

Reforming Theological Education in the Light of the Pentecostalisation of Christianity in the Global South

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Abstract

Recent church growth has largely been driven by pentecostalisation of Christianity in the global south, and this fact has significant implications for shaping theological education. After briefly surveying some promising educational responses to the phenomenon, this paper argues against a post-colonialist introspective strategy, and instead proposes that seminaries in the south be consumed by the global dimensions of the mantle that the Spirit has placed on them to form leaders capable of steering the pentecostalised Church unto the kingdom's harvest fields, both north and south, and certainly away from theological graveyards. The paper examines the practical outworking of this reforming agenda in six areas, namely, (a) theology of theological education, (b) access to that education, (c) curriculum design, (d) resource development, (e) research and (f) seminary-church relationship.

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¹ The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

1. Introduction

Contemporary theologians, missiologists and ecclesial leaders all unanimously agree with two fundamental facts regarding the current state of Global Christianity, namely, (a) that the epicentre of Church growth, at least in terms of numbers and increasingly, in terms of influence, is situated in the global south, that is, Africa, South and Central America, and Asia, and (b) that this phenomenal growth has been driven by the pentecostalisation of the Christian faith in those regions. Predictions of the first trend go as far back as 1977 when Bühlmann (1977:20) forecasted that demographic factors will in future result in Christianity becoming a predominantly non-western religion, and that this shift will be associated with the Christian faith taking a much-reduced share of adherents across the globe.

This prediction has been reiterated by others (e.g. Anderson 2001a; Barrett 1998; Walls 1996), but it was Jenkins' (2002) comprehensive marshalling of the data, and his insightful analyses of the socio-cultural and theological factors likely responsible for the southward shift of what he called 'centre of gravity' that revived and significantly advanced this view, even though he predicted that rather than decreasing, there will be an overall 'bonanza' of Church growth. These forecasts have largely been proved right in recent years, as the latest most exhaustive and statistically nuanced study by the *Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life* (Hackett, Connor et al. 2015) shows, although this recent study also echoed Bühlmann's intuition that given the higher fertility rate among its adherents, Islam will by 2050 become the more populous religion.²

Demography alone does not and indeed should not explain the rapid growth of religious adherence, surely not in the case of Christianity. For, it is evident that in addition to demography, the accelerated growth has also been catalysed by the predominant form of expression of Christian spirituality currently existing in the global south. That experiential form of Christian spirituality is pentecostalism and its resultant pentecostalisation. With its core values being the quest for religious renewal through personal conversions, explicit belief in, and expectation of the miraculous in the ordinary affairs of life, enthusiastic openness to expressions of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in worship and witness, heightened evangelistic and missionary zeal, and religious belief that engages with the material existential needs of its adherents, pentecostalism has tremendously impacted not only churches in the south but their wider societies (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Dayton 1987; Gooren 2010:355–376; Kalu 2008; 2002:110–137; Parsitau

² As they put it (Hackett, Connor et al. 2015:60): 'The regional distribution of Christians is forecast to change considerably by 2050. Europe is no longer projected to have a plurality of the world's Christians; in fact, only about 16% of the world's Christians are expected to be living in Europe as of 2050. In addition, the shares of the global Christian population residing in Latin America and the Caribbean (23%) and North America (10%) are projected to decline modestly. Meanwhile, sub-Saharan Africa is expected to become the region with the largest number of Christians—by a wide margin. Sub-Saharan Africa's share of the global Christian population is forecast to rise from 24% in 2010 to 38% in 2050'. They also predicted, however, that the significantly high fertility rate among Muslims indicates that by 2050 'The number of Muslims will nearly equal the number of Christians around the world' (2015:5).

2014:228–238). The ensuing phenomenon of pentecostalisation has thus been much more widely defined as socio-cultural transformation of societies consisting of tripartite features of ‘Pentecostal numerical growth, Pentecostal influence on other religions, and Pentecostal impact on the rest of society’ (Gooren 2010:356).

Whether defined narrowly in theological terms, or more broadly as a socio-cultural phenomenon, pentecostalisation has played a major role in restoring dynamism to traditional mainline churches, both protestant and catholic, spurred exponential growth of new independent churches and resulted in socio-cultural and increasingly political transformations in the global south (Kim 2012; Lende 2015). This ubiquitous influence has raised several questions as to its implications for the future of global Christianity.³

3 Thus implications ranging from implications for formulating current and future forms of global missions (George 2011:45-56; Heath and Studebaker 2014; Keum 2013; Van Gelder 2014:10-16), constructing research models in sociology of religions (Grant 2006; Werner 2011:92-100), its relevance to contemporary Christian ethics (Daswani 2013:467-479; Kobylinski 2016:100-120), its place in Church history (Hyatt 2000; Johnstone 2011), its effects on denominational relations and realignments (Markham 2011:209-217; Yong 2001), and its interface with modern science (Leidenhag and Leidenhag 2015:425-435; Smith and Yong 2010; Yong 2011) have all been debated.

4 For accounts of this history, see Anderson (2013), Cox (2009), and Miller, Sargeant, and Flory (2013).

An important implication is the question of how exactly theological education must be formulated or reformed in response to pentecostalisation. After all, it is the core purpose of theological education to train the leaders who will steer the Church of the future; as epitomised by the age-old slogan, ‘as goes the Seminary, so goes the Church’. In any case, that pentecostalism was itself birthed in a Bible School⁴ cannot be deemed as a non-consequential factoid when mapping out its logical progress and prospects. How its growing influence interconnects with theological education is thus a fundamental area of consideration to all stakeholders. Moreover, it is a primary vocation of theological educators to analyse, discern, and critique the forces shaping the socio-religious milieu of the contemporary Church, bring the unchanging truth of the Gospel to bear on illuminating these forces, employ their insights to predict future trends, suggest strategic responses and monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of these responses (Budiselić 2016:131–154; Hendriks 2014:1–8; McKinney 2003:1–16; Phiri and Werner 2015). Investigating the educational implications of pentecostalisation in the global south is accordingly to be expected.

In this paper I wish to contribute to this particular aspect of the discussion by arguing that the rapid growth of Christianity in the global south and the simultaneous but equally rapid decline of a secularised Christianity in the global north are linked, probably causally, but definitely in terms of their future trajectories. I therefore assert that instead of adopting an introverted post-colonialist outlook, as some theological educators essentially propose, seminaries in the global south must rather be consumed by the global dimension of the mantle that the Spirit is placing on

them, and so seek to be imbued with his discerning wisdom for forming future leaders capable of steering the pentecostalised Church unto the kingdom's harvest fields and certainly away from theological graveyards. This insight should be reflected in a two-pronged bioptic⁵ vision that recasts theological education to (a) form leaders capable of entrenching the gains and neutralising the potential perils of pentecostalisation in the global south, while at the same time (b) instilling in them a global disposition that would enable them to contribute to the reversal of the decline of Christianity in the global north.

In what follows, I will first survey a number of recent educational initiatives to illustrate how some institutions and educators are positively responding to the phenomenal church growth from pentecostalisation. I then set out a series of critical arguments against the category of proposals that imagine significant dissociation between a pentecostalised Christianity in the south on the one hand and a secularised Christianity in the north on the other. I argue that on the contrary, there are socio-cultural and biblical-theological associations between the two, and this calls for a carefully nuanced vision for reforming and informing the training of particular kinds of leaders for future global Christianity. I then flesh out examples of how this vision may be practically implemented in six specific educational domains.

2. Some Promising Educational Responses to Pentecostalisation

It should come as little surprise that churches, educational institutions and missionary organisations in both hemispheres, but much more so in the global south, have, in recent years, implemented innovative educational ideas in response to pentecostalisation (Alvarez 2000:281–293; Anderson 2004:1–15; Guenther 2009:99–122; Hendriks 2012:1–8; Mbamalu 2014:243–262). A brief survey of some of these initiatives will suffice for the purpose of illustration. On a global level, Anderson (2004) has argued for a contextualised theological education which is faithful to the pentecostalised experiences of the students as well as their church members. Johns (2010) has also taken this further in proposing a specific category of educational pedagogy, what he calls 'Pentecostal formation', even though his project restricts itself to a subset of 'oppressed' Pentecostals. The World Alliance of Pentecostal Theological Education (WAPTE 2017), an affiliate of Pentecostal World Fellowship, has also set forth strategies to, among other objectives, 'encourage excellence in the implementation of the accreditation/endorsement standards,

5 The term 'bioptic' describes a vision-enhancing miniature telescope with a pair of lenses that enables the wearer to simultaneously acquire two perspectives of the same object. It is herein employed as a metaphor for concurrent fusion of two visionary strategies.

procedures and activities of member theological associations to enhance the credibility and recognition of member theological associations’.

Though these global initiatives are targeted at Pentecostal denominations, aimed at articulating a distinctively Pentecostal theological education, they, at a minimum, have nevertheless served to project the core values of pentecostalism to the wider conservative theological academy. This has contributed to the broader adoption of distinctive elements of Pentecostal emphases in the articulation of the theological principles of conservative institutions across the denominations. For example, the articulated pneumatology of the global church today owes much to the insights of Pentecostal pneumatology (Kim 2017:22–32; Werner 2009). Indeed, the *Edinburgh 2010 World Missionary Conference*, no doubt as reflection of the influence of pentecostalisation, laid the foundation for this cross-denominational pneumatological trend by paying closer attention to how pneumatology impacts on missionary education, certainly far more than its predecessor conference did. The conference could have put forward more practical strategies for incorporating the lessons of pentecostalisation in missionary theological education. Even so, this omission is somewhat made up for by its recognition of the pneumatological priorities of missions leading to better appreciation of the ‘indispensable role of the Holy Spirit, not only in primary evangelisation but also in the on-going formation and transformation of the Christian in every location (Kerr and Ross 2010:62). More will be said on this issue later, but as has been noted by others (e.g. Whiteman and Anderson 2014), this recognition of the importance of pneumatology in missionary education by Edinburgh 2010 has produced a domino effect that has enriched several dimensions of global theological education.

On a more precise level and insisting on the primacy of spiritual experiences as fundamental to pentecostalisised religious life, Asamoah-Gyadu (2017:4–21) has argued that educational institutions in the south should emphasise ‘both academic and experiential’ elements of theological education in order to achieve its objectives, which should be ‘to impart knowledge regarding the Gospel of Jesus Christ in order to ensure that Christians grow in the grace of God and the maturity of the Spirit’. This echoes McGrath’s (2002:145; cf. 2003) pointed critique of current theological education in the north as having ‘more to do with elitism, ideological warfare and the principled cultivation of a discernibly anti-religious ethos’, and of Wall’s (2017:64; cf. Bedard 2009; Roebben and Miedema 2009:329–339) call for a transformative learning agenda able to intentionally ‘design and

deliver a curriculum that meets rigorous academic standards while nurturing disciples of Jesus Christ who can go and make disciples'. Kalu (2005:263–277) has also catalogued the historical evolution of approaches to formation of ministers capable of leading pentecostalised Christianity of Africa. And Alvarez (2000:282–293; cf. Kgatle, 2018:1–8) has compiled what he regards as the distinctive features of Pentecostal theological education. Basically, these proposals argue for integrating what Sampong (2011:25–35; cf. Lim 2014:85–93) describes as 'pentecostal spirituality' in theological education. While they do not flesh out the practicalities of how this agenda may be implemented, especially in an increasingly non-residential educational setting, their emphases on the necessity for educators to pay attention to the core values of Pentecostal spirituality are correct.

Indeed, several Pentecostal theological institutions in the south have reported on how they are systematically implementing their distinctive Pentecostal spirituality as part of the education of ministers especially within the constraints of limited human and material resources (e.g. Easter 2013:1–22; González 2014:48–55; Mbamalu 2014:243–262; Whitt 2013:23–34). Anim (2017:43–63), for example, documents an innovative model of pentecostalised theological education labelled as 'Apprenticeship or Asamankese Model', which combines formal and informal modes of training of Pentecostal ministers to ensure a balance between academic and practical experience in ministerial training. Even though his model is restricted to a single denomination, his paper is nevertheless insightful because it charts the negotiation of the various countervailing socio-economic and political forces in the attempt to formulate a flourishing pentecostalised theological education in the global south. Interestingly, the general features of this initiative have a lot in common with current experiments with transformational education being championed in a number of Pentecostal institutions in the global north thus hinting at a much wider trend (e.g. Byassee and Lockhart 2017:24–27; O'Keefe 2018). It is hoped that some of the insights would be transferable to non-pentecostal theological institutions.

Another exciting development is the trend towards expansion and indeed conversion of some seminaries in the south into private universities catering for non-theological subjects (Carpenter, Glanzer and Lantinga 2014; John 2014:1–14; Kay and Davies 2017:33–42; Laba 2005:153–164; Ostrander 2015:80–88; Theron 2013:1–8). This development is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it no doubt provides opportunities for employing distinctive Christian ethos to shape higher education in the global south and hopefully therefore training strong Christian leaders for the wider

economic, political and socio-cultural transformation of the regions. However, on the other hand, and judging by what has over the decades transpired with several Christian institutions of higher education in the global north, and is in fact already detectable in a number of recently converted institutions in the global south (cf. Austin, Omomia and Babalola 2014:69–89; Hadebe 2017:1–10; Naidoo 2017:1–8), those scholars who fear that this trend is at best premature, and worst, could be a prelude to diverting the primary focus of seminaries to train capable leaders for the pentecostalised Church, may not be unfounded. All the same, the trend appears to be an inevitable consequence of pentecostalisation and the rapid growth of Christianity. These and other educational responses bode well for the future of the Christian faith in the global south. However, I now address a particular category of educational responses, which in my view is potentially precarious.

3. Some Precarious Educational Responses to Pentecostalisation

There is a tendency in some academic circles to view the rapid growth of Christianity in the global south in complete dissociation from the religion's decline in the north, a tendency epitomised, for example, by the metaphor of 'shift of centre of gravity' of Christianity (Jenkins 2006; cf. Kamana 2005; Kaunda 2015:73–92; Ntamushobora 2009:47–59) or even to speak of 'World Christianities' (Bialecki and del Pinal 2011:575–593; McLeod *et al.* 2006; Phan 2016:205–216). In educational terms, some scholars assert a post-colonial implication of this southward shift, an approach which in the case of Africa is labelled as 'Africanisation' of theological education (Williams J 1998:1–3). By this approach, it is proposed that intentional efforts ought to be made to reduce the cultural vestiges of Christianity imported from the global north, 'deforeignise Christ' (Bediako 2000) for example, as part of this contextualisation, and thereby entrench a more authentic Christianity in the south.

Other proposals have also been advanced to further enculturate Christianity to enable it take firmer root within African traditional and cultural realities. Pobee (2015:23) for instance laments how the vibrant ancient Christianity in the Maghreb 'died because it was never contextualised among the native Berbers of North Africa'. He thus argues for accelerated pace in enculturating and contextualising the current vibrant Christianity in Africa. In line with this agenda, some (e.g. Bediako 1992; 1995; Clarke 2011; de Gruchy 1997:476–482) have poured energy into defining a distinctive African Christian identity which would then enable it to

self-confidently fulfil this task of entrenching itself in the continent. Indeed, the term ‘African Christianity’ (e.g. Kalu 2005), as opposed to ‘Christianity in Africa’ (e.g. Adogame, Gerloff and Hock 2008), may echo this post-colonial sentiment, even though it is worth noting that some writers unintentionally interchange the two terms.

This perception that the rapid church growth demands defining a distinctive Christian identity of the global south is further buttressed by the theory that the phenomenal growth is due to how pentecostalism chimes with the cosmology and socio-cultural distinctives of the global south, at least in part (Kalu 2002; Mbiti 1974:108). Asante (2001:359) for instance, observes that the specific emphases of Pentecostal notions of salvation mirror and so resonate with African traditional religious accounts of salvation.⁶ A similar account of contextualised soteriology has been argued for other parts of the global south (e.g. Wu 2013). The evident logical implication of such an Africanised or ‘southernised’ soteriology is less biblically particularistic but existentialist emphasis.

Clearly, these proposals have significant educational implications, requiring for example, the prioritisation of southern contextual socio-cultural realities in designing educational programmes. And so for example, taking leave from Desmond Tutu’s (1987; in Bowen and Bowen 1989:270) claim of a distinctive difference between cognitive analytic thought patterns of ‘westerners’ in contrast to synthetic reasoning of ‘non-westerners’, Whitt (2013:23–34; cf. Hendriks 2014:1–8; Lewis 1992:121–126; Mashau and Frederiks 2008:109–123; Phiri and Werner 2015) has argued for a complete overhaul of the criticality elements of the ‘western’ instructional methods in favour of an ‘inductive’ problem-solving approach to theological education. Similarly, significant sections of the most recent *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa* (Phiri and Werner 2015) evidence this Africanising agenda whereby a post-colonialist disposition underpins proposals for reshaping theological education in an *a priori* manner rather than a foundational commitment to biblical-theological tenets (cf. Mashabela 2017:1–9).

I find this narrative of complete dissociation between Christianity of the north and that of the south, and the educational strategies it supports potentially precarious for the fortunes of the global south. I hereby set forth a fivefold counter-argument to show that contrary to the above narrative of dissociation and its proposed implications for reforming theological education in the global south, there is by contrast a link between the secularised Christianity in the global north and pentecostalised Christianity in

6 Asante (2001:359) asserts, ‘Understood as deliverance not only from one’s sinful selfhood but also from evil forces, salvation must address the concepts of evil and sin in the African context. The African reality demands a Saviour who has the power not only to deliver the believer from evil powers but also to transform the lives of the bewitched and the dehumanised, enabling them to live actively in the community’.

the south. And this link mandates a more nuanced approach to the reforming of theological education. Specifically, my contention is that the continued resurgence of Christianity in the global south cannot be taken for granted, and an opportunity to truly ground the Gospel there while contributing to reversing the decline in the north could be missed through application of the wrong educational implications. Accordingly, pentecostalist Christianity in the south should regard its current fortunes as an indication of the Spirit's mantle for taking responsibility for the revival of Christianity in the north. I now set out details of my argument.

3.1. Current signs of reversal of decline of Christianity in the North

The narrative which regards the growth of Christianity in the south in dissociation from what is happening in the north flies in the face of signs of the impact of pentecostalisation on the incipient revitalisation of Christianity in sections of the north, where some of the fastest growing churches are enjoying its positive effects. The decline of Christianity in the north has in any case not proceeded in a uniform manner across all churches. It is true that secularisation has contrived a very challenging socio-political environment in the wider northern societies, but the decline of the membership and vitality of the churches themselves is much more evident in areas where secularisation has taken disproportionately deeper roots. By contrast, other groups of churches have mounted robust Christian responses to secularisation which have not only stemmed the decline but continue to see steady growth (Anderson 2013a; Brouwer, Gifford, and Rose 2013; Goodhew 2012).

The situation in the US is much more complex but certainly appears to somewhat challenge aspects of the narrative of decline of secularised Christianity in the global north. Wuthnow (2009) has, for example, objected to the whole notion of a paradigmatic shift of 'centre of gravity', arguing that it is too heavily reliant on uncertain demographic projections, does not adequately take account of the current strengths and contributions of the US church to Global Christianity, and harbours uncritical post-colonialist assumptions and tendencies. While secularisation is no doubt playing a role in muffling the witness of sections of US churches, especially those of prominent mainline liberal denominations, there are also signs of revival of Christian witness in others. Shaw (2012:179–184) has vigorously and quite correctly in my view, countered some of Wuthnow's arguments regarding the dominant role of American Christianity in the global picture. Even so, Wuthnow is also right to assert that the presumed inevitable demise of Christianity in the global north, certainly in North America is premature. Certainly, few will now agree with Bruce's

(2002) claim that ‘God is dead’ in the West. On the contrary there are enough signs of changing trend for some (e.g. Micklethwait and Wooldridge 2009) to counter-assert that ‘God is back’ in the West. We should say, then, that the narrative of decline of Christianity in the north, while evident in many prominent mainline liberal churches, is being countered by what appears to be revival in other churches.

One of the factors responsible for this apparently incipient reversal of decline of Christianity in sections of the global north is pentecostalisation, both generated *de novo* and also imported from the global south (Cox 2009; Johnson, Zurlo, Hickman and Crossing, 2017:41–52; Synan and Yong 2017; Währisch-Oblau 2009; Wandusim 2015:92–96). It is certainly the case that the fundamentalist trademarks of pentecostalism,⁷ combined with its largely irenic theological stance that fosters cross-denominational ecumenism are enabling it to play a role as engine of contemporary global church growth in both the northern and southern hemispheres. As several social scientists have opined, the manifest failures of secularisation have contributed to the generation of reactive forces which, in the globalised world, are making the rise of fundamentalist religion in the global north, of which pentecostalism is a current Christian expression, inevitable (Akoko 2007:299–315; Burgess Knibbe and Quaas 2010:97–121; Clark 2012:161–194; Iannaccone 1999:8–29; Martin 2017; Omenyo 2005:39–60). In the words of Anderson (2013b:1) pentecostalisation has, ‘provided a powerful argument against the inevitability of secularisation’.

In that case also, Sanneh’s (2013:xiv) emphatic claim that ‘The [Christian] religion is now in the twilight of its Western phase and at the beginning of its formative non-Western impact’ may turn out to be rather premature, in the light of pentecostalisation. Accordingly, if as appears to be the case, pentecostalised Christianity in the global south is contributing to the transformation of the fortunes of Christianity in the north, then an introverted retreat is hardly conducive for such a role. Rather than a southward-looking disposition, graduates from the south must be imbued with outlooks which enable them to regard their calling from a global perspective.

3.2. Weaknesses of pentecostalised Christianity in the South

A second factor casting doubts on the wisdom of the Africanising project is its lack of serious reflection on the weaknesses of the Church in the global south, a blind-sided outlook which could portend a degree of premature hubris. Several writers of the global south have indeed cautioned that the increased numbers of

⁷ I use the term ‘fundamentalism’ in its original non-pejorative sense as ‘strict belief in the divine inspiration and inerrancy of the entire Bible text’ (Jenkins 2006:11). Here in particular I refer to pentecostalism’s prioritisation of the authority of scripture, its contextualised hermeneutics which enables direct application of Scripture to the realities of human existence, its commitment to the ongoing manifestations of the work of the Holy Spirit in believers and within the Church, and its untrammelled enthusiasm for missions.

churches and their attendees have not been matched by a corresponding increase in depth and quality of discipleship (e.g. Acolatse 2014; Light 2012; Quampah 2014; Gatwa 2015; Williams 2003:147–156). Indeed, in some places the rapid growth of Christianity has been associated with potentially precarious turns in doctrinal beliefs and religious practices which threaten to undermine or even derail the resurgence in the first place. As Gatwa (2015:85) warns, ‘Christianity in the South is a giant standing on clay legs’. In that case, theological educational programmes which uncritically foreground African traditional religious concepts may well exacerbate and not ameliorate such weaknesses.

Moreover, and as some have cautioned, aggressive inculturation of Christianity in the south has increased the danger towards syncretism (Anderson 2001b:98–119; Ngong 2012:344–362; Potgieter and Magezi 2016:1–9; Umoh 2013:32–40; Wijzen 2000:37–60). The potential for an overly contextualised Christianity in the south to be further weakened through introspective inculturation is therefore significant. Admitted, pentecostalisation cannot be blamed for the current situation. Even so, its aggressive contextualisation is bound to worsen these dangers. Given that the strength and depth of Christianity in the global south cannot be taken for granted, educational programmes fashioned in response to the southward shift need to reflect a more global disposition.

3.3. Aggressive contextualisation and secularisation as bedfellows

A third fact cautioning against dissociating Christianity in the north from that in the south is the realisation that some forms of contextualisation projects essentially mirror the tenets of secularisation in the north. So, for example Bediako's argument calling for the ‘deforeignisation’ of Christ in the African context, though evidently different, is nevertheless based on the same assumptions which underpinned Bultmann's programme to ‘demythologise’ the Christian Gospel in his modernist European realities (Bultmann 1958:58–70). In his defence, Bediako believed himself to be correcting a defective Christology which was significantly refracted through European culture to the extent that it did not match the biblical Christ nor resonate with African understanding of the Biblical witness. Yet it is striking that Bultmann mounted a similarly analogous defence of his demythologisation project.⁸

It has also been argued that the aggressive foregrounding of the African traditional notions of salvation in current accounts of Christian salvation is a route towards materialism, which is one of the key pillars of secularisation. That is the view of Ngong (2009:2;

⁸ For recent analyses of Bediako's and Bultmann's contextualisation projects, see Congdon, (2015), Fischer (2018:70–83), Hartman (2017:95–110), Hughes (2009) and Potgieter and Magezi (2016).

cf. Ngong 2007; 2009) who argues that currently the most popular African Christian soteriological discourse contains ‘materialistic vision of salvation’ an attitude which in essence lies behind secularisation. Park (2013:189) has similarly observed how aspects of contextualisation in the particular case of Kenya are modelled along how western secularisation has proceeded, asserting that ‘a materialistic understanding of the Christian gospel is not only influenced by Western culture; it is also embedded in the African traditional worldview’. It would thus appear that some forms of contextualisation in the global south mirror secularisation in the global north. This not only cautions against fashioning educational responses based on an insecure assumption of significant dissociation between the north and south.

3.4. Inevitable consequences of globalisation

A fourth reason as to why educational responses, which envisage dissociation of Christianity in the south from that in the north, are ill-advised is the very fact that globalisation makes it impossible to imagine the trajectories of the Christian religion in the two hemispheres proceeding in separate directions. Given the dynamics of globalisation, there is definitely no guarantee that secularisation will not be heading to the global south, if not already; just as pentecostalised Christianity in the south is already exerting some influence in the north. As Ferguson (2012) has cogently argued, the nature of globalisation is such that influences flow both ways between south and north. For, though driven by forces of trade and geo-politics and catalysed by the internet and social media, globalisation expresses itself at local levels in diverse ways producing a paradoxical combination of sameness and diversification.⁹ The similarities between secularisation and materialistic contextualisation would seem therefore to have been driven to a degree by globalisation. In that case, educational responses fashioned for the global south will need to reflect on how to address the issues generated from secularisation in the north. Definitely, a discerning understanding of the forces of globalisation means that future leaders of the Church must be equipped to serve both local and global communities. Seminaries of the south will undoubtedly need to maintain globalised self-understanding and identity to enable them to shape the future of the global church.

3.5. Biblical-theological basis for rejecting the narrative of dissociation

A major reason for rejecting the narrative of dissociation between the secularised north and pentecostalised south is theological. For, there are indeed biblical-theological grounds for arguing for a

⁹ The more appropriate term ‘glocalisation’ has thus been proposed to indicate the interplay of universalizing global forces with local particularising factors that yield aggregates of nuanced expression of the phenomenon (Ng 2007:101-111; Roberts 2007).

causal link between the simultaneous decline of Christianity in the north and its resurgence in the south. Biblically, God's dealings with his people have often involved the trend whereby he forms future leaders in one part of the world in times of spiritual decline on the other to be used for their transformation. From the Patriarchs through Joseph, Moses, to some of the prophets, especially Daniel, to Paul and the other apostles in the New Testament, there is a consistent trend whereby leaders are raised for God's purposes for other parts of the world. The same trend may well be reflected in the current revitalisation of Christianity in the south, where several migrant Christian leaders with global missionary disposition are already making contributions to the reversal of decline in the north. As Währisch-Oblau (2009) has established, most successful leaders of migrant churches in Europe she studied had the self-understanding of missionaries with callings to help reverse the decline of Christianity in the north. Similarly, Catto (2017:105-118) has catalogued how the self-understanding of several British Christian migrants as 'reverse missionaries' has served as a catalyst in their contribution to the stemming the decline of some mainline churches.

It is also biblically sound to postulate that the decline of Christianity in the global north is probably causally related to its simultaneous revitalisation in the south. Paul's eschatological argument in Romans 9-11 no doubt applies to the specific case of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in terms of eschatological salvation and thus, hermeneutically speaking, cannot be unreflectively transferred to the current situation between pentecostalised Christianity in the south and its secularised counterpart in the north. Even so, the wider implication of Romans 11:11-12 is analogous to the current situation: 'through [Israel's] stumbling salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. Now if their stumbling means riches for the world, and if their defeat means riches for Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean'. The salvation of the Gentile is thus underlined as a divine means for stirring Israel from her slumberous unbelief.

This passage then reflects a generalisable principle in salvation-history whereby the unbelief of a group of people paradoxically serves as a stimulus to faith in another group, and vice versa. The primary causative link is what Paul labels as 'jealousy'. Indeed, as commentators (e.g. Hultgren 2011; Longenecker 2016; Moo 1996:688; Nanos 2012:3-21) have noted, Paul's argument in Romans 11 is itself based on a general principle derived from Deuteronomy 32:21 where God says, 'They made me jealous with what is no god, provoked me with their idols. So, I will make them

jealous with what is no people, provoke them with a foolish nation'. Thus, Paul's argument is applicable to analogous contexts.

This in effect is the view of Dunn (1988:653), who argues that Paul understood this principle as expressed in the consistent rejection of the gospel by Jewish synagogues as serving as opportunity for its acceptance by the gentiles during his missionary journeys (e.g. Acts 11:19–21; 13:45–48; 18:6; 28:24–28). In other words, there is a generalisable theological principle whereby through the unbelief of one group of people, God stimulates faith in another group in order to generate jealousy in the first and so bring them to faith. A number of passages in the Bible (e.g. Prov 3:11–12; Matt 21:31–32) and Second Temple Jewish Literature (*Testament of Zebulun* 9:8; *Wisdom of Solomon* 11:1–14; *2 Maccabees* 6:16; *Psalms of Solomon* 10:13; Philo in *Quod deterius potiori insidari soleat* 144–146) indeed reflect a similar principle.

It would appear therefore that the current decline of secularised Christianity in the global north is probably causally linked to the simultaneous but opposite resurgence of pentecostalised Christianity in the global south. Stated conversely, just as according to Paul, the salvation of the Gentiles was not an end in itself, but was also for the benefit of Israel, so also can it be concluded that the resurgence of Christianity in the south cannot be regarded as having borne its fruits except in the reversal of the decline of Christianity in the global north. Rather than adopting an introspective southward outlook, then, the church in the global south should instead consider its current fortunes as indication of the Spirit's mantle for taking responsibility for the revival of northern Christianity. This conclusion is bound to have important implications for how leaders are trained in the global south for the future. It is to this agenda that I now turn.

4. Reforming Theological Education for a Pentecostalised Church

Given the above I propose a bioptic vision of theological education in the global south, aimed at forming leaders able to address the local situation in the south and at the same time with the disposition to contribute to the reversal of the decline of Christianity in the north. I flesh out this vision in six domains, namely, (a) theology of theological education, (b) access to that education, (c) curriculum design, (d) resource development, (e) research and (f) seminary-church relationship.

4.1. Reforming theology of theological education

The scholarly discourse on the appropriate, theological framework that shapes theological education has in the last few decades been fashioned by Edgar's (2005:208–217) modification of the Kelsey-Banks' typology of four theological models of evangelical theological education, namely, Athens, Berlin, Jerusalem and Geneva models. As several scholars (e.g. Austin and Perry 2015:43–55; Kärkkäinen 2012; Kgatle 2018:1–8; McKinney 2005:218–227; Wahl 2013:266–293) have argued, these models are not mutually exclusive of each other or even existing in a continuum, but rather as different facets of a holistic and comprehensive theology of theological education. Given the transformations driven by pentecostalisation, it is reasonable to assume that this now standard account of models of theology of theological education should be further modified. Chiefly, a bioptic vision of theological education would require that the experiential spirituality of pentecostalism is integrated into the current standard models. Indeed, as already highlighted, Anim (2017:43–63) has reported on an Apprenticeship or Asamankese model of theological education suited for the contemporary context of ministerial candidates of his denomination in Ghana. As I note, his contribution is welcome, given that it aims to contextualise the model in the setting of the global south. However, it essentially replicates the Berlin vocational model, and only addresses the education of Pentecostal ministers.

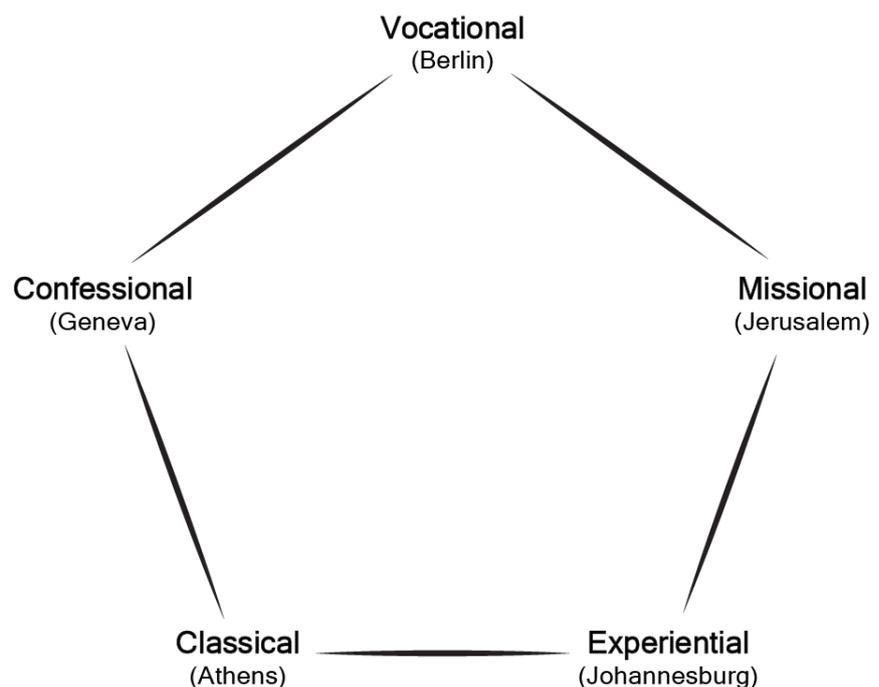


Fig. 1: Modified Model of theology of theological Education

What will make a more fundamental difference in the contemporary theological framework of theological education in the era of pentecostalisation is to integrate its experiential spirituality into the conventional account of theology of theological education and the practical educational methodologies that this modification mandates. I label this approach as Experiential (Johannesburg¹⁰) model of theological education (fig. 1). It certainly appears appropriate that the fundamentalist tenets of pentecostalism, coupled with its unstinting belief that God is as numinously active today in his world as he was in Biblical times will need to be a prominent theological ethos in current accounts of theology of theological education (cf. Asamoah-Gyadu 2017:16; Kärkkäinen 2012:245–261; Kgatle 2018:1–8; Lausanne-Movement 2010:47). This proposal then stresses integrating the importance pentecostalism places on numinous spiritual experience, especially the experience of the Spirit's presence and power and of God's continuing intervention in the world to make the reign of Christ real among his people. Implementing this will entail emphasising a pedagogical philosophy of spiritual formation which is unapologetically committed to consistent experience of God in the Person of the Holy Spirit who actualises and concretises Christian obedience to the Son to the glory of the Father in the light of the pentecostalisation of Christianity in the global south (cf. Asumang 2010; Neumann 2012:1–40).

4.2. Access to theological education

One of the strengths of pentecostalism is its egalitarian ecclesiology driven by the grassroots, often with little or no input from formal theological education. As several scholars (e.g. Anderson 2013b; Asamoah-Gyadu 2017:4–21; Jenkins 2006) have noted, this feature simultaneously constitutes its potential strength, and paradoxically also, exposes pentecostalised Christianity in the global south to lack of theological depth. The eventual outcome of the effects of these contradictory forces will depend on how carefully the grassroots are nurtured. And key to this is the question of their access to good quality theological education. The unfortunate elitism that has characterised sections of theological education in the global north, a trend which McKinney (1982:89; cf. McGrath 2003:1–14) vehemently deplores as an 'antithesis of the servant leaders that churches need', cannot be allowed to skew how access to theological education is conceptualised in the global south, certainly if the future of Christianity will be shaped by these graduates. Equity of access is thus one of the pressing issues being debated in the global

10 Johannesburg model for three reasons, namely, (a) it is a major city of the global south, (b) its globalised integration of features of Christian witness suited for both the global north and south, and (c) the resonance of the experiential model with the educational philosophy and cross-hemisphere reach of the South African Theological Seminary whose office is situated in Johannesburg.

academy (Amenyedzi 2016; Kärkkäinen 2012; Kinsler 2008; Watson 2013:120–125).

In this regard, two significant considerations among others need to be made as part of implementing a bioptic vision of theological education, namely, (a) the question of funding and (b) admission criteria to seminaries. With regard to the first, the increased efficacy, viability and accessibility of distance education is thankfully driving down costs even though more still need to be done to ensure that the potential advantages and methodologies for forming students at a distance are maximised (cf. Asumang 2016:2–38; Chawinga and Zozie 2016:1–20; Hockridge 2018; Spencer 2015:19–31). An added bonus of distance education is the opportunities it affords for developing global disposition among students in both northern and southern hemispheres.

With regards to admission criteria to seminaries in the global south, the key challenge is negotiating the often-conflicting forces of accreditation against opening access to students of middle and lower levels of abilities. The increasing popularity of Foundational and Tertiary Access Courses, Certificate and Higher Diploma levels of studies, and also Theological Education by Extension in its various guises (cf. Bellon 2017:21–34; Harrison 2004:315–328) bode well for the future among churches in the global south. However, given the debilitating politics that sometimes poisons the issue of national accreditation; it may well be wise for seminaries in the global south to seek ways of supporting two-tier systems in which students of lower academic abilities may pursue good quality but yet to be accredited theological education as interim measures in preparation for entry to accredited ones. Additionally, ‘Outreach’ programmes such as Church Seminars and ‘taster courses’ which increase the access of rank and file members of the churches to theological educators will also serve to demystify theological education and reduce the often-justified suspicions some believers hold against the educational enterprise. It will at least inspire some in the grassroots to study academic theology.

4.3. Revising the curriculum

A fundamental implication of the bioptic vision is how it impacts the theological curriculum at all levels. Three priority areas, in my view, need urgent reforms, namely, (a) integrating Pentecostal Hermeneutics, or as Keener (2016) labels it, ‘Spirit hermeneutics’, in the curriculum, (b) restoring Biblical Studies, including Old Testament Studies, to its pride of place in the curriculum, and (c) augmenting the hidden curriculum with pentecostal ethos.

To form and equip students with capabilities for both the global south and north, pentecostal hermeneutics should not be seen as another hermeneutical ‘option’ suited for those of Pentecostal persuasion, as Ervin (1981:11–25) for example argues. Rather its key elements need to be integrated into the standard accounts of biblical hermeneutics in the curriculum in the same manner as pentecostalisation has seamlessly impacted the global church. Two of these elements, namely, pentecostal emphases and skills on contextualisation and the application of Scripture and its openness to experiencing the Spirit’s voice through study of the Scripture need systematising to aid students engage more with the Bible as God’s active voice.

Currently, the standard approaches to hermeneutics tend to emphasise a deep dichotomy between exegesis and eisegesis, a dichotomy which is essentially correct and certainly necessary, given the tendency for anachronism. Yet, the empirical evidence (cf. Davies 2009:216–229; Grey 2011; Kärkkäinen 2012:245–261) is that this emphasis has sometimes been done in an unbalanced manner with the inadvertent result of undermining the confidence with which students apply Scripture to their contemporary situation. It has also generated a dualistic hermeneutics whereby students are able to more accurately interpret Scripture in its socio-historical, literary and theological settings, and yet unable to systematically apply it to their ministries, daily exigencies of life and the wider witness of the contemporary Church. Given this gap in current accounts in hermeneutics, the contextualised hermeneutics of pentecostalism which enables direct application of Scripture to the realities of human existence, and even more so, encounter and experience of the triune God of Scripture has much to offer. Admittedly, more work needs to be done to more completely map out the contours of Pentecostal hermeneutic. But the burgeoning literature on the subject (Archer and Oliverio Jr 2016; Grey 2011; Martin 2013; Noel 2010) indicates that the time is ripe for such a revision.

The bioptic vision also mandates a critical assessment of the priority seminaries give to the subject of Biblical Studies in the curriculum. In the first place there is a precarious trend in some institutions in the global south to moderate the primacy of Biblical Studies in preference to other disciplines such as Practical or Systematics Theology (cf. Cartledge 2012; Derks 2010:233–236). This trend is more pronounced in the Pentecostal institutions, even though the tradition cannot take all the blame (Austin and Perry 2015:43–55; Davies 2009:216–229; Jenkins 2006; Nel 2016:1–9). Complex factors have converged together over the last half-century to drive this unfortunate trend, not the least being the

dearth of faculty expertise, which in turn stems from the residual debilitating effects of the excesses of the 'Historical-Critical Method' especially in relation to Old Testament Studies. Even so, little argument needs to be made in defence of the proposition that the future effectiveness of seminary graduates as pastors, missionaries or scholars will depend for better or worse on their skills in interpreting the Bible. Certainly, the Pentecostal proclivity for Old Testament narratives, which has thankfully coincided with well-developed methodological approaches in literary-theological criticisms, provides an opportunity and at the same time necessitates the reinstatement of Biblical Studies to the hierarchy of the seminary disciplines.

The hidden curriculum defined by Snyder (1971:4) as the 'emotional and social surround of the formal curriculum' or as Shaw (2014:81) puts it, 'the sociological and psychological dimension of education', constitutes one of the fundamental factors, perhaps the most important factor which shapes learning. Not only does the hidden curriculum facilitate learning, it instils core values and cultural norms which in turn translates what is learnt into daily practice. In that regard therefore, and in the light of pentecostalisation, seminaries of the global south need to augment their hidden curriculum by integrating key aspects of the Pentecostal ethos such as vigorous commitment to prayer, worship and witness (Waddell and Althouse 2017:261–263). Seminaries must certainly shake off the not-undeserved charge that they see their mission as curbing 'zeal without knowledge' by injecting 'realism' into over-enthusiastic students. Good seminaries will on the contrary seek to heighten the zeal and devotion of their students with knowledge of the ways of the Lord Jesus.

4.4. Resource development

It also goes without saying, that key to fulfilling the bioptic vision is the nature and availability of resources which nurture the kind of disposition that the bioptic vision enunciates. Currently theological education in the global south is significantly hampered by the sheer lack of learning resources, both in depth and scope. This handicap is worsened by the fact that frequently the available resources are unbalanced, either wholly framed for education in the global north, or increasingly where attempts are made to redress this skew, are overly focused on the needs of the global south. While the over-reliance on textbooks fashioned for the global north is unsustainable, it is also untenable for resources to be so insular as to ignore the tremendous contributions to biblical-theological thought from the global north. A bioptic vision will seek

to harmonise both, so as to equip our students to serve both hemispheres.

4.5. Research agenda

While pentecostalism has been around for more than a century, pentecostalisation, and certainly pentecostalisation of Christianity in the global south is at best only a few decades old. As previously noted, scholarship has examined several areas of importance with regard to the global growth of pentecostalism. What remains outstanding is doubling efforts to fully grapple with the nature and prospects of the phenomenon in the global south. Here I can only approvingly echo Dube's (2018:223) challenge to scholars of the global south to 'undertake interdisciplinary collaborative research projects in order to make meaningful contributions to the methods and theoretical implications for teaching religion' in the era of the pentecostalisation of the Church in the global south.

To my mind, implementing this agenda means that several aspects of pentecostalisation, especially the socio-cultural factors facilitating its development need to be described, critically analysed and debated. But pentecostalism is first and foremost a divinely initiated act; in other words, it is essentially a theological phenomenon. In that case, its unique features, antecedents and historical trajectory, moreover, beg for thorough investigation in the light of the biblical theological witness. In addition, exactly how pentecostalisation in the south is impacting the global church's mission in the world awaits well-thought-out and structured studies. Then also, the task of clarifying at what point and by what mechanisms contextualisation of pentecostalised Christianity in the global south becomes a perilous experiment in syncretism and heterodoxy needs urgent examination. These and many other issues must shape the research agenda among scholars of the global south.

4.6. Relationship between the seminary and the pentecostalised Church

If, as is evident, the Seminary in the global south will determine the direction of the Church of the future, then the health of the relationship between the Church and the Seminary is paramount. Factors which have served to poison this relationship must be regarded as seriously as any other spiritual assaults against God's people, and thus must be addressed by both parties with such graveness in mind. A key issue is the vexed matter of accreditation. Pursuit of academic standards of accreditation dictated by the needs of irreligious university settings, and frequently driven by political motivations, has sometimes

contributed to the estrangement of the seminary from the church. While many seminaries in the global south strive to maintain their balance between maintaining the standards fitting accreditation and keeping very close relationship with the church as its servant, some are from time to time caught in the tensions and battles, especially with regards to admission criteria and the curriculum. In such situations, the Seminary must always take the side of the Church, never ever presuming to be on the side of the world. Viewing such choices as part and parcel of spiritual battles in theological education places them in the right perspective.

5. Conclusion

This paper has examined the implications of the pentecostalisation of Christianity in the global south for reforming theological education. With its premise being that the future prospects of global Christianity will depend on the calibre of the graduates of the seminaries in the global south, it has argued against the agenda which envisages a significant dissociation between the decline of a secularised Christianity in the global north as against the resurgence of a pentecostalised Christianity in the south. On the contrary it has argued that the two have linked futures and thus called for the adoption of a bioptic vision of theological education which equips graduates to entrench the current vibrant Christianity in the south at the same time as acquiring the disposition to contribute to the revival of global Christianity. This vision was practically fleshed out in six particular domains in theological education. Pentecostalised Christianity of the global south must certainly regard its current fortunes as indication of the Spirit's mantle for taking responsibility for the revival of Christianity in the global south. Fundamental to this is how well seminaries of the global south educate their students to become leaders of the global church.

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