

# Missiological Factors Involved in Designing A Curriculum for an Adequately Rounded Theological Training in Africa

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*Christian missions is at the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ, evangelising the lost and discipling the nations. Strange as it may seem, missiology has not always been at home in theological institutions. Following is a discussion paper by Rev. Dr. Victor Babajide Cole, prepared for the Workshop on Missions Training in Africa held at Miango, Nigeria, August 26-30, 1996. Dr. Cole explores the importance of giving prominence to missiology within the curriculum of theological education so that missions permeates the whole educational programme.*

## INTRODUCTION

The subject of missionary training has come to the fore since the July 1989 Manila conference that brought together 60 or so missionary leaders from 24 countries. The meeting focused on effective missionary training in the Two-Thirds World. Reports from that conference formed part of a wider concern presented in the World Evangelical Fellowship Missions Commission publication (Taylor 1991).

The overall trend points to a phenomenal growth in the two-thirds world missionary efforts in the eighties. For example, the OC Ministries Inc. research into the trend between 1980 and 1988 indicates

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that non-Western missions movement increased by an estimated 22,686 missionaries at an average annual growth of 13.39%, translating into a 248% growth per decade! This growth is reported to be about five times faster than the Western missions movement (Pate, 1991, 33).

Isolating the trend in Africa from the wider global report, it is noted that African missionaries grew by 9,300 to a total of 14,989 (or 235% increase) within the same period from 1980-1988 (Pate 1991, 29). Five of the ten largest missionary sending countries of the two-thirds World in 1988 were in Africa, listed in descending order as follows: Nigeria (2nd place), Zaire (3rd place), Kenya (5th place), Ghana (8th place), and Zimbabwe (9th place). Also, four of the top ten two-thirds World largest missionary sending agencies in 1988 were in Africa (Pate 1991, 33). Among the four, the Church of the Province of Kenya mission arm was in second place, "Forward in Faith Ministries" of Zimbabwe was 3rd; the Evangelical Missionary Society of ECWA, Nigeria was in 4th place, while the Gospel Mission of Uganda was in 9th place.

It is no wonder then that the Association of Evangelicals in Africa's Commissions on Theological and Christian Education, as well as Evangelism and Missions jointly sponsored the Miango workshop from 26th to 30th August 1996 to look into the crucial issues pertaining to the modality for missionary training on the continent. The staggering statistics quoted above point to an urgent need for effective missionary training.

The joint efforts of 15 or so member bodies of the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association resulting in the mid 1986 in the Nigeria Evangelical Missionary Institute (Fuller 1991) became an answer to the challenge. So is the Africa Inland Church Missionary College in Eldoret Kenya (Hildebrandt 1991). We would equally acknowledge scores of short-term training programmes for African missionaries across the continent. Some of these programmes are formal, others are non-formal while yet others are informal in mode.

What should constitute the content of an adequately rounded missionary training? What is the ideal context in which such a training should be conducted? Should there be special training institutes for missionaries, or should the training be part of the existing programme of theological training? Why have traditional theological institutions not put missionary training at the fore in their curricula? These questions form an aggregate of factors pertinent to the task of designing a missionary training programme that is equally well rounded theologically.

Fuller (1991, 81) had noted that ministerial training schools begun by western missionaries tended for long not to include missions in their curricula, and wondered why this was the case. A good look at the place given to the subject matter back in the homes of the European and American missionaries (as we will attempt shortly) soon reveals that a less than enthusiastic support is accorded the subject matter across the continents. That attitude is thus well reflected in the patterns and models of ministerial training across the Two-Thirds World. It is however gratifying to see recent developments, largely through the springing up of missionary training institutes, an attempt to correct the apparent neglect of missions that has long prevailed.

However, when one looks at the curricular components prescribed for today's cross-cultural missionaries, one cannot but wonder how many training programmes can afford to provide all that is prescribed and how long such a well-rounded training would last. Taylor (1991, 3) for example proposed a six-fold process to include: personal disciplines, local church involvement, biblical/theological studies, cross-cultural studies, pre-field equipping by sending agencies and on-field career training. The curriculum components constitute another important factor in attempting an adequately rounded training programme.

We shall therefore come back to address these components at the end. But to begin with, it is in order to set the topic of discussion in context by looking at the struggles and disillusionment of missiology in the course of the promotion of theological education, the need to reinforce the centrality of missions in our evangelical tradition, and a look at the place of missiology in theological education.

### **I. The Struggles of Missiology in the course of Promoting Theological Education**

The history of modern mission efforts can easily be traced back to the spontaneous rise of mission societies comprising people who were burdened for the lost and were deeply convinced of the missiological dimension of the church "to the nations". Some of these societies were spearheaded by student movements within the four walls of *formal* institutions of learning such as universities and seminaries. But the official positions of the academies seemed to have been marked by apathy, reluctance and outright indifference.

It is noteworthy that missiology as a discipline in its own right has struggled for recognition. O.G. Myklebust provides this historical perspective:

Apart from the United States of America, up to 1950 the study of missions had been admitted, not to the temple of theology itself, but only to what may not inappropriately be described as the court of the Gentiles. In Great Britain, no university had recognised our subject as an independent discipline. With one exception, the same was true of the theological colleges. On the continent of Europe, fifteen institutions of university standard had accorded to this particular subject the right of representation in the *civitas theologica*. In almost all of these, however, missionary science was taught, not as part and parcel of the ordinary work but as an "optional extra" . . . . In most universities the subject of missions had no official place in the curriculum [Myklebust: 2 (1955-57), 287-88].

The above provides the Western European perspective. It is to be remembered though, that a number of European missions came to Africa at the start of what we might call the modern missionary efforts to Africa in the 19th century. Is it any wonder that ministerial training institutions from such backgrounds will necessarily omit missions as a formal subject of training?

In 1974 Charles Forman of Yale Divinity School conducted a survey among Seminary students and came to the conclusion that, uncertainty about beliefs prevailed in the seminaries as opposed to the Bible institutes and Colleges of America. Forman reported saying:

It would seem reasonable to expect that where there is uncertainty about belief there will be less interest in making beliefs known and hence less readiness to consider missions. [This is supported by the fact that the Bible schools and colleges which represent on the whole a greater degree of assurance regarding traditional beliefs also represent in their reports a more secure place for the study of missions and clearer determination to maintain the subject in the future.] The insecurity prevails chiefly in the graduate Protestant theological seminaries where there is usually more questioning of beliefs (Forman 1974, 39).

One could infer then from Forman's study that the higher one goes theologically, the "cooler" one becomes missiologically, so to speak! But seriously though, Forman's study deserves attention. Is it any wonder that the questioning of beliefs leads to insecurity of the same? When beliefs are eroded in the name of scholarship and what is fashionable, the gospel is ultimately undermined. This is a lingering lesson of history and of our contemporary world of academia. Both the

European and North American traditions testify to the fact that a training institution could begin well with evangelical fervour, but later on discard what it initially held dear. History testifies to how universities gave way to seminaries because of the erosion of beliefs. Later on a number of those same seminaries gave way to Bible colleges and institutes for the same reason. Of late the trend in North America towards upgrading the institutes is witnessed. We allude to this history because not even special missionary training institutes are immune to the apathy, lethargy, reluctance and indifference that later characterised many of these distinguished institutions of learning.

We are not thereby saying that in the process of learning, we should not ask questions. We should of course ask good questions. We should question what we believe so that we may "know the certainty of the things (we) have been taught" (Lk. 1:4). Questioning that leads to deeper understanding of the faith and concomitant obedience to God is quite healthy. It is self-deluding to say that not questioning preserves faith necessarily, or that not questioning is what preserves evangelical fervour. After all, even so-called Christian beliefs can certainly militate against missions, as William Carey found out in his encounter with those Calvinists of his day who piously resisted his global outlook on missions.

What we are saying here is that missiology as a discipline has undergone some struggles back at the home bases from which the western missionaries brought it to Africa and the rest of the Two-Thirds world. We are thereby putting the present-day state of theological education *vis-à-vis* the subject of missions against that historical background. That background should help us understand in large part why missions as a subject has long been neglected in the course of ministerial training.

What then should be the course enjoined in our efforts at training? We would commend efforts at promoting the emerging patterns and modes of missionary training institutes while sounding the warnings from history as already discussed. We would also challenge the older and more established residential theological training institutions to follow the path of renewal in the evangelical tradition.

In 1982, Harvie M. Conn was appointed professor of missions at Westminster in the USA. At his inaugural address he proposed "a missio-logical agenda for theology, not a theological agenda for missions." He said,

In its times of greatest glory, theology was nothing more than reflection in mission, in pilgrimage on the road among the time-

bound cultures of the world. It was also a reflection on mission, on Jesus as the good news for the world . . . (Conn 1983, 7).

We would do well to remind ourselves of both: missiological agenda for theology (as Conn advocated), and theological agenda for missions (in the light of current movement to “de-theologise” missions).

## **II. The Disillusionment and Frustration within Missiology**

Not only has the subject of missions as a discipline in its own right undergone struggles, but within its own there appears to be a crisis of identity. On this note we would once again take a look at some of what obtains in those regions of the world that have had a longer history of missions training. I quote Harvie Conn on this point when he said,

“too often the professor, electing for his discipline as “practical theology” spins church growth strategy with only the slightest backward glance at “theology” (Conn 1983, 6,7).

In 1962, Leslie Dunstan quoted the frustrations expressed by a missions professor back in 1956 when he said,

We in the field of missions are lost sheep, scattered among the folds of history, theology, comparative religions, and education, wandering from the theological field to the practical field and back again . . . We proclaim in our lectures and sermons that the world mission is the central task of the church, yet we have all too often allowed it to become peripheral in our curriculum (Dunstan 1962, 1).

This writer could also report his encounter with a would-be missions professor who in the eighties had studied missiology at one of the north American seminaries at the doctoral level. Upon completing his programme, he refused to teach the subject as a protest to the type of training he had received. In his own words he said, “my training in missions was a hodge podge of history, anthropology, church growth, etc., touching bits and pieces here and there but really not addressing any of these areas well enough!”. When asked why he had pursued missions studies at the post-graduate degree level, he said, he had discovered the deficiencies too late in the programme.

In light of the above, some of the current discussions on whether theological and biblical studies should be part of or a prerequisite to missionary training comes to the fore. It would seem that most missionary trainers would agree that biblical and theological training is needed by prospective missionaries. Whether the missionary institutes have the resources to provide this needed training is sometimes the

question asked. At times this aspect of theological and biblical training is side-stepped deliberately in order not to “compete” with traditional theological schools who do not generally emphasise missions.

While assuming that the necessary foundational biblical and theological studies are already completed, Taylor (1991, 8,9) proposed in part what the content of a missionary training programme should include on both the formal and non-formal sides.

On the formal side he suggested among others, biblical and theological studies of Old Testament and New Testament bases of missions, New Testament church growth, hermeneutics and contextualisation, spiritual warfare and power encounter, historical studies of the expansion of the Church, history of missions, regional or national historical areas; cultural studies, examining contextualisation, cross-cultural communication, anthropology, sociology, and research methods; specialised studies depending on the candidate’s needs such as: linguistics, Bible translation and language learning; targeting unreached people groups; urban studies; university students; tent-making in restricted access countries, Islamics or studies in other world religions. All these were subsumed under the formal side of training.

Then came the non-formal aspects to include: practical courses such as health, agriculture, animal husbandry, schooling of missionary children, motor mechanics and others; discussions about missionary family life and husband-wife relationships in a cross-cultural setting; a series of guided field trips to study cultural or religious phenomenon; a more serious practicum in urban areas, towns and the rural sector under supervision and with the participation of local believers and missionaries, if they are available; and a final serious in-service internship followed by a wrap-up session with the teaching staff.

Taylor’s proposal obviously aims at the practical training of field missionaries while the earlier illustrations of frustrations and disillusionment concern missions training in the context of formal theological institutions. A close look though will reveal that a number of the courses listed by Taylor are also taught in the theological institutions’ missions programmes. It will also be realised that much of what is proposed by Taylor requires inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approach. One then wonders if the “slightest backward glance at theology” will not be the case here? Or might one not have the feeling of “hodge podge” approach to otherwise multi-disciplinary studies? Or would “wandering” from field to field be the case? But for sure, today’s missionary trainee is expected to be all things!

Although new modes of missionary training patterns are reported in the Two-thirds World with various ingenious attempts to be contextually relevant, we do suspect that the western model remains buried underneath. Until and unless missions training assumes a clear identity, reports of frustrations and feelings bordering on identity crisis could persist among trainers and trainees alike - whether in traditional and formal training settings or in the emerging non-formal training settings. The apparent point of distinction lies in the theory versus practice dichotomy. The perception widely adopted in some circles is that formal theological training patterns tend to be theoretical in nature. If trapped into this world of dichotomous perception, one might be susceptible to become insensitive to recognising the possibility of the supposedly non-formal (or practical) mode slowly coming to resemble the formal (or theoretical) mode with time.

We must come back to ask: "What is the place of missiology in the theological curriculum?" "Does missiology have to continue to play a subordinate role to the four main disciplines of the theological curriculum, namely Old Testament studies, New Testament research, History and Doctrine?" Before we turn to these curricular matters it is in order first to re-examine the centrality of missions in our evangelical tradition and consequently by implication, to our training for ministry.

### **III. The Ministry, Message and Minister of the Gospel**

We should not look at missionary training without reminding ourselves of the essence of that propelling force that gave rise to the need for the training in the first place – the gospel that has once for all been delivered to the saints. Three aspects of this distinctive of evangelical tradition are examined below.

#### **a) The Manner of the Minister of the Gospel (2 Cor. 4:1-4).**

The great missionary (apostle) to the Gentiles declared in 2 Cor. 4:1 that the gospel ministry is a stewardship from God through God's mercy. As such Christians hold this "deposit" in trust as those who must give account to the Master of the House at the appropriate time. Yet it is only through God's mercy that the minister could be counted trustworthy with this ministry. That glorious ministry demands of God's ministers an above the board lifestyle (manner or conduct) that renounces secret and shameful ways. This understandably is so that the lifestyle of the minister does not speak against the word of proclamation (2 Cor. 4:2a). But as touching the message held in trust, the ministers must renounce the use of deception and distortion of God's word in the course of duty (v.2b).



So then, for those who would obey the command to go with the gospel, there should be no sugar-coating of the glorious message. There must not be the playing of God's love against His justice. For those who would question faith in the wrong way, they are reminded that hell is a stark reality, not a myth. People all over the world are lost in sin whether or not it is fashionable to say. The ministers must conduct themselves in a manner that clearly sets forth (*i.e.* puts to full view) the truth for all to see. If then having set forth (or made plain) the truth and finding the gospel still veiled, it is understandable in view of the activities of Satan (2 Cor. 4:3,4). Satan is the one who blinds people to the light of the gospel. It should not be for lack of clarity on the part of the ministers, but due to a blinding deception of Satan. It should not be due to distortion of the gospel by the minister. Note that when the truth is set forth in plain terms, Satan still attempts to blindfold. How much more then when it is the would-be messenger who deliberately distorts the message in order to appear "presentable", "liberal-minded", and "contemporary".

We bring to view these points because it is in training institutions that bad theology has risen in respect of the gospel message. It is amply demonstrated that bad theology has a tendency to result in missionary decline.

**b) The Message of the Minister (2 Cor. 4:5,6)**

The minister is a herald of the message. It becomes, therefore, important to be sure of what the message is. The apostle Paul said, the message is not about "ourselves" – whether a group, a denomination, an agency in a human leader. The message is about a person: "Jesus Christ as Lord" (Κυριος Χριστος). This is the message of proclamation.

However, the messenger, too, features somehow in the course of proclamation. This fact is understandable. The ministers ("ourselves") are servants for Jesus' sake (v.5b). The servants have experienced, firsthand, the inner light of the knowledge of the glory of God. It is this fact that makes them qualified in large measure to proclaim the message. When they so do, they speak from personal experience as those who have been transformed from darkness into light. This way, God's all-surpassing power is displayed in lives transformed (vs. 7). The situation is quite clear: The human ministers chosen as ambassadors of Christ are feeble, "in jars of clay". This feebleness demonstrates that it is God's power that is at work in and through the messengers and not "ourselves".

We examine these in part because in the course of training we ought always to keep in view what the message truly is. As it is examined in the course of preparing the ministers, it must remain as it has always been: *Κυριος Χριστος*. Also, we must keep in mind that even though all efforts at enhancing clarity in terms of understanding cultures and communications principles, should be carefully expended, ultimately, we must recognise and rely upon God's power and Spirit to bring positive results.

**c) The Motivation of the Minister of the Gospel (2 Cor. 5:11,14,15).**

Two things are involved in motivating the message bearers. The first is the fear (literally terror) of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:11). Unpalatable as this may seem to some, this is the stark reality.

Back in 5:10 the apostle Paul had referred to the reality of *divine judgement*. This is a reference to God's justice upon a rebellious humanity. If the messengers truly believe in the terror of the Lord, that should be motivational in going out to make the proclamation. After all, if one sees that the house is ablaze one has a moral duty to raise an alarm. In this respect, the messenger would plead with the lost to respond to the message so as to avoid the "terror of the Lord". The fear of the Lord as here interpreted is biblical. This truth also must be set forth plainly before a dying world.

The second motivational factor is just as compelling. That is, the *love of Christ* (2 cor. 5:14,15). Like the parallel lines of the "truth rail line", God's love must be placed side by side with God's justice as the message is declared. God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son. In so doing God gave His all. That is love! This is why missions is "the heartbeat of God". Since He gave Himself for us - dying on our behalf - we who have been brought to new life must henceforth now live for Him (v.15). Thus His love, properly understood, should induce us to engage in the ministry of reconciliation as it befits Christ's ambassadors (5:18-20).

We have taken a look at these because without a deep inner conviction of these motivational truths, training of the ministers - whether using formal or non-formal modes - is doomed to suffer from the types of apathy, frustrations, disillusionment and plain neglect we have referred to already.

All that we have so far discussed in some ways sets the stage for us to examine what missiological and curricular factors are involved in designing an adequately rounded theological training with missions

consciousness.

#### **IV. The Role of Missiology and Missionary Training in Theological Education Curriculum**

Earlier on we raised a number of questions that should form legitimate concerns of curriculum planners in the task of missionary training. We will now take up some of these as well as consider other related matters.

##### **a) How Missiology and Missionary Training Should be Related**

So far we have used the terms, "missiology" and "missionary training" interchangeably. However, it might have been apparent that a distinction is often implied in practice. Conn (1983, 6,7) put his finger on the distinction. The assumption in some quarters that "practical" preparation for ministry is mutually exclusive of the theoretical preparation forces the distinction we refer to. In part then, practical missionary training is taken out of the realm of "serious academics" in the traditional formal institutions preparing ministers and placed into Training Institutes with less rigorous demands in the theoretical realm. This way "missiology" would tend to be more of theoretical approach and is usually practised in academic institutions. On the other hand, "missionary training" institutes and programmes would imply emphasis on the practical dimension of training.

This theory-practice dichotomy is detrimental. Someone has said, "There is nothing as practical as good theory." A good theory works. Why then not put good theory into practice? It is recognised that emphasis on practice without a grasp of theory often results in severe limitation of the individual so disposed. A grasp of theory should enable one to vary practice and to innovate. Conversely, lack of theoretical facts limits one to doing things "the way it has always been done".

But it is also fair to ask: "Does missions lend itself to theory or is it essentially a practical thing?" The answer is not quite straightforward. It depends on how you are looking at it. The process involved in proclamation of the message referred to earlier on is necessarily practical. If the messenger does not go and make proclamation, the message is not heard. However, with increasing complexity of cross-cultural demands on missionaries, we have witnessed the immense contribution of theoretical knowledge in helping to enhance the message proclamation. For example, communications theory has increased our understanding, so has the knowledge of cultural anthropology. These theoretical knowledge are practical. At another level though, practical

skills and theory will not suffice because ultimately it is the "power of God" at work and not "ourselves". However, all the above must be factored into the answer we give to the question.

We must however hasten to point out the artificiality involved in a formal schooling environment. Elsewhere, we have discussed the strengths and weaknesses of formal education in the process of leadership training for the ministry (Cole 1991, 33-43). The artificiality of a formal educational setting in a subject area that is practical means that missiology must be deliberately geared to the practical by curriculum makers of theological institutions. It will take a conscious and deliberate effort to make the theory taught to be demonstrated practically. It will require at times getting away from the artificial contexts into the realm of practice. It will involve trainers (faculty) and trainees (seminarians) with heart for what God is doing in reconciling the world to Himself.

That this deliberate and conscious effort at relating theory to practice is possible is increasingly demonstrated in theological training programmes around the world that are attempting innovations (see Ferris 1990, and models of Missionary training reported in Taylor 1991). What curriculum makers of theological schools must constantly grapple with is the tendency to treat theory as though it is impractical. To this end it will be advisable that faculty recruitment should target bringing together a team of practitioners and theorists who can work in concert at training candidates for the ministry. In some cases, the same individuals have had ample experience in combining theory and practice. Such constitute the ideal faculty.

In another way theological schools and missionary training institutes will deliberately seek the assistance of churches and agencies who are successfully practising missions. This is a case where both school and the community of faith ought to join hands in the task of training.

A point about practicums and internships is in order at this stage. These days, more and more theological institutions are requiring a time of practical field experience of their trainees. This includes missionary internships in cross-cultural situations. Such efforts are commended, and they form part of the conscious and deliberate attempt to relate theory to practice.

However a word of caution is in order as well. Our experience at studying practicums points out that they are most profitable when theological institutions carefully draw up the types of training activities on the field that will result in the training outcomes they desire. Unless

this is done and monitored by these institutions, one cannot guarantee that the desired outcomes will necessarily result simply because trainees have been sent out to the field. We bring out this point because of at least two factors.

First, practitioners on the field are often not set up as trainers or educators unless they too have consciously planned to be so. Sometimes a practitioner who is good on the job is lacking in teaching skills. The second point is that, the internship programme in some schools turns out to be no more than the dumping of trainees on the field practitioners to baby-sit them. Rather, the schools must be actively involved in not only articulating the training outcomes they desire from the internship programme, but must also have their own representatives (faculty) out there to encourage the field practitioners in the direction of those outcomes. Where the situation allows faculty to participate in part or fully on the field, this should be vigorously pursued. That will make for a vital modelling of the theory-practice linkage before the students.

#### **b) The Place of Missiology in the Theological School Curriculum**

From earlier discussion we mentioned some of the problems of frustration, disillusionment and neglect of missiologists and missions in the context of the theological school curriculum. The question is: "What role should missiology play in the theological school curriculum?" We can re-phrase the question differently in this form: "Does missiology have to continue to play a subordinate role to the four main disciplines of the theological school curriculum?" Three possibilities are seen in practice. They are:

- 1) Missiology is made a separate discipline. In this approach some theological institutions set up a separate department of missions.
- 2) Some theological schools seek to incorporate missions within one of the already established disciplines such as history or practical theology.
- 3) Many simply hope that the other disciplines will from time to time speak for missions and its promotion.

This last possibility alone amounts to the paying of lip service to missions. Harvie Conn (1983) advocates a combination of all three and we agree with this point.

Missions should form the over-riding thrust of the training philosophy in a theological institution that is committed to evangelical tradition and value. By this we do not mean that everyone that is trained should be in cross-cultural mission. Some will answer the cross-cultural

mission call. For such, a missiology department or programme is applicable. This is the case then for missiology as a completely separate discipline in the theological school curriculum. This is the first possible role mentioned above.

However, the challenge of world mission must not be seen as the exclusive burden of those in the missions programme. A missiological outlook should inform the perspectives of the other theological disciplines of New Testament, Old Testament, history and doctrine. The Old and New Testament studies should not be approached in evangelical theological training without calling attention to God's will in salvation for all mankind "unto the ends of the earth". If we pursue the texts and in the process we miss the lone thread that runs through the texts from the proto-evangelium in Genesis to the songs of souls set free in Revelation, we have missed the point of the texts! Equally, if we teach History and in so doing miss the history of salvation, or we fail to excite our students about God's saving acts in history, we have missed the point of history. Along the same line, if in our teaching of doctrine we are not gripped by God's dealings with humankind in salvation, if teachers and the taught alike are not personally affected in their inner being, if they are thereby unconcerned about lost humanity, then we have missed the point of our "so great a salvation".

This then calls for all the four established disciplines of the theological school curriculum to adopt a mission-orientation. This calls for an integrated approach to curriculum that results in mission consciousness throughout all of our training.

To illustrate, the writer recalls the days he used to teach doctrine at the ECWA Theological Seminary in Jos, Nigeria. Although we would have painstakingly inquired about the salvation of each applicant as part of the admissions process, when students came into Theology Proper class, they would be asked for detailed write-up on the topic, "How I came to know God". This would include not only the point of coming to saving knowledge, but also how they have walked with God in their spiritual pilgrimage. Even when the class exceeded fifty, every script was painstakingly read. There were some cases requiring counsel in an attempt to give encouragement in their pursuit of God. The subject of knowing God could be approached purely as an academic exercise or in an esoteric and speculative manner with a sense of personal detachment. On the other hand, the truth of the Word of God can be presented in classroom situations in a manner that will affect life, a manner that will arrest the soul.

Harvie Conn has also proposed that missiology perform a *Gadfly*

role in the theological curriculum. He said,

Missiology in this spirit, seeks to irritate the Herman Ridderboses of this world who can write a 586- page outline to the theology of Paul and not even include the mission of the church in any of its 80 separate headings. It will aim for unrest in a church history department which divides the history of missions from the history of the church or teaches as if the world were still flat. It will rebel against a practical theology department which offers only domesticated information for the church "at home" in white suburbia.

And, while all this is going on, it will continue to ask other equally embarrassing questions of itself as well (Conn 1983, 20, 21).

As a *Gadfly* then, missiology will serve as a constant irritant to remind all the theological disciplines not to sit at ease *vis-à-vis* their missionary task. So then, missiology can be of great assistance to the other theological disciplines and to the church at large. To that end Jerald D. Gort wrote,

It must exert itself in and out of season to help theology - especially Western theology - find its way back down from the upper regions of the towers of academia to the ground floor of human reality . . . . By the same token missiology also has a mission to the church. The church too must ever be reminded that its *raison d'être* lies in the gospel of the kingdom . . . . The congregation must be called to become what it is in Pentecost, to reaffirm its being and existence by living in mission (Gort 1980, 46).

Overall, we are advocating that missiology take a more active role in the theological school curriculum - not only in an exclusivistic form as would be the case in having a separate department, but also in an inclusive form as would be the case where mission consciousness permeates all the theological disciplines in an integrated approach. This way, missiology will have been shed of its "toolshed appearance" and will have been brought into the "stately mansions" alongside the other disciplines of our theological school curriculum.

## CONCLUSION

In this presentation, the attempt has been to look at the issues that have affected the apparent neglect of missionary training programmes in the traditional curriculum of theological schools. That

done, we attempted to look afresh at the essence of the evangelical tradition that puts a high stake on the need of the world for the gospel of Christ. This was in order to understand the message of the gospel and how we should conduct ourselves, whether as learners or trainers, for the ministry. The last major attempt was to examine what should be the rightful place of the subject of missiology in the theological school curriculum that is committed to the evangelical tradition and beliefs.

In grappling with the curricular factors of importance, to have an adequately rounded theological training, a number of issues were considered.

- 1) It is important to promote a linkage between theory and practice. That means that our academic pursuits must translate into practice on the field while the mission field also influences our academic pursuits. We said that the theological school curriculum makers should be involved in partnership with practitioners on the field.
- 2) There is a place for an exclusivistic missions department or programme. In that same spirit, the Missionary Training Institutes are encouraged.
- 3) Missions should also have an inclusive role that permeates all the other theological disciplines. This way missions will be integrated with the other theological disciplines.

A number of warning notes were sounded in the course of this presentation. One is that bad theology results in missionary decline. Another is that asking good and right questions does help to enhance beliefs, while not asking questions is not an antidote to the undermining of faith. Another word of caution is from the lesson of history that shows how well-meaning institutions that started with the right emphasis later discarded what they once held dear. This is a lesson to all forms of training - whether it be the emerging missionary training institutes in Africa or the older theological schools.

If we will keep on course as the years go by, we must take a cue from the great apostle to the Gentiles. Paul never seemed to lose sight of his Damascus experience, for he referred to it time and again - in verbal testimonies and in writing. His personal testimony of how he met Jesus Christ remained aglow in his heart. Whether he talked to great or small, he saw that experience as very precious. He passionately pleaded with Agrippa to "become as I am, except for these chains". We too must not lose sight of that experience of understanding faith in Christ. Like Paul, we must constantly be in deep appreciation of God's



love displayed toward us. That constant realisation of His love for us is bound to form a motivation for revitalising our outlook on missions. Paul never lost sight of the fact that he was "the chief of sinners," but as he himself said, literally, "God mercied me" (1 Tim. 1:13). If our excitement about coming to faith is not kept aglow, if we do not constantly keep in sight God's immense love for us and for the dying world, we are likely not to allow missions to propel all that we do in the theological school curriculum.

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