body, termed as Senate. Senate is responsible to frame courses of studies, rules for the conduct of examination and determine the qualifications, and eligibility of

candidates for different degrees and diplomas conferred by the Council.

II. Introductory Remarks

A. Theological education in Serampore System is open, all-embracing and ecumenical.

1. Serampore has been ecumenical in word and action throughout its history. First Council, the Supreme Governing Body of the College, mandated that one of the members of Council (one out of there, i.e. 33% at that time in 1833) shall be other than the Baptist. Senate which conducts the academic administration of the University is also legally bound to be an ecumenical body, comprised of members resenting all the major denominations in India.
2. Colleges are also affiliated without any denominational prejudice and discrimination. One should note that theological education, in India, is becoming more and more inclusive in nature and there is a tendency towards dilution of Exclusivism in our system. Some may complain that there is a strong prejudice against certain segments and strands of Christianity (Conservatives, Fundamentalists, and Evangelicals, Charismatic, Pentecostal etc.) within our family. As staff and students from other traditions, regions and language groups, are now joining our systems, we are called upon to be inclusive and ecumenical enough within us.
3. Serampore, therefore, emphasizes the importance of cultivating an ecumenical perspective, which it believes must be informed by one's own inherited ecclesiastical tradition as well

as by other traditions in the Indian religious context, and developing an open-minded and respectful attitude towards others, without giving up one's own beliefs and traditions and at the same time be constructively critical to both one's beliefs and traditions and those of others.

B. The Perspective of Senate of Serampore College (University) on theological education takes the context of plurality in all seriousness.

It is aptly stated in the Constitution of One National Structure for Theological Education In India: Set in the midst of people of other faiths and ideologies, as well as situations of life–negating forces, we are called to equip the whole people of God to respond to the contextual challenges, critically and creatively, by being faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the light of this faith and self-understanding, we seek to equip ministers, leaders, scholars and the whole people of God, to be committed to creative discernment of and active participation in God's liberative mission in the world at large, and in south Asia in particular, by providing programmes of theological study and ministerial formation at various levels through affiliated colleges.

C. Aims and Objectives of Theological Education

1. Along with the above mentioned paradigm, the Senate tries to involve itself in helping affiliated institutions to provide relevant curriculum for training ministers, leaders, scholars and the whole people of God engaged in the salvic and liberative mission in the world.
2. It strives towards the broad goal of equipping the

people of God and the congregations, in their respective contexts, to live out the doxological-liturgical, *koinonial*, reflective, *∂iakonal* and missional dimensions of their existence, with a strong commitment to the liberation of the down-trodden (dalits, adivasis, tribals, women, the disabled, persons infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, etc.). Reconciliation among all human beings (particularly in the multi-religious and pluralistic contexts), and integration and renewal of God's wider creation (particularly in the context of ecological crises) are also a part of it.

3. The aim of theological education, therefore, is to cultivate an integral and holistic spirituality that would enable the students to be sustained in their commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and be committed to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their living out the truth and values of the Gospel, thereby helping them become faithful and effective ministers/ teachers/ servant leaders in and through the Church and society.

4. Thus, the academic, professional and personal/ communitarian and vocational formation of candidates are taken seriously under the Serampore theological education system.

D. Standard of Qualify Assurance in Serampore System Has Following Set-ups:

1. Evaluation of Colleges Through Evaluation Commission

As Serampore became an affiliating university in 1918, it had to set some conditions for the colleges to comply with. They were to submit a clear statement of qualifications of its staff, general character and equipment of its institution, and give an undertaking

to report to the Senate any changes that may take place in the staff situation of the institution. Now institutions have to apply and fill an elaborate self-evaluation Performa. An Evaluation Commission is appointed to visit applicant colleges and give an elaborate report on the staff position, general character of the college, buildings and equipments, finances, library, etc to the senate with recommendation. It is the Senate which takes final decision.

2. Senate through its academic council work out degree programme, curriculum and syllabuses, involving affiliated colleges, churches and secular educators. Council of Serampore College has the final say on these matters.

3. Board of Moderators deals with cases of maintaining quality and purity in examination and evaluation systems.

Grading, class; Internal assessment; External assessment, Mode of Examinations- Assignments-reading, project, term papers, verbatim, participatory; Written; Viva-voce- interactive; examination for practical courses.

Evaluation: Serampore has a Centralized evaluation system though affiliated colleges have freedom to examine and evaluate answer-scripts of their students. Their grades are accepted by the Senate and students are given credit for that. The final grading is the alphabetic (Qualitative) and numerical (Quantitative).

III. Theological Education in Asian Context

A. Context

1. Asian context-no uniformity, Plural, multi-

religious, multi-cultural, multi-political system; sectarian, secular; democratic/ideological/ authoritarian/religious, multi city (Kung)

2. Dominant religion- Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, indigenous religions.

3. Christianity is a minority religion in most of the Asian countries.

4. Economically, most of the nations in the region can be classified as undeveloped/ developing/developed

5. Social structures- are diverse (tribal/class/ caste, agriculture-industrial, rural-urban, rich-poor divide, deprivation/exploitation of large masses; human right issues, gender justice)

Theological education in Asian context has to be for the entire people of God. There is no doubt that in the early days of evangelization, theological colleges, as missionary centres, built up structures that were to support the missionary concerns. For long, theological colleges were considered as centres where pastors, evangelists, missionaries and church professionals were educated in order that they may preserve and propagate certain Christian truths and ethical norms. Now there is general agreement that theological colleges are meant to educate entire people of God so that authentic Christ-centered communities are formed. This dimension of theological education needs to be recognized and strengthened.

Mission and missionary motifs are still primary concern of the Christian communities in this continent. It is praxis oriented and contextual, demanding total commitment with changed life-style of whole people of God. It has to involve the whole church and has to become an instrument of the church in equipping the believer to be an active agent of the liberative mission of God through witness, service and teaching. Theological

education, in Asian context, ought to have missiological dimension and there should be addition of relevant courses from time to time. The whole program should be under a rationalized nomenclature, which would enable the students to make choices in accordance with their interest in ministry. Included in this, there should be a dynamic process of incorporating regional and contextual issues either within the existing syllabi of a course, or by developing new courses.

Gradual shift from the understanding of theological education for pastoral ministry to education for the diversified ministry of whole people of God provided a opportunity to Serampore to introduce a few courses for the informed laity of the church and the society. Courses meant for the laity are consciously devoid of pastoral component, which we often find in the ministerial programmes and are external in nature; they are also less in numbers of courses required. Furthermore, many issues/areas that have impinged on theological education in recent times, since the advent of liberation theology, and which have exerted sufficient pressure to ensure that they cannot be ignored in the process of ministerial formation, has forced the theological curriculum to move far beyond the limits of traditional accepted courses of study.

B. Instruments for Theological Education

1. Theological university system (only for Christians), such as Serampore is unique example in Asian contest.
2. Secular university system- through Christian Study Departments- is also an example which is now followed in many countries. Theological studies are available to all, irrespective of religious affiliation of the students. Some of the department

of Christian studies are established by the churches and are staffed by the churches; some departments are inclusive as they offer studies in all religious traditions.

3. Deemed university system is being introduced in some countries like India where centres of specialized fields are recognized and conferred university status. Some of them are offering theological courses and degrees. This field is yet untested as some of them are receiving government funds which is supposed to be secular.

4. Accredited institutions- ATESEA, IIM, ATA, are purely private in nature, though following discipline of the accrediting body.

5. Independent school system have their own diploma/degree system and authority to grant such diploma/degrees.

6. External based institutional system-distance/ electronic education.

C. Standard of quality assurance under different systems

This is measured/assessed through different apparatus:

1. Evaluation of Institution- some criteria is set to take an objective view.

2. Centralized examination system for grant of degrees/diplomas

3. Self-evaluation system, providing opportunity to colleges to assess themselves.

IV. Towards Standard of Quality Assurance in Asia

A. Preliminaries

1. Theological education is the backbone of the

Church and Christian community everywhere without exception, more so in our context in Asia. In our context, churches depend upon us to provide theological education to their candidates for pastoral as well diversified ministries. The task, consequently, upon those who provide theological education though is noble, involves greater responsibility and accountability. Some mechanism for quality assurance in theological institutions and education is not only necessary, but desirable.

2. Quality can be defined differently in different contexts; it can be looked at-from zero defects to 'fitness for purpose'. In reference to theological education, quality means that education process is such that it ensures students achieve their goals and thereby satisfies the need of the church and society.

3. Quality sometimes defined as 'fitness by purpose at minimum cost to the society'. As quality in theological education is priority for us, we need to achieve it keeping in mind the issues of relevance, cost, equity and international standards. We should also be concerned with the promotion of a culture of quality within our institutions and have to spell out the elements of this culture.

4. There is constant need to assess quality in our system, and seek ways to improve upon:

    a. How we have handled such challenges: It may be that we require different sets of leadership in our institutions to bring out changes, or need more decentralization, dialogic and democratic style of functioning and management to maintain quality in theological education.

    b. We are discussing the question of 'control' and ownership' within our system. How do we generate a sense of ownership among the staff so that they are motivated to align themselves to

institutional goals and give their best? How do we convince the management (Churches in most cases, Governing Boards, in others) to own the institutions, and not to control?

c. Planning and resources are needed to watch constantly any pitfall in quality in our systems; monitoring and evaluation is to become part of all processes, systems and sub-systems; and a continuous quest for excellence is required.

d. With the increasing convergence of face-to-face, open and distance learning and e-Learning systems, we need to evolve separate quality assurance mechanism instead of applying the same criteria we apply to other systems.

e. There is a criticism, perhaps valid, that the Quality Assurance Agencies (like Serampore) are becoming exclusive clubs, and questions are being asked about our credibility; who is to accredit the accreditors?

B. Instruments of Maintaining Quality

I have no doubt that every one involved in theological education is conscious of the quality that it propose to provide; so also the credibility and acceptance of its programmes by the church and society. Therefore, quality assurance is the responsibility of everyone in an educational institution, though the top management sets the policies and priorities. As a consequence, assuring quality should be a continuous and ongoing process. It should not be considered as a one time activity for accreditation/affiliation alone.

Serampore, since 2006, is using criteria which are developed by National assessment and Accreditation council (NAAC) for assessing universities and

colleges; it has been quite helpful and useful. I will take some more time now to analyze and prepare a report on the basis of form I have received.

Quality assurance is assessed in the following way:

1. Self-evaluation as per the guidelines provided: Real quality that is sustainable is one that is assessed by self; gives strength and limitation of an institution to itself and to others; this helps for improvement;
2. Leads to completion-good or bad (manipulation of marks/results, extra teaching, personal attention; more equipments etc.)
3. Identifying pre-determined criteria for assessment
4. Peer review by a panel of expert; evaluation team: meeting with Principal, staff, students, visiting class rooms, hostel, staff residences, library.
    a. External quality monitoring- mandatory/ voluntary; checks reports, record and policies, interviews;
    b. Internal quality monitoring by Academic Council, Planning Boards, Executive Committee, Boards of Studies etc;
    c. Problem with autonomous body (invasion on autonomy, academic freedom,
5. Analysis of impression/information, report and recommendation
6. Final decision by the committee

Summary: self evaluation, bench marking and external quality monitoring. Evaluation is a continued process, is supposed to be repeated every five years/at the time of new affiliations at MTh/DTh levels. There has to be different criteria for distance education/research, though they are substantially the same in all cases.

C. Comments and Suggestions

1. Assessing the Assessors
   a. One may note that we have not been able to assess ourselves as a university/ accrediting body, which can be an extension of the assessment of colleges affiliated to the Senate. We need an outside body to asses us under following: curricula; teaching-learning and evaluation; research, consultancy and evaluation; infra-structure and learning resources; student support and progression; governance and leadership; innovative practices.
   b. This may amount to suggesting formation of an external body in each of the accrediting/affiliating systems in theological education that are functioning in the region/ sub-region. Common/combined evaluation team for affiliation/accreditation can also be helpful. Some thought can be given to this.
2. Association of Accrediting/Affiliating Institutions
   a. Multiplicity of accrediting bodies has to be taken serious note of, and some where its implication to theological education should have to be discussed. In this context, we should think of a National/International association of accrediting/affiliating institutions engaged in Theological education, as suggestion is worthy for consideration.
3. Exchange Forum
   a. There has been a long-standing need for national and international exchange forum where different theological accrediting bodies/ systems can have a time for interaction and

exchange of concerns and ideas, such an association will be most helpful in Asian context. It may meet once a while for sharing, common understanding, and planning for joint programme. The difficulties associated with division along doctrinal/theological perspectives can be set aside with mutual trust and commitment.

4. Network for Quality Assurance Agencies
   a. We are living in an age of global village, but terribly lack in our contact with each other. There is a need for a notional/ international network for quality assurance agencies in theological education to collect and disseminate information on current and developing theory and practice on the assessment, improvement and maintenance of quality in theological education. It can provide advice and expertise to assist, facilitate link between accrediting bodies, assist credit transfer schemes for migrating students and provide information about dubious accrediting practices and organizations.
5. Closer Cooperation
   a. We need to have some kind of active cooperation, and participation in, the process of working our academic programmes irrespective of our affiliations /accreditations in order to be more relevant in our vocation in training misters for Christian. This may be in some of the areas, such as these:
   b. Preparation of Common Syllabus, incorporating minimum/maximum contents with emphasis on Contextual syllabuses/ courses. We should be sensitive enough, and nothing should prevent us not to be helpful,

and flexible enough, in incorporating courses dealing with the concerns of present day in our curriculum, such as issues of Dalits, Minjung, women, indigenous groups; socio-cultural, political and religious movements; rise of communalism, fundamentalism, terrorism and globalization; threat to environment, eco-system, global warming, denuclearization etc. Our task is to equip the students with enough critical tools to be able to relate and integrate class-room theory, practical pastoral situations, and present day socio-religio-economic-political context including sensitivity to the needs and feelings of other people, gender, groups etc.

c. Cross-over mechanism- for mutual/ conditional recognition. Principles of mutual recognition need to be worked out and their and some efforts towards their recognition and acceptance have to be made. This can be worked out through

1. Agreed Equivalence System
2. Qualifying, or comprehensive Examination; short/tailor made course system, external system;
3. Agreed structure for admission process

d. New ways of providing theological education: Common minimalism in theological education

1. E-Theological Education to counter isolationism
2. Distance theological education
3. Theological education in multi-religious setting

e. Resource deficit: Many theological institutions are facing scarcity of resources;

this is leading to related problem- effecting library resources, brain drain, weak infra-structure, poor quality in management etc. Others have inefficiency in managing human resources, budgets and infra-structure assets. Sharing and closer cooperation will help

f. Pedagogy: Quality in teaching (pedagogy) and lack of research opportunity. Theological education has never taken this task seriously. Teaching element, pedagogical aspect, was never included in our structure of curriculum. Courses in Christian Education do have a few segments on it but it is not sufficient to help our graduate to be skillful as a teacher. Whether we have a course in pedagogy in curriculum or not, the college should evolve its own way in preparing its students to be an efficient teacher wherever they are. Time has come that we take some steps to train our teachers in theological seminaries and colleges. Specialized institutes, offering degree/diploma courses, can be established; regular training programmes for teachers can be offered through regular fresher' courses, seminars and consultations.

1. Context oriented teaching methodology has to be preferred than the content based. It means that the ministerial needs of the church and society should be given freedom to determine the nature of theological education. It calls upon the seminaries to participate in the ministry of liberation of the oppressed and marginalized, exploited and the weaker section of the society and working towards its transformation into the reign of God.

2. There should have to be a paradigm shift from disciplines to issue-oriented learning. Such a structure would address the contemporary issues, problems and concerns of the church and society from biblical, theological, ethical, sociological and other perspectives would facilitate dynamic relevance. The introduction of inter-disciplinary and integrated courses, in the past, was a conscious effort on the part of Senate towards that shift, but it failed to encourage group and team teaching within our system and could not deliver desired result.
3. This also involves another shift, from class–room to out-of-class learning, from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning. The courses and teaching method applied needs to be radically changed in order to establish new form of understanding and relationship between the teacher and pupil.
4. Another shift that is required concerns with reducing the load of the students: from unwieldy to the manageable curriculum. Most of the desired aspects and effects from the study of variety of subjects that are now included in our curricula can be tapped by means of offering a few courses. Course that are inter-disciplinary in nature may be more helpful; so also preparing more integrated courses that can be taught by a few teachers from different branches.
5. Theological education and ministerial formation is a life-long process, and it does

not end at the conclusion of first-degree programme. We need to work out a programme that supports the process even after student leaves the seminary.

G. Curricula Revision-Parameters

Much of our curriculum and syllabuses are the one which were given to us by the earlier generation; and we have mostly followed them faithfully. Our resources hardly allowed us to review them and come out with new innovative ideas and programmes.

The issue has often been raised that context concerns should be included in the theological curriculum. Context of economic poverty, social injustice, religious and cultural plurality, political oppression etc. should be addressed in theological education and ministerial formation.

Relevant theological education should have to take the contextual concern seriously and should have to include them in its curricula. Certainly each region, perhaps even each country, would have issues peculiar to their contexts which should find space in a theological curriculum offered by institutions in that area. However, it should not be necessary for issues that are clearly confined to a region/country to be a part of continental curriculum.

The curriculum should strive for cultivating academic excellence, practical skills and personal formation. Theological colleges should not be mere degree-oriented institutions but disciple training centres.

Personal formation should be extended beyond individual formation to community formation.
It is often pointed out the theological education is primarily urban-oriented where the needs of the rural churches are side lined. The same is true of the ministry

of churches. Pastors and ministers needs to be prepared for the rural churches and courses with specialization in rural ministry should be introduced in our theological curricula.

D. Contextual/regional concerns:

The institutions in our continent may have to deal with the following issues in their curriculum, and perhaps develop specific courses for understanding and interpreting the mission of the church, and for the proclamation of the Gospel:

1. The rise of religious fundamentalism that has pervaded the ideologies of political parties,
2. The rise of violence against Christians by groups claiming to have the backing of political parties or religious groups, the indifference of law and order and other authorities to these incidents unless pressure is brought to bear on them from higher authorities, and the helplessness of the courts in curbing these incidents and bringing culprits to book.
3. The socio-economic condition of the majority of Christians in the continent,
4. The shortage of qualified theological teachers in the region,
5. The plight of regional language institutions as qualified teachers are rare;
6. Freedom to colleges to add regional concerns to present courses and develop new courses, which would introduce contextual concerns and keep theological education relevant to the issues faced by the people;
7. Mission concern is an area, which is highlighted by many churches. One way of doing this to penetrate and spread the subjects dealing

with mission over all branches of study in the basic and essential study of ministerial formation at graduate level so that it may reach the congregation through the minister. Of course, the course should be introduced at Master's level too.

8. Concern for lack of personal and public morality among those who are entrusted with responsibilities. Personal and spiritual formation needs special attention.

9. With the introduction of multiple of degree programmes and courses, we often miss our priorities. A trained Christian theologian is expected to be professionally competent person in his/her respective field of training. We seem to produce ministers and theologians not competent enough in Christian discourses and spirituality. This may be contributing towards alienation of major segment of our community.

10. Theological courses for all: Laity oriented theological education; Theological regulation for informed People of other faiths (Inter-faith oriented courses).

V. Recommendations

A. We may think of an international support-group for quality assurance in Asia.

B. We should try to work out evaluation criteria, such as we have in India under NACC as applicable to theological education in our context.

C. Composition, terms of reference, methodology and other administrative aspects can be discussed in details.

Standards for Quality Assurance and Improvement in Europe

Reinhold Bernhardt

In the following presentation I leave out all the questions related to *accreditation* of institutions and programmes. I also set aside all questions related to assurance and development of quality in the fields of *research* and *administration*. Instead I focus on *education*, i.e., on teaching and learning. The debate on quality standards for education in general and theological education in particular refers not primarily to the *contents* of teaching but to the *pedagogical* aspects in a broad sense, which comprises not only teaching classes but all the components of learning processes: personal and financial resources, the qualifications of the teaching staff, the development of programmes and curricula, the definition of teaching objectives and requirements for achieving degrees, learning resources (libraries and computer-facilities), student support, information for prospective students, and so on. Teaching and learning processes can be studied under the aspects of the precondition (respectively resources), the structures, the performance, and the outcome. The outcome can be determined in terms of the achievement of knowledge or in a broader sense in terms of achieving competencies, which include skills, abilities, attitudes, forms of communication, and so on. Quality-management applies to all of those dimensions. It refers to planning, performance, and evaluation of the learning processes. Evaluation consists in permanent monitoring and assessment of all the dimensions of the process and it can be performed using internal (self-evaluation) and external (peer-evaluation)

methods of measurements.

I. The Institutional Framework

Quality management depends on the system in which theological education is organized. Thus we have to take a look first at that systemic framework. Theological education in the German speaking countries of Europe – on which I will focus – is split into an academic-studies part and the more practical part. The practical education for prospective *teachers* is conducted by state institutions, the practical education of *pastors* by church-run seminaries. The *academic* studies in theology on the other hand are normally performed at state universities. Thus quality assurance and improvement in theological education is part of the quality management of the state universities. Theological faculties define their quality standards within the framework developed by the university as a whole. And the universities are embedded first in national networks of universities and secondly in European associations of academic institutions, such as the "European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education" (ENQA). The "European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education" issued "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (Bergen 2005) and the universities have to comply with those standards.

Theological faculties are located in a triangle of academia, the churches, and the scientific community. The expectations from those three authorities are different and accordingly the quality standards which they propose vary. Churches, for example, are interested that at least the classic canon of theological disciplines (Biblical Studies, History of the Church and of Theology, Systematic and Practical Theology) is taught comprehensively. For the Roman Catholic church

canonical law is also important.[35] The universities are interested in applying formal standards and procedures to all the faculties, which allow a precise cost-benefit analysis. The scientific community is interested in publications and in the output of excellent young scholars. In the interference of those three fields of force the theological faculties have to determine and apply standards of quality. But they are not free to set their standards independently, as the churches can do for the practical training of prospective pastors. The faculties can only render the rather general norms set by the university administration more precisely and apply them to their own needs, conditions, and structures.

A theological seminary run by a church (like a Presbyterian seminary for example) is able to set different norms of quality than an academic faculty can do. The theological seminary, for example, can regard spiritual growth of the students, or loyalty to a certain confession or to a certain way of theological thinking as an important objective to achieve. Its quality management then will consist in selecting a staff and creating a curriculum which guarantees that those aims can be reached. Quality management will focus on how effective those measures are, in terms of the intended purpose of the educational process.

A theological faculty, on the other hand, will focus on more intellectual qualifications and accordingly will consider quality as a matter of improving cognitive skills. Developing quality standards first of all requires determination of the *qualifications* which should be achieved (by "qualifications" I don't mean degrees but competencies): What knowledge should be transferred? Which skills are desirable? What is the supposed outcome of the educational process?

At a theological faculty of a state university the professors are expected to train not only pastors for the

ministry but also teachers for public schools, scholars who strive for academic positions, and students from other disciplines who come to theology classes in order to collect some credit points. Thus it is required to train more the "brain" and the less the "heart" and the "hand" of the students. Spiritual development is not, and is not allowed to be, part of the curriculum.

That may be regarded as a disadvantage of our system of theological education. Its advantage, on the other hand, lies in its openness to other academic disciplines and to the secular society, in its high intellectual standards, and its striving for critical reflection.

I summarize the sketched system in the following scheme:

In the following points of my presentation I focus on *academic* studies in theology and refer to the different institutional levels on which questions of quality assurance and enhancement are debated. I begin with the highest level.

II. The European level: Quality-standards of the "European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education" (ENQA)

The ENQA defined seven standards and guidelines for (internal) quality assurance within higher education institutions. I quote and summarize them:[36]

A. "Institutions should have a *policy* and associated *procedures* for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should

develop and implement a *strategy* for the continuous enhancement of quality."[37]

B. Programmes and awards: "Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards." They are expected to develop and publish intended learning outcomes; to pay attention to curriculum and programme design and content; to specify needs of different modes of delivery (e.g., full time, part-time, distance-learning, e-learning) and types of higher education (e.g., academic, vocational, professional), to ensure the availability of appropriate learning resources. They should guarantee that programme approval procedures are developed; that the progress and achievements of students is monitored; and that the programmes are periodically reviewed. They should try to get regular feedback from students, employers, labour market representatives, and other relevant organisations.

C. Assessment of students: "Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently." The achievement of the intended learning outcomes has to be permanently measured. The assessment procedures should have clear and appropriate criteria for marking. The assessment should not rely on the judgements of single examiners and should be subject to administrative verification checks. Thus not only teaching but also testing and examination processes are to be included in the quality assurance and improvement procedures.

D. Quality of teaching staff: "Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so." Teachers need to be qualified not only with respect to the subjects they are teaching, but also pedagogically. They must have the necessary skills and experience to transmit their knowledge and understanding effectively to students. The staff recruitment and appointment procedures must ensure that all new staff have those competences. Teaching staff should be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching capacity and should be encouraged to value their skills. Poor teachers are to be removed from their teaching duties if they are not able to improve their skills.

E. Learning resources and student support: "Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered." Libraries, computing facilities and human support in the form of tutors, counselors, and other advisers are to be provided and permanently improved. The effectiveness of the support services is to be routinely monitored.

F. Information systems: "Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities." They need to develop institutional self-knowledge. That means to collect data about: student progression and success rates, employability of graduates, students' satisfaction with their programmes,

effectiveness of teachers, profile of the student population, learning resources available and their costs, and so on.

G. Public information: "Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering." Prospective students should be informed about the programmes, their intended learning outcomes, the qualifications the institution award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students.

III. The Level of The National Associations of Higher Education: "The Swiss University Conference"

In most European countries there are national associations of universities; in the case of Switzerland it is the Swiss University Conference (SUK/CUS), which issued guidelines for quality assurance in 2006.[38] The universities are required to develop and publish a strategy and a working system for quality assurance and enhancement, and to establish a culture of quality. The central pillars of it are:

- The periodic (internal) *evaluation* of (a) teaching processes, programmes, and curricula, (b) the procedures for assessing the students, (c) the results of teaching, research and services and (d) resources, (e) equal gender participation and (f) the infrastructure of education.
- *Human resource development* by continuing pedagogical education of the teaching staff, and support for the junior staff, especially of women.
- *Information-based planning*: The universities collect

relevant data for all their strategic decisions concerning research, teaching programmes, and the recruitment and development of their staff.

- *Communication*: The universities report the procedures and results of their quality management inwardly to the different groups within the university and outwardly to the public.

Those regulations are a very formal "letter-of-intent." They do not suggest or require certain measures but initiate a process and create a framework of general key points. The particular universities have to implement them and render them more precisely.

IV. The Level of The Universities: Evaluation of Courses at the University of Basle.

In 2006 the University of Basle launched a quality enhancement programme.[39] Part of this programme involves the evaluation of classes. As one example of measures of quality control and development I pick that measure out of a much broader conception and take a look at the current debate, as it is recorded in a recent draft.[40] I want to show how the evaluation of courses is supposed to work and where its problems lie.[41] The suggested procedure involves three groups of persons: teachers, students, and directors of studies, who are in charge of the curricula. Other stakeholders – like members of the scientific community or prospective employers – are not immediately involved, but their assumed perspectives should be taken into account. Every group has its own understanding of what quality is and how it could be assured, controlled, and enhanced. Quality standards for good practice in organizing learning processes cannot be set once for all times but have to be negotiated in an ongoing process. The decisive

body is the teaching administration of the university in cooperation with representatives of the faculties.

Once the standards are set, then the actual teaching and learning processes have to be audited according to them. It must be determined whether the processes meet the standards, and if so, to what degree. Different procedures of indirect and direct evaluation are possible. Indirect evaluation uses appropriate means to assess student's learning success by testing whether they have reached the predefined learning objectives. Direct evaluation asks for students' estimation of the class. The draft I refer to focuses on the direct evaluation.
It requests first that teachers enter into a permanent dialogue with the students about their progress of learning. At the beginning of the semester they should present the teaching and learning objectives, offer means of receiving feedback and encourage the students to make use of that possibility. During the semester they should periodically ask the students whether their learning progress is proceeding successfully, and whether there are obstacles that impede the process or impulses that should be strengthened. Different forms of communication between the teachers and the students may be used: oral conversation, e-mail, questionnaire, or an online form. The University of Basle has developed an online tool which allows students to give a structured feedback anonymously to their teachers.

Second, the draft suggests that the teachers give feedback to the students. They should expound their view on the learning process and give hints to the students how to improve it.
The third suggestion is that the teachers ought to inform the director of studies of their respective faculties about the performance of the class, the feedback of the students and his/her own impression of the teaching and learning process, and receive a kind of supervision from him or

her. In cases where the student feedback indicates continuing problems with a teacher, the director of studies must suggest measures to improve the didactic quality or the curricular conditions. For example, the size of the group can be reduced, the style of teaching changed, or the modes of examination modified. "Intervision" (mutual class visitations of teachers), supervision, or coaching can be recommended. If those suggestions do not lead to better results, the director of studies can inform the dean of the faculty, who then decides what further steps should be taken. In the worst case a poor teacher could be removed from teaching and entrusted with other tasks in the administration of the faculty or in research projects.

On the other hand, the faculties are encouraged to acknowledge and reward *good* practice in teaching. The results of those evaluations should have an influence on assigning temporary and permanent teaching positions and on the promotion of teachers.

The evaluation is not an end in itself, but is meant to influence the conception and performance of future courses. Thus evaluation and development of courses form a permanent circle. Concerning the *practical realization* of the suggestions, many questions remain open. Should the director of studies rely on the information conveyed by the teacher? Or should he or she have access to the online-evaluation-system? Or should he/she get directly in touch with the students to discuss didactic problems with them? The permanent assessment of courses is in effect an assessment of the teacher. That may put the teacher under enormous pressure. Is the director of studies counselor or evaluator and judge? What is the role of the faculty administration and of the dean? How could a system of gratification and penalisation be established? And so on.

But the more crucial questions are: What will be

the effects on the relationships within the faculty? How will the competition among the teaching staff influence collegiality? Will the attention given to the student's evaluations lead him/her to lower the requirements the students have to meet? Will the teachers be tempted to be everybody's darling? Will they customize the level of teaching to the weakest students in order to get good feedback from them?

The standards and guidelines issued by the ENQA, by the national association of higher education institutions, and by the universities are rather formal and applicable to all academic disciplines. They do not determine what quality means in regard to particular disciplines. They do not describe the best practises in theology, medical studies, jurisprudence, and so forth. Instead they suggest formal procedures and methods. Quality management includes all the means which assure and improve the teaching processes, measured by its outcome – which means: by the achievement of the knowledge and skills associated with the intended qualification. Quality management aims at good practice. But what is good practice in theology? What is the intended qualification? What part of that qualification is knowledge and what part are the skills associated with that qualification? Those questions must be answered by the faculties. Thus I move now to the level of the particular faculties and focus on theological faculties. The discussion I am most familiar with is the discussion in my own faculty. Thus let me give you an impression of the way we dealt with the questions at stake.

V. The Level of The Theological Faculties: Defining Teaching Objectives

In the course of the so-called Bologna reform (1999) we had to redesign our curricula and to define teaching

objectives for all the modules of the programmes. In 2006 we elaborated a conception for quality assurance and development. It defines quality of education in the following areas: curricula, teaching, examinations, information, counseling, and continuing education. I will focus on the first three points.

A. Curricula

1. Academic proficiency: The theological education should strive for a high scholarly level, based on research, and aiming at imparting profound knowledge, relevant skills, and the ability of critical reflection to the students.
2. Basic education and specialization: The students should gain solid knowledge of the basics in theology and get the opportunity to delve into fields of special interest. Teachers are encouraged to introduce the students to their own fields of research.
3. Interdisciplinarity: Theological curricula are open to other academic disciplines, relate to them, and oblige the students to gain a certain amount of credit points from other faculties.
4. Relevance for current social issues: The curricula must reflect on religion in culture and society and be sensitive to changes in that respect.
5. Professionalism: The curricula prepare students for executive positions in church and society as far as religious affairs are concerned.
6. Didactic quality: The curricula give clear descriptions of the objectives, contents and performance of teaching as well as of the examinations. The given structures should

leave space for optional studies.

7. Mobility: Students should have the option of moving to other theological faculties easily. That requires that the curricular modules are compatible with those at other faculties.

B. Teaching

1. Research-based teaching: Students should be introduced in research processes and results, so that they can develop an interest in sharpening their own fields of expertise and possibly going beyond the canon of classical theological knowledge, discovering new insights and ways of thinking. Community of learning: The teachers understand themselves as members of a learning community. Their competencies cover not only academic excellence but also pedagogical and linguistic-rhetorical skills.
2. Comprehensive advancement of students: Not only their intellectual but also their social, emotional, and ethical potentials are to be fostered.
3. Clear announcement of courses: A syllabus describes the setup of the course and the methods of teaching, and names the teaching objectives for the course and the requirements which the students have to meet.
4. Didactics of the classes: The teacher has to be engaged and well prepared, presents the subject matters in a clear and illustrated way. He/she uses supporting media, like Power-Point, handouts, scripts, and so on. He/she applies varying didactic methods, and allows questions and discussions. By this means a

positive learning atmosphere is created, which maximizes learning success.

C. Examinations

1. Transparency: An important feature of quality is the transparency of the requirements, the examination procedures, and the assessment criteria.
2. Preparation and appraisal session: The examiners should give all the necessary information beforehand and feedback afterwards. They should explain the results of the assessment to the students and counsel them on how to improve their performance in future examinations.
3. Sensitivity: The examiners are sensitive to the worry and anxiety of the students and try to help them to cope with such psychic stress.
4. Student Feedback: The students should have the opportunity to give feedback to the examiner, in which they comment on the fairness of the procedure and its result. If a student regards the examination as unfair, he/she must be able to appeal to the director of studies or another superior authority. The faculties may consider installing the position of an ombudsman.
5. Evaluation: The examination procedures must be evaluated regularly.

D. Instruction

In the instruction for studying theology at our faculty we furthermore defined eight sets of competencies – sets of knowledge and skills which our students should acquire:

religious-theological, hermeneutical, historical, systematic, ethical, linguistic-relational, social and practical skills.[42]

1. "Religious-Theological:" Students develop the ability to reflect on theological and philosophical questions, consider their own religious convictions critically, develop a well-thought-out opinion and learn to communicate it. In his "Brief Outline of the Study of Theology," Schleiermacher wrote: "It is to be demanded of *every* Evangelical Theologian that he be occupied in the formation of a *personal conviction* with regard to all *passages*, properly so called of the System of Doctrine" (§ 219).
2. "Hermeneutical:" Not only to the exegesis and understanding of biblical texts but also to the perception and interpretation of religious phenomena and concepts in history and in the present cultural environment.
3. "Historical:" Students develop an increased awareness of different historical contexts. They learn to understand scriptural texts and sources from the history of the church and of theology in reference to their specific place and time of origin. They are able to participate in debates on methodological and material questions of historical interpretations.
4. "Systematic:" Students are able to analyze theological and philosophical concepts and argumentations, and to develop their own thoughts in a structured and reasonable way.
5. "Ethical:" Students gain the capacity to reflect on normative contents of the Christian tradition, participate in discourses on current ethical questions, and suggest solutions for the debated questions.
6. Linguistic and Rhetorical Competence:

Students gain sensibility in perceiving and using language. They learn to realize different functions of language, different language-games, and nuances in oral and written communication. They can speak and write to express themselves in a variety of forms depending on the particular situation.

7. Social Competence: Students cultivate forms of behaviour which allow dialogical, open-hearted, sober, and respectful patterns of communication. That includes offering and taking criticism. Students are able to deal constructively with differences in opinions and convictions.

8. "Practical:" Students understand forms of religious practice performed by individuals or by institutions like churches. They are familiar with theoretical concepts which allow them to analyze and assess those forms and to develop a sense of the way Christian faith should be practiced in a secular society in late modernity.

Surveying those competencies, we see that they comprise both knowledge and skills. First of all students need to gain *information* about texts, historical contexts, theological concepts, and manifestations of Christianity in our cultural setting. Secondly they need to gain *skills*: instructions on how to work with that information. How does one understand and interpret texts and contexts? How does one evaluate them and develop one's own opinion? How does one express oneself orally and in written forms, and how does one engage in debates on theological issues?

An important objective of theological education is to enable students to work autonomously: to know where to find what information, to develop strategies to gather and select knowledge, and to organize that knowledge

into meaningful patterns. The aim of the educational processes is not to gain cumulative encyclopaedic knowledge, but to learn by example how to learn. That includes the ability to transfer insights from one field of study to others and the potential for imagining new ways of thinking and creating new insights.
To depict what quality in theological education is, depends on those objectives and draws attention to the means and methods which are used to mediate knowledge and skills.

VI. Considerations and Questions

In the last part of this paper I would like to address some basic issues of the current debate on quality assurance and improvement. I begin with the very fundamental question: What is quality? The term "quality" and the whole discussion on quality assurance, enhancement, development, and management originates not from the academic but from the economic sphere: from the theory of organisation as developed in the economic science. It aims at an "economization" of academia. The resources are to be deployed efficiently. That is a legitimate concern but it also needs to be subjected to critical scrutiny. The main question is: Is it compatible with the understanding of education in theology? Does it carry implications – a certain apprehension of education and its outcome, values, and norms – which may be in tension with a theological understanding?

Quality standards are supposed to be the same for all academic disciplines. But the disciplines and accordingly the ways of learning are very different. Critical thinking, for example, is much more important for the humanities than for the natural sciences. And theology again is different from other humanities insofar

as it not only aims at transferring knowledge and skills to the students but involves their whole personality. Thus it is not satisfying to describe theological education as mediation of knowledge and skills. We need to understand theological education in a less technical and in a more humanistic sense as *Bildung*, which means comprehensive personal development (by the way: that term originates from the mystical tradition of Christianity. Meister Eckhart for example used it in relation to the *Gottebenbildlichkeit – imago Dei* – of humans). That includes academic proficiency but goes beyond.

The question arises: Can such a development become standardised? Can it be trained by curricula and academic programmes? Can quality of theological education be measured by criteria of efficiency? The more we understand theological education in such a broad way the more questionable are the definitions of quality in terms of transferring knowledge and skills – and the related means of quality assurance. That is why quality assurance and development in the humanities in general and in theological education in particular is criticized, sometimes harshly. Does it lead to a rather *technical* understanding of learning, which can be measured by the efficiency of its resources, its procedures and its output (which has to be assessed by formal criteria and expressed in marks)?

Of course there are methods of assessing personal and spiritual formation. It is possible to define what a mature personality is supposed to be and to define criteria regarding how to test and verify if it is given or achieved. But is that legitimate and useful? Is there not a certain danger that such methods put the student under a kind of conformity pressure? In order to succeed students will be eager to comply with the defined standards. And even if those standards aim at the autonomy of the students, at self-consciousness and critical thinking, a permanent

adaptation to given standards is necessary. *Lee Harvey* and *Diana Green* distinguish between five conceptions of "quality" in general and referred them to the debate on quality-management:[43]

A. *Quality as exceptional accomplishment in meeting or exceeding given standards.* According to this understanding quality must not be materially defined and cannot be quantitatively measured and controlled. It consists in the difference to the ordinary. The often used term "excellence" refers to such an understanding of quality as that which is very special.

B. *Quality as perfection of a certain practice and its outcome in view of a supposed ideal.* This understanding leads to a more quantitative notion: Quality means to avoid mistakes and imperfect practice. Quality control accordingly consists, for example, in checking student's attendance and their marks.

C. *Quality as usefulness and adequacy of purpose.* A good education in that outcome-oriented perspective has to be "good-for" something--a certain profession, for example.

D. *Quality as adequacy of value.* According to that economic conception the relation between expense (input) and benefit (output) is relevant for determining what quality is. A faculty which achieves the same output with fewer financial resources is "better" that a more expensive faculty.

E. *Quality as transformation of the nature of an item* (a "qualitative" change). It is not the product itself but the change which matters. In the case of education: It is not the number of graduates and degrees, nor the

average of marks which indicates quality, but the empowerment of the students. And that is not easy to measure.

Different groups who are participants and stakeholders in the processes of education prefer different conceptions. It is mainly the research-oriented scholar who promotes type (A). The teaching staff often tends to understanding (B). Representatives of the job market probably will favour type (C). University administrations may tend to model (D). Type (E) will be preferred by the students – and hopefully by teachers and employers as well. Each of these understandings creates its own expectations of what learning and its outcome is and of what quality-management should be. And again we have to ask: Are the conceptions of education which are implicit in that multi-dimensional debate on quality assurance and improvement in accordance with what theological education is supposed to be? The fifth model seems to be the most appropriate. But "empowerment" as a purpose needs to become specified: Empowered to do what?

Thus we need to turn to the questions of competencies which a "good" theologian should have. In all the discussions of that question it becomes obvious that the qualifications a theologian needs to have cannot easily be standardized. A broad array of competencies are desirable. Not all of them can be empowered in the same way and at the same intensity. How a given individual cultivates them depends on the person. The educational process should allow a broad scope to let the individual talents of teachers and students grow.

We may even ask if the focus on competencies isn't too narrow. For example, are empathy and attentiveness competencies? Competencies are abilities – they refer to the "doing" of a person, including intellectual

actions. Theological education moreover takes the "being" of the person into account. It refers not only to the dimension of *logos* and practice but also to *eros* and *pathos*.

From that very fundamental consideration on the nature of "quality" further aspects come into view. First: What is a "good" teacher? In the debates on quality management in education role models of a good teacher are frequently presented. And according to those role models teaching programmes for prospective and current teachers are developed. But what about brilliant scholars who are and remain poor teachers? We should keep in mind that even a teacher who is not a brilliant pedagogue can have an important influence on his or her students. Karl Barth was a brilliant systematic theologian, but – as his former students frequently report – not a gifted teacher. He wouldn't have met the quality standards which are now asked for. But he gave rise to a generation of students not only with his theology but also with the dry style of his lectures. That is of course not meant to deny the importance of good teaching. For that purpose it is crucial to teach teachers how to teach, that is, to empower them to empower the students. But we should keep in mind that teaching and learning can work in very different modes of practice. Learning has a broader scope than teaching. It includes all the forms of self-learning of individuals and groups. Accordingly the evaluation of learning processes must refer not only to teaching but also to the infrastructure and the resources for learning (like libraries and computer facilities) as well as to counseling.

For the evaluation of the educational processes, student satisfaction is an important but not the only and perhaps not even the most important indicator for quality. It may be that students complain about a teacher, the style of his/her teaching, the work-load they have to carry and their suffering from strain – but at the same time they

achieve great success in learning. Thus the evaluation has to focus primarily on the transformation the students are undergoing. From my own studies I know of cases in which bad quality on the side of the teacher led to an intensification of learning on the side of the students. A teacher who fails to meet the minimum quality standards can unwittingly provoke the students to work on their own and thus lead to an increase of autonomy. Weaknesses on the side of the teacher can lead to a self-strengthening on the side of the students.

Another consideration concerns the trajectories of learning processes in theology. They do not always take place as linear succession in the growth of knowledge and skills. It may be that an unexpected disclosure of meaning occurs, which opens a new horizon. That kind of quality cannot be didactically planned, produced, and controlled. It is – theologically speaking – a matter of the Holy Spirit.

In his third speech on Religion to its Cultured Despisers Schleiermacher complained about an understanding of religious education as cognitive learning. Religious education has to open a space for inspiration, and what happens within the space cannot and should not be organized completely. Although *theological* education is not to be equated with *religious* education, the religious dimension – as a quality which cannot be measured by methods of quality assurance and improvement – should be taken into account. In his "Brief Outline of the Study of Theology" Schleiermacher wrote: "Since the Academical Instructor, dealing with youth who are especially animated by the *religious* interest, has to make *scientific* spirit, in its theological application, for the first time a matter of thorough consciousness in them; it is necessary to specify the method in which this spirit may be *quickened*, without *weakening* the religious interest."

Let me close with a critical remark referring to the debate on quality in theological education. It seems

important to me to use the term "quality" in a clear and specified way with a restricted scope of meaning. It should refer only to the "how," not to the "what" of education. It should focus not on the contents but on structures and methods. Defining and positing quality standards ought not become a carrier for proposing and promoting a certain understanding of "good theology" and for pursuing strategic interests aiming to enforce certain contents in the curricula of the theological study (like commitments to orthodoxy or liberation issues). It is important that an institution of theological education lay open its self-understanding of theology and that it arrange its curricula according to it. That is part of the procedures of quality-management. The understanding of theology has to be formulated as a mission statement or self-commitment of the educational institution. Prospective and current students, the university (in case of theological faculties), the church (in case of a church-run seminary), and the public have to be authentically and objectively informed about the profile of the institution and its teaching alignment. The fields of teaching and the learning objectives have to be described in the syllabus for the offered programmes in general and in the syllabus for the single classes in particular. All that belongs to the quality management of the institution.

But it does not belong to the depiction of "quality" that certain topics are taught, certain positions are held, and certain contents are favoured. The levels of discussion and practice have to be distinguished clearly: Issues of "quality" are located on a different level from issues of material contents. Gender-sensitivity, for example, is an (important!) objective of theological education but not a matter of the quality of education. The same applies for other teaching objectives like loyalty to a certain confession of faith. If the levels of discussion

become confused, then the quality debate tends to become ideologized. Questions concerning the understanding and the teaching of theology need to be discussed separately from the debate on quality of teaching. Issues of the social context of academia, the churches, and the society as a whole are without doubt very important, but they should not be regarded as standards of quality.

The Theological Education in Europe Today: Challenges & Promises

Petros Vassiliadis

Europe, despite all its confessional diversity, is more than all other continents and regions closer to the old tradition of the Early Church. Therefore, the Christian theological education developed in modernity shows some affinities, albeit indirect, with the conception of theological education of the undivided Church. At the same time certain deviations from the authentic theological education are more that obvious. It is, therefore, quite necessary to refer to the overall concept of theology and the theological education in the early history of our Church before we critically assess the present state of the European theological education, together with its challenges and promises.

I. Theology and Theological Education in the Early History of the Church

Throughout the history of Early Christianity the Church was understood in its ecclesial rather than in its institutional character. In the undivided Church it was of primary importance the eschatological awareness of the Church. The Church, in other words was understood as a glimpse and a foretaste of the *Kingdom of God*. Everything belonged to the Kingdom. The Church in her institutional expression did not administer all reality; she only prepared the way to the Kingdom; she was more or less an *image* of that eschatological kingdom. That is why, although to the eyes of the historian and the sociologist the Church is yet another human institution, to the theologian it is primarily a *mystery*, and very often is

called an *icon* of the Kingdom to come.

Under these circumstances *Eschatology* was traditionally a central and primary aspect of theological education. The latter was, therefore, always *community*-centred and *eschatologically*-oriented. And in this respect it was an important task of the Church. The historical dimension, and especially individualism, was incompatible to the traditional *ecclesial* character of theological education

After the Enlightenment, even in medieval scholasticism, *theology* was defined as a discipline which used the methods of the Aristotelian logic. Rational knowledge became the only legitimate form of knowledge. This resulted in a *knowledge*-centred and *mission*-oriented *theological education*. Inevitably, across denominational boundaries all Theological Institutions are structured in such a way as to educate Church 'leaders', not the entire people of God. They were meant to equip priests, pastors or missionaries with the necessary means to preserve and propagate certain Christian truths or ethical norms and values. Naturally, then, they were led to defend old-fashioned institutions, not to build up local communities. They lost, in other words, the *community*-centred and the *eschatologically*-oriented dimension of theological education.This was among other reasons why almost a generation ago WOCATI was set up. Its establishment seriously, though indirectly, challenged the old modern approach to *theology*. At the same time the vision of the Kingdom was reinforced within the ecumenical movement, which for a moment created an unprecedented enthusiasm among the deeply divided Christianity that the centuries-long divisions of the Church might find some sort of an agreed solution. Unfortunately the momentum which reached a climax in the 60s, especially through the historic event of Vatican II, did not have an equally optimistic follow-up.

II. The Theological Education in Europe Today

In Europe today there are two important educational processes under way: The so-called "Bologna Process", aiming at a radical change in Higher Education across scientific disciplines, and the "Graz Process" attempting to promote a new inter-denominational vision for theological education.

A. What is the Bologna-process?

The Bologna process was initiated by the European Union in order to create a new vision of a common European Higher Education. The Bologna process, which reached its final stage in 2010, is now in effect in 45 countries, which means that it covers a much wider spectrum than the 27 countries of the European Union. The primary goal of the Bologna process is to allow students and staff to move across Europe with ease and have fair recognition of their qualifications. There are three cycles of degrees: BA, Master, and Doctorate. Among the most significant characteristics of the Bologna process are: the mobility among students and teachers; the recognition of degrees and study programs; a common system, the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System); Diploma supplement (DS); Quality Assurance systems; Overarching qualification framework based on learning outcome, etc.

The principles underlying the Bologna process are: Institutional autonomy; Participation of students in higher education governance; Cooperation and trust between the participating countries and stakeholders: (organisations, business, but not Churches or other religious bodies yet). The Bologna process in its 2005

ministerial meeting made specific acknowledgement of the need for European higher education to look outward, not only inward. To implement this vision a constructive cooperation with other regions of the world (North America, China and East Asia, Australia, Latin America, and especially with less-developed countries in Africa) is very high in the agenda of European Union with regard to its higher education.

The social and cultural dimension of the Bologna process is indeed significant. Educational cooperation has a role in the development of stable, peaceful and democratic societies. The European Union has reluctantly acknowledged that the cultural and religious traditions have played a significant role in creating the Europe we see today. However, secularism and the ideals of Enlightenment continue to be the only basic values for state universities in Europe. Nevertheless, most European universities have been a model for unity in diversity and diversity in unity. The Bologna process builds on the heritage of European universities, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances is very much a part of this heritage. But the higher education does not rely on the religious heritage and the transmission of it to future generations.

Finally with regard to accreditation it is quite significant to note that contrary to what happens in other regions of the world the European countries as a part of the Bologna are only now establishing agencies for accreditation and quality assurance-purposes. Accreditation agencies are supposed to work autonomous and based on "general academic standards".

B. What is the Graz-process?

If the Bologna-process covers the entire field of the higher education in Europe, the Graz-process is an

attempt in the process to bring together all the European Theological Institutions. It is important to know that in Europe there is no tradition of Associations of Theological Institutions. For this reason I tried, as President of WOCATI to persuade the European theological schools and academic institutions who met in Graz for the first time to legally establish an association which would be eligible of joining WOCATI. The Graz-process, initiated by the Conference of European Churches (CEC), met three times so far: The first time in 2002, the second time in 2006, and finally in 2010.

In the 2002 Declaration of the Graz process, approved by all participating institutions and delegates, it was stated: "The necessity and the value of stronger cooperation among theological faculties, colleges and institutions across national and confessional lines became evident…Student and teacher exchanges, and the integration of ecumenical learning into theological education, are indispensable for the future of Europe's churches."

Unity in Diversity and Diversity in Unity was one of the main challenges for the future of theological education in Europe. "While on one hand the unity of the churches remains a goal which cannot be renounced, on the other hand their historical diversity and differences should be seen as a rich heritage, and appropriate use should be made of it".

In view of the Bologna Process, the Graz initiative was aiming rather at tuning, not at harmonizing theology. Its focus was to create better cooperation between the theological institutions and their stakeholders. In this respect a concern was voiced to "develop responsiveness to external stakeholders and society in general to meet the goals of employability and accountability". In addition, more effort was decided to be made to "implement sustainable reforms in theological research, education and

ministerial formation (student /teacher-exchange, joint degrees, etc.)".

In Graz in all three consecutive meetings the participants pledged to secure the funding not only of theological research, but also of pastoral formation. Therefore, for the first time, at least in university theological education, a clear connection between pastoral formation and academic theology was made.

According to the reflections presented in the Graz meetings theological education and training for ministry develops along a double track: The necessity of academic training for priests and pastors in the Christian churches was placed high on the agenda. A need for some kind of professional training, and even spiritual formation, taken care of or at least accepted by the Church, was considered as a *sine qua non*.

C. A common strategy in both the Bologna and the Graz process

Comparing the two processes, of Bologna and of Graz, one thing came out as of primary importance: the urgent need for cooperation. According to the Bologna principles, it is "essential for (European) institutions of higher theological education to cooperate across national lines, as well as (to develop) exchanges of students and faculty-members".

Along similar lines the Graz declaration has clearly stated that: "possibilities need to be created for students to experience and perceive other Christian confessions from their own perspective. Is it conceivable that a semester of study at an institution of another confession, in a country other than one's own, be made a requirement?"

As the Bologna-process was based on the idea of a double identity: European and National, so the Graz-

process equally insisted on a double identity: Christian (Ecumenical) and Confessional (Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant).

Quality Assurance in Higher and Theological Education in the United States

David Esterline

(The following paper provides an overview of the main principles and procedures of accreditation in the United States, with particular reference to theological education. It is the text of a brief presentation given to the 2011 WOCATI meeting in Johannesburg. Some of the sample standards and procedures have been updated to reflect the new COA/ATS standards approved in June 2012.)

Accreditation by private, non-profit organizations is the approach taken to quality assurance in higher education in the United States. Rather than a government "ministry of education" interacting directly with educational institutions, engagement with institutions on issues of quality assurance and improvement is done by non-governmental, not-for-profit accrediting organizations consisting of member institutions. Accreditation is a process of external review, conducted by peer professionals with expertise in particular areas relevant to the institution under review, and following standards and procedures set by the member institutions of the accrediting organization.[44] Peer review is central to accreditation as practiced in North America.

The purposes of accreditation include both the assurance of quality and the improvement of quality. For some accrediting agencies, assuring that an institution meets minimum standards is seen as the primary role; for others, while understand that assurance is an important part of accreditation, the more important objective is the

improvement achieved for the institution by going through the accreditation process. These two—quality assurance (determining and publishing that an institutions meets minimum established standards) and quality improvement (encouraging an institution to strive for better outcomes, stronger institutional resources, etc., an approach to accreditation sometimes called "aspirational")[45] go together in accreditation—though not always comfortably. In some agencies, and for some institutions that are accredited by two agencies with somewhat different philosophies, the tension between these two emphases in accreditation can be evident.

The accrediting organizations in the United States can be divided into four main types, two of which are particularly important for theological education: 1) regional agencies which cover the six geographic regions of the country, and 2) faith-related agencies. (The other two types are 3) career-related agencies, often dealing with for-profit institutions and 4) programmatic and specialized agencies that review academic programs within colleges and universities.) The "regionals" are the primary accreditors for not-for-profit colleges and universities, both public and independent. There are six regional agencies, serving the regions of the country indicated in their names: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA), New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC/NCA), Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).[46]

There are four national faith-related accrediting agencies in the United States. 1) The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) is an organization of approximately 260

institutions offering graduate-level degree programs preparing women and men for ministry and for research and teaching in theological disciplines. 240 of the member schools are accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of ATS (20 schools are members of the Association but are not (or not yet) accredited by the Commission). 2) The Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) accredits primarily undergraduate level institutions; however, among the approximately 100 accredited institutions, 35 also offer graduate degrees. ABHE was formerly known as the American Association of Bible Colleges (AABC). 3) The Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) accredits approximately 50 Christian post-secondary schools, including liberal arts colleges, graduate schools, and Bible colleges; some 30 also offer graduate degrees. 4) The Association for Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools accredits approximately 65 institutions offering degrees in Rabbinical and Talmudic education.

Each of these accrediting organizations (as well as the "regionals" and the career related, for-profit, and programmatic/specialized agencies) must be approved by the U.S. government's Department of Education. Each organization undergoes a periodic, exacting review and evaluation. The governmental role in accreditation in the U.S. is not direct involvement with educational institutions on issues of quality assurance and improvement, but to oversee and approve (or not approve) the accrediting organizations.

I. The Accreditation Process

With some variation, all accrediting organizations in the United States follow the basic pattern set by the following six stages:[47]

A. *Eligibility.* Most agencies require an institution applying for accreditation to go through a candidacy process. To be eligible, the school must have legal authorization to operate, have degree granting status, faculty with appropriate credentials, and a clear governance structure. These eligibility criteria serve as a screen before the institution enters the accreditation process.

B. *Self-study.* The accreditation cycle begins with a formal self-study conducted by the institution, following the guidelines set out by the accrediting agency. The self-study process will likely last one and a half to two years and will result in a formal written document, the "self-study report." The self-study process and the report are aimed at providing a thorough examination and assessment of the institution's strengths, challenges, and plans for improvement. The self-study process and report will be conducted in line with the accrediting organization's established procedures and standards (some organizations use the term "criteria" rather than "standards"). The objective is to describe and evaluate as thoroughly and frankly as possible the institution's current health.

C. *On-site team visit.* A team of peers—with expertise in the various areas that will be examined (governance, finance, faculty and curriculum, library, educational technology, student services, etc.)—will visit the institution's campus. There are normally at least four team members for a comprehensive

institutional visit; there may be more depending on the size and complexity of the institution. During the visit, which usually lasts two-three days, the team will interview chief administrators, faculty, staff, students, alums, and members of the board; the team will check files and records and will tour facilities. The school will normally have a "document room" in which all relevant materials—such as curricula, strategic planning documents, course and student evaluations, assessment data, budgets, financial records, audit results—are available to the visiting team. In recent years many of the documents are made available to the visiting team electronically, so the visitors will have had the chance to review most important materials prior to the visit.

D. *Team report.* The team will prepare a written report on its findings regarding the school's strengths, weaknesses, and prospects for improvement and well as its recommendations regarding assessment and will submit this report to the school to be checked for matters of fact, but not with regard to evaluation or recommendations. (The practice in some agencies is to present a brief summary of the findings and the main recommendations regarding accreditation to the institution's leaders before the team leaves the campus.) Once any matters of fact have been resolved, the team submits its final report to the accrediting agency for consideration and action. The school will have the opportunity to respond to the team's recommendations, either

in writing or in person.

E. *Formal actions and (possible) appeals*. The agency will make a formal decision regarding accreditation—based on the institution's self-study report, the recommendations made by the report of the visiting team, and any other information that the agency staff might have gathered. The action by the agency might include a number of issues, from the length of continuing institutional accreditation (or probation or denial), the approval of individual degree programs, authorization of extension sites, distance, or on-line programs, and any follow-up (such as reports or focused visits) on areas needing additional attention. Institutions are normally granted accreditation for periods of three to ten years.

F. *Between visits*. Accrediting agencies monitor institutions between comprehensive visits, with varying degrees of attention. All schools are required to submit annual reports providing a range of data regarding students, personnel, finances, and programs. All schools are required to petition the accrediting agency for permission to grant new degrees and to inform the agency when a substantial change is made in governance or curriculum. When particular areas need attention, the school will be required to submit monitoring reports and may receive a focused visit.

II. Regional Accrediting Agencies

Each of the regional and faith-based accrediting agencies

provides standards (or "criteria") covering all aspects of the school's educational program, structure, and resources, but the different agencies organize their standards/criteria in different ways. For example, the Higher Learning Commission (of the North Central Association) organizes "criteria for accreditation" under five major headings:

1. Mission and integrity,
2. Preparation for the future,
3. Student learning and effective teaching,
4. Acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge, and
5. Engagement and service.[48]

Each HLC accreditation criterion has three elements: the criterion statement, core components, and examples of evidence. Institutions are expected to provide evidence of the extent to which they are achieving each criterion and each of the core components. The examples of evidence given by the agency are meant to illustrate the ways that some schools are meeting the core components, but are not meant to dictate specific approaches of any individual school.

The following is an example of a criterion statement, one of the related core components, and (selected) examples of evidence:

> **3.** The organization (i.e., the educational institution) provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.
>
> **3.a.** The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.
>
> **Examples of evidence:**
>
> - Assessment of student learning provides evidence at multiple levels: course, program, and institutional.

- Assessment of student learning includes multiple direct and indirect measures of students learning.

HLC is on the quality assurance side of the "assurance – improvement" spectrum. As noted in the introduction to the Criteria for Assessment: "An institution must be judged to have met each of the Criteria to merit accreditation."[49] HLC is certainly also concerned with quality improvement (as the HLC by-line indicates: "Serving the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher education,") but from the way the standards are written, primary concern seems to be with assurance.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges, another of the regional agencies, is also on the "assurance" side: "institutions of higher learning achieve accreditation . . . by demonstrating they meet the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation* and comply with its policies."[50] As an illustration of the tension described above, NEASC also indicates that it expects member institutions to strive for improvement in effectiveness and overall institutional quality. Such an expectation is likely held by all involved in accreditation, even when the standards and procedures are set out in a manner indicating that the primary concern is with meeting set minimum standards.

NEASC organizes the areas to be covered in accreditation into eleven "dimensions of institutional quality," each beginning with a statement of the standard; though quite different from the five criteria statements of HLC, both agencies cover the same areas and issues in their standards/criteria and processes.

1. Mission and Purposes
2. Planning and Evaluation
3. Organization and Governance

4. The Academic Program
5. Faculty
6. Students
7. Library and Other Information Resources
8. Physical and Technological Resources
9. Financial Resources
10. Public Disclosure
11. Integrity

III. Association of Theological Schools (ATS)

The Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (COA/ATS) organizes standards for institutional issues in a manner somewhat similar to that used by NEASC. As the majority of graduate level theological education institutions in the United States are accredited by one of the regional agencies as well as by COA/ATS, the similarity/dissimilarity of organization and overall accrediting philosophy of the two accrediting agencies can be quite significant for the accrediting concerns of an individual school. In general, the Commission on Accrediting is further along the spectrum toward emphasis on quality improvement than the regional accrediting agencies. COA/ATS accreditation certainly provides the "assurance" that an accredited institution meets the accepted minimum standards of graduate education in North America. However, as the sample standards below will illustrate, COA/ATS accreditation also gives a great deal of attention to improving institutional quality and increasing students learning outcomes.

COA/ATS standards are divided between those dealing with the institution as a whole and those related to educational and degree programs. The general institutional standards are organized as follows:

1. Purpose, planning, evaluation
2. Institutional integrity
3. Theological curriculum: learning, teaching, and research
4. Library and information resources
5. Faculty
6. Student recruitment, admission, services, and placement
7. Authority and governance
8. Institutional resources

These standards cover the areas required of the institution as a whole and to the resources that must be available for the school to continue in operation, irrespective of the degrees offered. Educational standards that relate to all degree programs, such as matters dealing with multiple locations and on-line programs as well as a number of other educational issues, are set out in a separate section prior to the degree program standards.[51] The institutional standard on theological curriculum illustrates the improvement oriented or "aspirational" nature of COA/ATS standards:

> 3. A theological school is a community of faith and learning that cultivates habits of theological reflection, nurtures wise and skilled ministerial practice, and contributes to the formation of spiritual awareness and moral sensitivity.
>
> 3.1.1. [The goals of the theological curriculum] and the processes and practices leading to their attainment are normally interwoven and should be separate from one another.

The standard does not include a "bright line," the term often used in higher education to indicate the point at which an aspect of an institution or program is in or out of "compliance" with the standards set by the accrediting body.

The standard relating to the institution's engagement with

diverse publics is similar in aspirational tone:

> 3.3.3.2 Theological scholarship informs and enriches the reflective life of the church. The school should demonstrate awareness of the diverse manifestations of religious community encompassed by the term *church*: congregations, denominations, parachurch organizations, broad confessional traditions, and the church catholic. Library collections, courses, and degree programs should represent the historical breadth, cultural difference, confessional diversity, and global scope of Christian life and thought.

Of course, there are certain aspects of an institution that must meet established standards; when this is the case, the ATS Commission on Accrediting uses "shall" in the language of the standard, as illustrated by the following standard on faculty and faculty evaluation (emphasis added):

> 6.1.1 Faculty members **shall** possess the appropriate credentials for graduate theological education, normally demonstrated by the attainment of a research doctorate.
>
> 6.2.5 Schools **shall** develop and implement mechanisms for evaluating faculty performance, including teaching competence and the use of educational technology. These mechanisms should involve faculty members and students as well as administrators.

A mechanism for evaluating faculty must be in place and operating; the exact form of that mechanism is left to the school, though the standard provides a clear recommendation for one form it might take.

A similar example is provided by the standard on institutional authority and governance—the school must articulate the structure and process of governance; defining the "appropriate" collegiality and the resulting

level of "shared governance," however, are finally in the purview of the school:

> 8.2.1 Each school **shall** articulate a structure and process of governance that appropriately reflects the collegial nature of theological education.
>
> 8.2.2 Shared governance follows from the collegial nature of theological education. Unique and overlapping roles and responsibilities of the governing board, faculty, administrators, students, and other identified delegated authorities should be defined in a way that allows all partners to exercise their mandated or delegated leadership.

In addition to standards relating to institutions as a whole, COA/ATS provides standards for the several degrees offered by accredited members schools. The degree standards are organized into four categories:

> 1. Basic programs oriented toward ministerial leadership, including the three-year Master of Divinity (MDiv), two-year Master of Arts in areas of specialized ministry (MA in [specialized ministry]), and two-year master's level degree programs in church music (such as MA in Church Music).
>
> 2. Basic programs oriented toward general theological studies, including the Master of Arts (MA), Master of Theological Studies (MTS), and Master of Arts degree programs in a specific academic discipline. These degree programs normally require two-years of full-time academic study.
>
> 3. Advanced programs oriented toward ministerial leadership, including Doctor of Ministry (DMin), Doctor of Education (EdD), Doctor of Church Music (DCM), and doctoral programs in particular areas of specialization, including the Doctor of Educational Ministry

(DEdMin) and Doctor of Missiology (DMiss). The duration of these programs is normally not fewer than three years.

4. Advanced programs primarily oriented toward theological research and teaching, including the Master of Theology (ThM), Master of Sacred Theology (STM), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), and Doctor of Theology (ThD). The advanced master's degree programs (ThM and STM) can normally be completed in one year of full-time study. The PhD and ThD programs require the equivalent of two years of full-time course work in addition to "sufficient time to prepare for comprehensive examinations, to acquire teaching skills, and to conduct the research for and writing of a doctoral dissertation."[52]

Each degree standard includes the following four components: 1. Purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and educational assessment; 2. Program content; 3. Educational resources and learning strategies; and 4. Admission. The following excerpts from the Master of Divinity standard provide examples of each of the four components.

A.1.3 (Purpose, Goals, Learning Outcomes, Educational Assessment / Learning Outcomes) The primary goals of the program **shall** be delineated as discernable learning outcomes congruent with the institution's mission and purpose. Institutions **shall** demonstrate that students have achieved the goals or learning outcomes of the degree program by means of direct or a combination of direct and indirect evidence of student learning. (emphasis added)

As indicated by the "shall" language in this standard, institutions must have a process by which they

are able to determine the extent to which students have achieved the goals and learning outcomes established for the program. The COA/ATS places significant emphasis on the assessment of student learning outcomes; accredited institutions must provide direct evidence of student learning in all degree programs.[53]

> A.2.3.3 (Program Content / Cultural Context) MDiv education shall engage students with the global character of the church as well as ministry in the multifaith and multicultural context of contemporary society. This should include attention to the wide diversity of religious traditions present in potential ministry settings, as well as expressions of social justice and respect congruent with the institution's mission and purpose.

As revised and adopted in June 2012, the standard indicates that member schools are required to give attention to the multifaith as well as the multicultural contexts of ministry.

> A.3.1.1 (Educational Resources and Learning Strategies / Location) MDiv education has a complex goal: the personal, vocational, spiritual, and academic formation of the student. Because of the importance of a comprehensive community of learning, the MDiv cannot be viewed simply as an accumulation of courses or of individual independent work. The location, or learning environment, can occur in multiple patterns that include, but are not limited to, in-person faculty-student instructional contact on a campus or extension site, online/technologically mediated forms of instruction, supervised ministry practice, and formats that blend instructional modalities. Institutions shall clearly articulate the manner in which they provide the learning environment or

> supportive context for effective, comprehensive, theological education. An institution shall demonstrate that its students are engaged in a community of learning whereby faculty and students have significant opportunities for interaction, peer learning, development of pastoral skills, supervised experiences of ministry, and growth in personal, spiritual formation.

This standard was revised in order to acknowledge the many ways MDiv education is being carried out in ATS schools, to articulate the connection between the format or delivery method of a program and the goals of the program, and to require schools to demonstrate how they will achieve educational effectiveness. The language presented here was adopted in June 2012.

> A.4.1 (Admission) The MDiv is a post baccalaureate degree. Admission requirements shall include (1) a baccalaureate degree from an institutions accredited by . . .; (2) evidence of the commitment and qualities desired for pastoral leadership; and (3) the academic ability to engage in graduate education.

As the "shall" language indicates, admission to the MDiv degree program requires a first degree. However, for a number of years the COA/ATS has allowed a ten percent exception, an exception that was increased to fifteen percent in 2012; the following statement (A.4.2) now reads: "As many as 15 percent of the students in the MDiv degree program may be admitted without possession of the baccalaureate degree or its educational equivalent."

IV. Issues and Questions

Most theological educators in the United States

perceive the accreditation landscape as becoming more and more regulatory; that is, they see increased stress on accountability rather than encouragement for improvement. Accrediting agencies, by and large, claim to be concerned with quality improvement as well as quality assurance, but the underlying philosophy of any accrediting organization will push its practice and procedures in one direction or the other. Accrediting organizations more concerned with quality assurance, i.e., in determining that a particular educational institution has met minimum standards and so the various publics served by the institution can be "assured" that it is doing what it says it does, prefer standards that offer clearly identified indicators ("bright lines") to mark the point at which compliance has been met. The issue is played out in the way that standards are written; are they "minimal" or "aspirational"? Do they set out explicit levels of resources or performance that must be met or do they describe general areas for exploration and improvement? The Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (COA/ATS) leans in the aspirational/improvement direction, but certainly gives attention to quality assurance as well. Accreditation by COA/ATS provides assurance about the quality of the institution; the accreditation process supports and encourages institutional improvement and increased educational effectiveness.

Questions about residency and duration have been a significant part of the theological education conversation in the United States for several years. How long must a student live on the school's main campus? Or, what percentage of the course work required for completion of a degree can be undertaken at a distance or through on-line programs?[54] What length of time should be required for completion of a degree program? Or, for

example, how long does it take to prepare/form women and men for pastoral ministry?

Possibly the most significant question with regard to the accreditation of theological education in this generation has to do with the balance between measuring resources and assessing student learning outcomes. How should the quality of theological education be evaluated? Simply put, the question is framed as resources vs. outcomes: to what extent should the questions of quality assurance and quality improvement concentrate on assessment of learning outcomes rather than resources? Should the result of education, specifically the learning outcomes of graduates, outweigh the various resources—including curriculum, faculty, finances, library, etc.—that have been brought to bear on the educational process?

The assessment of student learning outcomes has steadily risen in significance on the accreditation landscape of the United States for the last twenty years. All higher education institutions, including accredited theological schools, are required to establish demonstrable learning outcomes for each degree program offered and to provide evidence of the extent to which students have achieved these goals. The sample criterion from the Higher Learning Commission (one of the regional accrediting organizations) given above illustrates how significant the assessment of student learning outcomes has become in the accreditation process; HLC has only five criterion statements to cover all aspects of the evaluation of an institution, its programs, and resources—and one of the five is dedicated to assessment.

Most of the theological schools in the United States were late in developing comprehensive assessment programs, and some are still hesitant. Many, however, have found the process remarkably (and often unexpectedly) helpful. Establishing and publishing measurable learning outcomes in line with the institution's

mission, followed by gathering evidence of the extent to which students have achieved these outcomes, provides the school with the data and analysis needed to revise programs and improve effectiveness. The process provides information for the school to use internally—it is indeed very helpful to have a clear understanding of the extent to which graduates have the aptitudes, skills, and knowledge expected of them. A number of theological schools in the United States have found assessment of students learning outcomes an effective means to both quality assurance and quality improvement. With the results of the assessment process, academic programs can be revised in order to improve effectiveness. At the same time, the assessment results can be published—and so provide assurance that the school is accomplishing its mission.

While there has been a major shift toward assessment of student learning outcomes in accreditation, a question remains about the most appropriate balance between outcomes and resources. Measuring resources (strength of faculty, integrity of curriculum, physical facilities, library, finances, etc.) cannot be completely abandoned in favor of assessing outcomes in considering institutional quality, as the continuing viability of the institution must be kept in view. Some attention must always be given to the resources needed to maintain the institution and assure its future. The value of assessing student learning outcomes for quality improvement and quality assurance has been established; the question that remains in the accreditation process has to do with the best balance between assessment of outcomes and evaluation of institutional and educational resources.

Towards A Common Charter on Quality in Theological Education, Theological Perspectives for Ecumenical Guidelines on Common Quality Standards: A Paper from ETE-WCC

Dietrich Werner

I. Introduction

It is the interest and purpose of this paper written from the perspective of the program on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) of the World Council of Churches (WCC) to suggest some common global guidelines on quality in theological education. The role of WCC to call churches for more unity and common collaboration has substantial implications for the area of theological education as the commitment to church unity across denominational boundaries and the commitment to common quality standards are interrelated. Increasingly the debate on quality standards has become an important dimension in conferences of regional associations of theological schools. At the same time it has become clear that solutions with regard to a common framework on how to respond to government requirements concerning accreditation and quality assurance cannot be answered just on national and on regional level, but need some common efforts and mutual understandings also on international level. It belongs to the core mandates of ETE in WCC to initiate and to accompany processes which – in cooperation with global networks like WOCATI[55] and ICETE[56], WEA[57], WPF[58] and the Christian World Communions and the Roman Catholic

Church can contribute to the formulation of a common Charter on Quality in Theological Education which can serve and enhance the unity of the Church in the area of how and with what orientation its future priests, pastors, deacons and church workers are being trained.

Although in some contexts there has been some regional examples for a debate on quality of theological education and criteria for quality assurance (like with the Latin American document "Manifesto on Quality Theological Education[59]" from 2008 which highlights some theological criteria for a proper understanding of quality in theological education) we are still far from having any common or generally accepted framework on understanding on what constitutes and contributes to quality of theological education today.

II. Our Context Today: Differentiation of standards of higher education institutions and denominational fragmentation of global and regional landscapes of theological education.

What is characterizing the international landscapes of theological education today? There are some 3000-4000 theological schools, theological faculties and Bible colleges around though nobody at present has an exact estimate of the numbers[60]. The last International Directory of Theological Schools, which was produced by WCC through Alec Gilmore[61] is back from 1997 and is not updated since then. There are also some 50-60 regional and global associations of theological schools which WCC through ETE is in contact with. There is a wide variety of different denominational networks of theological schools and theological educators as historical mainline protestant churches, Orthodox churches, Roman Catholic churches, Evangelical and Pentecostal

Churches as well as Independent African Churches have organized their theological education systems in distinct and separate networks both regionally and globally. Thus there is an enormous variety of theological programs offered and the standards for theological education institutions and curriculum plans vary considerably according to national, denominational and geographic conditions. The fragmented landscapes of theological education on global scale today and different social and political contexts in relation to which theological education has to organize itself also have led to quite different ways of accreditation processes and quality assessment of higher education institutions in theological education. In a brief typology at least seven different ways can be distinguished:

In several contexts *secular and state related national agencies for quality assurance* in higher education have been established which have to provide accreditation for all higher education institutions, including theological schools and theological faculties;

1. In other contexts *secular and regional accreditation agencies* are operative which combine several states and provide accreditation and quality assurance also for institutions of theological education;

In other contexts there are *Christian associations of theological schools* which are themselves serving as accrediting and quality assurance instruments for their constituency of Christian schools and theological colleges only;

2. In other contexts there are *church-related associations of theological schools which provide quality assurance of theological education, but no legal accreditation of the institutions* but continuous visits and evaluations to schools which are affiliated to the associations, but receive accreditation from secular bodies;

In other contexts there are *denominational associations of*

theological schools or Bible colleges which provide accreditation and quality assurance only to member institutions coming from the same denominational background;

3. Again in some contexts accreditation of local theological schools and Bible colleges which see themselves as *international branches or local extensions of 'mother institutions in some countries of usually the US or South Korea* is provided only via the relation to 'mother' schools outside the local context and in no relation to regional bodies for accreditation and quality assurance within the country (one of the realities of rapid spread of cross border education);

4. Finally in several contexts there is only a *weak or no common understanding of quality in theological education at all* and Bible schools and theological colleges are mushrooming as private commercial projects of limited groups with no coherent relationship with each other.

Already this short typology underlines the complex nature of the landscape of accreditation and quality assurance in theological education today which is aggravated by the fact that we have a growing denominational fragmentation of the landscape of theological education today[62]. In recent years, new degree-granting institutions have emerged and new degree programs have multiplied. There are new public universities, private universities, for-profit degree-granting institutions, public colleges offering bachelor and master's degree programs, institutions offering degrees through distance delivery, and degree-completion partnerships between colleges and universities. We are still far from a basic and common set of criteria which contributes to an integral concept of quality in theological

education which to some extend could be shared by many denominations and church traditions represented in the fellowship of churches belonging to WCC.

III. Political Changes Towards Common Standards of Regional and Global Systems of Quality Assurance and Accreditation.

Seen in European perspectives with the beginning of the Bologna process and its key document, the Bologna declaration from 1999, we can observe a massive political development towards a common European space for higher education institutions. The so-called European Higher Education Area was created which due to general political decisions for universities since some years has agreed on common standards of quality assurance and the ECTS system[63]. The Bologna process has also produced Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.[64] A European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education was founded (ENQA) which developed substantial papers for developing a common framework of quality assurance.

Similar developments for university related Higher Education Institutions (HEI) networks have taken place in several other geographic areas: As the World Trade Organization (WTO) through the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) has asked countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America to open up their boarders to cross-border providers of higher education there are increased needs for common standards and requirements for higher education. As higher education today is a commodity which has enormous economic interests behind there have also been initial developments for global or regional dialogues on

common criteria for academic courses and for the creation of a framework for describing and quantifying the content of study programs in universities and diploma-awarding institutions in order to harmonize for benchmarking, equating and recognizing qualifications. East African countries have been assisted and stimulated by a re-vitalized Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) to develop a Students' Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) System at the East African Regional level[65]. Several states have developed national protocols for higher education approval processes[66]. The Asian University network has developed a quality assurance system as an instrument for maintaining, improving and enhancing teaching, research and the overall institutional academic standards of higher education institutions of Member Universities[67].

IV. Different Ways of Assessing Quality in Theological Education and The Need for More Theological Reflection.

1. The *basic understanding of quality of theological education* should be influenced by three equally important dimensions:
2. The expectations and understanding of theological education held by the churches;
3. The general academic standards of higher education,
4. The specific needs and socio-cultural conditions of a concrete local social context and denominational tradition.

It is the interest of this paper that churches should more clearly articulate their expectation and theological perspectives on theological education which is to contribute to the process of formulating agreeable standards for quality in theological education.

In secular processes a common understanding is held that accreditation normally includes both internal and external evaluative processes on quality assurance. Criteria combine factors like the periodic review of academic programs offered, the ratio between teachers and students, the assessment of students learning achievements, quality assessment of teaching staff, learning and library resources within the school, information systems available and information policy of the school or college represented[68].

A common trend both in some African as well as in US-based processes of quality assurance is a shift from resources-based assessment (what does an institution make available in terms of educational resources to students?) to an outcome-based system of quality assessment (what are the results of higher education in terms of competences, abilities and qualifications in the students and candidates after their graduation?).

There has been a process of theological schools and faculties to get related to these secular sets of quality standards and to accommodate their programs within the Bologna system. But there are only a few examples yet of guidelines for quality assurance which are reflected theologically and specifically formulated for theological schools. We are still far from having a complete survey of these documents, not to speak of the ways there are operated. The European Evangelical Accreditation Agency (EEAA) has formulated a catalogue of essential criteria (EEAA Manual) according to which accreditation is done[69]. The Accrediting Council for Evangelical Theological Education in Africa has worked extensively on revisions and updates to the ACTEA Standards and the ACTEA Guide to Self-Evaluation[70]. ATESEA has worked on Guidelines for Doing Theology in Asia which is a revised version of CAPs (Critical Asian Principle) which are meant to be integrated into the

mechanisms of accreditation and quality assurance[71]. Therefore the effort of WOCATI to bring together all existing mechanisms and regional guidelines of quality assurance is highly appreciated.
There has not yet been any attempt to compare and reflect theologically the different sets of criteria by which associations of theological schools assess the quality of theological education within their own area of responsibility. A major international and ecumenical research project would be advisable on questions like:

1. What are the underlining theological presuppositions for sets of quality criteria for theological education in a given social and denominational context?
2. What is the relation between general or secular sets of criteria for assessment in higher theological education and specific sets of criteria which emerge out of specifically theological concerns?
3. To what extend there is a common ground between different sets of criteria for theological education programs between different social and denominational contexts?

V. Needs for Common Guidelines on Quality in Theological Education – Some Shared Convictions.

The WCC in its history has had the role to bring churches of different denominational tradition together to one common platform in order to relate their different ecclesiologies and bring them into dialogue with each other. The WCC never can force a member church to accept any given understanding of ecclesiology or to merge all existing ecclesiological understandings into one consolidated format. But the WCC has substantially contributed to overcoming a situation in which different ecclesiologies operate and exist in isolation or even in

overt contradiction with each other, remaining without relation to the potential of a common heritage. A recent example on how WCC can contribute to a common charter to the unity of the church was its recent 2010 document on "Common Guidelines for mission in interreligious contexts" which was published together with WEA and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue[72].

A similar role today needs to be played by WCC in the area of theological education as it is through theological education that the different profiles of the churches, their ministries, their openness and dialogue with each other are reinforced and also the continuation of isolation and theological stereotypes is continued. Again the WCC cannot and is not intending to impose any common form or content by rejecting distinct denominational approaches.

We should not remain content and silent with regard to a situation which leaves the regional denominational and regional associations of theological schools to themselves and isolated from each other. Each of them usually develops their own distinct sets of criteria for accreditation and quality assurance as applied then in regular visits to their member schools. The overall picture by and large is that there is no unity at present but major fragmentation in the different sets of standards applied for theological education in the different areas and denominational contexts.

While the different denominational emphasize in the curricula and content of theological education have some legitimate value and will continue as they portray an important expression of the diversity of Christian churches in defining their programmes of theological education, there is a strategic need for World Christianity in the 21st century to formulate some common basis and

common ground for guiding principles on quality of theological education. Without a common orientation frame, a common platform and a reference document for mutual dialogue and recognition of theological courses there can be no coherence, no common frontier and line or argumentation over against government agencies and no impact on long-term goals for Christian unity in the area of theological education.

To summarize we are claiming that there is a need for common guidelines according to core convictions held in the fellowship brought together by WCC and much beyond. This need is founded in the following essential convictions and observations related to the global situation of theological education today: We are convinced,

1. That Christians from all different denominations have a call to serve the unity of the body of Christ in the area of theological education;
2. That we need to develop a system of more mutual accountability, comparability and convertibility of theological courses through common standards in quality of theological education between the different regions and denominational traditions;
3. That an integral concept of quality in theological education is vital for the very future of church unity and the ecumenical movement and churches of different denominational tradition and confession do share enough in common to make it possible to formulate some *common principles of quality in theological education*. 4. 4. Any long-term lack of common standards on the other side will lead to disintegration, isolation or unnecessary unhealthy competition between different providers of theological education, distortions in church unity, integrity of the churches' witness and deviations in its doctrine;
5. That government accrediting agencies increasingly

demand for common standards across any denominational lie of affiliation and that developments in the area of *globalization and internationalization of quality standards in higher education* on UNESCO level (see: Higher Education Reports 2007 and 2008[73]) press to move towards common standards of quality of higher education in general which will have a certain relevance and impact also for systems of theological education in long perspective;

6. That considerations for a *proper Christian understanding of quality of theological education* - while certainly being related and responsive to some general requirements of higher education – should never be left only to secular or governmental authorities but should be defined in a frame of reference which reflects genuine *theological* perspectives, i.e.: The concerns and interests of Christian churches, their witness, service and unity for which theological education and ministerial formation are meant to serve, have a vital relevance for the understanding of quality in theological education.

7. That the internalization of theological degrees and particularly of online-courses of theological schools in the US and other western countries (which can threaten the role of local institutions and programs for theological education in the South) demands for clearer regulations on standards and models of proper partnership between theological schools in the North and in the South.

VI. Goals of the proposal for a common charter on quality in theological education.

A. It therefore belongs to the ***goals of the following proposal of a common charter***

1. To present a first draft of a common and ecumenical framework of understanding of the essential elements contributing to quality of theological education worldwide;
2. To stimulate an international debate on common basic elements for a theological understanding of quality in theological education;
3. To serve as a reference document for regional associations of theological schools and for inter-regional dialogue between institutions of theological education in different regional and ecclesial contexts.
4. To inform processes of formulating concrete assessment criteria and evaluation procedures in regional or national contexts which serve as a basis for concrete institutional processes of quality assurance and accreditation (while not replacing them);
5. To also be aware on the asymmetries in today's world between the rich and the poor, the asymmetries in terms of availability of higher education and the imbalance in terms of who has the power to define quality in theological education. The criteria should reflect critically on the existing asymmetries in power and accessibility of theological education and try to formulate shared principles;

B. For the ***content of the common charter on quality of theological education*** which is proposed here the following guiding principles have been taken into account: The subsequent guidelines;

1. Are intended to relate to *graduate theological education*, both theological institutions offering programs as well as theological courses;

2. Are formulated as orientation marks and guiding principles *for institutions and programs of theological education* as a whole, not as standards for individual quality assessment of candidates or teachers as this is another issue
3. Aim at providing *orientation marks for enhancing quality and integrity of theological education in ecumenical perspectives* without preventing schools to be committed to a particular theological tradition or denominational identity line;
4. Do *not intend or recommend uniformity of content or structures in theological education*, but instead aim at upholding some common and biblically founded theological values and principles;
5. Aim at a *balance between academic, spiritual and ministerial dimensions of theological education*;
6. Are intended to be formulated in a way which could *potentially be acceptable to theological schools of all different denominational traditions*, both within mainline protestant, orthodox, evangelical, orthodox and Roman Catholic churches (although more consultation need to be done in terms of dialogue on these essential elements);
7. Are *not intending to 'universalize' one model of theological education from a particular context to be applied universally*, but encourage to learn from existing models of quality theological education from all contexts in mutual dialogue;
8. Are aware of the fact that there is a *distinction between formulating general and common guiding principles for quality in theological education and the processes by which these might be applied in concrete processes* of quality assessment. It is only the first which relates to the core mandate of WCC, whereas the letter is an issue for regional associations of theological schools to deal with;

9. Are aware of the fact that there are *limits to the measurability of quality in theological education*, both methodologically and theologically;
10. Are formulated in a holistic perspective which brings together *general key parameters of theological education*, such as;

a. Content of theological education
b. Contextuality of theological education
c. Methodology of theological education
d. Hermeneutics of theological education
e. Results of theological education
f. Stability/continuity of theological education

VII. Proposal for a Common Charter for Quality in Theological Education

As positional elements which should form part of the envisaged common reference document on guidelines for quality in theological education the following key criteria for the orientation, content and shape of theological education programs or institutions are suggested:

A. Content of Theological Education

1. *Biblical orientation:* The Biblical tradition as interpreted in the history of the tradition of the universal church presents the sole and authoritative basis for theological education in churches of all denominational background. Introducing students into the richness and variety of the Biblical heritage and learning about the potentials of Biblical hermeneutics in its various forms today is one of the most fundamental tasks of theological education;

2. *Comprehensiveness:* theological education should be offered and maintained in all crucial fields and disciplines of theology such as Biblical Theology in OT and NT, Church History, Systematic Theology, Practical or Pastoral Theology and Missiology/World Christianity while the way these theological contents are organized in certain modules and courses (traditional disciplines; integrated courses; new clusters or thematic areas) remains flexible;
3. *Catholicity:* Theological Education should allow for a substantial introduction to the Catholic tradition of the church universal, particularly the Christian tradition in the first five centuries of the undivided church as well as into World Christianity and to a diverse spectrum of Christian denominations today while at the same time also allowing for a proper introduction into one or several denominational traditions and identities to which the respective theological schools are related to;
4. *Mission-mindedness:* Theological Education enhances the development of a missionary spirit which is a characteristic mark of the whole church. It tries to enhance a mission-minded theology with cultural sensitivity, a passion for mission according to Christ's way and a commitment to common mission with others;
5. *Integrated curriculum:* Theological education relates to body, mind and spirit. Thus an integrated approach which brings together different interrelated contents of curriculum, attitudes cultivated during the process of teaching and learning, spiritual life in programs of theological education and values lived out in institutions of theological education add to the

quality of theological education;

B. Contextuality of Theological Education

1. *Contextuality:* Theological Education aims at strengthening the witness and service of Christian churches in their related context. It therefore encourages the development of contextual theologies related to the burning issues of today's struggle for justice, peace, creation and human dignity;
2. *Public Theology*: Theological Education realizes the implications of the Gospel for all spheres of life. It therefore is engaged in strengthening Public Theology, the voice of the churches in the public sphere, the commitment to issues which relates the imperatives and values of God's Kingdom to the challenges of today's social and political contexts. Theological education cannot be done without a vital concern for ethics and social witness in church and society today;
3. *Anti-discriminatory stand:* Theological education has a clear commitment to unveil and counter all forms of overt or hidden racism, social or cultural prejudice and discrimination of minorities while respecting and holding to firm Biblical principles on the Christian concept of life;
4. *Listening to voices of the marginalized:* Theological Education develops ways to ensure that the voices of the marginalized and the concerns of the poor are heard and reflected upon within the process of theological reflection;

C. Methodology of theological education

1. *Inter-disciplinarity:* interdisciplinary learning and cooperation between theological disciplines are encouraged; dialogue between theological

reflection and social sciences, methods of field research and social analysis have a regular presence within theological education;
2. *Interactive and empowering educational methods:* Theological education is encouraging interactive learning styles of teaching and learning between teachers and students. It tends to avoid patterns of merely repetitive learning;
3. *Intercultural openness:* Theological Education deliberately promotes inclusion and participation of different cultural identities and avoids isolation in mono-denominational or mono-cultural social milieus;

D. Hermeneutics of Theological Education

1. *Ecumenicity:* Theological Education is concerned about the unity and common witness of all Christian denominations. It encourages interdenominational cooperation between teachers and programs of theological education from different denominational background and contributes to bridging the historical divides between Evangelicalism, Ecumenism, Pentecostalism and Independent churches;
2. *Hermeneutic sensitivity in Bible studies:* Theological education is firmly based on a solid understanding of the foundational sources of Christian faith in biblical tradition and enables for hermeneutical sensitivity in terms of how to read the Scriptures while developing an openness and knowledge on different Biblical hermeneutics and their validity and mutual correctiveness;
3. *Gender-inclusiveness:* Theological Education should allow gender issues to play a vital role in theological reflection and teaching (as integrated

subject or as distinct course) and women should have equal representation and roles in theological teaching and research;

4. *Interfaith commitment:* Theological Education has a firm commitment to encourage and include interfaith learning and inter-religious encounter which are an important element in any form of Christian witness;

E. Results of Theological Education

1. *Reflective theological identity:* Theological education aims at enabling a reflective and matured theological identity which is able to articulate Christian faith in a biblically rooted, historically informed, critically reflected and ecumenically open manner in the context of today's missionary challenges;

2. *Pastoral orientation:* Theological Education as ministerial formation is nurturing the development of an appropriate pastoral identity and is equipping candidates to cope with the demands of existing and future ministries of the churches;

3. *Integrative Spirituality:* Theological Education tries to integrate academic, social and spiritual formation so that Christian identities and spiritual life can be deepened and strengthened throughout the whole process of theological education;

F. Stability/continuity of theological education

1. *Stability and viability:* Theological Education institutions and course programs provide a basic stability and continuity so that students as well as teachers can rely on its continuation;

2. *Ownership:* While institutions of theological education enjoy a certain degree of autonomy and

freedom of creative biblical and theological reflection there is a clear and broad sense of positive ownership and support for institutions of theological education by the respective churches in a given region;

3. *International partnership:* Theological schools are open to innovative forms of international partnerships of theological programs and courses with theological institutions in other parts of the world. Partner theological colleges and schools from other countries respect, support and enhance local profiles of theological education and do not impose dominant models from external contexts.

4. *Continued education:* Theological education is not a limited period confined to the first period of seminary or academic training for becoming a minister or religious teacher, but aims at a continued life-long process of theological learning and growth which includes in-service training and continued learning periods during the involvement with church ministry and leadership.

Mainstreaming Gender in Theological Institutions in Francophone Africa: Perspective from Cameroon

Priscille Djomhoué

Quality assurance in theological education can be understood as a term used to denote the practices whereby academic standards are maintained and improved.[74] There is a distinction between internal and external quality assurance: Internal quality assurance refers to policies and practices which help the institutions to monitor and to improve the quality of their education provision, while external quality assurance refers to supra-institutional policies and practices whereby the quality of higher education institutions and programs are assured.[75] In another words, *External quality assurance* refers to the review by an external agency (e.g. a national quality assurance agency) or body (e.g. a professional body), which evaluates the operations of a university (institutional) or of its programmes to ascertain the level of compliance with set minimum standards. External quality assurance is mainly carried out through the instrumentality of accreditation and involves a self-study, peer review and a reporting system. *Internal quality assurance*, on the other hand, refers to the internal policies and mechanisms of a university or programme for ensuring that it is fulfilling its purposes as well as the standards that apply to higher education in general or to the profession or discipline, in particular.[76] Many criteria can then be taken into consideration when looking for how to assure the quality of theological education today: the management of the institution, the curriculum which is proposed in a specific context, the scientific level of the

professors and the university's policy to improve and to update their knowledge through research and conferences, the openness to other institutions (networking- mobility), the institutional quality culture... But my paper will take into account just one aspect precisely, the one related to the internal quality assurance in relation to the curriculum which needs to include a quality culture that determine the positive or the negative environment, and therefore the quality of the future leaders who are formed in a particular context.

In fact, during decades, African higher education institutions have carried a lively interest in integrating Gender perspective in their basic educational functions of teaching, research and administration. This decision is justified by the aim of the university which is to empower and to accompany leaders in a changing society. But Theological faculties in francophone Africa seem to evaluate on the margin of this situation which is still judged with a lot of prejudices. The purpose of this paper is to present the situation, reflecting on the case of Cameroon, and to suggest how taking Gender into account can be of help in francophone theological institute for the achievement of its aim which is the transformation and the development of the Church and the society.

I. Brief History of Quality Assurance in Theological Education in Cameroon

It is not possible to speak on the quality assurance of theological education in Cameroon without speaking of higher education, because the faculty of Protestant Theology is the first university institution just before independence, and some of its aspects are related to higher education in Africa.

The history of quality assurance in higher education

in Sub-Saharan Africa[77] goes back to the founding of the first universities in Africa (for example, Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone in 1827), all of which were affiliated to partner universities located in the colonizing countries (the United Kingdom, France, and Portugal). The University of Dakar, now Cheikh Anta Diop University in Senegal, was regarded as an integral part of the French higher education system as late as the 1960s.

Authority over the quality of university education in those early days was a function of their governing boards and faculty. With affiliation, the institutions automatically became part of the British, French, Portuguese or other systems of quality assurance through their partner universities. These institutions were subject to the same kinds of quality control as were British or other European universities, including external examiners and other aspects of these systems. As other new universities were established, some of them were also affiliated with external institutions. Over time, some of the first institutions, such as the University of

Cape Town became mentors for younger institutions in South Africa, as was the case for Fort Hare University which was affiliated with Rhodes University. Even with affiliation, a high degree of institutional autonomy was maintained. Thus, quality assurance was seen primarily as the province of the faculty and governance bodies at each university

At independence the role of state authority over higher education increased. Most departments and ministries of education took an interest in the universities and asserted greater control over their governance and decision-making. During the period following independence, most ministries and departments of education were given legal authority and oversight over higher education, though the level of authority varied widely from one country to another. Some governments

established highly centralized authority over higher education (as in Cameroon, Nigeria, and Madagascar).

Cameroon, Ghana, Tanzania and Mauritius established their quality assurance agencies between 1991 and 1997. For an initial period, all these agencies limited their activities to accreditation of private universities. In Cameroon, the process is carried out under the auspices of the National Commission on Private Higher Education (NCPHE), but the final decision on accreditation is made by the Minister of Higher Education.[78]

A notable observation is that Francophone countries seem to lag behind Anglophone countries in establishing formal quality assurance processes at the national level. While the reasons for this are unclear, this is probably due to the assumption by governments that responsibility for Quality assurance has been assigned to CAMES (*Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Superieur*) which is the first formal accreditation processes in tertiary education. It took place in Francophone Africa in 1968 and its task was, among others, harmonize recognition and equivalence of awards among member nations. Today, CAMES is also responsible for accrediting private universities as well as a select number of professional programs.[79] The 16 member countries of CAMES are Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, and Togo.

Francophone Africa lags behind the rest of Africa in developing structured management of quality assurance at the national level and also within institutions of higher learning. Only Mauritius and Cameroon have national Quality Assurance agencies in august 2007. Madagascar was at this date in the process of setting up one. CAMES, which has hitherto been responsible for quality assurance in the entire francophone region, presently appears over-

stretched in capacity. Moreover, it lacks the mandate to enforce quality standards as participation in its activities is voluntary. But increasing concern about the need to pay more attention to higher education quality at the country level is emerging within francophone Africa. Many institutions are using their on-going reforms of shifting to the LMD system as an opportunity to address quality issues.[80]

In fact, the Faculty of Protestant Theology was founded by eleven churches in Francophone Africa. It was the first University in Cameroon, inaugurated by the first president of the republic in 1962. At that time, students where granted scholarship from the Cameroonian government but it did not influenced the definition of the curriculum. Since 2006 it became Protestant University of Central Africa and accredited by the National Commission on private Higher Education.

The most common Quality Assurance standards which interest this commission in private Universities are mission and vision, academic programs, library resources, physical and technological resources, number and qualifications of staff, number of students and their entry qualifications, and financial resources (relative to number of students). There is no evidence of output standards such as through-put ratio (percent of a cohort that graduates within a specified time) or volume and quality of research. There is also no evidence of any link between quality assurance results and funding allocations to institutions or units.[81]

As far as curriculum is concerned at the Protestant university of Central Africa, National Commission on private Higher Education in Cameroon has a look in faculties of Social Sciences, Medicine, and Technology. But it is not regarding in the faculty of theology because of its direct relation to churches and religious partners who define the curriculum. In another word, the faculty

of theology itself, - and especially the Staff meeting- decides on the curriculum. As Peter Materu put it, the self-assessment process (at institutional or unit level) has positive effects on the culture of quality within an institution or unit. Because it is conducted within a collegial atmosphere without any pressure from an external body, the self-assessment fosters social cohesion and teamwork among staff and also enhances staff accountability of the results of the process. More concretely, self-assessment also helps institutions to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, while generating awareness of key performance indicators. The process of self-assessment is widely seen as the most valuable aspect of quality assurance reviews because it helps institutions to build capacity from within. This capacity-building function of self-assessment is valuable in any context, but it is particularly important in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa where capacity remains very weak.[82]

I am along with Peter Materu when he stresses the positive aspect of self assessment. But in the situation of Cameroonian Theological Faculties where according the curriculum, initiation on Gender matters is still a taboo contrary to States universities, there is a problem. How can we be sure that theologians and future pastors who are trained will be able to afford in the parishes and in the society, challenges of men and women who, because of their initiation in Gender in other universities and associations have another vision of the relation between men and women? This raises the question of whether the training provided by theological institutions is consistent with new thinking or life vision, and with the new and emerging demands of the global agenda. An increased focus on quality and relevance of theological education would contribute to strengthening the link between the institution and the church in the society. To understand

well this problematic, it is important to have a look on the situation within theological institution.

II. The Situation of Women in Francophone Africa Theological Faculties

This paragraph seek particularly to illustrate the challenges that women pursuing theological studies in general, and women theological educators in particular, encounter with regard to patriarchal attitudes which are legitimized by socio-cultural and theological discourses. In fact, students who are recruited to study in the theological faculty are the result of the society and the culture. Therefore, they duplicate the education they received in the institution where they are trained to be the promoters of the Kingdom of God defined as the place of peace and harmony. Also, staff and lecturers are in the same manner the product of their environment. The problem here is that, in such condition, what type of products is expected in an institution if there is not openness to knowledge on Gender equality nowadays?

III. Socio-cultural and Political Position of African Women in Cameroon

Cameroonian culture, like other African societies, is patriarchal. This is also true of the Francophone countries where many students in the Faculty of Protestant Theology and Religious Sciences come from. The traditional socialisation processes perpetuates beliefs, attitudes, and values which permit the subordination of women. The girl-child is taught to be submissive and polite, and is subjected to motherhood roles from an early age while boys are taught the manly tasks of providing and protecting. The result is that women are systematically subordinated and discriminated because

they lack equal opportunities in spheres such as education, the legal system, the workplace, the medical system and worse still in marriage.

The International Women Rights action-IWRAW to CEDAW[83] summarises well the plight of women in Cameroon:

The Preamble of the Constitution of Cameroon ensures equality of all citizens before the law. Yet according to women's rights activists whom IWRAW consulted, the unequal status of women and girls in Cameroon manifests itself in all spheres of life and there is no evidence that the government has taken measures to improve women's status. To the contrary, discriminatory administrative policies, practices, laws, cultural beliefs and attitudes hamper the enjoyment of human rights of women.

Women's rights activists report that the creation of the Government Ministry of Women's Affairs has not made much difference, as it has not taken steps to fight widespread practices of forced marriage, domestic abuse, female excision and other traditional discriminatory practices arising out of customary laws and traditions. According to NGO sources in Cameroon the government-created National Human Rights Commission does not address issues of inequality between women and men or discriminatory practices relating to women. Women are grossly underrepresented on politics...Out of 180 members of the National Assembly only l0 are women and there are only three women ministers in the 50-member Cabinet...only 5.3 percent of sub-ministerial level positions are held by women.

Discrimination against girls and women in education is common...illiteracy for women under 25 is 29% (for men 15 %). Women constitute more than 20% of the workers but only 5.2% of women are found in skilled jobs....

IV. The Situation in Theological Institutions

The situation of women in theological institutions is at the image of what is stressed above, and even more, because the aim of theological training is still to become an ordained pastor in a context where, for many churches, there's still no way for women to be part of the ministry this way. They have their place in the church as member or deaconesses,[84] but not as pastor. In Cameroon, over about eleven mainline Churches who are members of the Council of Protestant Churches in Cameroon (CEPCA), only three have ordained women. But in the reality, only two still have in the country, women as pastors.

This situation can explain, at a certain level the lowest number of female students at the Faculty of Protestant Theology, and their total absence in many of the theological institutions owned by about seven of the eleven members of CEPCA. Also, it is hard to have female student comparatively to male because the registration in the theological institutions in Cameroon is still conditioned by the recommendation of the church as a required document. Many women who would like to study theology are limited by this condition which is also required by partners or church organisations in case they need to apply for a scholarship. A part from this structural requirement, there is one church where women really fear to engage because of the sad experiences of the few first female pastors who finally are no more in the church.

Few numbers of female students who are registered faces many challenges. Challenge of being accepted by male students who moque them in classrooms, challenge of hearing repeatedly the known formula which explains the being there of female students as the result of pressure

from western countries and donors.

Female students also face the content of some courses that are still androcentric, as well as sermon which emphasise patriarchy as a model. In this situation the female student who tries to oppose to some readings of the Bible will be stigmatised as feminist, because in the milieu, feminism is taboo. The most funny is that Gender and feminism are regarded like the same thing. The philosophy is that, good women, and especially good African women who are look as example are those who don't complain, and who accept stoically their situation.

Like in many others institution in the country, female students face sexual harassment. Professor Jean Emmanuel Pondi, in his book, after telling the story of nine female students at the University of Yaoundé concludes that "these deplorable stories adequately prove that the phenomenon of sexual harassment in our universities is not a fiction at all. It describes the case of girls who, having registered in our "temple of knowledge" to pursue their higher education studies, see themselves mostly introduced and trapped in a trauma of psychosis, because of the activities of a minority of teachers, attitudes which in the long run end up tarnishing the aura of a very great majority of teachers who exercise this noble, worthy and prestigious profession: that of University lecturer (...) harassment can take the direction of the lecturer on the student, or administrative and support staff on the student, or administrative staff on administrative staff." (Pondi 24)

In the whole country of about 13 theological institutes and seminaries we have only one female recruited as full time lecturer. In such conditions, how can we be sure that men and women who are trained in our institutions are firstly changed people, and secondly well equipped to face the challenges of a changing Africa which is actually at the cross roads? Is it possible to

affirm that students who are trained in these conditions will lead Christians in this world which had become a small village? In ours states universities, in many associations and institutions, Gender question is not only integrated as curriculum, but as a serious matter at the level of structures and the functioning. How could we have the guaranty that future theologians and pastors will be the real promoters of the Kingdom of God that we are waiting for? How to build from the theological institutions, a Church which will fulfill its aim of being agent of peace, unity and development?

V. Mainstreaming Gender in the Curriculum of Theological institutions

Curriculum is something to do with the actual content of education. It deals with the methodologies and processes by which learning takes place. To deals not only with the facts and figures, but also with the culture and values of the society. Teaching and learning take place within a context of a conceptualisation of the society, its values, its direction and its role in the world as a whole. The curriculum can re-enforce the status quo or it can question the status quo. It involves the "hidden curriculum", which incorporates the often unspoken but nevertheless important messages which are transmitted within the higher education establishment.[85]

Disciplines dealing with education are related to human rights, culture and equity. For example, architectural and construction, are related to building for whom and at what coast. Building very expensive and showy buildings, which may end up as white elephants are different from building attractive, high quality but low coast housing for workers. The assumption is that the poor live in ugly houses that do not deserve an architect's creative, high quality attention. Education plays an

important role defining the society, its characteristics and its future. This is done through its research, development, education and training programmes. A society may conceive of itself as inefficient and incompetent one hears people say, "well, this is Africa", when there is corruption, when things don't work, when people don't come on time. Oppression of women and support for polygamy and even promiscuity may be defined on the ground that "this is our culture".[86]

The "hidden curriculum" deals with the unspoken curriculum. On many campuses, getting drunk may be seen as an expansion of power and freedom, and may be commonly practised by otherwise powerless youth. The baiting and sexual harassment of women student[87] may be seen as expression of manhood. Its worse expression may be in rape, where the hidden curriculum says that woman who says "no" really means "yes". There is a common misunderstanding between young men and young women regarding what is means to be a "boy friend" or a "girl friend". When a young woman agrees to be a "girl friend", this can be interpreted as meaning she has agreed to sex by the man, whereas for the girl, this means a special basically non-sexual friendship. The hidden curriculum may also say that a woman who has chosen a career, such as a career as a lecturer, is misbehaving societal mores, and deserves to be harassed.[88]

This situation which is observed in campuses is among serious issues that need to be addressed in this 21st century, because it functions as a blockage of one of the main objective of education which is to bring people belonging to a wide range of walks to communicate with each other on mere friendly grounds, and to be able to devise and to chalk out effective strategies and ways to help make their environment and society a better place to live. Theological institution which trains people on how to

inculcate the Gospel is the better place where theologians and future pastors need to receive lecture that will change them and equip them with tools that will enable them to promote the Kingdom of God. But how cans this change occurs through the taking into account of the Gender perspective in the curriculum?

VI. Curriculum as a Transformational Tool in Terms of Both Human Rights and Development.

Theological institutions are one of the best places for re-thinking and redefining reality on the light of the Gospel. As such, it is a key to change. One of the changes that need to be addressed is that of Gender. Research and development are primary sources of knowledge, and higher education is responsible for creating new knowledge as well as new values an attitude.

VII. Gender perspective as a corrective to patriarchal models

Gender Mainstreaming is the public policy concept of assessing the different implications for men and women of any planned action, including legislation and programmes, in all areas and levels. Mainstreaming essentially offers a pluralistic approach that values the diversity among both men and women. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economical and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and unequally is not perpetuated.[89]

The Lutheran World Federation uses the concept Engendering Theological Education; in fact, engendering theological education means transforming the entire

theological enterprise. It is not a matter of adding to, or being corrective. To engage in theological dialogue with gender issues is to see how the understanding of gender in society has affected our understanding of God, the Scriptures, the teaching and practices of the church and our relationships with one another, as men and women. Engendering means giving birth to something new- to hatch, cause, induce, provoke, develop, excite, stimulate, rouse or stir. The purpose is not to incorporate feminist perspectives into the existing curricula, but to provoke a reformation and reformulation of theological education, which is both relevant, and life affirming for both men and women. Engendering theology does not mean supplanting men's way of knowing with women's way of knowing thereby merely inverting the hierarchy.[90]

We are not the first person to think about engendering theological education in general; many scholars and associations have express this concern through reflexions and consultation. For example, from 6th to 7th November 2001 in Montreux Switzerland, the Department for Mission and Development of the Lutheran World Federation organised , a Global Consultation on the Theme *Engendering Theological Education for Transformation,* as a follow up of a formal one which was organised in Rome 23-27 August 1999 under the theme *Re-visioning Theological Education*. The message which came out of the first consultation to the head of churches was as follow: "Going into the next century, curriculum development should be especially attentive to issues of contextualization, spirituality, the insight provided by feminist and other liberation perspectives, transformation and ecumenics." (Lutheran World Federation 7)

We are along with this second consultation of the Department for mission and Development[91] which

determined the importance and ways of carrying out this project in Theological Education: in fact, Engendering theology frees men as well as women, leading men to recognise their own engendered experience; it retrieves lost stories and traditions and breaks open cultural stereotypes and hierarchies. It offers new ways of reading the Biblical text and seeks to free it from its moorings in patriarchy.

Engendered theology challenges the traditional assumption that the male is normative; that male theology and male experience can speak equally for women. Engendering theological education means transforming the entire theological enterprise. It is not a matter of adding to, or being corrective. To engage in theological dialogue with gender issues is to see how the understanding of gender in society has affected our understanding of God, the Scriptures, the teachings and practices of the church and our relationships as men and women with one another. The purpose of engendering theology is to provoke a reformation and reformulation of theological education, which is both relevant and life affirming for women and for men.

Engendered theology is not a matter of discussion but one of collaborative action that takes contextuality seriously. It should be introduced in the popular, pastoral and academic levels of the church. It needs to include students, faculty, and administrative heads as well as people from the grass roots in discussions on content, and method of doing theology.

Engendering theology is possible through networking, sharing of resources, equipping individuals with analytical tools, and training of faculty. Doing engendered theology retrieves lost and hidden stories and traditions and breaks open cultural stereotypes and hierarchies. It offers new ways of reading the Biblical texts and seeks to free them from their patriarchal

moorings. Engendering theology requires collaborative reflection with people on the margins of society.

It is not easy to formulate a single integrated curriculum. During the second consultation of the Lutheran Federation's Department for Mission and Development, many theological scholars were invited to develop a model, each of them according to his discipline. In this way, the result was the presentation of a multiplicity of models for the purpose of preparing an integrated curriculum: *Integrating Gender perspectives in the Curriculum- Biblical, Systematic and Practical theology*.[92]

In Francophone Africa, as far as theological institutions are concerned, we are not aware of writings and discussions or consultations in this sense. Unfortunately, this context also was not represented during this very important gathering. The fact that the francophone theological context have not yet gathered to discuss this issue is perhaps, the reason why talking about Gender perspective there is still a taboo. The result of this great work which was done by scholars will be of help if the context is prepared to accept it. But concretely, for a beginning, it will be difficult to Mainstreaming Gender in theological disciplines since lecturers as well as students in their study context are not prepared technically, and scientifically to do so. This is the reason why, we suggest that, the francophone theological association call ASTHEOL should reflect in the sense of encouraging the respective theological institutions which are members to take this questing seriously. It may be also advisable to introduce Gender as a course at list in the first year of Theological studies, and to train staffs, and lecturers during workshops.

Assuring the Quality of Institutional Practice: A Case of Africa

Simon K. Dossou

The consultation under preparation around the general theme: Challenges and Promises of Quality Assurance in Theological Education: Ecumenical and Multi-Contextual Inquiries, affords the opportunity to retrace the path travelled up until now by the Theological Training Institutions with regard to standards of quality .

Our particular remit is to study the sub-theme: Assuring the Quality of Institutional Practice.
In order to do so, after an initial overview of theological training in Africa from the earliest times up to the present, we shall be looking at the changes that the training centres have undergone and the image that most of them present today. Several institutions have joined together to form regional or sub-regional networks for mutual support. Have these networks succeeded in the mission they set themselves? Is it not the involvement of WCC through ETE, and AACC's involvement through its theology department in accompanying the theological institutions that have the duty to assure standards of quality – standards which seems to be falling today?

I. Overview of Theological Training in Africa

Since the birth of the Christian Church in Sub-Saharan Africa through the work of European and American missions, the training of parish ministers became part of the overall evangelisation programme. It required the creation of schools for catechists, theology schools and theology faculties.

The work of these training centres enabled the Christian communities in several countries to have local ministerial staff, as was the intention. Through an in-depth quality analysis we can discover the strengths and weaknesses of the training given.

A. Local Co-worker or Co-missionary

As the mission field expanded, it became increasingly difficult for a missionary to continue to work alone with his interpreter. A group of missionaries would come together and form a team with local Christians who had been converted for a while and who clearly had a passion for the Gospel. These would be mature adults who benefited from their position working side-by-side with the minister to learn to read and even to write. Several of these became catechists and/or evangelists.

Already in 1894 a school for catechists and evangelists was created in Bonabéri in Cameroun. The purpose of this school was to train auxiliary helpers for the ministers in those churches where French was considered the working language. Candidates came from Togo, from Dahomey (present-day Benin), from Madagascar, and indeed from all over Africa.

From 1924 a similar school was set up in Porto-Novo in Dahomey to take trainee evangelists from Dahomey and Togo, and later from Ivory Coast. The same school also served as a teacher training school to train staff who were intending to work in the Protestant schools. Many of these teachers were recruited to teach in State schools because of the high quality of the training they had received.

Out of this group of people who could be described as co-workers or "co-missionaries" there

were those who became interpreters for the missionaries, Bible translators, and translators of portions of Holy Scripture. Several were extraordinarily talented in translating hymns taught by the missionaries, and others became great hymn writers without any great knowledge of their local music or music from elsewhere. There are very few of this unique group of pioneers to be found today. Several of them had had a primary school education, but were highly regarded by those whom they served as auxiliaries.

In the 1950s, the school at Porto-Novo which had become a seminary was well-known and respected throughout the whole West African sub-region and counted several missionaries among its teaching staff. Several ministers from the Methodist and Evangelical Churches of Ivory Coast, Togo and Dahomey before their countries' independence, had received their training there, and were the object of pride among the Churches which supported the project. This process continued quite successfully until the participating countries' independence in 1960.

B. Theological Training in Africa – Progress Made Nonetheless

The year of political independence in Africa brought about changes in several domains, including that of the training of African clergy.

1. From pastoral training schools to schools of theology

In the early 1960s – the period when African States were gaining their independence the Churches felt a wind of change on several fronts. Missionaries who had felt more or less settled in their stations

suddenly realised that there was no longer a place for them. Did they really express how that made them feel? Perhaps. But certain Africa scholars think however that many Europeans no longer felt entirely secure in countries where the colonial armies were packing their bags and making way for a national army whose intentions in the face of a completely new set of circumstances were little known. In some cases the reasons given for wanting to leave were quite astounding. From that moment on, it was necessary to 'fast-track' the training of local clergy so as to avoid a serious shortfall in the number of ministerial staff to administer the Christian communities. From a number of measures that were adopted, two major ones locally and regionally merit attention.

2. Local Measures

Some Churches decided to promote some of their evangelists and catechists who had proved their ability in the domain of providing pastoral care to their communities by conferring on them the status of minister. They were ordained after completing a complementary training given in situ by ministers who were already experienced. Some did exceptionally well and were much appreciated by the communities they served.

3. Regional and Sub-Regional measures

Several theological training institutions joined together to train their ministers to a higher level, which in the long term would mean that they would have their own trainers to meet local needs. This was how, for Central Africa, the Protestant Faculty of Theology in Congo Leopoldville was came into being, and some time later that of Yaoundé, to serve West Africa and other francophone countries. As a result, since 1964 several hundreds of ministers have gained degrees in theology in these institutions, and were

thus able to train their fellow colleagues in the ministerial schools, which had eventually become schools of theology.

II. From Schools of Theology to Christian Universities

A. New and higher intellectual demands in the African Church

Ten years of independence for several African countries brought significant changes to the whole school and university scene. We see more and more intellectuals in all sectors of life, and the pastoral ministry too must be equal to the new demands of an intelligentsia no longer content with mediocrity. So it is imperative to raise the level of training of pastoral ministers forming the Protestant clergy, presently considered to be quite low. Ministerial training in the schools of theology has seen an improvement in its curriculum, and several of those who have gained diplomas from the schools of theology are going on to study theology at degree level. In the space of twenty years, several churches find themselves with an abundance of ministers having degrees in theology thanks to the work of the Theology Faculties of Yaoundé, of Kinshasa and later of Madagascar, in the context of francophone Africa.

B. A further step towards the goal of a solid training

In view of the considerable increase in the number of theology students at the Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Yaoundé and that of Kinshasa in the 1980s, the idea was mooted to make it possible for the

theology schools with a certain level of academic capacity to have their status raised to that of Higher Institute of Theology. The aim is to enable these institutions to train theology students to degree level. In the interests of continuing to have a joint ecumenical and intercultural place of learning, Yaoundé has been chosen as the centre where students who already have their degree go to study for their Masters in biblical subjects and at Kinshasa in systematic subjects. In this way any duplication of effort could be avoided as regards training, and also any possible spirit of rivalry between two former great institutions of the francophone Protestant world. This would also mean that all the Churches involved could continue to be involved together in their students' training in a spirit of continued ecumenism.

The experimental period for this plan lead the Churches to review the strategies in the light of unfolding practical realities. Once the plan had begun, several institutions who were teaching their students to degree level, took the unilateral decision to continue to teach to masters level in order, as they said, to reduce the excessively high cost of training students abroad. The modus vivendi between Yaoundé and Kinshasa did not even get off the ground. The institutions plan however did proceed, and spread rapidly to several theological training institutions who might even have gone as far as doctorate level had it not been for the lack of lecturers to support such a programme. On analysis, it became indeed apparent that overseas study was becoming increasingly expensive, particularly as regards travel costs. Moreover, the fact that certain institutions are able to deliver a good standard of training in their own country has meant that other Churches in that country can enroll their students who would not

otherwise have had access to university studies. The university education has become ecumenical within the country itself. Unfortunately, certain ecumenical partners have refused scholarships to those requesting to study in their own countries on the grounds that their institution is not ecumenical – or not sufficiently ecumenical. These are matters to be looked at more closely.

On another level, the Institutions have not merely been content to educate their students to degree and/or masters level, but have sought and been granted university status with several courses or departments or even faculties in various subjects. In the majority of cases, theology has become the poor relation in the institution as a whole, and struggles to attract students. In some instances in order to maintain an interest in theology-related studies, chair of Religious Studies have been purely and simply created in these new universities , and even in the State universities. Theology as an academic subject is losing ground even in Church institutions. The disarray among certain Church leaders is clear. But the fact remains that the element of competition is increasingly harsh. So what's to be done?

III. What Kind of Theological Training for The World of Today?

It is generally accepted that the centre of gravity of Christianity is shifting from the North to the South. For this reason a new vision of how to nurture and support the people of God must be thought out in the light of this new set of circumstances. Consideration must be given to classical education, to empowerment training, to theological studies outside of the libraries, to mutual exchanges etc.

A. Classical Education

There is no doubt that at the beginning, the training of ministers and spiritual mentors of the people of God in Africa mirrored exactly what the missionaries wanted for Africans. Numerous are the intellectuals who, like Professeur Mengi Kilandamoko, think that the "The Catholic and Protestant missionaries came in the name of the Gospel, but also with their own particular mentality and culture." So naturally they communicated the Gospel with their own essential nature despite all good intentions to be as neutral as possible. It was stated in an exposé during the National Synod of the ECZ in 1993, that education in colonial times had the aim of "assuring a religious and moral education for the children by developing attitudes on the one hand, and skills for manual work on the other." This strategy linked to the education of the children also extended to the treatment inflicted on adults. Thus "the educated black man, therefore promoted and privileged, maintains his mentality of underling… the colonial agent trains the educated black man, not with the idea of his becoming an equal, or a free and responsible being, but above all a colonised individual, a good and useful person. Neither did the missionary have the conviction that he was making Christians who would become his equals in the Christian life. So both the one and the other trained underlings to remain underlings, men of average ability and with a submissive spirit. … On a spiritual plane, the black man who has had another culture thrust upon him, feels that he has been snatched away from his own culture."

Theological and ministerial training in most cases

in Africa has followed the same pattern with various adjustments introduced by successive generations. When Africans became the teachers for their own brothers and sisters going into the pastoral ministry, it was the African culture linked to the respect of one's elders which came to the fore. So, without considering the younger students as assistants of the more senior ministers, the treatment meted out by the latter on certain students has left indelible memories for many.

Looking at another aspect, the theological training institutions based their programmes on what they had learnt from the missionaries, and also on programmes that had been elaborated elsewhere. Hence their libraries are full of books by the great theologians of the last century such as Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann and others who, although good theologians, were only addressing their contemporaries first and foremost. It is therefore not surprising that certain African theologians never understand what they are reading in "these great theological classics."

At a time when the Church in Africa must play a large part in a new global evangelism, it is increasingly important that a new vision of theology be developed to meet the challenges of the age. This is not about dreaming up theories for other people – African theology must stop and take time to reflect on what it needs in today's world on the basis of meetings and exchanges where all possibilities must be explored.

However, since the old-school theologians are still in the system, what can be done to help them respond to the demands of the present age? A programme of retraining or of capacity building seems increasingly necessary.

B. Capacity Building

Almost all the ministers of African Churches in the francophone world today were trained in the system where it was considered that a good theological education must be based on the number of books read by authors of great theological renown. Equally, theological dissertations at every level should include a certain number of books considered as classics in the field of theology. Of course these are needed, but how many of these classics touch on questions of poverty, of illness, of witchcraft – questions that many Africans seem to have to face in their everyday life? And are the books written by African theologians which broach these subjects read in the same way? Aren't several of these books written by Africans considered to be of a lesser scientific value by those whose task it is to certify universal theological standards? Far be it from us to systematically reject inherited assets from the past, but we must wake up to the fact that a new era has arrived where "the stone rejected by the builders must become the main corner stone of the building." For this to happen, all those of the old school must undergo retraining in order to be able to adapt to the new set of circumstances we find ourselves in today.

Therefore, our theological training institutions and in particular our Protestant universities have the duty to assume the task of creating centres for the capacity building for the ministers of our churches so that they may be equipped and able to meet the challenges of today's world. It is not merely a question of looking at African Christianity where numbers are continually growing, but of being aware of the global responsibilities of that Christianity in the same way that the European and American missions of the 19th

century looked at them in relation to the rest of the world at that time. In direct opposition to that era, African Christianity has neither the ambition nor the means to go on a colonial conquest of the rest of the world. All ministers will have to go back and relearn the culture of a new evangelism if we don't want to slip back into a Christianity which is incapable of offering healthy solutions to the problems of our contemporaries and of the rest of the world. From this perspective, theological training has to be done differently or at least make some modifications.

C. A Theological Training Beyond Libraries

Theological training in the churches born out of the Reformation will have to embrace a vast cultural diversity if its validity is to be recognised. This is why it is obligatory to study the Biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek . In addition to these come the subjects which are on the curriculum of all the great theological institutions worldwide. In the majority of cases the academic staff use the technique of what has been dubbed as "quotation theology." What is needed now is for each lecturer to campaign for a theology based on original thought which does not exclude the scholarship of the past but which avoids becoming enslaved by it to the point where he is no longer able to speak without quoting a former master in the discipline he us teaching.

So libraries must therefore become support mechanisms for theological teaching in Africa, but not by acting as unconditional mentors who allow no room for personal reflection.

The experience of the 'old countries' who brought us Christianity must be drawn on for the time being. In fact it is recognised that the libraries in these

countries have an abundant stock of very good theology books, but these no longer seem to be effective for the development of the Christian faith in their own contexts. If this is indeed the case, does academia still have a raison d'être? And what credit is given to those who think differently? Hence our question:

D. How Long Before There is Mutual Respect Between Theologians?

The theological training system of the last thirty years in the countries of the North as well as in those of the South seems to be in harmony especially as regards doctoral studies. This is due above all to the fact that the professors who have been guiding theses during that time were either taught in universities of the North, or that the professors of the North were associated in the mentoring of doctoral or PHD research in the south. As such, this type of co-operation is a good thing. But where will it lead at the end of the day?

Several African doctoral or PHD candidates have undertaken research in universities of the North, and have been well regarded by their mentors. But not one of these candidates has ever been invited to prepare a lecture to deliver to their mentor's students, which would stretch them to the maximum in their area of research. It should however be recognised that some mentors have actually tried that and would be ready to repeat the experience if only the students showed some willingness in that direction.

In the same vein some African professors have never been invited to lecture anywhere in the North. Is it because they have never expressed the wish to do so, or because they are considered incapable of

delivering a course of lectures ? Who should be taking the initiative here? Whereas professors from the North are often invited to visit the institutions of the South, if this is not a two-way process, is this not due to a lack of mutual confidence? How long will it be before a mutual confidence South to North and North to South is restored in the domain of theology, and the North learns from the South and the South continues to have confidence in the North? The Church will then be open to the world and be enabled to reclaim its status as the Church of Jesus Christ in the world.

IV. The Theological Networks and Their Roles

Aware of the necessity to rise to the challenge sooner rather than later, the Theology Training Institutions in Africa have seen the need to come together in regional and sub-regional associations to uphold their common interests. The ministerial schools and Theology Faculties decided to operate in a network, and as far as possible to have a common training programme. In French-speaking Africa, l'Association des Institutions de Formation Théologique (ASTHEOL) was formed. Parallel networks were created in the other sub-regions of Africa. Hence ATIEA, ATISCA, WAATI. These associations also brought together the advanced ministerial training institutions as well as those of a lower academic level. For quite some time they successfully fulfilled the role assigned to them. They rendered an enormous service in the field of training Protestant clergy before descending into a sort of lethargy which now requires some energising solutions. This work has now begun with a renewed commitment on the part of those involved with theological education in Africa.

V. The Accompaniment of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and ETE/WCC in Revitalisating Theological Training

Today, several theological institutions are at a crossroads, and it's becoming necessary to rethink how to maintain quality in institutional practice. Shock therapy will be required for this, in the form of

1. Rethinking the real needs of today's church as regards local parish ministers
2. Adapting training according to actual contextual need, and stopping importing theological concepts developed elsewhere and in a different age.
3. Reviewing the quality of the heads of these institutions and daring to get back to giving training in a theological context which is ecumenical and multicultural, which we had in the past.
4. Having a vision of quality in theological training which conforms to universal standards.

It is in this perspective that the Theology Department of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), has embarked on a series of ground-breaking reflections aimed at helping African institutions assume full responsibility for quality theological training.

Indeed the Advisory Committee of the AACC has proposed a raft of measures to make theology in Africa a viable and ongoing concern, with appropriate financial backing and an ambitious literary output. This means that the following points require serious consideration:

1. The founding of an All Africa Academy of Theology and Religious Studies
2. The establishment of a Theological Training Fund for Africa
3. The publication of a Theological Training Manual for Africa

These initiatives will serve to assure a high quality

of institutional practice in the field of theological training not only in Africa but all over this world of ours which has today become a global village.

Conclusion

The All Africa Conference of Churches is not only committed in its responsibility to support the theological networks mentioned above, but is also preparing to play an important part in the training of the trainers. Together with its partners, AACC will be at the forefront of ecumenical theological training in Africa and will be vigilant in assuring a high standard of institutional practice for the sake of the Christian faith on the continent of Africa and around the world.

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Appendix A

L-R Back: Ruiz, Gendi, Mutambara, Nadar, Phiri, Ngumi, Bernhardt, Dossou, Botha, Amanze, Polombo, Djomhoue, Esterline, Esack, Kang, Nsengiyumva, Masango, Werner, Kalengyo, Nakah, Allaboe, Wang, Massey, Suh, Pun, Tuidrakulu. Front: Wandera, Matsolo, Dimitrov, Brockman, Oduro, Zhimo, Johnson, Lal, Gichimu, Tiwari.

Special thanks to Dr. Victor Nakah for contributing this photo.

WOCATI 2011 Consultation Communiqué

Johannesburg, South Africa, 4 July – 8 July, 2011

1. From 4 July to 8 July 2011 representatives of the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) met at Lakeview Airport Lodge in Johannesburg, South Africa for a Consultation on "Challenges and Promises of Quality Assurance in Theological Education: Ecumenical and Multi-Contextual Inquiries." The 38 participants enjoyed meeting for the first time on the African continent and becoming aware of the strategic importance of African associations of theological schools and the work of AACC and other ecumenical bodies in enhancing theological education in Africa.

2. The Consultation was an historic event, since for the first time Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and African Independent Churches' associations came together to address issues of quality assurance and enhancement in theological education on the global level.

3. In the course of the Consultation, participants became aware that quality assurance and enhancement take place in a variety of

different ways. In some contexts, the work of quality assurance and enhancement is done by different organizations, including state-related accreditation agencies, universities, independent secular accreditation agencies, and church-related uni-denominational or multi-denominational accreditation agencies. It also became clear that there is no global agency to accredit institutions of theological education. Participants also recognized the need to develop a common understanding between all Christian institutions of theological education on what constitutes quality assurance and enhancement in theological education.

4. Participants realized that quality assurance and enhancement in theological education is a multidimensional process that involves several interrelated parameters, including curriculum in theological education, institutional resources for theological education, student competencies and skills, contextualization, and outcomes of theological education among others. A balanced concept of quality in theological education should include academic proficiency, spiritual formation, and pastoral competencies.

5. Participants affirmed that quality theological education should address multiple forms of oppression and discrimination based on

gender, race, ethnicity, color, class, caste, ability, sexuality, and religion. Participants also affirmed that quality theological education should contribute to promoting justice, peace, equality, and ecological integrity in church and society.

6. Participants affirmed that WOCATI is an essential platform for networking among associations and institutions for theological education in the world according to the WOCATI constitutional mandates.

7. Participants acknowledged the need for a charter with guidelines on the essential elements of quality in theological education.

8. Participants expressed appreciation to ETE-WCC for its ongoing support, and affirmed the Executive Committee's recommendation to ask WCC through the Assembly Planning Committee that a space be created to represent WOCATI in the next WCC Assembly and the future working structures of WCC.

Representatives from the following networks and associations were represented:

- All Africa Theological Education by Extension Association (AATEEA)
- All-African Conference of Churches (AACC)

- Association des Institutions d'Enseignement Theologique en Afrique Occidentale (ASTHEOL)
- Association for Theological Education in Myanmar (ATEM)
- Association for Theological Institutes in the Middle East (ATIME)
- Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa (ATIEA)
- Association of Theological Institutions in Southern and Central Africa (ATISCA)
- Community of Churches in Mission (CEVAA)
- Council of Theological Institution in Francophone Africa
- Korean Association of Accredited Theological Schools (KAATS)
- Myanmar Institute of Theology
- Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC)
- Overseas Council International
- Senate of Serampore College
- South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS)
- TEE College Johannesburg
- The Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada (ATS)
- Theological Education in the

Anglican Communion (TEAC)
- Trinity Theological College, Dimapur, Nagaland
- Universität Basel
- Université Protestant du Congo
- University of Johannesburg
- University of KwaZulu-Natal
- University of South Africa (UNISA)
- West African Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI)

The Johannesburg WOCATI conference included two "listeners' reports" presented on the last day of the conference, the purpose of which was to provide summative interpretive statements by two persons specifically assigned before the conference to "listen for," identify, or further develop concerns, issues, and themes emerging during the conference. These reports were presented on the last day of the conference, discussed by the full conference, and was thereafter entered into the historical record of the conference. The reports are included in this volume as an appendix to give the reader additional insight into the proceedings of the conference.

Reflections on the "Challenges and Promises of Quality Assurance in Theological Education: Ecumenical and Multi-Contextual Inquiries"

Lester Edwin J. Ruiz

PRELUDE

My context-specific task in this "listener's report" is to try to make some observations about the ongoing conversations on theological education broadly conceived that have occurred during this WOCATI consultation, to raise some questions about some of the issues that I believe are embedded in these conversations, and to offer an interpretive perspective about the conditions of possibility that may have a bearing on the transformation of theological education in our time.

Entering the discussion in this way does at least two things, for the future of this ongoing, turbulent and necessary conversation. First, by situating the conversation within an ongoing discussion of the relevance, adequacy, and desirability of theological education worldwide, I wish not only to recognize the importance of the conversation, but the necessity of re-affirming the public character of theological education as an antidote to the re-emergence of auto-referential, self-serving, and therefore fragmenting subjectivity in theological education and its destructive consequences.

Second, by affirming the multiple locations and positionalities of "our" multi-stranded diversities as the methodological and spiritual starting point for transformative theological education, I wish to signal an affirmation of diversity and a recognition not only that the boundaries, territories, and containers of pluriform

theological education are far more permeable than has often been acknowledged, but also that the virtue of living in leaky containers lies in the strength it provides to refuse the temptation of essentializing or homogenizing theological education and its curricular forms.

DILEMMAS IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: SOCIAL, POLITICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, INSTITUTIONAL

I am particularly grateful that this consultation, unlike some that I have attended, has insisted that theological education, not unlike the institutions out of which it arises, namely, the church, academy, and the world, are creatures with multistranded histories comprehensively and variously understood as "space," as "political-economic-cultural artifact," as "religio-moral event," as "sites of ministry," as "structures and processes of capital, goods, information, people," and, as "ecosystem." It is not surprising, then that our discussions about "quality in theological education" have sought to carefully, intentionally, and passionately attend to these histories that not only gave it birth, but which continue to nurture and shape it.

In the first place, there seems to be consensus that our world in the early years of the 21st century no longer resembles the world, which gave birth to the seminary, theological school, or university-affiliated divinity schools with its decidedly "monastic" self-understanding.

In the second place, there seems to be agreement among us that institutions of higher education continue not only to be intensely contested, but also continue to be *sites* of substantive, metatheoretical, methodological, and political/institutional contestation. We know in our hearts that there are real differences among a small

denominational seminary in Richmond, Indiana, USA, a large university-affiliated theology department in Kwazulu-Natal, a diocesan theologate in Manila, Philippines, a cluster of theological schools in Serampore, India. Location and positionality make a difference. Bodies shape ontologies, which in turn disciplines epistemologies.

For example, the notion of community which is central to the language and experience of seminaries, theological schools and university-affiliated divinity schools, and on which many ground their *raison d'etre* has raised more questions than it has provided answers—a theme eloquently articulated yesterday by Farid Esack. While there may be an emerging sense of a globalizing identity, and while we may yet in our lifetime see the institutionalizing of a worldwide theological education oriented around Christian unity—about which Dietrich Werner correctly reminds us—present-day structures and patterns of actually existing communities, tied to territorial claims, particularly of the state and/or of ethnic groups, still remain and continue to hold sway. It is not so easy to extricate ourselves from the reigning asymmetrical definition of "community" that is articulated along dichotomous, if not divisive lines—the civilized versus the barbarian, the inside versus outside, the friend versus enemy, the domestic versus the international, the resource-rich versus the resource-deprived along with the imagined or real asymmetries of power, position, and privilege that often accompany these asymmetries.

In effect, one of the dilemmas faced by WOCATI is that any pretensions of having a community of learning, teaching, and research, normatively rooted in the primary face-to-face relationship within a shared and common horizon, are rendered problematic, if not illusory by, on the one hand, the actually existing "anarchic" structures at the global level masquerading as centralizing, not to

mention, civilizing norms, and, on the other hand, the specificities of local identities desperately asserting themselves in the name of survival. The question is not only whether there can be a community without the ethical face-to-face, but also what the conditions of possibility are for a community that can account simultaneously for both local (face-to-face) and global identities.

In the third place, it is difficult to speak about universally applicable theological education for church, academy, and world, given what for a long time now has been called the "unevenness of development." This kind of unevenness is probably the most pervasive context of theological education worldwide—and is often legitimated by practices rooted in assertions of subordination based on gender, class, and race. This problem of unevenness lies not only in the vastly different theoretical and practical contexts in which seminaries, theological schools, and university-affiliated divinity schools have come to be situated in the present—contexts which themselves are undergoing profound changes. Nor does the problem of unevenness emerge only as a question of the re-distribution of resources—political, economic, and cultural. In fact, this WOCATI meeting underscores the fact that there are "higher order" differences, both inter-and intra institutionally, in the ways institutions of higher education are organized, supported, and developed, which profoundly shape each institution and which cannot simply be resolved by appealing to some universal pedagogical role which theological institutions are said to play in church, society, and world or by redistributing the resources required for theological education—their importance notwithstanding. In fact, both difference and unevenness raise critical questions about commensurability, applicability, and translatability; and can only be addressed, if not

overcome, by intentionally providing contexts and opportunities for encountering, engaging with, the historical Others who continually *∂i*ω*p*lace or *re*p*l*ace our best intentions and desires for quality theological education.

ORIENTATIONS: TOWARDS (BEST) PRACTICES IN QUALITY THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

While I am somewhat skeptical about the capacity of theological institutions including my own to exercise a consistent and sustained transformative role in church, society, and the world, I do not believe that they will wither away—more so that they should. For these institutions in their medieval, modern, and post-modern forms have always re-presented society: its "scenography, its views, conflicts, contradictions, its play and its differences, and also its desire for organic union in a total body." In fact, these institutions—such as we know them today—are more necessary than ever, because they are already implicated in society as *topoi* for practices that shape human experience.

Among the many lessons I have been gifted by all of you in this consultation, I would like to underscore at least four normative, orienting practices.

First, there is the practice of *engage∂* deliberation. Deliberation cannot be reduced to mere speech. It encompasses the whole range of participative practices, which our morning bible studies with Sarojini Nadar so lightly but profoundly exemplified. These practices presuppose a recognition and affirmation not only of the plurality of theological institutions, celebrating difference as constitutive of community, but also of meaningful and direct participation in the production and reproduction of theological wisdom. Here, "community" has less to do

with the aggregation of groups based exclusively on racial, gender, class, or disciplinary identities or solidarities, and more with the *sites* where human beings, if not theological educators, recognize and affirm their mutual responsibilities, obligations and relationships while simultaneously accepting norms of principled diversity and non-exclusion.

Second, there is the practice of creating, nurturing, and defending what Hannah Arendt called, in a different though not unrelated context, the *res publica*—the "public thing." Contrary to those modernist practices that reduce the public to a pre-given structure of reality, or even to an ethnocentric project given ontological or universal status through its imposition worldwide, the "public" is the space for difference carved out by deliberating communities as they seek meaningful consensus. By being committed to the retrieval and preservation of the *res publica*, understood primarily as practices of intersectionality, of living in the interstitial, one casts suspicion on the logocentric, self-referential, and totalizing pretensions of modernist narratives that continue to cast their long shadows on theological education today. It also redefines the public beyond the conventional notions of territoriality, recognizing not only our shared contexts or our profound pluralistic existence, but also of our *human specie identity.* The discussion we had around the *Kairos* documents is illustrative.

Third, there is the practice of utopia—of living in the "no place." I suspect many of us would agree that, "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." (Proverbs 29: 18, *NIV*) This vision, not unlike Namsoon Kang's notion of "remembering the future," is not a description of the future, rather, it is an orientation in the present, a point of entry, a beginning, a departure, but not a final solution. While this orientation is mediated through our limits and the limits of our institutions of theological

education, this unavoidable, if necessary, limitation, can be transformed into a practical critique of universalizing hegemonies, that, in the language of Foucault, makes transgressions possible, making it *imaginable* to undermine, subvert those dominative practices—particularly of pseudo-universals and false dichotomies—which discipline present-day experience of the church, academy, and world. The strategies undergirding the discussions on the geopolitical and socio-cultural issues of Session 6, as well as in the panel with Nico Botha, Simon Dossou, and Priscille Djomhoue directs us to the transformative theological imagination that arises out of and returns to our unconditional limits.

Moreover, the possibility of transgression rests, largely, on a critical consciousness and a creative imagination that are not imprisoned by the logic of modernity nor bound by conventional wisdom. Such an imagination and consciousness, which are windows into time and eternity, will need to be nurtured, cultivated, indeed, disciplined in order for them to be in*formative* as well as trans*formative*. It will require that imagination be at home with memory; and that critical consciousness not be a disembodied emancipatory interest. Indeed, one of the lessons we have learned for theological education as a whole, particularly from the feminist/womanist movements—caringly represented in this consultation, is the impossibility of dissociating mind and body, reason and passion, thought and action. What is at stake, moreover, is both the freedom to reflect in ways that go beyond present structures of thought and action; as well as the practical wisdom that avoids the pitfalls of the "first naiveté" that often mis-recognizes reversals and rejections of the practice of modernity for the transformative act.

Finally, there is the practice of truth-saying, of theological education institutions striving to be places of truth in church, society, and the world, as part of its

commitment to self-critical accountability. Despite their implication in modernity's "meticulous rituals of power," seminaries, theological schools and university-affiliated divinity schools, by intention and design especially in terms of learning, teaching, and research and the specific forms they take in their respective theological curricula, can provide alternatives to the practices of thought and action generated by the grand narrative of modernity which intersects with other historical narratives including (hetero)sexism, racism, classism. They can seek to articulate, as in John Gichimu's presentation, different understandings of the world in which they are situated, provide alternative readings of political, economic, cultural, and religious life—without pretending or aspiring to be legislators for the worldwide church, academy, and world. Such truth-saying is a necessary condition for the ethical, though it is not yet its completion or its apotheosis.

LOCATIONS/POSITIONS: TASKS FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN GENERAL, AND WOCATI IN PARTICULAR

Let me conclude by suggesting several tasks for WOCATI and theological education.

First, WOCATI may need to more fully embrace and experience a continually changing world. The profound transformations, dilemmas, and questions that WOCATI faces today call for articulating appropriate pedagogies, structures, and processes that are adequate for the particular spaces and places in which we variously find ourselves. The work articulated by Reinhold Bernhardt and his emphasis on theological pedagogy in the light of the demands of the Bologna Process; the work of David Esterline that seeks the alignment of mission, resources, and learning/formation in the context of quality assurance

and improvement; and, Ravi Tiwari's suggestions about a more intentional and sustainable practice for educational assessment, exchange, cooperation, and networking of accrediting institutions—provide an agenda for how we might embrace and experience this continually changing world of ours.

What is especially important, in my view, is that while cognizant both of the profound resource asymmetries of our world and the necessity of having resources approaching those of the global north, these examples do not reach for the latter, but are committed to their own sustainable ecologies. In their respective ways, these examples may be interpreted as challenging the fact that the notion of educational quality, for example, has been identified only with the standards set by institutions of higher education in the global north—much in the same way that global capitalism has arbitrarily defined for us what is the true, the good, and the beautiful. Judged even by its own standards, educational quality in the global north is clearly (ecologically) unsustainable; and the premises under which it is achieved arguably anomalous. The challenge, then, is to form our own meanings of *sustainable quality* for our own space, time, and place without surrendering the spirit of quality, which animates even these so-called model institutions, particularly in the areas of governance, faculty, resources, and educational effectiveness (assessment).

But even more than sustainable quality, I believe that the challenge for WOCATI and its member institutions is to look beyond quality itself—beyond matters of accreditation, credentialing, quality assurance—to institutional *strategies of excellence*, that assist individuals in the creation and nurture of a genuinely public space in which persons can appear before each other in the best way they know how to be.

Second, WOCATI may need to develop even

more fully *engaged* pedagogies of interpretation, performance, formation, and contextualization. We have been reminded in this consultation that all education is about the discovery, creation, and nurture of creative and critical consciousness. In their own ways, each of you have pointed out that "critical consciousness" in theological education is a process of thinking, feeling, acting which is set in a thoroughly historical, political, cultural context, and, carried on in the midst of a freely-chosen struggle to create a just, participatory, and sustainable society. My reading of Dietrich Werner's WCC-ETE's missiological guidelines for quality theological education, of Nico Botha's UNISA "Charter on Transformation," and of Gary Reibe-Estrella's plea for Catholic "friendships" against the backdrop of an almost absolute Roman magisterium, is that they are pressing institutions of theological education to be places for the practice of *embodied* freedom.

This practice of embodied freedom, which is always and already a sustainable freedom, includes the development of the whole person, one who has clearly grasped the simple fact that his or her self is fully implicated in those beings around her or him—human, non-human, Other, and who has learned to care deeply about them. Embodied freedom is relational freedom, by which I mean, it is a *biosphere*. In my opinion, this is part of the message of the film "White Wedding;" of the Apartheid Museum and of Nelson Mandela; and of the dinner celebration last evening. Indeed, the world of the 21st century is yearning for human beings who are fully alive, and who therefore can embody the "glory of God."

Third, WOCATI may need to attend to building human and humane communities of theological scholarship with its three-fold character of learning, teaching, and research. At the heart of this task is the

commitment to, and practice of, dialogue—moving through multi- stranded universes of meaning which, often involves conflict and collaboration, continuity and chance, and the creation of justice. We already know that the way education occurs is as important as its content. What is sometimes overlooked is that *relevant* and *meaningful* education occurs *as* a dialogue, which means, like any good conversation (or degree program), it has purpose, goals, content, location, duration, and resource requirements. In its most comprehensive sense, it means *together* connecting different spaces, times, places, in order to overcome what the American philosopher Alfred North Whitehead called "the fatal disconnection of subjects which kills the vitality of our modern universities."

We already know that theological education requires positive, affirming relationships among its participants. What is often overlooked is that in order for learning, teaching and research to be *relevant* and *meaningful*, they must involve passion, i.e., connected to *eros*, love, and ecstasy. After all, human beings are more than *logos*; we are also *eros*, *pathos*, and the *∂aimon*. Unfortunately, despite our being a truly passionate people, we sometimes tend to view with skepticism, if not open hostility, the pedagogical virtues of *eros*, love, and ecstasy in theological education, perhaps, because we fear *eros* may lead us down the dangerous pathway to undisciplined, irresponsible, if fascinating human sexualities; or, we believe love will impair our pedagogical judgments and evaluations by making us "subjective" or "biased;" or, we think that ecstasy is nothing more than esoteric, otherworldly-directed experience. Happily, *eros* is more than the sexual. It is the moving force that propels every life form from a state of mere potentiality to actuality—and therefore, is an entirely appropriate (re) source for theological education; love and care in the

Christian tradition are the bases not only for a fuller humanity, but for a deeper and expansive understanding of self, other, and world; and, ecstasy, "standing outside ourselves," is the historically-grounded precondition for personal, political, historical, and, indeed, religious, insight and transformation, without which we will only remain myopically pre-occupied with and in ourselves and our own self-interests.

Listening report of the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) Consultation Johannesburg (South Africa), 2011

Isabel Apawo Phiri

1) from 4 to 8 July 2011 representatives of the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) met at Lakeview Airport Lodge in Johannesburg, South Africa for a consultation on "Challenges and Promises of Quality Assurance in Theological Education: Ecumenical and Multi-Contextual Inquiries."

2) During the session on participant introductions, it became clear that this was a historic occasion in 3 ways:
    a. For the first time, all the major denominations are represented. These include: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Pentecostals and African Instituted churches (AICs) associations have come together to discuss issues of quality in theological education. The presence of the AICs was particularly important because they feel marginalized in theological institutions. Therefore, this consultation gave them a platform to gain international recognition in WOCATI.
    b. It was particularly historic for Africa, because it was a first WOCATI meeting of its kind on the African continent.
    c. It also created an opportunity for African

Theological Institutions to come together to discuss challenges and promises of quality assurance in Theological Education. This was important because the African Theological Institutions are trying to find their joint voice after a long period of dormancy.

3) During the session on reception by the local committee, there was screening of a South African film entitled 'White Wedding." After the screening of the movie, the participants engaged in a lively discussion on issues of race, gender, culture, hybridity, tradition and modernity as part of life after apartheid in South Africa. The discussions showed an appreciation of an exposure to some aspects of change in human relationships in South Africa. Critical reflections on the movie continued to inform the discussion at various points of the Consultation, and participants drew on the insights offered in the movie to highlight issues particularly related to contextuality and theological education.

4) At three of the morning reflections, the participants were introduced to Contextual Bible studies which provoked serious conversations among the participants as received readings of bible passages were challenged and transforming interpretations were promoted. In the first biblical reflection, a new reading of the Genesis 1 creation stories promoted the creation of mutuality in the relationships between women and men based on community of equality. In the second biblical reflection, the reading and discussion of the narrative of the Canaanite/Syrophonecian woman

as recorded in the gospels of Matthew and Mark brought to the fore challenges of inter religious relationships and the need to transform our deep seated prejudices of other religions. The third morning reflection was facilitated by a Muslim theologian who shared a reading and a reflection from the Quran. In his reflection, he highlighted the struggle of all religious people who live with contradictions in our faith, particularly with regard to our sacred texts. We struggle to make sense of the ambiguous God portrayed in our sacred texts - a loving God and at the same time a God who avenges. He highlighted the inconsistency in the ways in which "power" requires different and contradictory responses from Islam. He provided the following examples: When communists ruled Afghanistan "power" required Islam to respond with "jihad", which in turn relied on an understanding of a God of vengeance. In the aftermath of 9/11 "power" requires a more "moderate" Islam, one that relies on an understanding of God as loving. In the final morning, at the request of some of the participants, a session on how to design and facilitate a Contextual Bible Study was held. The pedagogical principles which undergird the Contextual Bible Study method were discussed.

5) During the sessions of paper presentations by the participants, it became clear that quality assurance and quality enhancement take place in a variety of different ways. In some contexts, the work of quality assurance and enhancement is done by different organizations, including state- related accreditation agencies, independent secular accreditation agencies, and church-related

denominational or multi-denominational accreditation agencies. It also became clear that there is no global agency to accredit institutions of theological education with similar standards all around the world. However, there are increased expectations to have some common understanding between all Christian institutions of theological education on what constitutes essential elements of quality assurance and enhancement in theological education.

6) Furthermore, from the participants papers it also become clear that quality assurance and improvement in theological education is a multidimensional process that involves several interrelated dimensions, including: the dimensions of content and curriculum in theological education, institutional resources for theological education, competencies and skills achieved by theological students, contextualization, and outcomes of theological education among others. A balanced concept of quality in theological education should include academic proficiency, spiritual formation and pastoral competencies.

7) From some papers and discussions that followed, one of the dominant issues was the importance of making a link between offering a quality theological education with multiple oppressions and discriminations affecting all people regardless of gender, race, nationality, religion or race. Giving an example of gender, it was asserted that the inclusion of gender in the curriculum needs to be two-fold. On the one hand mainstreaming is crucial. Mainstreaming requires not just "gender sensitivity" in the curriculum but a critical

awareness of how power relationships between women and men, inform, restrict or contribute to the scholarship in particular disciplines. On the other hand, specialized study in the area of Gender and Religion is also required so that students can obtain specialized qualifications in this discipline in and of itself. Another point raised here was also the issue of evaluation – how can those who support patriarchy themselves be the evaluators of whether the study of gender is needed within theological education.

8) Another major issue that came from some papers and discussion was that despite denominational differences on what constitutes quality theological education, there is much more which can be held in common between all Christian churches in the understanding of theological education. During discussions, examples of collaboration in Theological Education across denominations were given to show that it is possible to work ecumenically without compromising on denominational theology. As a way forward, one of the papers presented a proposal to formulate a Common guideline on what constitutes basic elements in the understanding of quality in theological education. During discussions of this proposal call for the need to respect contextual experiences and focus on outcomes were voiced out.

9) Participants raised a number of important issues on - Kairos theologies in South Africa and Palestine and their implications for Theological Education. One of these was the notion of a theology of land as espoused in the Palestinian

Kairos Document.

10) At the meeting of the WOCATI executive which took place before the Consultation, the members were informed about the plans of WCC to prepare a major assembly in 2013 in South Korea where attempts are under discussion to also have an Ecumenical Theological Institute prior and during the assembly. Furthermore the executive were also informed that discussions included the possibility of creating a visible space for theological educators and associations of theological schools.

11) Where are we going with WOCATI?

Discussions
How can WOCATI be helped as an institution?
What is the next tangible stapes to go forward?
How can WOCATI's relationship be improved with regional church organization
James: on the basis of the papers that we have received, we can empower the executive to concritse the points that we have heard
Or form a small group of experts to be adopted in South Korea Group discussions have been less reflected on

Appendix B

WOCATI Consultation Schedule

Challenges and Promises of *Quality Assurance* in Theological Education: Ecumenical and Multi-Contextual Inquiries

Date: 4-8 July 2011

Venue: Johannesburg, South Africa

Venue Address:

Lakeview Airport Lodge
(Previously known as Kempton Park Conference Centre)
24 Geldenhuys Road, Bonaero Park 1622
Gauteng, South Africa

Telephone: +27 11 973 3775 Fax +27 86 566 2739

Sunday, July 3 – Executive Committee meeting

Arrival of Executive Committee Members

3:00-6:00	Executive Committee Meeting
6:00-7:30	Dinner

Monday, July 4 – Welcoming and reception

7:30-8:30	Breakfast
9:00-12:00	Executive Committee Meeting
12:00-1:00	Lunch

Arrival of Participants

5:00-6:00p.m.	**Session 1: Opening Welcome and Introduction**
	Introduction of WOCATI and Participants
	Words of Greetings from WCC
6:00-8:00p.m.	**Session 2: Dinner Reception, Welcome, and Special Film –**
	Local Planning Committee in South Africa

Tuesday, July 5 – Theme I: "What Constitutes *Quality* in Theological Education

7:00-8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30-9:00 a.m.	Morning Reflection: Local Planning Committee
9:00-9:10 a.m	Announcement

9:10-9:40 a.m	**Session 3: Quality in Theological Education in Particular and Higher Education in General**
	Presenter: Dr. Lester Ruiz
	Moderator: Dr. Isabel Phiri
9:40-10:10 a.m	Discussion
10:10-10:40 a.m	**Session 4: Quality in Theological Education from an Ecumenical Perspective: Intra- and Inter-religious Issues**
	Presenter: Dr. Dietrich Werner
	Moderator: Dr. Isabel Phiri
10:40-11:10 a.m	Discussion
11:10-11:30 a.m	Break
11:30-12:00 p.m	**Session 5: Searching for the Ideal of Theological Education: Remembering the Future**
	Presenter: Dr. Namsoon Kang
	Moderator: Dr. James Amanze
12:00-12:30p.m	Discussion
12:30-2:00 p.m	Lunch
2:00:3:00 p.m	**Session 6: Quality in Theological Education: Geopolitical and Socio-cultural Issues**
	Panelists: Drs. Isabel Apawo Phiri, Tinyiko Maluleke, Sarojini Nadar, Maake Masango
	Moderator: Dr. James Amanze

3:00-3:20 p.m	Break
3:20-4:20p.m	**Session 7: Group Discussion**
4:20-4:50 p.m.	Reports from Group
4:50-5:10 p.m	**Session 8: Global Digital Library on Theology and Ecumenism**
	Presenter: Dr. Dietrich Werner
5:10-5:30 p.m.	Discussion
5:30-6:00 p.m	Wrap-up of the Day
6:00-6:10 p.m.	Evening Prayer
6:10 p.m.	Dinner

Wednesday, July 6 – Theme II: Standards for Quality Assurance:
Resources, Processes, and Outcomes

7:00-8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30-9:00 a.m.	**Morning Reflection: Local Planning Committee**
9:00-9:10 a.m	Announcement
9:10-9:40 a.m	**Session 9: Standards for Quality Assurance in Africa**
	Presenter: Rev. John Gichimu
	Moderator: Dr. Ivan Z. Dimitrov
9:40-10:10 a.m.	Discussion

10:10-10:30 a.m.	Break
10:30-11:30 a.m.	**Session 10: Standards for Quality Assurance in Asia**
	Panelist: Drs. Ravi Tiwari
	Moderator: Dr. Ivan Z. Dimitrov
11:30-12:00 p.m.	Discussion
12:00-1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30-2:00 p.m.	**Session 11: Standards for Quality Assurance in Europe**
	Presenter: Dr. Reinhold Bernhardt
	Moderator: Dr. Namsoon Kang
2:00-2:30 p.m.	Discussion
2:30-3:00 p.m.	**Session 12: Standards for Quality Assurance in North America**
	Presenter: Dr. David Esterline
	Moderator: Dr. James Massey
3:00-3:30 p.m.	Discussion
3:30-3:50 p.m.	Break
3:50-4:20 p.m.	**Session 13: Standards for Quality Assurance: Catholic Theological Education**
	Presenter: Dr. Gary Riebe-Estrella
	Moderator: Dr. James Massey
4:20-4:50 p.m.	Discussion
4:50-5:20 p.m.	**Session 14: Case Study: Theological Education by Extension**
	Moderator: Dr. Isabel Phiri

5: 20-5:40 p.m.	Discussion
5:40-6:00 p.m.	Wrap-up of the Day
6:00-6:10 p.m.	Evening Prayer
6:20 p.m.	Dinner

Thursday, July 7 – Theme III: "Assuring Quality across Contexts"

9:10-10:10 a.m.	**Session 15: Assuring the Quality of Institutional Practice**
	Panelists: Drs. Nico Botha, Simon Dossou, Priscille Djomhoue
	Moderator: Dr. James Amanze
10:10-10:40 a.m.	Discussion
10:40-11:00 a.m.	Break
11:00-11:30 a.m.	**Session 16: WOCATI Special Forum**
	The Choice to be Struck: Kairos-Theologies in South Africa and Palestine and their Implications for Theological Education.
	Presenter: Dr. Farid Esack
	Moderator: Dr. Namsoon Kang
11:30-12:00 a.m.	Discussion
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Lunch

1:00-6:00 p.m.	Visit to Anti-Apartheid Museum
6:00-7:30 p.m.	Dinner

Friday, July 8 – Theme: Summary and Wrap-up

7:00-8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30-9:00 a.m.	**Morning Reflection: Local Planning Committee**
9:00-9:10 a.m.	Announcement
9:10-9:30 a.m.	Photo Taking
9:30-10:30 a.m.	**Session 17: Wrap-up of Consultation-I: Reports from Listeners**
	Challenges, Promises, and Recommendations for Quality Assurance in Theological Education
	Moderator: Dr. Namsoon Kang
10:30-10:50 a.m.	Break
10:50-11:50 p.m.	**Session 18: Wrap-up of Consultation-II: Remaining Issues and Follow-ups**
	Moderator: Dr. Namsoon Kang
11:50-12:00 p.m	Closing Prayer
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Lunch and Adjournment

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Appendix C

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[45] This term is frequently used by Daniel O. Aleshire, Executive Director of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) in describing the accrediting philosophy of ATS.

[46] Full information, including accrediting standards and procedures, can be found on the respective websites: www.msche.org; www.neasc.org; www.hicommission.org; www.nwccu.org; www.sacscoc.org; www.acswasc.org.

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[48] For these criteria and for the example below, see http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/criteria-for-accreditation.html.

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[50] http://cihe.neasc.org/standards_policies/standards/standards_html_version. The NEASC standards (outlined below) can be found at the same address.

[51] The COA/ATS completed a four-year process of revising the standards in the spring of 2012; the standards quoted here reflect the changes resulting from that process and formally adopted at the Biennial Meeting of COA/ATS in June 2012. One aspect of the revision was a reorganization of the standards and the establishment of a new "Educational Standard" (ES) including material relevant to all degrees. Among the significant changes included in the ES and

adopted at the June 2012 meeting are expectations about distance education and the assessment of student learning outcomes.
[52] http://www.ats.edu/Accrediting/Pages/StandardsAndNotations.aspx. This outline reflects the revisions adopted by COA/ATS in June 2012.
[53] One aspect of the revisions adopted in June 2012 is the importance given to "demonstrable student learning outcomes."
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been described in this book is common to all the universities.
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WOCATI

World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions

The WOCATI (World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions), the global platform for dialogue and networking between regional associations of theological schools, was established in 1989 with its inaugural meeting at Kaliurang, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, June 19, 1989. WOCATI intends the followings:

- To provide an established and continuing dialogue forum;
- To serve as a network to promote relations of member associations;
- To serve as a platform for dialogue on the quality standards of theological education and the excellency of theological research;
- To serve as an international quality assurance agency;
- To serve as a community of learning for exploring new models of intercontextual exchange and mutual enrichment between different contextual theologies around the world;
- To serve as an advocate for exploring new ways of global resource sharing in the area of theological education and to identify new resources for the development of the global nature and contextual implications of theological education.