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# Kērussōmen

## A JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY FOR THE AFRICAN CHURCH



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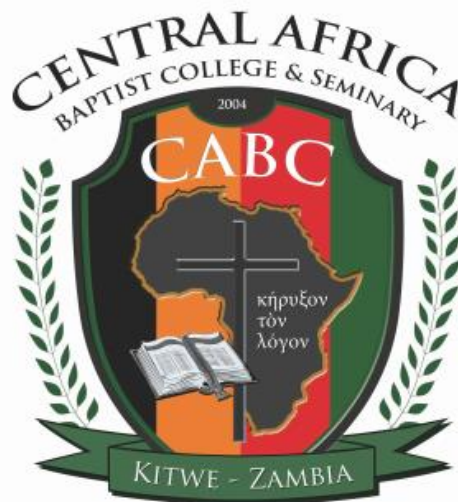
**Trends in African Theological Contextualization**

Kennedy Bota

A PUBLICATION OF CENTRAL AFRICA BAPTIST COLLEGE & SEMINARY

# Kērussōmen

A JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY FOR  
THE AFRICAN CHURCH



*This journal is intended to aid the work of Central Africa Baptist College & Seminary in fulfilling its purpose to train the next generation of servant leaders in Africa for Great Commission living. The journal raises issues of theological importance and practical pastoral concern in order to cultivate Biblical discussion and to build up pastors and other leaders in African churches.*

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REFORMING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:  
PAST LESSONS FOR AFRICA TODAY

*Dr. Joshua Caleb Hutchens*

Those of us who are called to train pastors have been given a deposit of sound doctrine to guard as well as to entrust to faithful men (2 Tim 1:14; 2:2). The burden upon our shoulders is to pass on this deposit both faithfully and fruitfully. But those of us who train pastors in Africa bear an even greater responsibility. This continent will be the center of global Christianity for the foreseeable future, and the institutions we lead, the methodologies we employ, and the curricula we develop will create standards and expectations that will far outlive us. What will theological education in Africa look like? What kind of pastors will our centers for theological education—whether formal seminaries, informal seminars, or church-based programs—produce? This article offers lessons for Africa today based on six reform movements or reformers of theological education from Christian history—monasticism, the Brethren of the Common Life, the Reformation, Pietism, James P. Boyce, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. By becoming students of the past, we can prepare the institutions we lead for the future.

**Monasticism**

The earliest form of theological education occurred in the home as parents taught their children to love the God of Israel (Deut 6:7). While the New Testament continues this focus on the instruction of children (e.g., Eph 6:4), it gives even more emphasis to the theological instruction of the family of faith—the local church—and its developing leaders. Jesus chose twelve disciples “so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:14). Paul similarly invested in

young men like Timothy and Titus. Paul reminds Timothy to “follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in faith and love that are in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 1:13), and he counsels Timothy to make the same investment in other men who will teach even others (2 Tim 2:2).

From the Greek verb “to instruct” (κατηχέω) came the concept of catechesis (e.g., Luke 1:4; Acts 18:25; 1 Cor 14:19; Gal 6:6). In the first few centuries of the Christian era, catechesis became a formalized training regimen for new believers.<sup>1</sup> Catechumens (the new believers) received instruction in what Christians believe, how they worship, and how they live, usually for a period of about two years. As early as the second century, early Christians also established formal schools. Justin Martyr established a school in Rome that he patterned after pagan schools of philosophy. Justin desired to teach Christianity as the true philosophy. Justin’s school seems to have been a short-lived endeavor, probably not lasting long after his death around A.D. 167. Schools in Alexandria and Antioch, however, left a longer legacy. The school in Alexandria was established before A.D. 190 and became known for popular teachers like Clement of Alexandria and Origen. The school in Antioch was established around the same time. These schools became especially influential in the third century, but Alexandria and Antioch did not exist specifically for the training of pastors. Instead, they focused on the development of a Christian worldview and apologetics. Nonetheless, some influential bishops in the early church were alumni of these schools, but others like Ambrose and Augustine had received training in pagan schools of rhetoric rather than in Christian institutions. At the time, no educational standards existed for church leaders, although churches did eagerly seek educated ministers. In *On the Duties of the Clergy*,

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<sup>1</sup>Justin Martyr, *The First Apology*, 61.

Ambrose reflected on his own lack of educational preparedness for ministry, “[I] began to teach you, what I myself had not yet learned. So it happened that I began to teach before I began to learn. Therefore I must learn and teach at the same time, since I had no leisure to learn before.”<sup>2</sup> Many church leaders, such as Cyprian and Tertullian, were self-educated by following a reading regiment.<sup>3</sup>

Two larger historical developments, however, began to influence Christian education in the fourth and fifth centuries: (1) The conversion of Emperor Constantine to Christianity in A.D. 312 and (2) the fall of the Western Roman Empire to the Germanic barbarians. When Christianity ceased to be a persecuted minority and began to enjoy official status under Constantine and his successors, the standards of doctrinal and moral instruction declined. Many people began to receive baptism and join the Church without a period of catechesis. By lowering the standards of entrance into the Church, many believed that the spiritual vitality of the church had been compromised. This led to the acceleration of the development of monastic life, which became a way for Christians concerned with holiness to distinguish themselves from the masses. In the new world of Christendom, ascetics replaced martyrs.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, after the barbarians invaded the crumbling Roman Empire, monasteries, especially those of the Benedictine order, became isolated depositories of Christian doctrine and learning.<sup>5</sup> Monks both preserved and produced Christian literature in a period of

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<sup>2</sup>Ambrose, *On the Duties of the Clergy*, 1.1.4.

<sup>3</sup>Paul Sanchez (Ph.D. Candidate in Church History, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) reviewed an earlier version of this article and contributed several insights like this one.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2004), 54.

<sup>5</sup>Bokenkotter, *Catholic Church*, 105.

immense illiteracy. Over time, some monasteries and cathedrals developed formalized schools called monastery or cathedral schools, such as in York, England and Orleans, France. These schools trained both future clergy as well as government officials and became the seeds of what would grow eventually into the university.

Although evangelical Protestants have largely rejected monasticism as a form of the Christian life, we can nevertheless learn from the phenomenon as a reform movement in theological education. Monasticism arose from what could be called the Christian instinct of regenerate church membership. While Baptists have an *explicit* doctrine of regenerate church membership, that is we believe that only those who have been born again can become members of the local church, many other Christians have retained an instinct of regenerate church membership, even when their explicit ecclesiology has contradicted it. In the case of monasticism, some early Christians instinctively believed that Christians should live a holy life and pursue whole-heartedly the knowledge of God, and they were offended at the declining standards of membership in the Church. Their solution was the monastic life. This was the wrong solution to a rightly identified problem. Across the continent of Africa today—as in many other parts of the world—we see a similar lowering of standards as millions of people claim to be Christians while showing no evidence of being born again. Centers for theological education, whether formal schools or informal gatherings, must counter this sad reality. Monasticism wrongly sought to create a higher tier of Christians. Centers for theological education in Africa, however, should confront the problem of the unregenerate “Christian” by grounding preachers in the biblical gospel and by preparing shepherds who will raise the expectations for membership in the churches that

they eventually serve. In the midst of the religious showmanship and shamanism that masquerades itself as Christianity, centers for theological education must be built up as depositories and bastions of sound doctrine and godly living.

### **Brethren of the Common Life**

In the twelfth century, the cathedral schools of Notre Dame and the Abbey of Saint Victor in France gradually developed into the University of Paris. Soon other universities were founded in emulation of the model in Paris, including Bologna in Italy, Oxford and Cambridge in England, and Salamanca in Spain. While these universities began to teach law and medicine, their primary concern was the teaching of theology and Roman Catholic canon law. Medieval universities employed two methods of instruction: (1) Lectures by the instructor on a text (which could be biblical, theological, or philosophical) and (2) debate. Students who completed a three- or four-year course of study in the seven liberal arts—grammar, astronomy, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, and music—would endure a series of oral examinations. Those who passed became known as “bachelors.” Bachelors could then continue their study of theology by mastering Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, the standard theology text of the era. After further examinations as well as an evaluation of the student’s moral life, the bachelor could attain the rank of “master” or “doctor.”<sup>6</sup> The results of this formalization of theological education remain with us today from the names of the degrees granted by colleges and seminaries to the caps and gowns worn at graduation ceremonies.

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<sup>6</sup>Justo L. González, *The History of Theological Education* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2015), 43-47; Bokenkotter, *Catholic Church*, 158-161.



This formalization of theological education into the university system, however, also led to a distance between academic theology and the application of theology to life. In response to this problem, Geert Groote founded a lay order called the Brethren of the Common Life in the Netherlands during the fourteenth century. Groote had studied at the University of Paris. After his studies, he became a priest in the Netherlands. Despite being a priest, he lived a life of sexual immorality, but around 1374, Groote experienced a personal crisis that caused him to repent of sin and pursue a holy life. Groote began preaching against the ungodliness of the clergy and even began preaching to the common people in Dutch rather than Latin. Since Groote was rejected by the clergy, he turned his focus to the lay people and founded a brotherhood that committed itself to the theological education of lay people. Wherever the Brethren of the Common Life spread, they taught in local languages instead of Latin, and their teaching focused on the devotional results of theological knowledge instead of knowledge for its own sake. One of the most well-known of the Brethren was Thomas à Kempis (c. 1379–1471) who wrote *Imitation of Christ*. His focus on godliness and the common man can be seen when he writes, “What good does it do to speak learnedly about the Trinity if, lacking humility, you displease the Trinity?”<sup>7</sup> By integrating education and piety for the benefit of the common man rather than focusing on the academic speculation like the university scholars, the Brethren of the Common Life prepared the way for the Reformation, which grew strongest where the Brethren had been well-established.

The Brethren’s focus on the common man highlights for theological institutions today the scope of their mission. While centers of learning should be depositories of sound doctrine and

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<sup>7</sup>Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, 1.1.2.

godly living, they must not isolate themselves to an elite cadre of scholars. The question must constantly be asked, “How will what is taught and done here help the average Christian in our community?” While Protestants do not limit religious instruction to Latin, the terminology and vocabulary utilized in theological institutions can become a code that separates the initiated scholar from the average believer. This becomes even more exasperated in much of sub-Saharan Africa today where theological instruction often occurs in English or French rather than in the vernacular language of the local people. While English language programs and theological vocabulary may be necessary to accomplish our missions as institutions, our goal for our students must be to equip them to communicate biblical truth in plain language that can be understood by a primary school student or an elderly farmer. The success of our programs must be measured by the degree to which they edify the local church and the common man.

### **The Reformation**

In one sense, the Reformation was less a reformation of the Church than a reformation of theological education. Martin Luther was an Augustinian monk and became a Doctor of Theology at the University of Wittenberg in Germany, and his recovery of the biblical gospel emerged from his lectures on Romans, Galatians, and the Psalms at Wittenberg. The University of Wittenberg had been founded in 1502. Luther came to Wittenberg in 1508 to study and was awarded the Doctor of Theology in 1512. The University of Wittenberg was founded under the influence of the Renaissance. Renaissance scholars had a different method of learning than their medieval predecessors. Renaissance scholars desired to “return to the sources” (*ad fontes*) and to learn directly from the original

sources rather than from handed-down tradition. Applied to the Bible, this meant the study of the Scriptures in Greek and Hebrew so that the scholar could understand the author's intended meaning. For Luther, this practice of careful biblical interpretation eventually led to his break with Rome. John Calvin also emerged from a university setting. He had studied classical literature at the University of Paris, and his first book was a commentary on the Roman author Seneca. When Calvin applied the same Renaissance methods of interpretation to the Bible, it brought him to embrace the views of Luther and set him on the path of becoming a Reformer in his own right at Geneva.

Because the Reformation emphasized careful exegesis of the Bible and the preaching of the Bible to the ordinary person in their own language, the Reformation produced Christian schools with the primary task of training pastors. Before the Reformation, it was not necessary for a pastor or priest to have completed a course of study in theology. Under the leadership of Luther and his successor Philip Melanchthon, expectations changed. Lutheran ministers were expected to attend university prior to seeking ordination. Melanchthon revised the curriculum at the University of Wittenberg for the specific purpose of training ministers. Under Melanchthon, theological education focused on three units of study: (1) biblical languages, (2) the interpretation of the text of Scripture, and (3) biblical doctrines. Melanchthon's program became the foundation for new German universities and the model for reforming existing universities, most notably Marburg, Tübingen, and Heidelberg.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Calvin's Academy of Geneva, founded in 1559, influenced the development and spread of theological education in Calvinist lands. The Catholic historian Bokenkotter calls the Academy

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<sup>8</sup>González, *Theological Education*, 69–74.

Calvin’s “crowning achievement.”<sup>9</sup> Calvin envisioned a two-tier school at Geneva, which became reality under the leadership of Theodore Beza. In the lower tier, which was called the private school, students learned to read and write in Greek, Latin, and French. Students who completed the private school could advance to the public school, where they learned exegesis and theology. John Knox called the Academy “the most perfect school of Christ that was ever on earth since the days of the apostles.”<sup>10</sup> The model of education in Geneva spread to the Netherlands, Scotland, and England, and as access to theological education spread so did the expectation that ordained ministers receive formal training. Wherever Calvinist Protestants would go in the world, they would establish universities for the training of pastors, such as Harvard in 1636, the first university established in North America.

Like medieval Catholicism, the form of “Christianity” popular in Africa today is pagan superstition disguised in Christian vocabulary. It is specifically designed for the human sensual appetites. Worship, miraculous activity, and prophetic preaching has been designed to entertain and bewilder the masses. Even the “gospel” message itself has been altered to satisfy the fleshly appetites of sinners—health, wealth, happiness. Against these “enemies of the cross” (Phil 3:18), we must wield the same weapon used by the Reformers, the Word of God, carefully interpreted and plainly preached. Just as Reformation theological education—in both its Lutheran and Calvinist forms—made the preached Word in the local congregation its goal, so also the goal of our educational

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<sup>9</sup>Bokenkotter, *Catholic Church*, 229.

<sup>10</sup>I have been unable to trace the primary source for this quotation. See Mark Galli and Ted Olsen, eds., *131 Christians Everyone Should Know* (Nashville: B&H, 2000), 170.

institutions must be to produce preachers who could rightly and carefully interpret the Bible. The Reformers' reverence for the Word of God made the concept of an "untrained pastor" unthinkable, and in the same way the churches that our institutions serve should begin to expect their pastors to have received a theological education in whatever form is available.

### **Pietism**

In the sixteenth century, the Reformers had focused on formal theological education so that pastors could clearly and carefully expound the Bible in preaching, but by the seventeenth century Protestant theological education had begun to lose its way. In the passing century, Protestant theology had become increasingly academic. It had little concern for godly living and focused increasingly on defending one's own theological tribe. Philip Jacob Spener, a Lutheran pastor in Frankfurt, Germany, complained about this sterile intellectual approach to theology and its effect on preaching: "There are preachers who fill most of their sermons with things that give the impression that the preachers are learned men, although the hearers understand nothing of this."<sup>11</sup> In his 1675 publication *Pia Desideria* ("Pious Thoughts" in Latin), he rebuked the Protestant scholars and pastors of his day for caring more about the judgment of one another than they did the judgment of God: "Let us remember that in the last judgment we shall not be asked how learned we were and whether we displayed our learning before the world ... Instead, we shall be asked how faithfully and with how childlike a heart we sought to further the kingdom of God."<sup>12</sup> The

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<sup>11</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964), 115.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 36.

pervading spirit of the time from the classroom to the pulpit was worldly and arrogant.<sup>13</sup>

To remedy this problem, Spener made six proposals: (1) The Word of God should be used more extensively in both public and private spaces. (2) Instead of reserving the work of the ministry to the clergy, all believers should minister to one another. (3) An emphasis should be laid on the practice of faith, not just knowledge about the faith. (4) Religious controversies should be responded to in godly ways. (5) The training of pastors required training in godly living as well as theological knowledge. (6) Sermons should edify the average hearer and not be treated as a platform to display the brilliance of the preacher.<sup>14</sup> While each of Spener's proposals are worthy of consideration, the last two are especially so when considering the topic of theological education. Spener expected theological education to demand more than mental effort. Professors should live exemplary lives so that "students should unceasingly have it impressed upon them that holy life is not of less consequence than diligence and study, indeed that study without piety is worthless."<sup>15</sup> The accomplishment of this goal required intentionality on the part of schools. Students needed "concrete suggestions" on how they could mortify sin and pursue holiness.<sup>16</sup> Like theological education, preaching also needed to move beyond "the mere accumulation and imparting of information."<sup>17</sup> Spener reminded preachers, "The pulpit is not the place for an ostentatious display of one's skill. It is rather the place to preach the Word of the Lord plainly but powerfully."<sup>18</sup> Spener's legacy for godly

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<sup>13</sup>Spener, *Pia Desideria*, 45–48.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 87–122.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 112–113.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 116.

living and faithful preaching resulted in missionary and revival movements such as the Moravians in Germany, the Methodists in the English-speaking world, and even the Great Awakening.

Theological education can become a mere checklist of credits. If the student checks off each of the required courses and refrains from committing any egregious, public sins while enrolled, he will receive his degree. That piece of paper, however, often says very little about the graduate's character or preparedness for ministry. Furthermore, academic skills of taking exams and turning adequate work in on time says very little about a graduate's ability to communicate theological truth in a plain way for the edification of the church. As we pioneer theological education in Africa, we must develop and evaluate competencies in our students beyond the cognitive. We must design programs with intentional opportunities for the development of godliness and pastoral skills. Acing a systematic theology exam will never prevent a pastor from becoming a thief or an adulterer.

### **James P. Boyce**

Friedrich Schleiermacher's father was a pietist, and Schleiermacher received much of his education in Moravian schools. But Schleiermacher would reject the doctrine of his Pietist upbringing while nevertheless seeking to maintain the emotional vitality of Pietism. Schleiermacher, reconceptualizing Christianity around the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, believed that humans cannot know God as he truly is. Humans can only know God through their subjective experience of dependence upon God. In 1810, Schleiermacher helped establish the University of Berlin, and in 1811, he wrote an outline for the theology program of the university. Students would study three types of theology: (1) Philosophical Theology, (2) Historical

Theology, and (3) Practical Theology. Historical theology examined doctrine as it had been taught by theologians throughout church history while practical theology gave the minister necessary pastoral skills. The core of the curriculum, however, was philosophical theology, what would later be known as philosophy of religion or comparative religion. Christianity was simply one form of human dependence upon God and should be compared to others.<sup>19</sup> This conception of theological education discarded the Bible as authoritative revelation and treated it as a mere historical record of human religion. Like any other human book, the Bible was filled with errors and should be subjected to various methods of criticism. This “scientific approach” to the Bible spread from the University of Berlin to other German universities, and through the influence of German universities, theological liberalism spread to the English-speaking world where institutions founded for training pastors like Harvard and Yale became places for scientific research.

Although the Fundamentalist-Liberal Controversy in the United States would not heat up until the early twentieth century, the threat of liberalism upon theological education was apparent much earlier. In 1856, James P. Boyce gave a faculty address at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina in which he proposed three changes to theological education. These three changes would become the foundation for the seminary that Boyce founded in Greenville (but later moved to Louisville, Kentucky) in 1859, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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<sup>19</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Brief Outline of Theology as a Field of Study*, trans. Terrence Tice (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), §24–31.



First, Boyce believed that current models of theological education did not produce a sufficient number of ministers. At the time, Baptists in the American South suffered from a shortage of pastors with many pastors serving multiple churches simultaneously. One reason for this shortage was that few Americans of the day met the prerequisites for theological studies at seminaries. At most American seminaries, students were expected to begin their studies already knowing Latin and classical Greek. Boyce said, “It is not that every man should be made a scholar, an adept in philology, an able interpreter of the Bible in its original languages.”<sup>20</sup> Instead, theological institutions should seek to give men “adequate knowledge” of doctrine and the ability to accurately interpret the Bible in English. These two things—systematic theology and biblical interpretation—constitute “all that is actually necessary to enable them to preach the Gospel, to build up the Churches on their most holy faith, and to instruct them in the practice of the duties incumbent upon them.”<sup>21</sup> If an institution lowered the bar for admission, then it would be able to produce sufficient pastors to confront the shortage problem.

Second, despite his desire to broaden the reach of theological education, Boyce did not desire to lower the quality or scope of the institution. In fact, he hoped that his envisioned institution would expand the opportunity for quality scholarship among Baptists in the United States. He proposed that such an institution have a well-provisioned library and that it teach various disciplines that would be useful for pastors and missionaries to know. For example, he proposed that the seminary teach Arabic since “knowledge of that language would

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<sup>20</sup>James P. Boyce, *Three Changes in Theological Institutions* (Greenville, SC: C. J. Elford’s Book and Job Press, 1856), 13

<sup>21</sup>Boyce, *Three Changes*, 13.

be of obvious value to those who go forth as Missionaries to Central Africa” where Islam has such a strong grip on the people.<sup>22</sup>

Third, Boyce claimed that a theological institution must guard itself from doctrinal infidelity. Boyce reminded his listeners about the recent damage done to Baptist churches by Campbellism, which taught that baptism was necessary for salvation.<sup>23</sup> But Boyce saw an even more dangerous threat on the horizon: “A crisis in Baptist doctrine is evidently approaching, and those of us who still cling to the doctrines which formerly distinguished us, have the important duty to perform of earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.”<sup>24</sup> The impending crisis was the influence of liberal theology. To guard itself from theological infidelity, an institution needed a confession of faith to which the faculty would be held accountable. To that end, Boyce commissioned Basil Manly Jr to compile the Abstract of Principles when he founded The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Boyce’s prediction proved correct when in 1879 he was forced to dismiss Crawford H. Toy, the professor of Hebrew, for teaching contrary to the Abstract. Toy had studied at the University of Berlin from 1866 to 1868 and had come under the influence of German scholars like Julius Wellhausen. After leaving Louisville, Toy taught at Harvard where he abandoned orthodox Christianity entirely, becoming a Unitarian.<sup>25</sup> After Boyce’s death, however, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary gradually came under the influence of liberal theology anyway. While the Abstract of

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<sup>22</sup>Boyce, *Three Changes*, 32.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>25</sup>Gregory A. Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1859–2009* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 108–149.

Principles remained the standard confession of faith for the faculty, successive administrations failed to hold faculty accountable to the confession and instead allowed faculty to affirm the Abstract on the basis of their own private interpretations of it. But when conservative trustees elected Albert Mohler to lead the seminary in 1993, the Abstract became a tool to return the seminary to Boyce's founding vision.<sup>26</sup>

Like Boyce, institutions in Africa must think in terms of different levels of theological education. Should African pastors learn to interpret the Bible in Greek and Hebrew? Certainly, but not all have the ability or the opportunity to pursue advanced study. Many more will benefit from learning to interpret the Bible in their own language. Africa also needs some elite institutions with well-stocked libraries and a broad mandate to teach from a Christian worldview, while other institutions should have a more focused mission. Each institution or training program should view itself as part of a growing ecosystem of theological education on the continent. But as we develop this ecosystem of theological education, we must each do our duty to plant our institutions for longevity. Like Boyce, we must lay the foundations of theological fidelity at the beginning.

### **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer came of age during the zenith of German liberalism, and he studied at the birthplace of German liberalism, the University of Berlin, under the premier liberal theologian of the era, Adolf von Harnack. Bonhoeffer began his career as a lecturer at the University of Berlin in 1931, but by 1936 he had been banned from the university. In 1933, the Nazis had seized power and began to gradually compel the German church to conform to Nazi ideology. To Bonhoeffer and others

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<sup>26</sup>Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 515–519.

who formed the Confessing Church, the choice was clear: Nazism or Christianity. There could be no harmony between these worldviews. From 1935–1937, Bonhoeffer led an illegal seminary at Finkenwalde. Then from 1937–1940, he led a second incarnation of the school that met at various places in northern Germany. Bonhoeffer and his students were under constant pressure from the Nazis. In this crucible of persecution, however, Bonhoeffer developed a unique model of theological education. He wrote to a friend, “I no longer believe in the university. ... The next generation of pastors, these days, ought to be trained entirely in church-monastic schools, where the pure doctrine, the Sermon on the Mount, and worship are taken seriously.”<sup>27</sup>

Bonhoeffer’s most famous book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, was written during his time at Finkenwalde and published in 1937. Bonhoeffer rejected the “cheap grace” that he saw among German Christians who attempted to conform to the spirit of Nazism. Instead, Christ offers the “costly grace” that demands the disciple take up his cross and give his life.<sup>28</sup> Bonhoeffer believed his seminary should be a school of discipleship that would make disciples who would stand firm for the faith against Nazi tyranny. In 1939, Bonhoeffer published *Life Together*. Bonhoeffer’s emphasis on the Christian community in that book reflected the practices of his seminary.<sup>29</sup> Times of community worship, Scripture meditation, confession, and even leisure was just as important to the curriculum as biblical studies or

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<sup>27</sup>Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *London: 1933–1935*, ed. Keith Clements, trans. Isabel Best, vol. 13, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 217.

<sup>28</sup>Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. R. H. Fuller (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 45–60.

<sup>29</sup>Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (San Francisco: Harper, 1993).

theology. Bonhoeffer meant for his school to drill students in a rhythm of spiritual disciplines that would sustain them throughout their ministries.

Bonhoeffer's seminaries remind us that the true test of our institutions will come not in times of peace and religious liberty but under the heat of persecution. Are we producing the caliber of graduates that will stand for Christ against the World? To put it differently, are we making cross-bearing disciples? Paul R. House, reflecting on Bonhoeffer's seminaries, writes, "Where personal shaping of disciples diminishes or disappears, so does Christ's way of shaping shepherds."<sup>30</sup> Africa has enough religious professionals. The need of the hour are disciples of the crucified and risen Christ.

## Conclusion

After reviewing these six reform movements and reformers in theological education, two general observations should be made. First, the constant threat to Christian theological education has been to remove Christ from the center. Theological education tends to drift toward worldliness and arrogance or at the very least superficiality. When we do theological education in a human way for human goals, then we leave behind biblical discipleship, and we bring great harm to the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. Second, two concerns should permeate our curricula: (1) the clear and accurate preaching of the Word and (2) practical godliness. Students must be constantly reminded that their calling is to pay careful attention to themselves and to the flock of God (Acts 20:28). If we can truly make disciples rather than merely graduating students,

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<sup>30</sup>Paul R. House, *Bonhoeffer's Seminary Vision: A Case for Costly Discipleship and Life Together* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 94. This book should be read by everyone involved in theological education.

then one day we will stand before Christ and receive his commendation.

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