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*Contextual Theological Education in Africa as a Model for  
Missional Formation*

**Abstract**

This paper argues that teaching of contextual theological education in Africa can aid in missional formation of students, teachers, and their communities. Further, common African struggles are explored as a way of discovering how theological education can be used to address Africa's unique situation. The paper further asserts that the only kind of education with the power to form humanity is the one that relates to them and addresses their unique situations, and answers their questions. To form missional Christians in Africa, we need contextual education in our training institutions.

**Keywords:** theological education, Africa, contextual theology, transformation, teachers, missional

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## Teaching in Africa

In traditional African societies, teaching was primarily done through apprenticeship. People learned many lessons ranging from how to be a good neighbor, have good family relations, hunt, and be a good carpenter. The older generation had a duty to pass down knowledge to the young in their midst. Children were taught how to relate well with others in order to foster peace in the community. Apart from social life, they also learned skills that would help them to pursue a trade or livelihood. During their teenage years, a young person would be linked with a professional blacksmith, or a successful hunter where he was expected to learn through observing the mentor.

In matters of religion and belief, religious leaders mentored young people and trained them on how to lead their communities to God. Upcoming mentees lived with the sitting priests or closely interacted with them to gain experience in priesthood. It was believed that by observing the life and actions of the senior priest, the young learner would be thoroughly informed and also equipped for the noble job ahead of him. Learning happened through living life together in community. Godly principles were taught while working, eating, playing and generally living life. As such, education was more caught than taught. Although the religious leader held the greater responsibility to teach the mentee, the whole community was involved. Thus, there was no dichotomy between formal and informal teaching.

Oral communication was the major form of knowledge transmission in traditional Africa with stories being the primary mode used. This was the medium through which the histories of the people were passed down to the younger generation. Parents told their history to their children, and those children likewise told it to their children. The stories told of the battles they had won and which warrior was instrumental in the victory. They also told about how God had saved them from certain pestilences. These “God stories” invoked trust and worship to the “High One”. Through this method, African theology was preserved for generations. This African way of teaching, i.e. stories, narration, learning in community, and merging of both formal and informal education can also be traced through the bible.

## Community Learning and Orality in the Bible

The bible is rich with stories that display the theology of the Jewish people in the Old Testament. These stories tell about the victories that God wrought among God's people. Oral tradition was a big part of the Hebrew bible. There are numerous records in Psalms where songs and stories from joyful communities are used to tell of the victory and love of God. In Psalm 78:3-5 the Psalmist declares "We will not hide them from the descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done." It was the older generation's responsibility to teach faith and religion to the younger ones, thereby making the chain-link continuous.

In Deuteronomy 6:6, God instructs his people to live life in a way that honors him. There was no compartmentalization of secular life apart from sacred life. All life was to be lived in obedience to God's commands and in full acknowledgement of God's reign. Teaching happened when the people sat at home for a meal, or went out on journeys, or took a rest. Teaching took place in their houses and also at the gates outside of the house:

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deut. 6:6-9)

In the same way, Jesus taught in the temple and also as he went about the usual business of life. The disciples learned about God's kingdom through their interaction with Jesus. They learned as a community about how to embody the kingdom of God on earth.

This biblical ideal of teaching corresponds with traditional African societies' models of teaching. However, colonial masters introduced new ways of learning different from what African societies were used to. Consequently, the foreign ways of teaching, and the imported types of education have not resonated well within the African context. Coming from another culture, this kind of education only answers the questions of the colonial culture rather than those questions posed by the indigenous society.

African people are thirsty for contextual education that takes into consideration her unique situation. This need is particularly evident in the teaching of theological education. It seems that the theological education offered in the majority of seminaries in Africa has not been able to quench the thirst of the African church. As such, there is a disconnect between what is taught in the seminary and what is needed to do ministry in the churches. Before looking at how to do contextual African theological education, we will explore the current context in Africa, especially as it pertains to the relevance of the Christian faith.

### **Contemporary Challenges in African Christianity**

In order to understand any context, it is important to ask the right questions. For example: What does the African context look like? What are her celebrations? What problems or challenges does she face? How can we address these to enable a more vibrant Christianity? What kind of education does Africa need? What are the real needs and felt problems in the African church? Is it even possible to talk about these needs in general: for Africa and for the Church?

In trying to answer these questions, I have identified four areas that are crucial in many African contexts, and want to look at how these are affecting Christianity in general and the church in particular. The four areas are: power encounter, prosperity gospel, poverty, and HIV/AIDS.

#### *Power Encounter*

Since the Enlightenment, the world of beliefs has been shaped by a worldview that belittles the idea of spirits. Those who believe in these are seen as primitive and uncivilized. Hiebert observes, “most missionaries taught Christianity as the answer to the ultimate and eternal questions of life, and science based on reason as the answer to the problems of this world. They had no place in their world for the invisible earthly spirits, witchcraft, divination, and magic of this world, and found it hard to take people’s beliefs in these seriously” (Hiebert 1999:19). This worldview has brought many challenges to African Christianity and especially its mission-founded churches. The African Christian is at the crossroads where the pastor ignores his/her questions on spiritual encounters and yet forbids a visit to the diviner who is willing to answer them. The dichotomy between the sacred and the secular was non-existent in traditional society. This

division leaves the African wondering about the compartments in dealing with one's life.

Pastors trained in many African theological institutions are ill equipped to deal with this issue. Teachings in African theological schools that faithfully follow the missionary curriculum have failed to respond adequately to the person afflicted by spiritual powers. Hiebert shared the struggle he encountered with the Western worldview on spiritual warfare, while he was ministering in a different culture. "As a Westerner, I was used to presenting Christ on the basis of rational arguments, not by evidences of his power in the lives of people who were sick, possessed and destitute. In particular, the confrontation with spirits that appeared so natural a part of Christ's ministry belonged in my mind to a separate world of the miraculous — far from ordinary everyday experience" (Hiebert 1982:35).

The challenge with this kind of teaching is that it loses meaning for African people. People have had experiences with this middle world that neither science nor the church can explain. Science is clearly unable to address this issue and the church is either apathetic or uninformed about it. Consequently, people have concluded that they have to find an avenue that will take care of this middle level.

Meanwhile, the church and the academy are dismissive of the subject. This is evidenced by lack of any mention on the subject in systematic theology textbooks. As such, the African has little use for a theology that says there are no ancestral spirits. Hiebert argues that there is need for "a holistic theology that includes a theology of God in human history: in the affairs of nations, of peoples and of individuals. This must include a theology of divine guidance, provision and healing; of ancestors, spirits and invisible powers of this world..." (Hiebert 1982:46). The failure of a communally experienced faith makes it difficult for people to deal with their prevailing situation. The pastor then becomes the custodian of academic theology while the masses are rife with oral interpretations of which spirit might have been offended and thus responsible for the people's suffering.

### *Prosperity Gospel*

There is no doubt that the Bible promises a good life to those who obey God. There is health, joy, and sufficiency in following the Lord with a whole heart. Prosperity is taught in the bible and is a valid teaching.

The African situation especially, is at a point where people need hope in the midst of poverty and oppression. They need to hear that God will bless them, that God wishes for them to overcome problems and be free from the powers of disease and chronic poverty. However, that is not all that the gospel is about. Prosperity gospel preachers emphasize creating hope at the expense of any other biblical teaching in Christianity. Teachings on accountability, stewardship, and responsible living are deemphasized or not addressed at all.

Zac Niringiye, a Ugandan Anglican bishop, argues that authentic proclamation should only be a continuation of what Jesus did. Such proclamation guided by the Holy Spirit should produce much fruit. He notes that some preachers doing gospel rallies in Africa have had the temptation to present a gospel that does not call for repentance. It is all about miracle working. Although this may indicate that the preacher is succeeding in creating a scenario where problems are solved in magic-like style, it misses the power of the gospel that calls people to a different kind of life that is more concerned with glorifying God and fostering a deep relationship with a holy God. He further asserts that the community that is called into the body of Christ needs to be itself good news. It becomes good news by the way it lives, which should be so impactful that it draws others into itself (Niringiye 2008:17-18). The prosperity gospel is therefore not false so much as it is incomplete. Such a deficient gospel is toxic for Africans and should be a concern of all who hope to present an unadulterated gospel of God's kingdom. The toxic effect of individualistic wellbeing, rather than communal welfare, is antithetical to Christ's example.

### *Poverty*

The rates of unemployment are at an all time high in Africa. Many people lack any means of earning an income, which ends up creating a high percentage of poor people. Bad leadership and dictatorial governments with officials whose main concern is amassing wealth for themselves from public coffers has left the citizens poorer than ever before. The situation is so prevalent that many have resigned themselves to embrace poverty as their only way of life and their destined fate. This has been fanned further by an individualistic mindset that does not concern itself with the welfare of "others". Pastors with little or no knowledge about development and poverty eradication do not bother themselves with helping the church to care for the "least of these". The story of Lazarus and the rich man was

used by Jesus to condemn apathy towards the marginalized. The problem with the rich man was not his wealth, rather, it was his choice to cushion himself and become completely insensitive to the suffering poor man at the gate. The African church needs a lasting response to the plight of the poor.

J.N.K. Mugambi a Kenyan theologian, is strongly concerned by how poor Africa has remained despite its growing number of Christians. He argues, “During the past thirty years, the economy of Africa has deteriorated at the same inverse proportion as church membership has grown. The more Christian the continent becomes, the more pauperized it is increasingly becoming. Is this a fact for Christians to rejoice about? If not, it is a challenge, which we have to take seriously” (Mugambi 1998:357). The task is to ask ourselves how well we have prepared our leaders so that they will be equipped to deal with this pertinent issue. “Poverty affects the whole person, whole families and whole communities. It is the root cause of many injustices and much violence. Poverty should become a central concern of every theological institution in the African continent” (Njoroge 2004:99). The African traditional worldview was more engaged with caring for the vulnerable people in the community. Their driving philosophy was what John Mbiti talks about, “I am because you are, and because I am therefore you are.”

### *HIV/AIDS*

HIV is ravaging many communities in Africa. The big question that African Christian leaders should ask themselves is what should be their response to HIV and its twin diseases of stigma and alienation? In fact, it has been said that the disease that kills HIV infected people is not the disease itself, rather it is the aspect of being cut off from the community. This is coupled with negative judgment and stigma. Some people still view AIDS patients as immoral people, because HIV is supposedly only a disease of sexual promiscuity resulting in ostracism of the patients. Some people justify their actions by attributing the disease to divine punishment for immoral living. This is a faulty theology that presupposes that all who get infected must be sexually promiscuous people. In many cases, HIV infected people are innocent victims. However, even if the infected people were immoral, society needs to realize that we are all sinners and thus in need of God’s grace. God has loved us in our iniquities.

Peter Mageto observes, “HIV/AIDS offers an opportunity for Christian theology in Africa to engage with questions of sex, disease and

death that have troubled all peoples” (Mageto 2004:151). Christian theology needs to address the issues that ail the people in society. It should seize the unfortunate opportunity of disease and be a witness to God’s healing power and love for those cast out to the margins of society.

### **How Does Contextual Education Facilitate Formation**

Education in Christianity has been categorized as Christian formation, spiritual formation, or missional formation. Christian Education hopes to create either one or all three forms of formation. Indeed, all of these formations aim at one goal; molding Christ-like behavior in believers. As they learn from the example of Christ, the sanctification process leads them towards the *Imago Dei*. The *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* defines learning as “the permanent change in behavior” (Scorgie 2011:677). People are always learning, and as such they keep on changing. Growth in Christianity does not happen overnight; rather it is a process that can be slow but sure. Paul Hiebert writes about moving away from a bounded set mentality to that of a centered set (Hiebert 1983). The important thing is that we are moving towards being more like Christ. This is the essence of Christian formation.

According to English, “Inquiring into the process of learning involves uncovering the discontinuity, disruptions and interruptions constitutive of learning, and the perplexity, frustration and irritation that characterize the learners” (English 2010:76). Theological training in Africa must recognize its discontinuity with education that does not respond to her needs, because it does not provide the formation needed. A foreign approach to education lingers on but does not penetrate deep enough to cause change. The fundamental values and worldviews are what change people either positively or negatively. They determine the direction that people follow. “To undergo a perspective transformation, it is necessary to recognize that many of our actions are governed by a set of beliefs and values which have been almost unconsciously assimilated from the particular environment” (Kinchin and Miller 2012:119 quoting Kember, Jones, et al. 1999). Change in people is inevitable, but the course they take is determined by foundational values in their lives. Contextual education takes seriously the needs of the people. It cannot afford to be generic. It is specific, strategic, and intentional. Education brewed in a context penetrates



people's consciousness and their souls, to the place where transformation begins to happen. For example, if one learns about a God who is willing to heal their diseases and save them from oppression, they will take the teachings of this God to heart and follow him in obedience.

### **The Incarnation as our Model for Contextualization**

God is the chief contextual teacher, because God has always sought to teach humanity about who God is. God's desire is that we may not only know God, but also get the meaning of human life. God in Jesus Christ uses himself as a powerful teaching aid hanging on the cross while declaring undying love for humanity. Additionally, Jesus came to the world to help humans understand divine things. The incarnation was the ultimate contextualization. Jesus came to encounter humanity as a particular person: a male Jew in Palestine, and at a particular time. Jesus used miracles, parables and simple stories to help people understand matters of the kingdom.

The Holy Spirit took the role of our teacher when Jesus left earth. Jesus promised to leave his disciples with a helper who will teach them all things. At the time of Jesus' resurrection, Mary realizes that the man she had supposed to be the gardener near the tomb was actually her Lord and friend, Jesus. She exclaims "Rabbon," (which is Aramaic for teacher). It is important to note that Jesus had been many things to Mary; He had delivered her from demons, been her friend and her Lord. Yet the title that comes to Mary's mind at a subconscious prompting is "teacher." This shows that Jesus was a very impacting teacher. Mary remembered him for his teaching. He is indeed the chief teacher.

As theological educators, we are to join with Christ in this noble ministry and help people to find meaning in life through our teaching. God is our mentor in contextual teaching. He is leading in this path, as he knows it is the way by which we will form a community of disciples. He has set the example on how we need to teach, and we are to diligently follow him in his mission. The theological educator is therefore a channel through which God forms the student. God the great contextual teacher became incarnate to fit in a particular context. This is what enabled regular fishermen to be formed into the likeness of Christ. When people develop a heart for Jesus, they will not rest until the whole community can say "thy Kingdom come."

### **Way Forward: The Role of the Teacher in Formation Through Contextual Education**

In the first part of this section, I want to address not only what the teacher does, but also what the institution in which he/she teaches will do, in moving towards contextual education. The two parties are crucial because the inefficiency of one affects the other in critical ways. This is in consideration of the fact that a teacher may desire to do incarnational teaching, but then their efforts would be strangled by structural ineffectiveness, and vice versa.

Theological institutions have a God-given mandate to provide direction in Christian teaching. These institutions can figuratively be referred to as the factories where Christian leaders are made. Pastors, evangelists, missionaries and sometimes- lay leaders pass through these institutions for at least three years to be prepared for the ministry. This is a great task that should be taken with the seriousness it deserves. If these leaders are not relevantly prepared, they go to the field and do more damage than good. The community that is looking up to them as resource people end up being disappointed.

It would be inaccurate to argue that the theological training in many African seminaries today is foreign and of no use at all. In fact, Western theology has shaped many African theologians in contemporary times. Most of Africa's celebrated theologians received their education in African schools that taught purely imported theology by Western professors. Others benefited from scholarship funds from the West and even attended Western institutions for their training. For this, the African church is grateful. In fact, this very education has shaped the thinking of many theologians who are now leaders in many African churches. However, time is ripe for African theology to answer African questions, thus solving the problems that are deeply felt by the people that it seeks to serve. The following are propositions of different ways through which the academy would offer contextual Christian theological education in Africa to ensure more vibrant Christ-like communities.

#### *Communal Education Through Engaging the Masses*

For a teacher to facilitate contextual education, he/she needs to listen to the theology that comes from the people on the ground. Contextual theology cannot be formulated from academies that are oblivious to the

people at the grassroots. The teacher as a theological educator needs to learn from the people which issues concern them. As the saying goes, it is the wearer of the shoe who knows where it pinches most. The masses that are ministered to by the clergy and missionaries who are trained in the academy can be a great resource as to what is missing. Learning in community and through community is a biblical model that should not be ignored. God has made people as relational beings and what he seeks to establish on earth is a kingdom community rather than pious disconnected individuals.

Teachers need to engage the community in helping shape theology. For example, students should intern in HIV support group centers where they can deal with their flawed theologies and prejudices before moving out to the community. Pastors trained in this way are profoundly formed to be missional in their contexts. This interaction does not only dismantle prejudices, it also gathers grassroots theology that is needed for the teacher to know how to formulate his/her content. In addition to gathering relevant grassroots theology, the teacher becomes aware of what is happening in the community and how God is working in the particular situation. This awareness brings awe and adoration as the teacher realizes that he/she is a partner with God in the *Missio Dei*. His/her role is drastically changed from that of a knowledge disseminator to Christ's change agent in the world.

As much as grassroots theology is very crucial, it is important to recognize that there are those fundamental doctrines and teachings that are non-negotiable. Those are the doctrines that unite us, as the body of Christ in the world and cannot be ignored. Consequently, not all grassroots theologies are valid and theological educators are responsible for offering direction in those areas. However, they cannot pretend to play deaf to the voices from the masses. Additionally, engaging the hermeneutical community that listens to the African teachers and offers feedback from global cultures is inevitable as advocated by the great 20<sup>th</sup> century missiologist, Paul Hiebert.

### *Relevant Curriculum*

The theological educator should develop a curriculum that includes theory and praxis. To achieve this, the teaching space does not need to be confined to the classroom on campus. I realize that supervised ministry is supposed to offer this contact, yet supervised ministry is treated as a separate experience that happens after class is done. Because the sitting

pastor determines the learning experiences and may not stimulate critical thinking, the mentee is not usually afforded unconventional opportunities. What would it mean if students went to these practical classes outside the seminary, in orphanages and rehabilitation centers, as participant observers to establish not only what is happening, but also what is missing? Teachers need to challenge students to be critical thinkers who participate in solving problems that the African Christian society wrestles with. What if stimulating a keen eye and critical observation becomes part of the student learning objective that the educator has set?

Secondly, theological educators should seek to design and teach courses according to need. For example, why should students study language for six semesters when that is not their specialization? What differences would we observe if those many language class hours were reduced to create space for courses such as development and poverty reduction, or power encounter in missions? It should be noted that the idea is not to eradicate study of biblical languages or traditional courses that have always been offered in seminary on dogma. No, they are very important. But so are the other courses, especially those that are directly addressing the needs of the African context.

### *Role Modeling*

The teacher is a role model of Christian formation. He or she is aware of his/her partnership with God in creating an alternative community in the world. As such, the teacher invites students to his/her life in the same attitude that Paul had when he said, "Imitate me even as I imitate Christ." Students should learn what the *Missio Dei* entails by looking at the teacher's life. The realization by the teacher that they are being imitated as role models of the faith will help them to be authentic imitators of Christ. Jesus' disciples learned the essentials of kingdom business by living life together with the master. The teacher becomes aware of the great impact he/she has in forming students' lives, creating a great impact in the teacher's life as well.

The teacher is a powerful teaching aid. There are no divisions between where sacred life starts and where it ends. Life is integral and as such, a teacher is always teaching. When he/she becomes involved in projects to serve the community, or engage in training leaders in the churches, or serve in beginning income-generating projects for orphans, the student is learning how to have a heart for the kingdom.

Additionally, a teacher who respects the student's worldview just like Christ did, and enters their context, embodies the gospel in very profound ways. Acknowledging the students' experiences makes the teacher privy to the experience of the students' community of origin. This enables the teacher to plan better on how to train the student to impact the community. Ultimately, both the trainer and the trainee are transformed.

### *Use of African Arts*

Theological educators need to recognize that people are spiritually formed when they pray and worship God in their heart languages. By heart language, I mean the language of praise, the body language of dance, and the communal language of laughter. The African continent is endowed with a great artistic culture. It is a disservice to the community when this rich culture is not incorporated in the people's worship. Musa Dube argues for the need to study how the bible can be interpreted through crafts, songs, art, and dance in theological institutions. Christians already display their love for these artistic expressions in worship services. For example, stories feature a lot in African churches' testimonies. They tell of what great deeds God has wrought. Lay church members crave the orality practiced by African tradition and also by people in ancient biblical times. But a solid theology is yet to be developed in Africa's teaching institutions (Dube 2004:60). This would foster an intentional approach toward learning to appreciate our gifts, talents, and heritage.

Traditionally, worship for the African did not involve a silent prayer in the soul; it was a worship incorporating the whole body. Thus it was not strange to see dancing, clapping, jumping, in laughter and in tears, with emotion and passion, all constituting a worship event. LeMarquand agrees with the argument on the importance of Africa's artistic culture. He tells of how an African proverb helped him understand a biblical passage in a very intense way. He demonstrates that it is important not only for Africa, but for the whole world, in their endeavor to understand scripture. He points out that, "In many ways African culture and African experience can help the church around the world to understand the bible. But how can the rich biblical insights which Africa can provide become a part of the genetic code of our theological colleges" (LeMarquand 2004:82).

Contextual education therefore, is not going to be achieved through the teacher adding a little piece of our African heritage here and there. Rather the teacher will fashion the course in such a way that the very

DNA of its essence is true to its culture. This will in turn ensure that the people own the faith as authentically relevant to them. There is a deeper connection in worshipping God using the heart language, ways that are traditionally accepted as a means of reaching the divine as long as they are not portraying dangerous theology. This is what true Christian formation in Africa entails.

### *Hear the African Voices*

Theological educators in Africa need to develop a theology hewed from the African soil. In addition to listening to grassroots theology, they also need to hear African scholars. Studying Paul Tillich and Karl Barth is good for African theological students. It helps them come in contact with some of the greatest minds in theology and global Christian history. But theological education in Africa is not complete until the students study John Mbiti, Kwame Bediako, Philomenah Mwaura, Mercy Aduyoye, Lamin Sanneh, Ogbu Kalu, J.N.K Mugambi, Peter Mageto, Saneta Maiko, Kwabena Asamoah Gyandu, Tite Tienou, Desmond Tutu, Esther Mombo, and many more like these.

One may wonder, what effect does educating our teachers outside of Africa bring? Does this argument not suggest that teachers should only be trained in Africa using African literature and theology? In fact, studying in Western theological seminaries does not make one cease to be an African theologian. The exposure and diversity they encounter in other countries opens their eyes to see the bigger picture of the gospel. They realize that Jesus does not require them to forsake their identities in order to follow him. They also realize that missing the African story in the global Christian story makes it deficient. Ironically, the most authentic African scholarship that I have interacted with in terms of published work has happened in schools outside of Africa. My argument is that the same kind of exposure should happen back in the African continent too. The great minds of Africa have something important to contribute to both African and world Christianity, because without them the whole story is not heard.

Andrew Walls tells of an imaginary group of people in a theater that he calls the "Human Auditorium." People seated in different parts of the theater will see different things from those in another part. Some will see more than others. Those in the balcony will have clear sight of some scenes and not of others. What one sees is affected by where he/she is seated (Walls 2002:43). Global Christianity needs to hear African voices, but even

more so, African Christianity needs to hear her own voices. Theological training in Africa, or for ministry in Africa, that does not feature African scholars is simply incomplete and consequently does not enable positive formation. By this, I do not mean adding a book or two to the required list. What I advocate is having African writers occupy a meaningful portion of the required readings.

#### *Proactive Development of Healthy Theology*

Theological educators need to be on the forefront in creating orthodox theology rather than waiting until the wrong one is displayed and then fighting it. Taking the example of prosperity gospel, many teachers of Christian education encountered it in its early stages, but did not think it would get very far. Teachers have a calling to correct heresy and ground society in the correct theology. People need to know that our hope in God is coupled with a responsibility; it is a hope that fosters resilience and it is a hope in obedience. When the prosperity gospel proclaims nothing but material wealth and health as the full gospel, it needs to be named as the lie it is. The church and the academy should be “consciously cultivating a desire for God as more authentic than our desire for things, which is a crucial antidote to the idolatry of brands, commercial domination, and material hopes and dreams that too often dominate the hearts and minds of the culture, including God’s people” (Elliott-Hart 2013:134). The African church should remember her calling to be an alternative community exemplifying kingdom values of love of neighbor and God.

Theological educators are called upon to challenge the prevailing falsehood in half-truths that are disastrous for the Christian faith. Unfortunately, some of these false preachers know no other gospel. They are either not trained or faultily trained and immature in faith. The teacher will remind his/her students specifically, and society in general, that true discipleship bids us to follow not only Jesus the savior but also Jesus the Lord. In the prosperity gospel arena, people are following the savior, healer, provider and not the Master, Lord and God of the universe.

#### **Conclusion**

The teacher of theological education in Africa has a difficult task ahead. It is a task to join the contextual God to further His incarnational ministry. This will be achieved through the teaching of contextual

education, a teaching that invites all God's children as equal participants into the theological discussion. God's mission is happening in community, as we live life. It is happening through both oral and written theologies. It respects peoples' contexts and worldviews, and yet challenges them to an alternative lifestyle and a higher calling as it embraces the eternal truths of God's kingdom. It is in this noble call that the teacher joins God to form both students and the community at large for achieving the kingdom goal. Consequently, the teacher is not left untouched by the same transforming truth.

As demonstrated in this paper, the only way to form people in a godly lifestyle is to enter their contexts and see the world through their eyes. Theological educators are not pie-in-the-sky pointers who are not in tune with every day struggles of the people. Theological educators in Africa in the twenty first century have a divine duty to address the issues with which Africans are contending. This venture will in turn produce strong, grounded believers on fire for a God who knows them and meets them where they are. Only then will the whole community of faith join God in the *Missio Dei* and with one voice declare; "Thy Kingdom Come"!

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