

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PLANNING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION/LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Based on the earlier chapters of this paper, what should be the procedure or approach to planning and doing theological education on the mission field? Not all countries have the problems faced in Angola, but is there anything to be learned from what has or has not been done in theological education there? Where does one start?

The Importance of Prayer

One thing that has not really been said, but which should come first in any planning is prayer. Before doing anything else, seek out the mind of God. He knows the obstacles that may lie ahead, and how to help us overcome them. He can give us insight and understanding that we within ourselves are not capable of.

Missionaries and nationals need to pray together about what their strategy for leadership training will be. There is a saying which says, "The family that prays together, stays together." What a difference there might be in relationships between missionaries and nationals if they prayed with one another!

Clark Scanlon says: ". . . The much publicized population explosion alone demands that theological education be conducted wisely. . . . The missionary--particularly the one involved in leadership training--must sharpen his focus on winning large numbers of [the] lost multitudes. . . . He is involved in the front-line battle, where the souls of men are at stake. The destiny of countless lives is related to the preparation, the orientation, and the spirit he gives to those whom he has the privilege and responsibility to train."¹⁸⁷

What better way to plan wisely than to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit? What then are the next steps?

A Spirit of Unity

Theological education or leadership training should not be a project of the organization of missionaries. They need the input of nationals who can relate better to the culture. However, the nationals would do well to respect the opinions of the missionaries. If they have prayed together as suggested above, there will be an attitude of brotherly love in Christ, and they will listen to one another.

Even if a missionary is asked to direct a program of theological education or leadership training, it would be good for him to work with one or more nationals. In fact, the Convention should elect a governing board made up of nationals (and other missionaries if the Convention desires) and they should work

¹⁸⁷ Clark Scanlon, Chapter 4, Discipling through Theological Education, ed. Gerber, 79-80.

together with the director. If there are none who really are qualified or know enough to be of help, the missionary can counsel and inform the group about the way different programs work. He may need to have someone to assist him personally. The more the missionaries and nationals communicate with one another, the better the relationships will be. All need to develop a servant attitude. If the nationals are involved, the program, whether a fixed institution or TEE, will be supported by the churches.

Establish Aims and Objectives

Why?

Viertel mentions three important functions of aims: "1. They give direction to the educative process. 2. They are values and thus give motivation to the learner who adopts them as his own. 3. They provide criteria for evaluating the educational process." He further maintains that "designers must agree on what they are trying to accomplish. Without well-defined aims, the designers may be faced with a number of options and yet simply perpetuate customs and traditions which are no longer relevant to the task they are trying to accomplish. . . . It is possible that the weakness of our theological educational system lies in our failure to clearly define our aims and to devise curricula and a methodology which will accomplish them. Our aim is to train church leaders to function as witnesses of the Kingdom and as teachers of God's righteous purpose and gracious

redemption. This aim should determine what subjects are included in the curricula."¹⁸⁸

What?

Paul Miller quotes from God's Frozen People by Gibb and Morton: "The objectives of the entire programme [sic] would not be the creation of an intellectual elite who can boast that they have covered all the traditional courses of instruction. The material should be selected and shared in such a way as to evoke deep faith and skill in applying truth, in the spirit of a life-long learner."¹⁸⁹

Viertel indicates that "the ultimate goal of theological education is . . . to lead students to an understanding of biblical concepts and to develop their ability to communicate biblical truths."¹⁹⁰

Holland declares, "The proper end of theological education is ministry. All theological education must be part and parcel of the church and its mission. It can only be those things as it trains the ministry of the church for service that directly relates to the will and purpose of God. God wants us to make disciples and to bring them into worshipping and serving congregations. Training in service

¹⁸⁸Viertel, 76-77.

¹⁸⁹Paul Miller, Equipping for Ministry (Dodoma Tanzania: Central Tanganyika Press, 1969), 101-102.

¹⁹⁰Viertel, 47.

is to prepare adequate leadership so that continuing growth takes place in outreach, maturity and organization."¹⁹¹

Kinsler says in the preface to his book Ministry By the People that all God's People are called to minister, and that all theological education is ultimately dedicated to the equipping of God's people for ministry.¹⁹²

Viertel suggests that in order to help in the establishment of aims, we ask ourselves what we want the student to be able to do when he has completed his education: "1. To sit in an office as an administrator? 2. To be an expert in the original languages? 3. To be a skilled orator? 4. To be a witness who wins the world to Christ? or 5. To be a teacher-trainer who equips and trains each member of the body of Christ and involves each in ministry?"

Discover the Needs

Target the Group You Need to Train

Covell states: "The church trains men and women . . . how to proclaim and live effectively the message of reconciliation. However, the task of training will be selective. It will concentrate its efforts on those people whose Spirit-given gifts clearly evidence their divine calling."¹⁹³ He adds, "We do need

¹⁹¹Fred Holland, "Training for and in Ministry" in Discipling through Theological Education by Extension, ed. Gerber, 137.

¹⁹²Kinsler, Ministry By the People, xiii.

¹⁹³Covell, "Biblical Models for Successful Teaching" in Discipling Through Theological Education by Extension, ed. Gerber, 94.

pastors within the church who have the ability to nurture, to admonish, to rebuke, to exhort, and to lead the flock of God."¹⁹⁴

Although these statements imply the training of pastors or ministers, Covell also makes the following comment: "When we note the heterogeneity of the church and its inclusion within itself of various subcultures and many different levels of society, one apparent observation is that leaders must be trained within each group represented in the church fellowship. That will dictate a multicultural approach." That is, even the training of pastoral leaders would need to be on different levels.

According to Matthew 28:20, all Christians need to be disciplined and taught the truths of the gospel. Those who will be the future leaders and pastors need to be trained, but what about the pastors and lay leaders who are already serving the churches and have little or no training. Often, on the mission field, it is impossible to try to train everyone at once. Neither financial resources nor personnel are available. Therefore a decision must be made in the beginning, as to the priority group to be trained. Other groups may be considered in the future.

Determine the Resources Needed

In Chapter 4, basic necessities were listed for both a fixed institution and a mobile Bible institute, which is a type of extension study. The lists included food and lodging, available students, teachers, classroom facilities with chalkboards

¹⁹⁴Ibid., 96.

and desks (if possible), textbooks, libraries, transportation, and funds to pay for all the other necessities.

Food and lodging are much less expensive for extension studies because the students are at home. The buildings and classroom space with furnishings necessary for a fixed school are very costly. Maintenance must also be considered. Students are more available in extension center areas. However, they may or may not have as much time to study.

Textbooks and libraries are always costly, but the programmed texts are usually less expensive. Also the level of study offered would make a difference in the basic books needed in the library. For extension studies, there might not be enough funds for a library at each center.

Transportation for non-resident students and teachers without their own transport in the fixed school would cost more. However, when transport costs are needed for teachers to travel to the extension centers, this could be expensive.

Teachers who have the academic qualifications for teaching on the higher levels of study often offered in fixed institutions would expect higher salaries. On the other hand, trained seminar leaders who lead in the extension studies at the local level would expect less, or might even volunteer their services if they have other means of earning a living.

The funds available, either from a mission or the national convention, to meet all the above needs would affect the type of training to be offered. These needs should be considered before deciding on a strategy and trying to implement it instead of afterwards.

Naturally, sometimes it may be necessary to step out on faith if any training is to be done. But if those involved are seeking to do God's will and not to further their own ambitions, He will reveal to them what they should do.

Planning

Based on the aims, the target group to train, resources needed, and resources available which have been determined by a group composed of both nationals and missionaries, plans can begin to take shape. Decide first of all which type or types of theological education will be implemented. Then goals and objectives can be set. Determine how to meet them.

The city, cities, or rural areas and local sites where theological education will be implemented will be determined by the type of theological training to be done as well as the financial resources available. A fixed institution needs a more permanent location, whereas extension centers can, if necessary, be in a local church.

The curriculum should be designed according to the aims, goals, and objectives which have been set. If a particular course does not contribute to the over-all aim, goals, or objectives, it should not be included. Obviously, the particular program of theological education to be used will affect the curriculum. In a fixed institution, the curriculum should be designed in such a way that pastors or future pastors will be equipped to train their church members for ministry.

Conservative theology with an emphasis on evangelism should characterize the curriculum. Also the needs of the students themselves will influence the curriculum. Hopefully these will have been considered when the aims were established.

Choose the textbooks which will be used. This will be determined by the level or levels of study offered. The programmed texts of TEE are very appropriate for the lower levels of study. They could possibly be used in an institute-type study or in a lower-level residential school. If the textbooks are written at a level too high for the students, they will not serve their purpose.

Students must be enlisted. Once again, who should be enlisted will depend on the type and level of training to be offered as well as on the aims, goals, and objectives. In a fixed school, "some desire to limit enrollment to those who claim a divine call to the ministry" while "others conclude that a more open policy would result in helping some students find God's will and mature in the Christian life. . . . Extension training can afford to be more open with regard to student enrollment [for the following reasons]: 1) Students are not subsidized. 2) Those who enroll and drop out are not such a financial drain. 3) Major expenses are the cost of the books and the support of the teachers. Therefore, the number of students does not affect significantly the cost of the program."¹⁹⁵

However, Snook declares, "The type of students which programs thrive on are well-motivated, involved in serving the Lord in the local church and active in

¹⁹⁵Viertel, 68-69.

evangelism."¹⁹⁶ Paul Miller quotes an article "Pattern of Ministry in I Corinthians" by Brian Beck: "In recruiting for the ordained ministry, or in the screening of volunteers, more careful attention must be paid to the finding of the real rather than the second-rate leadership. In addition to proven spiritual power, a pleasing personality means much to an African congregation and should be sought.."

Whichever type of theological training is implemented, the spiritual aspect should be considered. Our churches should not recommend anyone as a student whom they would not wish to have serve them as a pastor or a leader during or after the student completes his studies. We should "pray for laborers to enter the harvest (Luke 10:2). Ask and expect the Lord to reveal which persons He has chosen as pastoral leaders."¹⁹⁷

Enlist teachers or helpers according to the type and/or levels of training offered. Nationals should be used as much as possible to make the training indigenous. To offer training on a post-secondary level, the teachers would need to have at least the equivalent of a Master's Degree from an accredited institution. For secondary level study, the teachers should have a Bachelor's Degree if the school wants accreditation. It might not be necessary to be accredited, but the teachers should have more education than the students they will teach. Above all, they should sincerely care about the students, their needs, and their problems. They should be dedicated to their work and committed to the

¹⁹⁶Snook, 170.

¹⁹⁷Viertel, 31.

Lordship of Christ. It is possible that the students will learn more from their lives than from the classes they teach.

The Administrator or Director of a TEE program should have as high academic qualifications as possible. However, his moral and spiritual life is most important. Those who serve as seminar leaders should have the same or a higher level of training than the students. The seminar leaders need to be able to express themselves well and have certain skills which can be learned through a training program offered especially for them before the program starts.

The number of teachers will depend on the levels of training offered, the curriculum, and the funds for salaries. More teachers are needed for fewer students in fixed institutions. Teachers that have an overload of courses cannot do their best work. Seminar leaders that will do the major part of the work with the students in the extension centers, can be trained, so that teachers will not have to travel to extension centers so often. In fact, if TEE is an extension of a residential school, teachers will not be able to travel to the rural areas when classes are in session. This could seriously hinder the progress of any TEE program that is started under the administration of a seminary or fixed institute.

Methodology should be geared to the learning level of the students.

Students studying on the lower levels do not respond well to the lecture method. They have more trouble taking notes and assimilating a lot of information at once. They respond better to discussion and practical projects. Even those who teach on the higher levels will find that their students learn better when they have opportunity to participate. Participation often increases motivation.

Set up certain rules, such as those mentioned in chapter 4, concerning pre-requisites for study (what grade level, age, any Christian or only Baptists can study, recommendation from a church, etc.), student fees, method of evaluation, attendance requirements, recognition for completion at various levels of study. The training being offered will determine what these rules will be.

Set up a budget for the operational costs of whichever program is implemented. Know where the funds will come from--the Mission, the Convention, special gifts, student fees, scholarships, etc.

All of the above should be done before starting any theological training program. This can save lots of headaches and difficulties down the way. Further helps for planning a TEE program can be found in most of the books referred to in this paper. After all plans are made for whatever program, decide how they will be carried out and implemented.

CONCLUSION

There are certain conclusions which can be drawn from this study. They are listed as follows:

1. No one program of theological education can train all the pastors and church leaders which need to be trained.
2. No one program of theological education should be considered superior to another. They may train on different levels, but all are equally valid and have value. The residential or fixed institution can produce scholars or theologians on a high level, and every denomination can use scholars. However, extension studies can reach many more people and give opportunity for training to those who would not be able to get training in any other way.
3. Other alternatives to traditional resident theological education, besides TEE, should be considered in certain cases--such as short-term Bible institutes, correspondence courses, night classes, etc.
4. All pastors should be equipped to teach and train the members of their churches for ministry.
5. Any attempt to train leaders should be prefaced by corporate prayer and unity of purpose on the part of missionaries and leaders of a convention or union.

6. Plans made should be carried out, but if factors beyond human control such as war and natural disasters occur, those in leadership should be flexible and sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading to experiment with and be innovative in using other ways to train leaders.
7. Any program of theological education should be evaluated periodically to see if it is accomplishing the aims, goals, and objectives established at its inception. If not, it may need to be re-structured.
8. Personnel and financial resources may be important factors in determining what kind of theological education program can be implemented.
9. When possible, a dual approach to theological education is probably best--a fixed institution and extension studies.
10. Any program of theological education must have the approval of the local churches and leadership if it is to succeed.
11. Missionaries and nationals must work together and keep the lines of communication open.
12. Every effort should be made to utilize nationals in the planning, and in teaching when they are qualified, in order to indigenize the work. They will support what they feel belongs to them.

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