Contested issues in training ministers in South Africa

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Editor
Marilyn Naidoo

RELATIONS BETWEEN CHURCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTION: A SYMBIOTIC ASSOCIATION?

H. MVUME DANDALA

Introduction

The type of relationship which exists between the Church and theological institutions as training centres for ministers, will in one way or the other portray the quality of ministerial leadership that results both in the kind of congregations that emerge as well as the service that the Church renders to its communities. This, therefore, raises an important question on the kind of relationship that needs to exist between the Church and the theological training institutions which train ministers as leaders for the Church. In no way will the theological training of ministers have relevance and meaning to the ever-changing South African context unless church denominations and training institutions are in a collaborative relationship on the nature of ministerial formation and critical thinking required to equip their ministers. The training institutions cannot theologically train ministers without an awareness of what the expectations of their denomination are and how the Church itself identifies with the changing needs of the communities it serves.

It is envisioned that through collaborative engagement, denominations and their theological institutions are of one mind as to what service the Church should render – both to their communities of faith and their social context. Just as the thinking of the Church impacts on or shapes the thinking of a theological institution, so should the thinking of a theological institution impact the thinking of the Church. It is certainly difficult for theological institutions to train leaders who can be innovative in ministry when what is being modelled by the denomination and its decisions are not open to change. Thus, theological institutions can easily be accused of producing misfits. It is in this way that ministerial formation becomes an integral part of theological and pastoral training. The relationship that exists between the denominations and their theological training institutions should, therefore, be a symbiotic one – held together within the tensions of what ministerial formation for their particular denominations must look like on the one hand, and the necessity of critical inquiry on the other. This partnership often creates tensions and contestations – be it by the church denomination that makes recommendations to the theological training institution, requiring conformity, or the theological training institution with its own priorities. This chapter, therefore, outlines the unique relationship between the Church and its respective theological training institutions, using the Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Institutions as an example. This chapter explores the tensions that develop, highlighting attempts towards new partnerships and how these relationships impact on ministerial training.

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The unique relationship between Church and seminary

Most theological training institutions in Africa have adopted an ecclesial trend where their origins can be traced back to a particular denomination. This trend, in most cases, has not only informed but also greatly influenced the character and nature of these institutions. This pattern of relationship is not only unique for African church-seminary relations, but seems to be a method also accepted in the West where most theological schools were established as ministerial training centres. Emphasising this kind of relationship in the United States context, Weber (2008) shows how theological institutions were founded by denominations, reflecting the particular emphasis of such denominations. According to him, this kind of relationship between theological institutions and their establishing communities is, in the context of education, exceptional only to theological schools (Weber 2008:65):

Most theological schools continue in some pattern of relationship. There is no parallel in other forms of graduate professional education. Law schools were not founded by courts or legislatures or law firms. Medical schools were seldom founded by hospitals ... Theological schools have a one-of-a-kind relationship with communities that established them.

Although times have changed, the traditional relationship between Church and seminary still holds strong. Some churches have continued their theological training in public institutions, while others have opted to establish or continue with their private institutions. In both instances the intention is unwaveringly that of “the training of their professional leaders, people who will both profess the faith in fresh ways and function as professionals, i.e. display the skills and competencies appropriate to their calling” (Stortz 2011:374). What is obvious, according to Stortz (2011), is that the constantly changing social landscape demands newer approaches to such training if the faith has to continue to make sense. Stortz (2011:374) further argues that the Church has to understand that “church leaders of the 21st century need training in a number of additional disciplines as well.” This has to be inextricably linked to how a denomination understands the new challenges imposed by new contexts. In this case, both private and public institutions have something to offer towards training for ordination purposes. However, the critical factor becomes that of the relationship between the denomination and the theological institutions concerned.

As early as the 1960s, Louisell and Jackson (1962:751) noted that universities originated within the fold of the established Church in the Middle Ages as extensions of the medieval church schools. What remains evident from this observation is that while these institutions were not intended for ministerial training by their nature, they brought theology as a discipline into the arena of intellectual discourse, resulting in inevitable individual critical theological inquiry. With this in mind, Phiri and Nadar (2011:81) have argued that “faith and religion can and must be exposed to academic scrutiny, and the best place for such scrutiny is the public university.” This evidently means that a religious faculty of theology in a public university should be viewed as having minimal creedal and character formation

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intentions for its students when compared to a seminary or a Bible school. In this sense the intention of a university is, therefore, to cultivate critical scholarship and make sure that students learn without a particular creedal or behavioural formational requirement being ‘forced’ upon them. This may or may not always coincide with what a particular denomination is looking for in the formation of its clergy. When a church seeks to impose this on a university, it compromises the primary purpose of a university. In such cases, the relationship between church denominations and the religious faculties of theology in public universities become strained and, in most cases, remains on a feeble edge.

In South Africa, for example, during the Apartheid era, some universities promoted specific doctrinal and character formational positions informed by their political weight and persuasion, thus compromising the academic independence of those universities. Therefore, it is not unfounded to suggest that church denominations often intend to have a direct doctrinal influence on their theological training institutions. This trend was evident in faculties of theology in public universities. For example, up to the year 2000, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in South Africa in a certain way regarded theological training at the universities of Stellenbosch, Pretoria and Bloemfontein as their ‘own’, focusing on the training needs of the DRC.¹⁴ The teaching staff at these institutions had to be members of the DRC and were appointed by the DRC in collaboration with the university. With the recent drive towards transformation in higher education, all theological faculties had to become ecumenical faculties in order to give theological students a broader exposure to different church traditions. In the case of these ‘reformed’ universities, a ‘curatorium’ (ministerial formation focus) pays special attention to reformed students by offering ‘church-owned’ modules which are operated separately from the university programmes at the cost of the DRC. Hence, the ability of theological institutions to freely exercise critical thinking and inquiry within the denominational confinement, demonstrates – to some extent – the nature of the relations which exist between the Church and theological institutions.

Weber (2008:85) questions how theological institutions understand their task, inquiring whether they exist to produce theological scholars or to provide the Church with ministers for ordination. It thus becomes of vital importance to consistently ascertain the relationship of the Church with its theological institution – especially when it comes to theological education and ministerial formation. McCarthy (2004:176) notes that what leads to a deepening connection between the Church and a theological institution, is when theological schools begin to correct the ‘missing connection’ between the faith of the Church and the critical inquiry component in the mission of training institutions. It is within this described tension between faith formation and critical inquiry about that faith,

¹⁴ Information provided in conversations with Dr Flip du Toit on 11 December 2014, who is the Director of the Centre for Ministerial Development of the Dutch Reformed Church at the University of Pretoria, South Africa.

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that the Pietermaritzburg Cluster becomes an example of a ‘network’ model for offering an ecumenical approach towards ministerial formation and theological education.

The Pietermaritzburg Cluster Model

The Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Institutions (hereafter simply referred to as ‘the Cluster’) was founded in March 1990.¹⁵ The Cluster was originally founded by an association of three partner institutions, namely the Saint Joseph’s Theological Institute and the then School of Theology of the University of Natal (now forming part of the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics of the University of KwaZulu-Natal) together with the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa. Since 1994, the Cluster has had additional institutions seeking membership, which has included the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa (ESSA), the Lutheran Theological Institute (LTI), and the Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary (SMMS) as the current members of this association.¹⁶ As stipulated in the declaration of intent, it is clear that the Cluster has a public commitment to the ideas upon which it was first founded. Central to this commitment, is the fact that the member partner institutions shall support and strengthen one another in their common task of educating and equipping people for Christian ministry in the Church of South Africa.

The Cluster, therefore, stands as a reminder of the centrality of ecumenism in the mission of the Church. In its Declaration of intent, the Cluster Constitution states that “the changed and changing needs of the Church and society in Southern Africa require the constant renewal of the models and methods of theological education, and a careful analysis of social, economic and political structures in the light of the Gospel.”¹⁷ With this awareness, the strongest asset for the Cluster is the capacity it has to bring different denominational traditions together for common theological reflection and ministerial formation with the richness of critical inquiry in an ecumenical setting. In this case, the institutions in partnership not only enjoys ecumenical support from member denominations involved in the Cluster, but also the involvement with those churches of partner institutions.

The Cluster also has a commitment to seek and develop models and methods of preparing people for an incarnational ministry which meets both the needs of the Church and the society in which the Church exercises its prophetic, pastoral and serving roles. The Cluster creates a space for the sharing of resources in the form of opportunities for team-teaching amongst lecturing staff, sharing of library resources, possibilities of joint publishing ventures, and research opportunities. Central to ministerial formation needs are the quarterly Cluster

¹⁵ http://www.sjti.ac.za/strat_alliance_cluster.htm

¹⁶ Each participating institution in the Cluster is autonomous and has its own credo, its own denominational and ecumenical links, its own ethos and style. The Cluster seeks to enhance the richness and the diversity which each institution brings to it – http://www.sjti.ac.za/strat_alliance_cluster.htm.

¹⁷ http://www.sjti.ac.za/strat_alliance_cluster.htm – the Cluster Constitution approved by the Cluster Council on 23 September 1994.

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worships from the various traditions represented within the Cluster institution partners. The most unique feature of the Cluster is that while six of the partners are institutions set up by denominations, the seventh, viz. the school of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, forms part of a public university. The Cluster has the potential to expose its students to various forms of critical inquiry. This immediately affords the Cluster an opportunity to explore the extent to which its member institutions could have access to the other disciplines that are needed for critical inquiry, as well as a more expanded approach to ministering. The institutions within the Cluster have an opportunity to reflect together on suitable theological and pastoral responses to social, political and economic challenges of their context, thus laying the foundation for a common approach to dealing with the challenges typically facing South African Christianity. They also have an opportunity to engage with different spiritual traditions as they participate in devotional gatherings of the different denominational member institutions. Formation, to the Cluster, thus means an encounter in the lecture room, in the chapel and in the community, as well as social life within the Cluster. Students are exposed to and formed in a diverse ecumenical context which is envisioned to aid them serve more effectively in an ever-changing pluralistic, post-apartheid South African context.

In the context of nation-building in South Africa, it may, therefore, be argued that there seems to exist an overriding challenge to the churches to offer a ministry that responds to the need for social healing from the effects of apartheid. This requires an approach to ministry that focuses on building healthy relations between people and groups, as well as enlarging the capacity to constantly critique the evolving socio-political context. The latter can be better achieved within an ecumenical approach to theological training and ministerial formation. This then calls for strong relations between theological institutions and church denominations. The doctrine of apartheid essentially maintained that one's identity could only be affirmed within the context of separateness and not within a context of diversity (Motlhabi 1984). The Church, together with its theological institutions, should consistently challenge the aftermath of such a history – both in its faith expression and in its ecumenical lifestyle. In the current situation this makes a strong case for caution where the separateness of denominations is concerned. Since the demise of another ecumenical initiative, such as the Federal Theological Seminary (Denis and Duncan 2011), traditions are moving back more and more into a denominationally-based ministerial formation focus in their theological training. It is in this context that the Cluster remains a noteworthy model for theological education as denominations and theological institutions develop viable relationships, focusing both on critical inquiry and ministerial formation within an ecumenical space.

Potential tensions between Church and theological institutions

The relationship between the theological institutions and denominations may be best upheld when there is greater clarity on issues such as the right and power of the denomination to intervene and cut short a programme of a theological training institution if the theological

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institution defines itself out of the denomination's formational agenda. The demise of the Federal Theological Seminary points to this need (Gibbs 2014:82-83). When the terms of reference are not clearly defined, the chances of destructive conflicts are enhanced. The common understanding is often merely that the theological training institutions prepare leaders for the Church, without much clarity given on the extent beyond which the seminary may go in its theological innovation and leadership. The mission of the seminary in Alexandria, for instance, as it prepared leaders for the Church, seems to have sought to produce leaders who would delineate specific space for the Church within the context of competing philosophies (Malaty 1995:9). Finkenwalde, on the other hand, sought to produce leaders whose depth of faith was of such a nature that they would stand up to the Church and the State whenever faith was compromised – even by the Church itself (Zimmermann and Smith 1973:107). The Federal Theological Seminary sought to form ministers who would not succumb to the dictates of apartheid.

The major concern that should be pertinent for both Church and seminary relations, regards the denomination's readiness to commit resources to the theological institutions and its formational cause. Some key issues which require consideration in this regard include teaching faculty, finances, and sharing of other available resources such as properties. Churches usually equip the denominational seminary with qualified teaching faculty. On the other hand, as His Holiness Aram 1 (2000:150) observes, in spite of the multiplicity of our traditions, "there can be no churches (in the plural) except as manifestations of the one true Church." Overall, as much as denominational institutions are of teaching staff from within the tradition, they should still remain open to other traditions so as to ensure that a theological institution remains a faithful custodian of the truth with regard to the ecumenical unity of the Church.

An area of strained relations often leads to the question, who must appoint the theological institution faculty? Should the theological institution be allowed space to make its own appointments, or should these appointments be the responsibility of the denominational church? One is inclined to call for independence for a theological institution to build a staff component that will be faithful to the mandate the Church has given with its mission in mind. However, in this regard, space should be allowed for the engagement in robust but mutual conversations with the denominational church.

The same principle which applies to staffing the theological institution should apply to the financial relationship between a theological institution and the denominational church. While the denomination is the primary investor in the theological institution, it is also aware that the theological institution is governed by principles of truth seeking, critical thinking, and unwavering adherence to such truth. Financial, property and staff appointment policies should, therefore, be of such a nature that a theological institution is never put in a situation where its faithfulness to its calling is undermined or compromised by resource dependence. This point of financial dependence on denominational churches

creates tremendous tension in terms of vision and mission, and eventually impacts on the quality of ministers being trained.

Theological institutions as catalysts for creative ecclesiology

If theological institutions are going to be effective in driving a process of formation that must indeed be wholly transformative of the Church, they cannot but see the need to address the training of the lay leaders of the Church as equally central to their task. Otherwise this becomes a prescription for serious tensions between the ordained and the laity. Kritzinger (2010) takes the process of ministerial training beyond a focus merely on those being prepared for ordination. Kritzinger (2010:211) argues, “By ministerial formation I mean the holistic formation of church members for ministry.” In the light of this observation, His Holiness Aram 1 (2000:150) notes that, “Churches everywhere are called to witness to the Gospel,” and for that reason, “Christian formation of laity remains a continuing priority for the churches.” Sound relations between the denominational church and a theological institution rest on the level to which the laity understands the mission and purpose of the theological institution and their commitment to the same. Those who are being formed for the ministry need to be nurtured into a spirit of the inseparability of the laity and the clergy. In its practical sense this means that the theological institutions cannot be adequately prepared for the ministry of the Church outside daily encounters with the experiences of its people.

A conscious effort to develop the meaning and application of Christian beliefs for a particular context is an important route to follow in the process of formation. The question of Christian values and how they relate to contemporary socio-political and economic experiences is part of the struggle that must characterise the process of formation in theological training institutions. This struggle in itself is not new, as theologians like Karl Barth and many in the tradition of the Confessing Church demonstrate (see Villa-Vicencio 1988). There is always a possibility of conflict in the relations between the Church and the theological training institution as a place of testing established theological positions. The theological training institution must, therefore, constantly weigh denominational positions against the stringent requirements of the scriptures, while, at the same time, passing these on to the future church leaders without necessarily requiring conformity. In this case, the theological training institutions should be understood as the essential intellectual interlocutors of the Church. They drive theological and ecclesiastical discussions, as well as help formulate lasting Christian values and doctrines of the Church.

Historically, theologians have often been leaders in driving such discussions, including the likes of Martin Luther (1517), John Wesley (1738), and many others in their times. Such great teachers have throughout the history of the Church helped to refine its thoughts in the light of challenges encountered within the context of the growth of society and the Church itself. However, this has not always been a readily welcomed intervention by the Church, which has shown different levels of tolerance – from outright rejection and

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isolation, to reasonable tolerance – in requiring conformity to what the Church referred to as ‘orthodoxy’. In our own South African context it took courageous theological thinkers, like the Rev. Beyers Naudé, to challenge the Dutch Reformed Church to abandon its divisive ecclesiology (De Gruchy 1979:81). Younger theological institutional teachers like Desmond Tutu and Simon Gqubule at the Federal Theological Seminary, Manas Buthelezi at the Maphumulo Lutheran Seminary, Basil Moore of the University Christian Movement, and Allan Boesak at the University of the Western Cape, not only pursued this thinking, but brought it within the domain of the theological institutions. It is in such a context that De Gruchy (1986:154) asserts that “the supporting churches felt uneasy” about such developments. The question that arises is whether or not a theological seminary can offer a safe space for critical inquiry within tensions of conformity and formation. The challenge is to ensure that the relationship between church and theological institutions withstands such legitimate tensions.

The effectiveness of a theological institution has to do with the strength of its theological innovation, its capacity to understand the challenges of the moment, and its ability to integrate these into its processes of formation rooted in the experiences of its people. Thus, the theological institution becomes a place where men and women process their faith for an effective ministry of the Church in its society. If the theological institutions are the places where the ministry of its future leaders are formed and developed, formation cannot be done outside the need for building bridges between the thinking of a theological institution and the denominational churches as to where they stand on major theological and/or socio-political issues at any given time. Two alumni of the Federal Theological Seminary, the Rev. Stanley Sabelo Ntwasa in his time – both as organising secretary of the University Christian Movement (UCM) and student at the St Peter’s Anglican College in 1971 – and the Rev. Stanley Mmutlanyane Mogoba, are examples where the positions of a theological institution and that of the churches diverged. Mogoba, as an ‘unstationable’ probationer minister of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, was ‘shunted’ to the seminary by the Methodist Church of Southern Africa because the Church could not find a station for him where the security police would leave the Church in peace (Molomo 1998:33). Some of the leaders of the Methodist Church were questioning the value of accepting a candidate for ordination whose presence within the fraternity of the ordained would attract the unwanted attention of the state security apparatus. The seminary, on the other hand, recognised his potential as a minister of the Church, and after intense dialogue with the denomination opened its doors to him. Ntwasa found the strength for his ministry with the UCM from the bold support he was offered by the St Peter’s Anglican College under the Rev. Aelred Stubbs, when some of the ordained clergy who were supporters of the radical black theology, like the Rev. Basil Moore, were being eschewed by their denominations (Molomo 1998).

A matter raised by Denis and Duncan is apt and gives way for further reflection. With regard to the Federal Theological Seminary, Denis and Duncan (2011:4) posit the question: “Were the constituent churches genuinely committed to ecumenism when they established the

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Federal Theological Seminary in 1963?” This question could be seen to probe the extent to which a denominational church gives thought to the kind of formation it has in mind and which it desires the theological institution to promote. This question with regard to the Federal Theological Seminary, may be viewed as being prompted by hindsight, thus calling for a process that should interrogate the earlier discussions of the constituent churches when they took the decision to establish the Federal Theological Seminary. It leaves one curious to know whether the formational intentions of the denominational churches were properly discussed, agreed and documented. In that case, one would want to know whether they included plans for an eventuality of a breakdown of relationships between the churches and the seminary.

John Mbiti (2013), in a similar vein, makes a telling observation in the evolution of the indigenisation of the Church in Africa. In his foreword to the *Handbook on Theological Education in Africa*, Mbiti retells how a few of them, as teachers of theology in Africa, were pioneers in interrogating African life and culture in the 1950s and early 1960s “... to stammer about ‘Theologia Africana,’ when the Church which had been in Africa for more than a hundred years, had not even begun to seek to feel the authentic African pulse” (see Mbiti 2013:xv). It has taken a titanic power struggle for theological institutions to be seen as more than a means of spiritual domestication by the churches. Theological institutions are not, and should never be allowed to be, mere vehicles of processed and packaged views of the denominations for uncritical spiritual consumption by the theological institutions. This would be a violation of the primary calling of theological institutions as cradles of formation. Having said this, the process of theological training and formation should be a continual one. It is essential that denominations develop systems whereby their students are exposed to the priority emphases of their churches before they come to the training institution. This enables them to reflect meaningfully on their theological formation and ministerial priorities. It becomes equally important for the denominations and the training institution to formulate processes by which ongoing formation is maintained, even after theological school or seminary.

The fact that theological institutions are also places of theological innovation and catalysts for creative ecclesiology, is precisely the area where the vulnerability of the Church often shows. On the whole, denominations tend to be comfortable with defined and tested theological and social positions, and uncomfortable with new theological innovations. Denis and Duncan (2011) observe that the products of the Federal Theological Seminary changed the tone of the witness of the Church after 1976 through greater robustness in their opposition to racial and ethnic segregation. For instance, with the Methodists it was at a conference held in Pietermaritzburg in 1976 after the Soweto massacre, during which black Methodist ministers under the leadership of an alumnus of the Federal Theological Seminary, the Rev. Ernest Nkato Baartman, refused to allow the conference to proceed with its original agenda, forcing it to address the crisis at hand. The tension between nominal and radical commitment to fighting apartheid had come to a head. It expressed itself as a collision between a sedately anti-apartheid church and a radical young clergy

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formed in a seminary. As things stood, Baartman was prepared to weigh the demands of scriptures in a radical manner against the demands of the existing status quo (Molomo 1998). Currently, issues that call for reflection, like HIV and AIDS as well as those of same sex relations, have taken central focus in the discussion about the ministry of the Church. Such issues have to be engaged with honestly, especially considering theological reflections and tempered emotions that are given to disciplined and rigorous intellectual inquiry and prayer. Theological training institutions have to lead this discussion even when the sponsoring churches have not yet engaged them. It thus becomes important to build a rapport between the denominations and theological training institutions, as it will allow commonly agreed values and goals to be central to relationships between them.

The impact on ministerial training

Andrew Walls (2013:4) uses the Catechetical School of Alexandria that “offered a ‘rich mixture’ of intellectual and religious activity” as an example of a good working model of the process of formation. He asserts that the process of formation at the Catechetical School of Alexandria was so formative that it became the basis of the Church’s theological system, ensuring the “‘continual development of Christian thinking and Christian understanding’ in the context of many other philosophies and religions” (Dandala 2013:68). In this case, this process “sought to ‘build the faculty of discrimination’ in the students”, where the students were equipped with the ability to discern that which is of value from that which is not (Dandala 2013:68). This established clarity about the Church’s own self-understanding, as well as the understanding of its mission. The self-understanding of the Church, in turn, must inform the self-understanding of the seminary as an agent of the same mission as that of the Church. In this case the propagation of a Christian faith in the context of other contending ideologies becomes the primary mission informant for both Church and seminary. The task of the seminary, therefore, becomes that of equipping the seminarians to service a mission response that the Church has embraced, while at the same time helping the Church itself to improve and refine its own mission thinking.

In addition, ministry internships and church placements should also become central to cementing Church and theological institution partnerships. Internship for practical ministry and exposure ceases simply being a place where the skills for ministry are honed. Rather, it becomes a nurturing exercise for a healthy relationship between the minister and the Church, as well as the theological institution. It affirms and recognises the legitimate role that both the Church and the training institution play in this mutual work of forming ministers. In this case, practical training and internship both become important aspects in helping the Church as well as theological institution decide on which competencies they would like ministers to develop. In this way, they both become helpful collaborators in ministerial formation.

Just as the local Church has to keep its arms open and understands itself as an equal player in this process of formation for ministry, the seminary also has to fulfil its own obligations

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toward the formation of lay leadership. This is not a call for the seminary to stretch itself beyond its mandate. Rather, it is to recognise that the work of ministerial formation reaches far beyond what happens within the walls and confines of the seminary to a live encounter with the Church, and this work is incomplete without such an encounter. This cannot be achieved when relations between the Church and the seminary are not satisfactory. Thus it is essential that Church and seminary consciously nurture collaborative spirit and practise to intensify mutual theological and ministerial formation.

Conclusion

Healthy relations between Church and seminary form a critical basis and foundation for the seminary to fulfil its obligation to produce well-formed ministers of the Gospel, firmly rooted in their tradition, fully cognisant of the unity of the Church, and passionate about the mission and ministry of the Church. These have to flow from what seminarians have learned in class, experienced in chapel as well as in the field. They have to be undergirded with a strong and well-developed capacity for spiritual formation and intellectual inquiry. Both the Church and the seminary have to affirm the legitimacy of this approach. The integrated nature of this human development targets the intellect (forming the mind), the spiritual (forming the heart), and the practical (forming the moral character and skill). It leads to theological competence that marks the ordinands as capable practitioners and leaders of Church and society. The efforts of the Church and those of the seminary as training partners should, therefore, produce a process that balances “the integration of the cognitive, practical and professional apprenticeships in educating clergy” (Naidoo 2010:352). The goal must be to initiate change for a lifetime of ministry that seeks transformation of society. In order to achieve this, a symbiotic relationship between the Church and the seminary as ministerial training partners needs to be firmly established.

The trust relationship between the Church and seminary has to be worked on regularly in order for their relations to provide an acceptable environment in which formation can blossom. When these two bodies are on the same side, united in their common call and with their relations matured enough to accommodate diversity, their work together can only thrive.

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