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# PURSUING THE IDEAL OF INTEGRATION IN PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF PENTECOST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, GHANA

## ABSTRACT

*Theological colleges aim at training well-formed, well-resourced Christian leaders who possess a compelling personality and moral authority for impactful and transformational leadership. This is achievable largely through an integrated approach to the curriculum that places equal value on the development of the “head, heart, and hands”, the institutional ideal of holding the cognitive, affective and psychomotor dimensions of theological training in equilibrium. In addition, the contextual and contemporary relevance of such a curriculum is critical for maximum effect. The initial slow and hesitant approach of the Pentecostal movement to theological education has made them dependent on other Christian persuasions for models in theological education. This article reports on an empirical study to describe and evaluate the curriculum of Pentecost Theological Seminary in Ghana, in order to appreciate the extent of integration and relevance accomplished, and to contribute to institutional efforts at further integration.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Pentecost Theological Seminary in Ghana was selected to participate in an action-research project conducted from 2018 to 2020 that examines the extent of integration in the theological curriculum and its impact on producing mature and resourceful Christian leaders. This case study was part of an Africa-wide study with two other institutions conducting similar research, namely, Justo Mwale University in Zambia (Banda *et al.* 2020) and Baptist Theological College in South Africa (Naidoo 2020). Having a major Pentecostal denomination in the broader study was important, as any African theological education study needs to engage Pentecostals, which constitutes the fastest growing Christian tradition in Africa.

Initially, the Pentecostal movement was not favourably disposed to formal theological training. However, this trend has changed since the 1980s (Ojo 2006:236), and Pentecostals are expressing interest in higher education in Africa, where many of the new churches have established their own theological colleges (Omenyo 2008:41-57). Key scholars such as Pobee (2013), Asamoah-Gyadu (2018), Anim (2017), Larbi (2001), and Aryeh (2018) from Ghana have explored various aspects of theological education. Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians have, for many years, been hesitant to engage with theological education, as it stresses academic theology to the disadvantage of religious experience (Asamoah-Gyadu 2018:207). Many of these scholars have written about this issue: the anti-intellectualism in the tradition and the excessive focus on the work of the Holy Spirit. Onyinah and Anim (2013:398) observed that there is a tension between the ability to maintain a sound spirituality *and* academic theology, with which many Pentecostals continue to struggle. The Pentecostal tradition is activity prone and appears to be preoccupied with events such as evangelistic outreaches, revivals, “spiritual” conferences, prayer meetings, and retreats, with hardly any time for academic study and reflection. According to Anderson (2001:300),

Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are clones of western forms of theologizing and new initiatives in providing relevant theological education for third-world contexts are very few and far between.

It has been established that models of theological education inherited from the West seem to ignore “local religious, social, and cultural contexts that dominate Pentecostal/Charismatic people throughout the rest of the world” (Anderson 2001:297).

Because of the Western slant on Pentecostal education, exploring the concept of integration helps theological education consider the intentionality and planning of its curriculum for its contextual needs as Africans. Students also commonly complain that learning is abstract and that they do not

know how to attend to challenges in ministry, practically and theologically. Theological educators now have the task of developing learning programmes that integrate the divisions within the formal curriculum, and link this to the informal aspects of the curriculum, and effectively connect the theory to practice. More reflection is needed on this area of educational practice in Africa, so that the curriculum is fit for its purpose (Galgalo 2004).

## 2. BACKGROUND TO PENTECOST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Pentecost Theological Seminary (PTS) is the official training institute for the Church of Pentecost (CoP) since 2012. PTS is located in the Central Region of Ghana, in a remote campus with impressive infrastructure. PTS was accredited through its affiliation to Trinity Theological Seminary in Ghana, an established institution that trains ministers for the mainline Protestant Churches (Asamoah-Gyadu 2017:5), that provided mentoring and oversight for PTS to the National Accreditation Board.

The origin of the CoP is traceable to the ministry of an indigenous Ghanaian, Peter Anim of Asamankese, who established some Pentecostal churches by 1930 (CoP History 2005:17). Initially, the ordained leaders learnt mainly by observation and practice. The formal theological training of ministers in the CoP began in 1972, in Kumasi, with five students initially. This training grew and later became PTS.

Although PTS largely follows the standard evangelical theology curriculum, dimensions thereof reflect the doctrinal position and ethos of the CoP. Pentecostal distinctives include the radical conversion experience, leading to a palpable manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues, healing, exorcisms, prophecy, and so on. Congregational life places much emphasis on prayer and fasting, which creates the atmosphere for the demonstration of the aforementioned pneumatic gifts. In addition, Pentecostals pursue radical evangelism, and are riveted on church growth and the expansion of their mission.

Currently, the total population of Ghana is 30.7 million, of whom 7.1% profess to being Christian, and 28% of them being Pentecostals. The CoP has progressed to become the largest Protestant denomination in Ghana with 3,257,943 members in 21,802 assemblies and 2,492 ordained pastors, globally.<sup>1</sup> The size of the Church and the sheer number of adherents it commands in Ghana has made it a significant player in the ecclesiastical narrative of Ghana. The success story of the CoP occurs within the post-

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1 The Chairman's State of the Church Address (CoP 2019).

independent Ghanaian context, where the nationals, who appear to be industrious and creative, worked hard to indigenise all national institutions, including the church.

## 2.1 Theological programme

The academic programme under review for this research was the accredited two-year Diploma in Theology. The curriculum follows the traditional structure of divisions and courses of Biblical Studies (seven), Theology (three), Church History (two), Mission (three), Religious Studies (two), General Education (three), and Practical Ministry (six), a total of 26 courses. The curriculum engages vertical integration, which refers to the sequence of courses from first year to second year, from introductory courses to more advanced courses (Cahalan 2011:81). However, horizontal integration, which deepens the same subject area at each year level, was not evident, possibly because of the short duration of the programme. There are also seven additional non-credit courses such as Communication Skills, Primary Health Care, and so on. This reflects that the programme is only accredited at Diploma level and that there is a need for additional learning.

PTS trains only CoP students and, hence, all courses are compulsory with no specialisations. PTS averages 100 male students per year. There are three terms in the first year, and the second year has two blocks (six weeks long). The training is accomplished mainly through lectures, weekend church placement, and extra-curricular items such as prayer meetings, community worship services, and pastoral group meetings with a lecturer. The programme structure can be referred to as a “sandwich model” (Harkness 2001:143), where students are admitted to a first-year full-time residential programme and then posted to the field in the second year to oversee a cluster of churches known as districts. While doing this in the second year, they continue with further theological education at PTS in a block structure that brings them to campus for lectures twice a year (for six weeks) to complete the remaining courses. Students are exposed to congregations that offer them hands-on ministry experience concurrently with their PTS course work. This programme is structured to offer some degree of integration, with the intention of linking theory and practical ministry.

The academic staff at PTS includes ten full-time and 22 adjunct faculty staff, as well as 26 administrative staff. Besides the few adjunct female faculty staff, the faculty consists mostly of male staff. Although the vast majority of the PTS faculty staff are church ministers of the CoP, a few are Evangelicals and one is a Methodist. This category of faculty members has helped address the ecumenical concerns, by engaging constructively with Pentecostal praxis and enriching the exposure of the students.

### 3. RESEARCH PROJECT

The aim of the research project was to examine the academic and non-academic methods of fostering integration in the curriculum; to understand the contextual and institutional challenges that impact on the curriculum, and to indicate ways towards an integrative approach for PTS ministerial formation. The theoretical framework of the study was built on Cahalan's (2011) definition, as attempts to combine in a programme the three major dimensions of education, namely a cognitive or intellectual apprenticeship, pastoral skills development, and an apprenticeship of character or spiritual formation. The rationale behind the practice of curriculum integration is that learning is enhanced when it is supported by prior learning (Beane 1997), which helps in the overall formation of students in their lifeworld.

This study employed a qualitative approach, using action research defined as

a flexible research methodology uniquely suited to researching and supporting change. It integrates social research with exploratory action to promote development (Given & Somekh 2008:4).

In this method, the researcher is an observer and a stakeholder in the outcome, where the research focus will change through the research process itself. In addition, action research values the subjective insights from the research participants. The research team included the Principal of PTS and four senior faculty staff members to examine the alignment and integration of the Diploma programme.

Data collection involved 19 interviews with faculty staff, recent graduates, and final-year students. Four interviews were conducted with faculty staff who are involved in formation; ten students were selected randomly and interviewed to discover how their educational experience was preparing them for ministry, and five recent graduates evaluated the effectiveness of their training on their current ministry. Data was also collected through observations of various formational activities on campuses such as chapel services and lectures; through an analysis of the curriculum, in order to establish the integration, and through the mandate evident in PTS policy documents such as Statutes and the Students Handbook. Overall triangulation was used to understand the integrated formational emphasis in more than one way and enable the researchers to explore all aspects thereof. At all times, principles of research ethics were maintained with institutional permission from the CoP to conduct the research, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and the clarification of data management.

Interviews were transcribed and manually coded, using open coding (Saldana 2009). Thereafter, transcripts were coded, using software called ATLAS.ti v.8. A code list was generated with the assistance of data analysis support, member checks were conducted, and themes were formulated, verified against the manual coding. The research team spent time understanding themes against actual educational practice. To verify the newly formulated themes, a stakeholders' workshop was held that assembled all faculty staff, administrative staff, a cross-section of students, senior pastors from the CoP, and lay leaders to receive the findings and provide additional views. Immediately thereafter, the research team met to further discuss the input and to refine the themes. Data analysis and interpretation involved thematic analysis (Denzin & Lincoln 1998:80). As a final part of the research process, local experts hosted a faculty capacity-building workshop on core principles of integrated education to enable PTS to fully engage in this action research.

## 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Findings revealed different aspects of the teaching-learning experience. Themes especially focused on the three major learning dimensions and the integration of learning. Positive themes included the collegial staff and students' relations, close community interactions, and that staff were good role models. In this section, we highlight findings that point to gaps in the curriculum, in order to work towards integrative strategy.

### 4.1 Formal curriculum issues

The prioritisation of academic training was a key theme. PTS appears to place an overwhelming emphasis on knowledge acquisition to the disadvantage of the other areas that contribute to students' holistic development. A faculty member stated:

If we want to look at it per the credit or time allotted to it, one dimension receives more attention, that is knowledge acquisition, because a lot of time is spent in the lecture hall, compared to the time that is spent on other things.

In this fast-paced curriculum, semesters were crammed with courses so as to cover all the material, with hardly any time to reflect or integrate learning. A student noted:

I will say over here, the classroom work was more, and that is a concern to some of us. The theories that we are taken through become[s] very difficult to apply, if you do not make much effort to be able to digest

much of the things that are being taught, then it becomes a little bit difficult.

In terms of pedagogical methods, faculty appears to be the omniscient authority on the subject, downloading information for the students to assimilate. This was reflected in the assessment procedures of PTS, which rivets on formal examinations. A student commented:

And then if we can also minimize the focus on examinations ... and focus more on some of these brainstorming sessions, that will help.

In response to an enquiry on integrated assessment, such as a reflective paper or a portfolio that covers all aspects of learning, a faculty member indicated:

Not really, we don't do all these things [integrated assessment] but with time we have to ... They just write term papers and they go, and they rather evaluate the faculty. But if there is evaluation, it is when maybe students are on placement, and their supervisors submit assessment reports, but concerning your particular dimension of evaluation we don't have any such thing.

Another theme was the curriculum's lack of contextual relevance, highlighted in student interviews and in the stakeholders' workshop. One faculty member opined:

We need to implement the curriculum in a way that will fit into the needs of African society. Adequately responding to the needs of the recipients of the products of the curriculum, what they need to know, and how the knowledge is imparted. So I think we have not made so much effort in that direction.

One would consider it surprising that a faculty member would state this, as faculty staff are responsible for the content of the curriculum. However, at PTS, the curriculum decisions are influenced by the CoP. Although PTS faculty members are largely responsible for the content and structure of its academic programmes, the CoP leadership could pragmatically intervene to request the inclusion of programmes and activities in the curriculum that would serve the best interest of the church. A staff member stated that Western models undermine African attempts to contextualise:

We have to find out the questions that people are asking, questions on witchcraft, and questions on what to do with their traditional past. The Western models try to degrade the past, but I think in our context you cannot completely dissociate people from their past.

Pentecostals, where the Spirit is active, will demand that the learning should vigorously engage with supernatural realities and the importance of charismatic power. Yet, most of the PTS faculty members were educated in the West, which influences their teaching. At the same time, faculty members are aware of integrating African values into the curriculum:

We need to teach values such as communal living ... Africans cherish community, accepting one another, trying to go to the aid of one another in trouble. We are not that individualistic, so if this kind of value is inculcated in ministers, they leave with that mind-set and they can use it to mobilise people in the community.

Only focusing on disconnected doctrine will be inadequate for deep learning. The curriculum needs to promote value systems such as communalism and cooperation, which are intrinsic in the host community. There was a need to broaden the curriculum, courses that promote contemporary social concerns, as the vast majority of the courses deal mostly with the work of the minister in the local church. A graduate stated:

engage ministers to dissect issues and see how we can write certain communiques and let our voice be heard in the nation.

Other practical courses such as counselling were needed and would become major components of their work as ministers; yet they are not trained in this. Together with relationship or relational skills in ministry, a student stated:

In addition, we must let the people understand that the work [ministry] is relationship, so they must bring in certain courses that seek to bring our attention to living with people.

## 4.2 Integrating theory and practice

Even though PTS offers a Diploma programme with an “apprenticeship model” (Anim 2017:52), it was found that the theoretical component of the course was emphasised at the expense of the practical learning, and that practical learning had to extend beyond preaching. A student stated:

en bloc placement ... inform them not to limit the exercise to preaching assignments, but also provide opportunity for other things to help the students.

This is the assessment of an alumnus who is now in ministry:

I think some of the courses were very theoretical, so when you go to the field you can see that it is not applicable here, but as you are in the



system you learn to adjust. You develop your own views and theology to be able to move on.

The above indicates that the student is left to create the integration and is not given help to consider the theory for its practical use; practical learning is not brought back to the classroom for further reflection with the teacher and students. This praxis mode of learning is lost. We found only a one-way theory to practice which makes learning ineffective and irrelevant, especially when Western learning is applied to an African context. We also noted that, although students spent their entire weekends working at the placement location, this effort did not earn them any credit. The only document attached to this exercise is an assessment form for the host minister to update the faculty on the students' capabilities, and their character strengths and weaknesses. Students requested more transparency in pastoral reporting. They reported that there is generally a lack of supervision of pastoral skills and that supervisors are not trained. One faculty member opined:

I think a definite effort should be made to identify certain pastors who have what it takes to teach students something new. We also need to let the pastors know what we do here so that our students can easily connect when they go to the Districts.

As supervisors are not trained, they do not know where to focus the practical learning; pastoral training becomes "busy" work in the church where the focus is not on real reflective learning.

### 4.3 Focused spiritual formation

While it was appreciated that there are various spiritual activities on campus such as pastoral groups with up to 14 students per group and chapel services that build fellowship, this spiritual development was not coherent, with no programme in place. Spiritual development needs intention, as future ministers are expected to possess a genuine spirituality – a life of prayer, devotion, and worship (Anderson 2001:297). This will be a resource in times of conflict, disappointment, and setback. Importantly, spirituality is the other side of morality including integrity, honesty, self-discipline, and holiness. Students commented that spiritual activities at PTS are not adequate in terms of the time allocated to activities:

For pastoral formation to have an impact on the character of the one being formed, they must have time for prayer sessions, because a pastor is supposed to pray.

In addition, students reported on an overwhelming theme of the lack of personalised spiritual care or had access to counselling. A key principle

of integration is to know the students we are teaching, to understand their motivations and aspirations so as to connect teaching in a meaningful way. This is typical of Pentecostals whose extreme pneumatic focus causes neglect of the human person in terms of emotional, psychological, and spiritual pressures. It is true that many people join Pentecostals churches to meet their emotional needs, which were neglected in the mainline Christian traditions. However, emotional and psychological maturity is often assumed at the leadership training level. A possible reason for this overall lack of care could be the belief that “academic achievement ... is important but is not a guarantee of effectiveness in ministry” (McKinney 2000:261). Many Pentecostals believe that “education by no means ensures that a minister will be competent, caring, honest, faithful, or spiritually gifted” (Martin 2016:3).

#### 4.4 Faculty capacity issues

Even though all PTS faculty members were highly qualified academics, they had limited awareness of pedagogical styles and methods. In interviews, a faculty member insisted that a course in educational theory was critical for PTS faculty:

Because for years The Church of Pentecost thought that education was a bad thing, so we do not have many faculty [members], so when they are appointed to teach, there should be a definite programme for them to acquire at least a certificate in education ... to expose them to theories and practices of education.

Further to their limited exposure to pedagogy, there is a report on the shortage of both academic and administrative staff at PTS. Understaffing characterises many theological institutions, due to lack of resources, leaving academics to teach more than one subject.

### 5. DISCUSSION

Making sense of the findings involves attaching meaning and interpretations within the PTS institutional context, the broader CoP denominational, and within the cultural and social contexts of Ghana. We will discuss the structure, content and capacity of the curriculum in relation to an integrative approach.

The PTS educational programme was initially structured to offer some degree of integration by linking theory and practical ministry in a two-year diploma that offers foundational courses and practical exposure. Instead, there was excessive academic focus with banking education and some practical activity in ministry, with hardly any reflection taking place, as supervisors are

not trained and learning was not brought back to the classroom. A deeper scrutiny of the focus of the PTS curriculum (2016) states:

The theology programme therefore seeks to develop an in-depth theological understanding and equip students to engage with the religious challenges that confront society today. Thus, students will gain a good grasp of current thinking, trends and developments in global Christianity, as well as sharpen their missiological use of the Bible, showing practical ways to understand and interpret human conditions which will enhance effective ministry both at home and abroad.

This framing of the curriculum reveals a significant concern for the intellectual resourcefulness of the student to respond constructively to societal concerns. In addition, the “missiological” application of the theology should result in the practical function of the student for fruitful Christian service. There is no mention of the essential spiritual or character development or the focused pastoral skills development except for reference to “showing practical ways”. It is assumed that the student is a spiritual person and practical learning is understood as the old theory-to-practice application (Cahalan 2011).

The CoP is significantly supportive of the theological education offered at PTS. In their Vision 2023, they state that “PTS ... will seek to strengthen ministerial formation, refresher courses, higher theological education and missionary training for the Church” (CoP 2018:1). In addition, “[w]e [church leadership] will ensure that the pursuit of further studies by ministers does not impact negatively on their practical ministry” (CoP 2018:1). While the church leadership is concerned to invest in theological education for its ministers, ensuring that the practical aspect of ministry simultaneously receives adequate attention, the programme offered does not engage a comprehensive understanding of ministerial training. Rylaarsdam (2017:93) intimates that a well-integrated seminary education should produce students who are knowledgeable and theologically reflective enough to link “biblical, historical, theological, and pastoral reflection with all ministry practices”. We observed a lack of intentional integration at PTS, as there was hardly any connection across disciplines, and teaching was done in silos. In addition, course descriptions revealed hardly any awareness of linking knowledge to pastoral skills and character. Rylaarsdam (2017:94) provides the key concerns of an integrated curriculum:

A history course must also strive to develop student competencies in other curricular areas. Faculty are expected to ask the following questions: How can this course intentionally develop the character of a student? How can the knowledge and skills developed in this course help the student form a community of disciples? Simply asking, how

can I cover the content of my discipline most efficiently, is no longer adequate.

Connecting intellectual capacity to ministerial skills acquisition and linking both to character development is the goal of holistic theological education. However, the PTS findings are skewed in favour of knowledge acquisition, which confirms Naidoo's (2013:756) observation that most of the seminary curricula favour academic work, thus limiting the time and scope assigned to other dimensions. A major concern was for PTS to migrate from a teaching-centred approach to a student-centred one that empowers students to discover and generate knowledge, and avoid excessive reliance on the lecturer for knowledge acquisition. Arey (2018:69) even mentions sociocultural ways of learning, "incarnational and participatory learning that recognizes the Spirit as the supreme teacher". This promotes the transformative learning approach, where both formal and informal learning experiences are explicitly integrated, giving value to all three dimensions of learning, namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor, as well as linking theory to practice (Wall 2017:70).

More recently, the CoP has become concerned about holistic ministerial formation, since this was raised by the Executive Council,<sup>2</sup> who then mandated PTS to balance academic work with skills development. Considering the suggestion that for any approach to ministerial formation to be effective and intentional, the training "may need to be out there rather than in here" (Harkness 2001:149) implies that practical training should receive as much emphasis as theoretical training. One of the major issues identified in terms of designing an integrated curriculum was the duration of the programme: a two-year qualification offering limited exposure to the scope of theological knowledge necessary for adequate ministerial formation. Although Pentecostals have been late to take to the rigours of theological education, it appears that the value some put on it is still quite low, which this observation reveals:

Formal theological education is perceived as limited to equipping students philosophically to present arguments concerning the Bible with very limited and insignificant training on how to spiritually minister to the existential needs of the audience (Aryeh 2018:68).

We noted that the Diploma programme design was impacted by a CoP decision, due to accreditation woes, that PTS merge with a partner institution, the Pentecost University College at the University of Ghana. This resulted in Pentecost University College removing mission- or theology-related courses to "make space for the University of Ghana requirements" (Anim 2017:15), courses that involved a secular epistemology and non-theology-related

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2 2019 General Council meeting of CoP, 8 May 2019.

courses. This arrangement “posed a threat to the integrity of the theology programme” (Anim 2017:15). These denominational decisions pose major challenges in developing an integrated curriculum, especially when the CoP only allows students to stay on campus for a limited time and the seminary cannot fully expose students to an extensive and adequate training programme. This is, however, underpinned by the fact that the church bears all the cost involved in the training of ministers, whether capital or recurrent. In addition, faculty staff are appointed by the CoP leadership, rather than people selected for their area of competence, as a faculty member commented:

I think the denominational leadership really have a say in almost everything done here. Right from the appointment of faculty to the appointment of Principal, and I would say even programmes, though initially programmes were not dictated to the college, but they have considerable influence.

Another example is the lack of female faculty members at PTS, which is largely attributable to the CoP ethos. This limitation does have implications for women’s empowerment in Christian ministry. It is interesting to note that PTS extends training for ministers’ wives and women training as ministry leaders. The church considerably controls institutional processes and as much as this arrangement makes for stability and progress from the Church’s perspective, developing and delivering an integrated formation programme will continue to challenge PTS for some time. Dandala (2015:115) writes of the tension of balancing denominational interest with ministerial formation demands and the need for critical inquiry.

Secondly, regarding the content of the programme, a critical aspect of integration is the concern for contextual relevance, where theories learnt in the classroom cannot be easily applied in pastoral settings (Galgalo 2004:13). Courses are foundational in that they mostly focus on biblical and theological knowledge. Furthermore, the scope of the curriculum appears limited, as students need exposure to knowledge of the relevant areas of their work as ministers. The introduction of new courses of contemporary relevance, which respond to some of the numerous socio-cultural and religious challenges facing Africa today, would enhance the contextual integration process. The concern of African theological educators (Onyinah & Anim 2013:394) about the dominance of Western theological ideas in the African academy is well documented:

In the past, theological education in Africa has sought to approximate North American and European models of seminary structure, with the content heavily dosed with details of systematic theology. European

missions often ignore the penetrating questions and felt needs of the African.

To understand the impact of the Western influence, one has to appreciate the history of PTS. The first three principals were of British extraction and made hardly any effort to contextualise learning. According to Pobe (2013:21), Western theological education is significantly influenced by Enlightenment ideology, and this stress on objectivity and rationalism in Western education often clashed with the lived experiences of Africa, which mainly constitutes a rather subjective field of knowledge. Life in Africa is characterised by “irrational” beliefs in witchcraft, ancestral worship, ghosts, dwarfs, and water mermaids. One PTS faculty member views these as the ancestral past of the African that must be negotiated within the context of Christian experience. Jusu (2009:46) admits this quest is not an endeavour in unbridled subjectivism,

but arriving at those subjective views about God must be through disciplined inquiry and reflective endeavours in the process of hermeneutics, experience and reason.

Mbiti (2006:1) reminds us that religion influences every segment of social life in Africa to such an extent that it is difficult to isolate it from other spheres, for objective inquiry. It is, therefore, suggested that the Enlightenment approach to theology will not easily synchronise with the Africa experience,

where credulity is the norm ... where the universe continues to remain ... ‘enchanted’, and where ethics continues to be strongly shaped by theism and social tradition (Balcomb 2013:583).

Higgs (2015:43) suggests that it is only humane to decolonise theological education in Africa by using post-colonial approaches to theological education that will retrieve indigenous African scholarship by restructuring the curriculum and making significant changes in theological discourses.

On the issue of contextual relevance, this is exacerbated by the dearth of African theological literature. Books published by African theologians are few and far between and almost non-existent in some theological disciplines. This perpetuates the African dependence on Western theological models. Although leading tertiary institutions such as the University of Ghana, Legon, and Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture, Ghana, educate theologians locally, the challenge of accessing publishing services in Ghana is partly responsible for the limited availability of indigenous theological literature.

Another critical content issue is that Pentecostals dichotomise ministerial formation by drawing a line between the spiritual and the intellectual, between character and skills that are detrimental to integration. The excessive spiritual

orientation of African Pentecostals informs their ascription of various kinds of human expression to spiritual forces, which often ignores the human factor. This attitude appears to influence their theological education, which assumes, to some extent, that the physical, emotional, psychological, and ethical needs of students are best left to the regulation of the “Spirit”. Hence, some Pentecostal theological institutions pay marginal attention to moral education and counselling. This gap can be addressed with an integrated theology curriculum that transcends cognitive knowledge assimilation for a “more integrated human development” (Naidoo 2013b:6). There is a need for reflection on other dimensions of formation, for example character development, with a formal approach such as using interviews or reflective papers to evaluate students’ progress in these areas. Character development was the most neglected aspect in the integration process. This endorses Naidoo’s (2010:347) observation that, because seminaries pay little attention to “pedagogies of formation and contextualisation”, their graduates tend to lack self-awareness, and their leadership capacity is often irrelevant to their context. Spiritual formation targets personal transformation and the ultimate pursuit of knowing God, rather than knowing about God (Kärkkäinen 2012:248). There is a tension of reconciling academic goals with spirituality, which characterises all “revivalistic theological training” (Kärkkäinen 2012:248). The gap is exacerbated by the Pentecostal assumption that the Holy Spirit is responsible for, and controls everything, including human inclinations.

Finally, the issue of capacity-building is a serious need at PTS. A seminary that delivers integrated theological education must itself be integrated in terms of diversity, administration, and internal faculty relationships that promote ecumenism. Foley (2017:21) aptly observed that seminary boards or those responsible for the progress of the seminary hardly reflect on the interrelatedness of the

various groups, tasks, processes, and messages that reverberate through a school to discover how they converge or when they contradict each other.

The extent to which the various segments of the seminary demonstrate unity and a common purpose will significantly impact on the quality of their products, namely students who are expected to carry a message of integration to a disintegrated world.

Findings from PTS indicate that they have a highly educated faculty. However, due to denominational control, certain policy decisions that could have enhanced the integration of PTS are difficult to implement. For example, faculty members are required to take up full-time leadership roles as resident ministers of some local churches. Their work in the church thus competes with

their time for professional development and the contribution to the ministerial formation programme at the seminary. This brings into focus the faculty members' pedagogical effectiveness at the seminary. Obviously, the banking approach to education results in an imbalance of power between learners and educators, which can be resolved by engaging students in informal and semi-formal patterns of learning for power improvisation (Foley 2017:67). Faculty should empower and guide students to seek, discover, and apply knowledge constructively.

## 6. CURRICULAR INTERVENTIONS MOVING FORWARD

The research project yielded many concerns on integration. Although the curriculum indicates attempts to integrate theory and practice, the extent to which this is done needs far more reflection and implementation. Taking into account the considerable level of influence exerted by the CoP leadership on the educational practices at PTS, it becomes clear that, for integrative education to become a reality, there first needs to be coherence within the institution, where all significant stakeholders – CoP, faculty staff and students – are committed to a *known* theological and educational philosophy. Quality education must be a priority, as it reveals the deeply theological nature of ministry, which is not merely a task to be managed with an efficient office or a good personality. Thankfully during the duration of this research project, this concern of deepening education has been prioritised since the CoP leadership and the faculty staff initiated a process of upgrading the PTS Diploma programme to a four-year Bachelor of Arts in Theology.

As an action-research project working toward curriculum integration at PTS, a helpful way forward would be to develop an integrative motif, ideally based on the work of the Spirit, that can hold together what PTS wants to achieve through its theological training. The curriculum must be embedded with Pentecostal distinctives, so that the training is suited to the tradition and the sociocultural context and not exported from elsewhere. Nevertheless, to accomplish this, one has to be mindful of the National Accreditation Board (NAB) standards. Given the high prevalence of Pentecostal churches in Ghana, the NAB will require generic quality educational standards, and caution against overt “spiritual learning”. Yet there are various ways to incorporate spiritual development for credit purposes: reflective and formative assessment, together with emphasis on Christian values and a Pentecostal ethos in the hidden curriculum.



To be part of this research project, institutions needed to make curricular commitments towards integration. For PTS, these learnings, taken into the new programme, include the following commitments:

- The course structure will include the idea of vertical, horizontal and diagonal integration (Cahalan 2011) that will purposefully plan learning experiences for each learning dimension. In addition, thematic courses that connect concepts across disciplines would be developed and taught by faculty teams to enhance their integrative impact.
  1. Pedagogically, teaching will be student-centred using dialogical and participatory methods such as a problem-solving approach with community engagement.
  2. Teaching content would reflect on local idioms such as proverbs, metaphors, songs and imagery drawn from the communities, drawing on the myths and legends of the African/Ghanaian context.
  3. PTS will increase its theological literature of African sources in the library and make it a requirement as compulsory course material.
- Practical ministry skills development was enhanced by first training ministry supervisors. New accountability structures will be developed: comprehensive assessment forms designed for ministry supervisors. In addition, students will present a written report on their placement ministry encounters to their pastoral group leaders, who are to help them address any relevant issues.
- A new focus on character development was introduced that will use a reflective paper to help students express their self-awareness and progression in spirituality. This research project has already stimulated and revitalised the pastoral groups by now evaluating the skills and conduct of each student, together with the use of psychometric tests to assess students' emotional and vocational suitability for ministry.
- To further enhance its capacity for integration, faculty needs professional development as educators. Faculty resourcefulness would be enhanced by curtailing their involvement in church activities, investing in their research and publication, and the CoP sponsoring their conference participation.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This research project provided an opportunity to explore what integration could mean for PTS. It highlighted the complexity of providing holistic theological

training within the denominational landscape. Shaped by various institutional and denominational challenges, this study revealed specific dimensions: the need for more appropriate pedagogy; a contextually connected curriculum; the need to respond well to accreditation and denominational demands, and intentionally connecting with students' lived experiences. These issues all need further exploration. Integrative learning is not restricted to the formal curriculum; it involves all areas of institutional life that support the integration. It can be realised as a key approach to curriculum design for meaningful learning so as to develop Christian maturity, and a uniquely Pentecostal theological vision.

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