Contested issues in training ministers in South Africa

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CHALLENGES IN MORAL FORMATION FOR MINISTERIAL TRAINING

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Introduction

The formative years of ministers are very important for the sustainability of effective ministry in a transforming society such as South Africa's. The South African nation is not only struggling with the disintegration of a united nation – however limited the unity may be – and with the widening gap between rich and poor, but, more importantly, also with corruption amongst leaders that is spiralling out of control. Shutte (2001:1) sums up the moral vacuum in South Africa:

In recent time there has been much talk in South Africa of a 'moral vacuum'. Something has gone and nothing has replaced it. Our President and other public figures, religious and community leaders with various outlooks, all express concern at the absence of a moral sense. Increasing crime, callous and often gratuitous violence, corruption in public office and private financial affairs, self-centred retreat into private security, the equally self-centred 'culture of entitlement' or rampant consumerism taking the place of traditional family values – these are some of the things they mention.

The first democratically elected government under the leadership of the late President Nelson Mandela, reacted with the establishment of the Moral Regeneration Movement. "The origins of the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) date back to a meeting in June 1997 between former President Nelson Mandela and key faith-based organisation leaders, the then Deputy Minister of Education, Father Smangalis Mkhathswa, and the SABC, to discuss spiritual transformation. At that meeting, former President Mandela spoke about the role of religion in nation-building and social transformation, and the need for religious institutions to work with the state to overcome the 'spiritual malaise' underpinning the crime problem."¹³ Since its official launch, the MRM has had various national and regional events to address the scourge that was threatening the moral fibre of the South African nation. The results of this movement is difficult to measure, as corruption is still rife, violence is escalating, the gap between the rich and the poor is at its worst since the birth of democracy, and abuse of power is common practice.

Division, materialism and greed are not limited to government officials or corporates, but is also prevalent amongst church ministers. Child abuse, financial scandals, substance abuse, abuse of power, and extra marital affairs are some of the serious moral issues that

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¹³ Moral Regeneration Movement. *The history of the Moral Regeneration Movement*. Viewed on 31 August 2014, from http://www.mrm.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1219&Itemid=592

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have confronted the Church in post-apartheid South Africa. The landscape of ministry has shifted drastically since the dawn of democracy. Communities are disintegrating, societal structures are changing, traditional societal roles are shifting, and social problems are increasing in both types and levels. For the most part, these problems have become the concern of the Church and, to a large extent, that of those in Christian ministry. The church community is part of society and is exposed to the same moral challenges as other communities.

Moral formation is important if the South African society wants to overcome the increasing moral failures of leaders and the broader members of society. Christian ministers are not exempted from the moral decay in society. To a large extent they are regarded as part of the custodians of the moral fibre of society. For many the restoration of society and the moral vacuum that is evident in the South African society since the dawn of democracy, is even further complicated by the lack of moral leadership by church ministers. The lack of moral formation of ministers makes the moral task of ministers more difficult.

The problematic issue addressed in this chapter is whether church ministers are receiving the necessary moral formation to do effective ministry, and whether these programmes are adequate. To put the question differently, one may ask whether the theological training at universities and colleges provides the kind of moral leaders that are associated with Christian ministry. To answer these questions, I will firstly give a brief overview of what moral formation is and engage with the two dominant approaches of moral education. These two approaches give rise to contestations that are both within the conceptualisation of moral formation, and the institutions of training and formation of ministers. The contestations refer to the use of abstract reason as a meta-narrative in the teaching of moral formation, as well as the practice thereof. The individual (as autonomous rational being) and the self (as social being) are another contestation that I will address. The third contestation is about the absence of community within the curricula, and the distance of the theological institution from the Church as moral community. The final contested issue is the lack of ethical leaders that can serve as mentors for ministers.

Understanding moral formation in a society characterised by a moral vacuum, moral plurality, and a society undergoing transformation, has its challenges, to say the least. I will highlight important issues rather than prescriptions, since moral formation of ministers at universities and seminaries is a complex process. In addition to the complexity of the nature of moral formation, is the South African nation with its manifold diversities and pluralities.

Since 1994, the curricula for the training and formation of ministers changed from the narrow Christian approach of theology to the broader religious approach. Archbishop Ndungane, the former archbishop of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, challenged the curriculum for Anglican ministers and caused reform within the curriculum of The College of Transfiguration (1998:113):

The way in which we develop theological formation must not only give attention to the multiplicity of expressions of our Christian faith, but also to the importance of *ubuntu* and the dominance of African traditional religion in the region, and the growth of eastern faiths such as Islam and Buddhism. We also cannot ignore the presence of other faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism.

Another example is found in the formation and training of ministers at the University of the Western Cape. The change at this University is partly because the Faculty of Theology has been incorporated into the Faculty of Arts or the Departments of Humanities. At the University of the Western Cape, the once vibrant Faculty of Theology amalgamated with Biblical and Religious Studies to form a Faculty of Religion and Theology in 1995. In 2000, this Faculty underwent another transformation due to drastic decline in student numbers in the whole university, and became a department within The Faculty of Arts. This, in turn, resulted in a change in the approach towards the teaching of ethics, since the overwhelming majority of students are from other departments and other faculties. At Stellenbosch University, where training and formation for ministers is still within the Faculty of Theology, the shift has been less drastic. This shift in training and formation intensifies the tensions between the approaches of moral formation of ministers within a context such as South Africa where moral degeneration amongst secular and religious leaders and the broader society is worsening. Instead of trying to present a comprehensive approach towards moral formation, which is beyond the scope of this chapter, I hope that the ideas rather than solutions will contribute to a more effective approach towards moral formation and training of ministers.

Moral formation: The use of reason and individual freedom

Moral formation can be explained by two complementary terms, namely ethics and morality. These are so closely related that they are sometimes used interchangeably. Ethics is a branch of moral philosophy and is defined as “rational inquiry into how to act and how to lead one’s life” (Pojman 2005:xv). Unlike social sciences and the humanities which deal with the question of how life is lived, ethics asks the more important question, namely how we ought to live our life. Whereas social sciences and the humanities are descriptive, ethics is a normative enterprise (eds. Johnson and Reath 2004:1). Notwithstanding the importance of reality with regard to how people actually live, the main aim of morality is to give direction to moral conduct and responsible decisions. Ethics has two sides, namely ethical theory and applied ethics. One side is the theoretical aspect (ethical theory) which deals with theories about the good life, what is right or wrong, and what is appropriate or inappropriate. The other side of ethics (applied ethics) deals with moral problems such as euthanasia, abortion, the death penalty, war, and affirmative action. Practice and theory goes hand in hand (Pojman 2005:xv-xvi).

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How do I make the right, appropriate, or responsible decisions? What is right, appropriate or responsible must be substantiated with reasons. The Greek roots of reason date back to Plato's theory of human nature. Plato explains human nature as that which is the essence of being human. And that which is the essence of being human sets human beings aside from other living beings. Reason is the one quality that is both common to all human beings, and sets human beings aside from animals (Shutte 2001:37-38). Plato's student, Aristotle, built on this theory and came up with the idea that ethics is the theory of how to live or develop our full humanity. The implication that we can draw from Aristotle's theory, is that if reason is the core of what it means to be human, then living in accordance with reason would be the most satisfying and fulfilled life (Shutte 2001:39).

Reason, as a system of morality, has reached its climax in the fifteenth century with the philosopher Rene Descartes. Descartes' famous argument, *dubito ergo cogito, cogito ergo sum* (I doubt, therefore I think; I think, therefore I am), became the catalyst for what it means to be human (Shutte 2001:45). Another modern attempt to argue for the normativity of reason for moral formation, is Immanuel Kant's 'Copernican revolution'. Kant argued that knowledge is not something that was caused from outside of the human being, but was part of the human being. Since every human being has the capacity to reason and since reason is the source for a fulfilled life, rational decisions and actions are judged to be good (Shutte 2001:46).

Good decisions and right actions are supported by logical and persuasive reasons. If an action cannot be rationally supported it is accepted as wrong or inappropriate. The consequence of rational action can be applied universally or beyond the boundaries of the person. What is rationally supported is right for you as much as it is right for me. "People who engage in oral inquiry and discussion of ethical questions do say what they believe. But they are expressing the beliefs that they think are best supported by reasoned argument, and believe that the reasons that persuade them to accept these conclusions should be rational for others as well" (eds. Johnson and Reath 2004:2).

When we apply this theory to religion it raises the question about the role of Christianity in the process of determining what is right or wrong. We could argue that when we apply reason to Christianity we conclude that, since reason is part of the nature of human beings and every human being has the potential to free itself through natural means, God and Christianity is not essential for the freedom of the person. This means that the individual does not develop through a predetermined pattern of behaviour, that of the supernatural, but rather through the ability to perform abstract reason.

The Enlightenment, as a project of modernity, has elevated rationality to a position of superiority. Van Huyssteen (1999:2) observes that, "We are indeed the children of modernity, and the often stellar performances of the sciences in our time have again managed to elevate this mode of human knowledge to a status so special and superior that it just had to emerge as the paradigmatic example of what human rationality should be about."

Coupled with reason is the centrality of the individual. The distinctiveness of the individual was a clear breakaway from the Medieval period characterised by tradition, the authority of institutions, and a sacral worldview (Shutte 2001:43). The Modern period made the individual the centre of everything and in control of everything. “Society was now seen as made up of atom-like individuals, and politics was the study of the forces necessary to form them into a harmonious whole” (Shutte 2001:44).

Individualism refers to the “moral emotions, motives, attitudes, virtues, or decisions of the individual function as the springboard for reflections on moral education” (Van der Ven 1998:21). This can mean three things. Firstly, the individual takes its own perspective and experience as the starting point for moral reflection. Secondly, the individual can be observed without attachments to any outside authority, which is typically the approach by Kant. A third and probably combined view has to do with the individual’s spiritual or material needs (Van der Ven 1998:22).

This breakaway from the Medieval period to the Modern period spilled over into the Church. The authority of the pope and the Church was questioned by reformers such as Luther and Calvin. Luther rejected the notion that Christians are bound by external works or authority for their salvation. The individual does not have to pray through the priest or find absolution in the authority of the priest. The individual has direct access to God. Wogaman (1993:111) makes this analogy to illustrate Luther’s ethics:

Luther might agree with an analogy drawn from educational experience. We do not become educated by virtue of receiving good grades; we receive good grades as an effect of becoming educated. Education itself – which occurs within us – is primary; evaluation by our teachers is secondary. While bad grades may goad us into greater effort, what really counts is our love of truth and our faith in the possibility of knowledge.

Transmission as mode of moral education in universities and seminaries

Van der Ven (1998:182) describes seven modes of moral education. The first kind of moral education is in the form of discipline. This is usually in the case of a child who internalises habits through reciprocal and open communication with parents. The second approach, socialisation, like discipline, is also a form of informal education. Socialisation is the internalisation of values and norms of a community. A third approach is called the ‘cognitive development’ which refers to education as development, “... in which development is seen as passing through a sequence of three levels, each consisting of two stages, beginning with the concrete and specific principles and moving to more abstract and inclusive ones” (Van der Ven 1998:182). The fourth approach, the clarification approach, emphasises the process of how people come to value what they experience and to act on those values (Van der Ven 1998:182). The fifth approach is about emotions as a vehicle to come to what is good and right. Van der Ven’s (1998:379) own approach, the sixth one, is called ‘education for character’. Van der Ven’s approach is defined as based

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on the three-way interrelatedness of passions, goods, and reasons, as we learn from the ancients, especially Plato and Aristotle. Then this interrelatedness must be interpreted from the perspective of interactionism between person and situation. This interactionism, being linguistic in nature, has to be understood in terms of its narrative structure.

The seventh approach of Van der Ven (1998:379) is transmission which applies to educational institutions like colleges and universities. Here the teacher transmits the values, which students might know, to the students on two levels. The first level of transmission is on the level of the curricula which is prescribed, and forms part of the official teaching material. In the university, school and seminary curricula, the notions of morality, individualism and reason have been the norm. Where ethics is taught as a major or elective to students of theology, rational theory forms part of most approaches to morality. Transmission is the process whereby unconscious rules, laws and moral assumptions – that form the basis of moral formation – are taught by the teacher and intentionally received by the student. This intentional learning makes it possible for the student to use the basis of moral formation in different situations and contexts (Van der Ven 1998:126).

This educational approach to moral formation usually consists of a set of propositions and conclusions that is widely accepted as the norm. The content is found in uncontested documents such as doctrines, canons and texts which interpret the primary sources. These can include accepted commentaries that have reached authoritative status by the particular community or group (Van der Ven 1998:129). The content is also given authority through organs such as synods, councils or religious leaders (Van der Ven 1998:130). The goals of transmission are threefold: cognitive, affective and volitive. Cognitive goals on the level of developing knowledge are the memorising of the values, rules and laws that have been transmitted. Cognitive goals involve four qualities, namely comprehending, applying, analysing and syncretising. Affective goals include motivation and attitude development. The volitive aim is to bring the student to such a point where the will is used to uphold the value propositions in both the personal and social life (Van der Ven 1998:131-132).

The second level of transmission as a mode of moral education, is rationality. In addition to the above forms of rationality described, there is also the kind of rationality that uses the values in different moral traditions to determine which become substantive (Van der Ven 1998:136). In this instance the different traditions are compared in order to determine which of the values can be taken as normative. This form of reasoning raises the questions, by what criteria do we select the traditions, which traditions, and why? Another form of rationality that can be added to the above forms refers to procedural rationality. The determining factor here is to decide what procedural principle the tradition is linked with. The question is, to what extent does tradition acknowledge the autonomy of a specific kind of rationality? The difficulty with this approach is to decide which rationality to use in the process (Van der Ven 1998:137).

While transmission is widely used in tertiary education as a form of moral formation, there are – due to moral plurality – some serious questions with regard to the appropriateness

of this form. The various Christian traditions also contribute to the difficulties that arise from transmission as a mode of moral formation.

Contestations in moral formation of ministers

The first contestation links directly to the question, which reason should be taken as normative? The formation of ministers at universities must take the superiority given to reason, as a meta-narrative approach in the transmission of values, seriously. In the context of South Africa with its social challenges and moral problems, the moral formation of ministers must take cognisance of the limitation of the rational approach in ethics. In this country's context, morality is more complex than the mere application of substantive, procedural or abstract reason as a meta-narrative approach. How one comes to moral decisions, moral judgments, and ethical decisions cannot be adequately determined without taking the history of South Africa seriously. Separate development and race classification resulted in the loss of human dignity and basic human rights. Historical facts, events, persons and periods are important for moral decision-making, judgments and moral formation. These phenomena impact on the present and how the future is shaped. The experiences of colonialism in a pre-apartheid South Africa as well as the apartheid era itself contributed to the current worldview of plurality of truths, practices and morality in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Reason is not only scientific, though this has become the norm amongst those who use reason for moral formation. Another type of reason, namely practical reason, is a more appropriate use of reason for moral formation of ministers in a society characterised with moral plurality. Practical reason is the critical engagement with or reflection on experience. Reason becomes only one of the factors for determining what is right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate, good and bad. "This prudential process makes syllogistic reasoning open, dynamic, and flexible. It does not prevent *prima facie* ideas, intuitions, and emotions, which clearly condition concrete problems in concrete situations, from coming into play" (Van der Ven 1998:150). For example, in the South African context one needs to consider the level of poverty when assessing whether or not stealing and violence is a means to an end. If someone steals to feed their family, or reacts with violence as a result of a violent socialisation, one should consider the role given to the circumstances of the specific person with regard to the stealing or the violence.

Practical reason does not reject principles for moral formation. However, principles on its own are insufficient for moral formation of ministers who regard tradition(s) as an important tool for their formation. By principles I mean a set of rules or laws that predetermine how one gets to what is right or wrong or good or bad. It can usually be used in different contexts. When such principles are used as a means of moral formation, it borders on indoctrination and prescription. Practical reason, on the other hand, engages with the experience of each situation or community or tradition as an authentic partner

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in moral formation. Differences are tolerated and taken into account, and through open dialogue, peaceful co-existence of moral plurality is possible (Klaasen 2012:115).

Unlike abstract reasoning that is deterministic and isolated from traditions and concrete experience, practical reason takes into account the plurality of religious traditions, experiences, and beliefs of the ministers. The prospective minister does not come to the university as an empty vessel, but with a wealth of knowledge (informal) and experiences that impact on their own moral formation as well as on those in their pastoral care. While tradition, experience and beliefs do not determine moral formation, they engage with principles, laws and moral propositions in a critical way in the formation of ministers.

Ministers must acknowledge the situation in which they find themselves. By 'situation' I refer to their emotional state. The upbringing of ministers, their past and their narrative all play a significant role in their leadership. Erickson's (1980) stages of moral formation show that one's earlier years determine the kind of relationships with others which, in turn, influence the virtues that one upholds. Instead of holding on to abstract rational theories about rules or utility, non-rationalism is as important for the leader to be morally sound and virtuous in its execution of leadership. Moral leaders make an effort to discover the self and accept who they are. Moral leaders do not seek affirmation through coercion or domination, but serve with integrity and sometimes unpopularity.

The second contestation relates to ministers being caught up between what it means to be an individual and what it means to be part of a community. According to Alasdair MacIntyre, the compartmentalisation of the self is one of the most devastating effects of abstract reasoning. MacIntyre (1981:204) claims that any attempt to view human life as a whole, has social and philosophical difficulties:

The former is the tendency to think atomistically about human action and to analyse complex actions and transactions in terms of simple components... Equally the unity of a human life becomes invisible to us when a sharp separation is made either between the individual and the roles that he or she plays.

Communitarian ethicists are amongst those who were influenced by classical figures such as Aristotle (1962) and Aquinas (1928), as well as more contemporary scholars such as Richard Niebuhr (1941) and James Gustafson (1975). Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) and Stanley Hauerwas (1983) are two of the contemporary ethicists who affirm the critique of contemporary philosophical ethics and the alternative that the community is important with regard to both methodological and social ethical questions. This approach points out the weaknesses of individualism and argues that the community is central for moral formation. The individual does not live isolated from other persons, and moral formation takes place in an interdependent relationship with others. Instead of the autonomous individual of modern ethics, the community becomes the harbinger of morality.

Moral formation of ministers happens within a community, and the formation and training process must take the community serious for effective ministry. Ministers are not

just social beings; they are part of a specific community with a specific history, and are, furthermore, characterised by definite virtues that differentiate the community from other communities. When they adopt a distorted view of who they are, for example as merely individuals connected for certain purposes, they fail to respond to the need of the other and ultimately fall into sin. When the minister trusts the other to challenge him/her, character is formed. In other words, the other becomes the initiator of character.

One of the most significant resurgence in the theological landscape, has been the focus on the Trinity. There is a renewed interest in the reciprocal relationship of God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This focus has also spilled over to critical engagement about what it means to be human. Does being human mean to be a person with a mechanical nature, or does it refer to being made in the image and likeness of God? The former refers to the modern, independent individual, while the latter refers to personhood in a relationship. To be in a relationship means to be inter-dependent. Moral leadership means to be faithful to the Christian moral code to love your neighbour as yourself. At the heart of personhood is self-sacrifice, grace, respect for the other, and humility.

The third contestation with regard to moral formation of ministers at tertiary institutions, is the lack of involvement of the Church as part of the formation process. This conflict has come about partly because of the theoretical orientation of moral formation at universities, which resulted in the distance between the Church (as moral community) and the tertiary institution, as well as the shift in moral formation within the Church's ministerial formation processes. With regard to the latter, this is as a result of a move away from a comprehensive formation process, as found in residential training to non-residential training and distance learning.

For centuries, training was exclusively centred on the model of the Middle Ages, where priests lived in community for the whole duration of their training and obeyed a monastic spirituality characterised by work, pray and service. Training was not without tensions, caused by the formalisation of orders. Although persons were trained in community, their local community did not have the authority to affirm or confirm their calling. Formal 'orders' began to emerge with the closer relations of the Church with the Roman Empire (Gill 1990), and in the Medieval period, this formalisation took its most rigid character. Schillebeeckx (1990:82) argues that the "Third Lateran Council of 1179 and the Fourth of 1215 were the occasions of fundamental change, whereby men were ordained without being put forward for ordination by a particular community." This was a diversion from the early Patristic view of the minister, when the community could lay claim to ordination.

This process of ordination, characterised by medieval legalism and feudalism, had serious ramifications for ordained ministers. Ordained ministry became a status symbol instead of service to the community. The minister was separated from the laity with absolute authority. Ministers were able to misuse their position in society without meaningful accountability. The misuse of authority resulted in immoral acts that could hardly be

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challenged by the laity who have, by then, become subordinate to the ordained person. Such notions of priesthood led to the questioning of the calling and vocation of those set aside for ministry and contributed to the Reformation (Gill 1990:83).

With challenges such as escalating costs, the growing number of married candidates for ministry, non-stipendiary ministries, and curriculum changes at universities, traditional training became less practical. While the community, through the parish council or church board, has a role in the initial discernment process, the authority to ordain resides with the bishop, board or council. For example, in the Anglican Church in Southern Africa, the worshipping community is part of the initial stage of discernment. The candidate first approaches the local priest, who after some informal discernment discusses the intentions of the candidate with the parish council. The parish council writes to the bishop, recommending the candidate to be considered for the official discernment process. Although the parish council “does not decide on the progress of the candidate, their support can help the broader church with the discernment of a call on the person” (Klaasen 2012:56). Until the candidate is ordained, the worshipping community does not have any authority in the rest of the discernment process. At ordination, the worshipping community merely witnesses the authority of the bishop.

The lack of community is not only in the discernment process, but also in post ordination. Because of the medieval paradigm of ordination that is prevalent in many processes of ordination, clericalisation is still a major problem for effective ministry. The canon law of many denominations is used as the justification for the legalistic formulations of relationships between clergy and laity, as well as bishops and clergy. These relationships are expressed in hierarchical forms and place the ordained in a class above the laity. This separation is contrary to the early Church’s acceptance of the equality of all the baptised and that all the members of the community are ministers by virtue of their baptism. It is perhaps not community per se that is lacking, but the self-appointed position which the clergy occupies in relation to the rest of the members. The lack of community in the training and formation of ministers subsequently results in dissociation and irresponsible moral decisions and actions.

The status that is associated with ministry can become a gateway for abuse of power, whereby the minister has complete control over the ministry that God initiated and which the community affirmed. This leads to corruption, all kinds of abuse, and negative autocracy. Ministers become an authority unto themselves when they take on a position isolated from the community who affirms their calling from the very early stages of their discernment process. Good moral leadership is reflected in the model of leadership that is exercised by the leader. The shepherd-sheep model is usually associated with the leader taking on a superior role and the ecclesia a submissive one. This usually results in clericalism. On the other hand, ministers – who view their calling as part of the body, yet distinctive in nature – take on a Body of Christ approach. Within the Body of Christ,

the minister exercises particular gifts within the context of the gifts and skills of the church community. From a moral perspective the minister treats the congregation as equals and fellow ministers within the mission of God.

Suggested ideas for effective moral formation of ministers

The curricula of universities and theological colleges should aim to balance abstract reason and practical reason, in addition to the individual and the communal within moral communities. About this, Gill (1989:64) says:

Pointing out the importance of moral communities in fashioning and sustaining values in our society, need not become an excuse for irrationality. It is rather a claim that individual, isolated rationality is quite simply, in it, an insufficient resource for a profound morality. Moral communities without the critique of rationality can become tyrannical, arbitrary and perhaps even demonic. But atomised rationality without moral communities seems incapable (despite many attempts) of fashioning and sustaining goodness beyond self-interest.

The eighteenth century emphasis of the centrality of the individual for moral formation has taken on a universal significance. Freedom is perceived as the extent to which the person is independent from outside forces such as tradition and institutions. The individual is atomistic and is the source of his/her own freedom. On the other hand, the individual is part of a community and cannot be isolated from others in the community. The self cannot be understood apart from its social roles and attachments.

Ministers ought to guard against the status attached to ministry that was evident in the Medieval period. It is this notion of ministry that has allowed ministers to act legalistic 'canonised' (Gill 1990:82). This interpretation of the authority of ministers contributes to the abuse against the vulnerable members of the community and the structures and procedures of the institution.

The university curricula should also take cognisance of the role of the family and society in the formation of ministers. Moral formation is not restricted to rules or principles, but the influence of the family through socialisation, which is another way of transmitting values and forming character. Coupled with socialisation – by entities such as the family – is the important role of the media, especially social media, in not only contributing to moral formation, but also in transmitting values. However, it has both positive and negative aspects when it comes to transmitting values, and while social media is beneficial for easy access of information, it still carries with it some dangers. The media should be used as a critical tool of moral formation.

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Conclusion

Ministers are confronted with the challenges evident of the Medieval period as well as modernity. Feudalism and legalism can lead to dissociation from the community. It can also lead to ministry being a status rather than being a service to the church community and society – or being a calling by God and not by any earthly structure or authority (council or bishop). The community, through its communitarian nature, forms the minister into a morally responsible human being who has a common humanity with other selves within the community as well as with those beyond.

Universities and theological colleges must make the community of learning an important role player in the academic curricula of those being formed for ministry. Curricula will be enhanced when consideration is given for the correlation between various modes of moral formation. Therefore, moral plurality and different traditions should form part of the content of such curricula.

An example of moral leadership is found in one of the most humble Christian leaders in contemporary South Africa, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. Lombard (2014:15) writes of him as:

His leadership was transformative, it was definitely a form of servant leadership, it was inclusive and affirming of his co-workers, but it also had a much disciplined side to it, including prayer and meditation and real dedication to the task. He trusted people to do their own thing, he could delegate various tasks, but importantly decided to write his own sermons, speeches and letters, and he spent much time writing to South African leaders (the ‘enemy’), whom he approached on the basis of their own faith commitment, bringing in the moral dimension of politics and whatever the issue was ... Tutu’s leadership rested on a vision and understanding of God’s dream for humanity, and thus rested not on managerial gimmicks, but on deep spiritual roots, including his belief in the power of the resurrection (coming from the Community of the Resurrection), but also fed by his strong belief in what Khoza calls African Humanism or *ubuntu*.

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