



CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN EDUCATION

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Abstract:

The practice of Christian higher education has respected these different forms. Three types of Christian higher education exist on the continent: church-controlled higher learning of theological institutions: church-funded colleges and universities of higher learning: and finally Christian-perspective liberal Arts colleges. The importance of the Christian based education of previous generations needs to be underlined and brought to the attention of the church because the utmost importance of this issue was overlooked for too long. The first major threat facing Christian higher education is the "anti-intellectualism" in the churches today. Most of the leaders in churches do not see the need for higher education. A common misunderstanding circulates among church members that to carry on pastoral duties, there is no need for further studies. There is even a saying in my country that "Higher theological learning does not produce a good pastor; it is rather the Holy Spirit on the field". According to ACE philosophy there are five basic needs which all pupils have and which have to be addressed in education: A spiritual need, a need for approval, understanding, appreciation from others and a need to feel important. Furthermore ACE sets out seven training objectives for pupils: Self-discovery, self-acceptance, self-confidence, problem-solving (learning to deal with problems as they arise) / making and keeping friend, achievement and success. This education covered the three classical divisions of education – primary, Secondary and tertiary. This third level is at stake today. The governments inheriting the schools created by Christian missionaries are faced with many challenges. Christian higher education is the hope for the virile integrate faith and learning in every aspect.

Introduction:

Education plays a paramount role in the development of any country of the world. Through it knowledge and skills are passed from generation to generation. History of education shows a division into three different stages: primary, secondary and tertiary. The tertiary education has been commonly referred to as higher education. This level of education has been presented in different forms: classical and academic: technical and vocational. The practice of Christian higher education has respected these different forms. Three types of Christian higher education exist on the continent: church-controlled higher learning of theological institutions: church-funded colleges and universities of higher learning: and finally Christian-perspective liberal Arts colleges. This third category is a challenge to Christian educators.

These educational institutions enrolled indigenous people from primary to high school level. The creation managing of educational institutions slowed down towards the end of the last century and almost stopped at the beginning of the new. Factors explaining this situation are both external and internal. Within the environment of churches and theological education institutions, there is a vast demand for highly educated nationals to take up leadership positions at the denominational level and also staff an ever growing number of post secondary schools of theology.

Aims and Objectives:

It is time to put differences aside and write Church history that gives information and guidelines to the Church and no longer to divide or side track people or the Church. The importance of the Christian based education of previous generations needs to be underlined and brought to the attention of the Church because the utmost importance of this issue was overlooked for too long.

I want to argue that the fundamental Christian education that the people living in the taught their children formed the backbone in the building process of the nation. These people that lived through the hardship of the Trek and had to make a living in a new land with not much money and help from outside became the people who ran the country and a few years later successfully. The world around them changed rapidly from a rustic farming community to an industrial country. Through all the challenges and changes they faced, it was their faith in and obedience to God that kept them Christians and part of a unique nation. The pioneers instructed their children according to the laws of the Bible. Not education peruses, but the fundamental Christian education was all they had, and all they needed to build a nation. Their faith and commitment became the force that kept the unique nation with a strong character based upon faith. And its influence is still felt today.

History of Christian Missionary's Educational:

The history of Christian Missionary's educational effort is very old. It started from the days of Jesus Christ himself, with the divine revelation to him, which directs the Prophet to teach his people about the tenets of Christianity and the mystery of creation of the Universe which led them to understand the true light of the truth. It was also found that introduction of modern education by the Missionaries into the society of the hill tribes of was a big step towards a change of their century-long social structure. It was significant to note that the Missionaries were successful to inculcate a feeling among these backward communities, that race and creed

would not deprive them from getting a job or a comfortable life under the patronage of the Government like the other Aryan races achieved, if they could fulfill the required educational qualifications.

Education activities under missionaries introduced competing value into the indigenous societies as primary, objective was to 'civilize' and Christianize the heathen population. The missionaries' activities expand geographically under the protection formal German administration in the 1890.

It was found that the Missionary schools have very satisfactory infrastructural facilities. The school buildings are properly planned with pleasing architectural features. The buildings have sufficient number of rooms to facilitate separate rooms for library, conference hall, staffs room, principal's room, etc. This helps in the smooth functioning of the Missionary schools.

As started earlier that missionaries engaged in education, health and social development they knew that school was the back born of missionary work. It was used to gain converters and train local assistant who were sent out as missionaries to their own people. School was the main tool in affecting entry into new areas. It was used in changing the culture, beliefs and value systems to form which was more acceptable and supportive of European social – economic position of those who received (Lawuo 1975, Welborn 1965, Gotneid 1976).

As pointed earlier, the aim of missions was to spread education as widely as possible with an ultimate goal of gaining converts and preparing way for integrating the country into the economic structure and political control of their home country. The approach that followed was to train local converts to be missionaries to their own people all those passed through the mission school system were absorbed by the missions as teachers, semi-skilled, craftsmen or farm laborers.

Christian Higher Education:

The primary reason for this enterprise was to meet both educational and developmental needs of the indigenous people. Missionaries were invited either by local kings or indigenous churches to start general education schools. Their solicitude caused them to sometimes take this initiative in order to participate in the development of their countries of mission. Undoubtedly Baptist schools served as venues for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. This enterprise was characterized by the fact that the school levels ranged from primary to high school; that equal chances of education were given to boys and girls; and finally that the program of education covered areas like agriculture, health, professional schools, domestic science and handicrafts.

Secondary and high school needs were naturally met in order to continue the process of education. At the start teachers at these different levels were sent from the United States of America. Some distinguished and gifted students who finished these levels were recruited into the teaching task. They were given training in schools created in order to prepare them to teach their fellow country people. The curriculum taught in these educational institutions at the beginning, were, to a high percentage of American-oriented. However an effort of adjusting the curriculum to integrate some local realities was successfully carried on. This trend continued until the time the program drew extensively its component from the local context.

Christian Higher Education - Threats and Opportunities:

Threats:

The first major threat facing Christian higher education is the "anti-intellectualism" in the churches today. Most of the leaders in churches do not see the need for higher education. A common misunderstanding circulates among church members that to carry on pastoral duties, there is no need for further studies. There is even a saying in my country that "Higher theological learning does not produce a good pastor; it is rather the Holy Spirit on the field". This view not only reveals an inappropriate reading of the Bible. Churches and denominational budgets reflect this anti-intellectualism. Most of the churches and Christian denominational leaders would not see the need for dedicating a part of the income to higher education. Vikner puts it better: "Rather than seeing Christian colleges and universities as partners and settings where the Christian faith can be nurtured, these colleges and universities are considered to be uninvolved in proclaiming the faith and are often more likely considered to be antithetical to the faith" (Vikner 2003).

The second main threat in higher education is the declining influence of the church. They took over schools created by Christian missionaries. Regulation for creating and running a private school were so tightened in some countries that it became almost impossible for the very few daring churches to invest in that area. The principle of separation between Church and State has been interpreted by some careless politicians to exclude churches in the task of education. The saying goes: "The Church is for worshipping God and the Government for educating citizens.

The third chief threat is financial. Running a credible academic institution is extremely. The existing schools on the continent have always been crying out for financial help from churches. These institutions are operating in a context of poverty.

Opportunities:

The first and foremost need for higher education is the great demand for highly educated nationals to take up key leadership roles in churches and staff the ever growing number of post secondary schools. Anti-intellectualism is losing its standing as church leaders are dealing with more and more "sophisticated" societies and peoples. Even through the decisive step is yet to be made there is an observable openness to the idea of

higher education. Students coming from Bible schools demand for more education after some years of ministry. Their number is growing larger and larger each year, and yet there are very limited institutions of higher education where they can go.

The age of scientific materialism, technological destructiveness, religious nihilism, and spiritual impoverishment has rendered life meaningless. This leads to an unbalanced life which expresses itself in naughtiness, sadness and madness observed in the world today. Religious courses are taught in secular universities. This desire to better understand religions presents an exceptional opportunity for Christian colleges and universities. The third opportunity is the response of some Christian organization to the cry of help from country. Overseas Council does outstanding work in helping Christian theological higher learning. Overseas Council offers scholarships for leaders and theologians for advanced studies and provides limited assistance for them as a stipend of encouragement to continue working in their context.

According to ACE philosophy there are five basic needs which all pupils have and which have to be addressed in education: A spiritual need, a need for approval, understanding, appreciation from others and a need to feel important. Furthermore ACE sets out seven training objectives for pupils: Self-discovery, self-acceptance, self-confidence, problem-solving (learning to deal with problems as they arise) / making and keeping friend, achievement and success.

Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) Boasts the Following Unique Characteristics:

- ✓ ACE material is prescribed individually and ACE is individualized. It is designed to facilitate learning through self-instructional materials requiring a minimum of adult supervision, while enabling pupils with varied abilities to advance academically.
- ✓ ACE material is accelerated. Each, individual student is allowed to progress at his own pace through the modules of the curriculum. ACE material allows continuous progress. The ~earning-limited are never left behind; the gifted are never held back.
- ✓ ACE is achievement oriented. Its programme is based on a procedure that rewards success in academic achievement. Since learning tools are tailored to the pupil's ability and not his age, a high degree of success is possible.
- ✓ ACE builds self-discipline. Goal and progress charts encourage and develop self-discipline.
- ✓ ACE is Christian. The curriculum has been developed by Christian educators and teachers, the Bible is the basis of all ACE text material, the curriculum represents absolute values and all curriculum materials are Bible-centred and theistic. All teachers and staff are to be born-again and 'separated unto Christian living'.
- ✓ In the opinion of ACE, the conventional classroom is based upon a philosophy of conformity to the group. It forces an equality of teaching upon an inequality of learners. The uniqueness of the individual is sacrificed for the expediency and convenience of grouping (Howard 1985). ACE views individualism as theistic.

Conclusion:

The history of Christian missions testifies of the institution of formal education in country. This education covered the three classical divisions of education – primary, Secondary and tertiary. This third level is at stake today. The governments inheriting the schools created by Christian missionaries are faced with many challenges. The least that could be said is that there is a great need for redeeming this level of education so that the process of development continues. Christian higher education is the hope for the virile integrate faith and learning in every aspect. Overseas Council does outstanding work in helping Christian theological higher learning. Overseas Council offers scholarships for leaders and theologians for advanced studies and provides limited assistance for them as a stipend of encouragement to continue working in their context. They are undertaking masters and doctoral theological training. The focus of Overseas Council is theological education.

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