

Reflections after 30 years of lecturing

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(The italicised text can be omitted for an abridged reading)

Introduction

- Would Jesus have sent his disciples to a modern Bible College?

Pentecostals and theological education –

- the past
 - short courses
 - focus on training for pastoral ministry
 - anti-intellectual
- the present and future
 - the increasing recognition of the importance of teaching
 - the redeeming of the mind and scholarship
 - the value of exploration
 - the importance of application
 - the importance of adapting our teaching to our audiences

Pentecostals and the Academy

Important factors in the learning journey of the student

- The necessity of a context for spiritual formation
- The provision of a place for the Spirit
- The possibility of encounter with and experience of God
- The importance of planning for the medium-distance future
 - Make room for our lecturers to keep learning

Conclusion

The Reading

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...

You are the salt of the world...you are the light of the world...love your enemies...pray like this, ‘Our Father who art in heaven’...don’t be anxious about life”.

And Peter said “Do you want us to take this literally or should we contextualize it for first century pre-modern non-Westernized Jews?”

Andrew said, “How many books did you use for that lecture and have you included them in your bibliography with full references?”

James said, “Is this coming up in the exam at the end of the semester?”

Philip said, “Do you want us to memorize *all* these points?”

Matthew said, “Can you go over the third point; I didn’t have time to write it down”

Bartholomew said, “When you said that we should be lights in the world, did you mean that we be like candles in the world or searchlights or these new halogen bulbs?”

Judas said, “Do we *all* have to do this?”

John said, “I’m sorry, I think I dozed off; did I miss anything”

Thomas said, “I’ve got some questions”

Thaddaeus said, “Is it coffee time?”

One of the Scribes asked, “Jesus, what were your aims for this lecture?”

One of the Pharisees asked, “Jesus, what were your proposed learning outcomes?”

Herod asked, “Jesus, has this been passed by the Jerusalem University validation board?”

Pilate asked, “Jesus, does this compare favourably academically with the teaching in the Academy at Rome?”

Paul said, “What, no tongues?”

And Jesus...wept

Introduction

Jesus had a very clear agenda when he set up his learning programme...to create disciples. Having established who he wanted to train and what he wanted them to be

trained to do, he set about training them efficiently and teaching them content that was relevant in a style that was appropriate. A question we rightly come back to from time to time is, “Who are we creating in our programmes and are we succeeding?”¹

This week, thirty years ago, I came to Regents to teach; I was, by some way, the youngest faculty member, aged just 31 and only out of Bible College six years myself. I began to teach subjects that were set by the universities of Cambridge and London – not especially relevant for our students or our own theological aspirations; but that’s what you did back then. In time, I have seen major changes to our teaching ethos and curricula, the introduction of our own degrees, undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral. We have strategized, changed, planned and prayed ourselves into the College we now are, moving campus twice in the process, changing our name and changing principals five times, in my time, as well as replacing all our Faculty team over the years – except for me! After all these years, I would like to offer some reflections.

Pentecostals and theological education - the past

▪ Short courses

For most of their existence, Pentecostal Bible Colleges have been the venues for short term preparation for ministry, not places for exploration and contemplation. Studies were not expected to last for longer than 2 years and were often much shorter, the teachers often being successful or experienced ministers or evangelists.

▪ Focus on training for pastoral ministry

The major purpose for the establishment of such Colleges in the past was to prepare people for evangelism and leading churches rather than for objective enquiry and development of Pentecostal scholarship.² McClung writes of study conducted there as, “more experiential than cognitive, more activist than

¹ Ruthven, J., “Are Pentecostal Seminaries a Good Idea?”, *Pneuma* 26.2 (2004) pp. 339-345 Yung, H., “Critical Issues Facing Theological Education in Asia”, *Transformation* (Oct - Dec. 1995) p. 1 (pp. 1-6).

² Maachia, F.D., “The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology”, in Dempster, M.W., B.D. Klaus and D. Petersen (eds.), *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), p. 9 (pp. 8-29).

reflective, more actualized than analyzed".³ Also, in the early days of Pentecostalism, there was a strong belief in the imminent return of Jesus and therefore to engage in extended periods of study was felt to be inappropriate.⁴ Similarly, in the (positive) quest for evangelism and pastoral leadership, education has generally suffered; while church growth has emphasised the status of the pastor/preacher, the teacher has often been marginalised. Kennedy makes the valid point that "Pentecostals have historically focused their attention on missionary projects rather than on establishing research institutions"⁵.

The focus was largely on "how to do..." funerals, weddings, prayer meetings, leading people to receive the baptism in the Spirit... In this regard, it was unwittingly following a Roman educational system where the emphasis was training the student to complete a task, to know the basic rules, rather than to experiment or investigate or explore truth.

▪ **Anti-intellectual tendencies**

In the past, Pentecostalism exhibited significant anti-intellectual tendencies. In an interesting empirical investigation, Kay demonstrates that, as recently as 1999, 36% of UK Pentecostal ministers had not received any formal theological training while only 10% had gained a degree in theology.⁶ This reflects the anti-intellectual tradition that has existed in Pentecostalism for much of its history. In recent years, there has been considerable discussion by Pentecostals concerning the role and development of Bible Colleges and Christian education⁷ and in some areas of the

³ McClung, L.G., "Salvation Shock Troops", in Smith, H.B., (ed.) *Pentecostals from the Inside Out*, (Wheaton: Victory, 1990) pp. 81-90 (86).

⁴ Wilson, L.F., "Bible Institutes, Colleges, Universities" in Burgess, S.M., Van der Maas, E.M., (eds.) *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) p. 373 (pp. 372- 380).

⁵ Kennedy, J.R., "Anti-Intellectualism", in *Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity* (ed.) Burgess, S., (London: Routledge, 2006) pp. 35-39.

⁶ Kay, W.K., "Sociology of British Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements", in Burgess, S.M., Van der Maas, E.M., (eds.) *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) p. 1081 (pp. 1080-1083).

⁷ Warrington, K., "Would Jesus have sent his disciples to Bible College?", *JEPTA* 23 (2003) pp. 30-44; Tarr, D., "Transcendence, Immanence, and the Emerging Pentecostal Academy", in Ma, W., Menzies, R.P., (eds.) *Pentecostalism in Context. Essays in Honour of William W. Menzies* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) pp. 195-222; Robeck, C.M.Jr., "Seminaries and Graduate Schools", in Burgess, S.M., Van der Maas, E.M., (eds.) *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) pp. 1045-1050; Ferris, R.W., (ed.) *Renewal in Theological Education: Strategies for Change*, Billy Graham Center: Wheaton College (1990); Lee, E., "What the Academy needs from the Church", *AJPS*, 3.2 (July 2000); pp. 311-318; Hittenberger, J.S.,

world, there has been a resurgence in the growth of Pentecostal Bible Colleges and scholarship (India, Ghana, China, Asia).⁸ However, in other regions, this has not been reflected, Sepulveda, for example, describing Chilean Pentecostals as still exhibiting a “strong anti-theological, anti-academic prejudice”.⁹ Similarly, Hedlund cautions against this tendency among some Indian Pentecostals¹⁰ as does Ayuk of Nigerian Pentecostals,¹¹ Larbi acknowledging that African “Pentecostals would like to hide behind closed doors and pray instead of presenting the gospel at the open market of ideas”.¹² This propensity is often most espoused where the leaders are less educated as well as where the perception of ministerial success is viewed as being solely or significantly due to the Spirit.¹³ Furthermore, in general, Pentecostals have preferred to live in contexts dominated by exclamation marks rather than questions marks.

A number of reasons may be adduced for this tendency to limit the value of the mind by some Pentecostals:

- It has partially resulted from the historical roots of Pentecostalism, which mainly attracted adherents from the working, and therefore less well educated,

“Toward a Pentecostal Philosophy of Education”, *Pneuma*, 23.2 (Fall 2001) 217-244; Dovre, P.J., (ed.) *The Future of Religious Colleges*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2002); Johns, C.B., *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy Among the Oppressed*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) pp. 111-140; Kay, W.K., “Pentecostal Education”, *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 25.2 (2004) pp. 229-239; Sepúlveda, J., “The Challenge for Theological Education from a Pentecostal Standpoint”, *Ministerial Formation*, 87 (1999) pp. 29-34.

⁸ Wilson, “Bible...”, pp. 375-379; Espinosa, G., “Bible Institutes, Spanish-speaking”, in Burgess, S.M., Van der Maas, E.M., (eds.) *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) pp. 38-381; Hunter, H.D., “International Pentecostal-Charismatic Scholarly Associations”, in Burgess, S.M., Van der Maas, E.M., (eds.) *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) pp. 795-797; Hedlund, R.E., “Critique of Pentecostal Mission by a Friendly Evangelical”, *AJPS* 8.1 (2005) pp. 83-84 (pp. 67-94); Sun, B., “Assemblies of God Theological Education in Asia Pacific: A Reflection”, *AJPS* 3.2 (2000) pp. 232-241; Daniels, D., “Live so can use me anytime, Lord, anywhere (sic): Theological Education in the Church of God in Christ, 1970-1997”, *AJPS* 3.2 (2000) pp. 295-310; Hittenberger, J.S., “Globalization, ‘Marketization’, and the Mission of Pentecostal Higher Education in Africa”, *Pneuma* 26.2 (2004) pp. 182-215; Palmer, M., “Orienting our Lives: The Importance of a Liberal Education for Pentecostals in the Twenty First Century”, *Pneuma* 23.2 (2001) pp. 204-206.

⁹ Sepúlveda, J., “The Challenge for Theological Education from a Pentecostal Standpoint”, *Ministerial Formation*, 87 (1999) pp. 29-34 (29); Wilson, “Bible...”, p. 374.

¹⁰ Hedlund, “Critique...”, p.89.

¹¹ Ayuk, A.A., “Portrait of a Nigerian Pentecostal Missionary”, *AJPS* 8.1 (2005) pp. 133-136 (pp. 117-141).

¹² Larbi, E.K., *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 2001) p. 447

¹³ Pagaialii, T., “The Pentecostal Movement of Samoa: Reaching the Uttermost”, *AJPS* 7.1 (2004) pp. 273-275 (pp. 265-279).

classes. Furthermore, early Pentecostals were opposed by other denominations, which were often populated by more professional, and better educated, people.

- *It has also resulted from the belief that the Spirit is the sole interpreter of Scripture; any competitor to his role has been viewed with suspicion. Consequently, there has developed a reticence to credit the mind with significant value as far as interpretation of the Scripture is concerned for fear that it might militate against the work of the Spirit who has been given to lead believers into truth.*
- *It has also been prompted by the fact that those who were engaged in critical biblical analysis for much of the twentieth century were reflecting liberal and rationalist perspectives relating to the inspiration of the Scriptures and the person of Christ, whilst exhibiting antagonism to the idea of a miracle working God and a charismatic Church, inspired and empowered by the Spirit. Because of the provenance of such individuals, it was largely assumed that the fruit of their labour was to be ignored or condemned.¹⁴ Thus, they were rarely interacted with and the notion of significant biblical analysis was to lie dormant for most of the Pentecostal era. Because, of this, Pentecostals lacked training in using literary analytical tools and they retreated into the artificial security of assuming that they had the truth and that, because they relied so much on the Spirit as their guide, no further discussion of the text was needed.*

Things have moved on...

There is an increasing recognition of the importance of teaching

In the early days of Pentecostalism, there was a strong belief in the imminent return of Jesus and therefore to engage in extended periods of study was felt to be inappropriate.¹⁵ Similarly, in the (positive) quest for evangelism, education generally suffered; today, worship and the place of the emotions has been elevated but the place of the intellect in worship has concomitantly been sidelined; also, while Church

¹⁴ Hammer, R.R., "From Atheism to a High View of Scripture", *Paraclete*, 16.1 (1982) pp. 16-18.

¹⁵ Wilson, L.F., "Bible Institutes, Colleges, Universities" in Burgess, S.M., Van der Maas, E.M., (eds.) *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) p. 373 (pp. 372- 380).

growth has emphasised the status of the pastor/preacher, the role of the teacher has been marginalised.

However, the concept of teaching in Pentecostalism is being increasingly recognised as crucially important to its wellbeing. This is particularly the case in regions where revival has been a prominent feature for the past decades; there, the concern is that a rapidly growing Church may implode as a result of shallow biblical traditioning. Although theological reflection in the early decades of Pentecostalism was often defensive, intermittent and narrow in scope, the more recent decades have seen a marked increase in scholarship and exploration by Pentecostals of issues relating to their theology, spirituality and history. *Bowdle encourages this development, noting that "Jesus is Lord of learning".*¹⁶

There has been a redeeming of the mind and scholarship

Historically, there has been a fear of the intellect by Pentecostals with regard to the interpretation of Scripture. *Indeed, for much of its history, the notion of a "Pentecostal scholar" was an oxymoron and Pentecostals engaged in a pre-critical engagement with the text (and many still do).*¹⁷ *For example, the willingness to interact with the text whilst benefiting from some of the twentieth century methods of biblical interpretation has only in recent years been accepted by some Pentecostals.*¹⁸

However, it is precisely a careful use of the intellect that has increasingly been recognised by most Pentecostals as holding significant value for its development and protection from error.¹⁹ *This is demonstrated by the development of graduate and*

¹⁶ Bowdle, D.N., "Informed Pentecostalism: An Alternative Paradigm", in *The Spirit and the Mind. Essays in Informed Pentecostalism. To honor Dr. Donald Bowdle. Presented on his 65th Birthday*, (ed.) Cross, T.L., Powery, E.B., (Lanham: University Press of America, 2000) pp. 12, 13-15 (pp. 9-19); Bundy notes that in early Pentecostalism in Norway, there was much evidence of theological dialogue, even of controversial issues (Bundy, D.D., "Historical and Theological Analysis of the Pentecostal Church in Norway", *JEPTA* 20 (2000) p. 82 (pp. 66-92).

¹⁷ Cargal, T., "Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy", *Pneuma*, 15.2 (1993) p. 179 (pp. 163-188).

¹⁸ Rice, F.B., "The Holy Spirit and the Intellect", *Paraclete*, 10.3 (1976) pp. 3-7.

¹⁹ Bundrick, D., "Ye need not that any man teach you", *Paraclete*, 15.4 (1981) pp. 15-17; Gear, S.D., "The Holy Spirit and the Mind", *Paraclete*, 18.4 (1984) pp. 25-30.

postgraduate education for Pentecostals worldwide²⁰ and a recent flurry of academic journals²¹ dedicated to issues of interest to Pentecostals.

As lecturers, we are not simply engaged in providing data but also in allowing students to think. I also like to think of my lectures as opportunities to engage with where my students want to be - before they get there. Pentecostals are increasingly redeeming the concept of scholarship, enabling and encouraging those who have been so gifted to engage in it for the benefit of the Church, the development and training of leaders²² and the exploration of truth.²³ It is now much more acceptable to acknowledge that one's intellect is God given and that it can be used for the glory of God in the context of teaching and research.²⁴ Allied with the Spirit, a powerful combination is anticipated. I do have a concern however, that the British Pentecostal Church is slowing down in this regard compared to the Pentecostal Church in other parts of the world, especially Asia and parts of Africa.

The value of exploration of truth has increasingly been recognised as having great value in the process of learning

Colleges are increasingly recognising that they are not meant to be places where sacred Pentecostal dogmas are safeguarded at the expense of encouraging students to think about their beliefs. Learning needs to be more than simply receiving and reproducing information. It is the exploration of truth (not simply of key concepts of

²⁰ Brooks, M.P., "Bible Colleges and the Expansion of the Pentecostal Movement", *Paraclete*, 23.2 (1989) pp. 9-17; Tarr, D., "Transcendence, Immanence, and the Emerging Pentecostal Academy", *Pentecostalism in Context*, (eds.) Ma, W., Menzies, R.P., (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) pp. 195-222.

²¹ *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Theology, Australian Journal of Pentecostal Theology, Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association, Journal of Pentecostal Theology, Pneuma, Pneuma Review, Spirit and Church* plus online journals.

²² Pandrea, R., "A Historical and Theological Analysis of the Pentecostal Church in Romania", *JEPTA* 21 (2001) pp. 128-129 (109-135).

²³ Ma, W., "Biblical Studies in the Pentecostal Tradition: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow", in Dempster, M.W., B.D. Klaus and D. Petersen (eds.), *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford: Regnum, 1999) pp. 57-64 (52-69); Bowdle, "Informed...", pp. 9-10; Brenkus, J., "A Historical and Theological Analysis of the Pentecostal Church in the Czech and Slovak Republics", *JEPTA* 20 (2000) p. 63 (pp. 49-65); Jacobsen, D., "Knowing the Doctrine of Pentecostals: The Scholastic Theology of the Assemblies of God, 1930-1955 in Bays, D., "The Protestant Missionary Establishment and the Pentecostal Movement" in Blumhofer, E.L., R.P. Spittler and G.A. Wacker (eds.) *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999) pp. 90-107.

²⁴ Hollenweger, W.J., "Pentecostalism and Academic Theology: From Confrontation to Cooperation", *Epta Bulletin*, 11. 1 & 2 (1992) pp. 42-49; Nañez, R.M., *Full Gospel, Fractured Minds? A Call to Use God's Gift of the Intellect* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

one's cultural or religious heritage). If a learning process exists solely to transmit and reinforce a cultural and theological heritage, it cannot empower the learner to think creatively, reflect independently and articulate transparently; it cannot ask the awkward questions for fear of what answers may be raised.

It is a positive sign that Pentecostals are exploring their own histories objectively. This sometimes results in painful discoveries but it demonstrates an integrity and readiness to be less polarised and polemical in maintaining one's distinctive Pentecostal views. Increasingly, study is dialogical and contextual - far removed from the programmed memorisation of biblical texts to undergird particular doctrines felt to be important to the Pentecostal constituency concerned. Instead of seeking to indoctrinate students with pre-determined ideas or truths, Pentecostal Colleges are becoming centres where learning is facilitated and enquiry is encouraged in a Spirit-inspired context where commitment to integrity, transparency and authenticity is prized.

At the same time, whereas Pentecostal theology used to be taught using textbooks written by Evangelical authors, which in some areas (the role of women in ministry, supernatural phenomena, the inerrancy of the Bible) tended to gradually move Pentecostal students away from their traditional values. Now, students are guided in their explorations whilst benefiting from literature written by Pentecostal scholars.²⁵

We are privileged to be not merely transmitters of information so much as facilitators of learning. An integral component of our responsibility as teachers is to help students think. *Care needs to be taken in this regard as the student should not be destabilised, nor intimidated, nor feel that his/her perspective is necessarily suspect or to be analysed ad nauseum. However, the opportunity to ask questions is to be sensitively provided in a safe environment, whilst recognising that sometimes, the text may not provide answers to our questions.*

The context of learning in the Christian sphere is that of a God who, by definition is inexplicable but who calls us to explore him. *This eternal quest begins now and the*

²⁵ Thomas, J.C., "Pentecostal Explorations of the New Testament: Teaching New Testament Introduction in a Pentecostal Seminary", *JPT* 11.1 (2002) pp. 120-129.

student is to be encouraged to enjoy the journey. Similarly, the Bible is to be viewed as a dynamic text that beckons the reader to research its contents and to be expectant that fresh insights may be discovered. My role is to facilitate that process.

We teach with application

I say all that to propose this: With all the opportunities to advance our knowledge and that of our students, to discover new truth, to explore God more, to learn about – so much, we must not forget the heart of the students in our care. Our remit is not simply to impart knowledge but also wisdom, not merely to deliver data but also to develop character, not only to change incorrect beliefs but also to change unhelpful habits, not only to help students create carefully structured theologies but also carefully crafted lifestyles.

It is a challenging thought that although Paul encourages believers to renew their minds, the Spirit chooses **not** to live in the brain but to take up residence in the heart – the centre of a person’s volitional character. What is our emphasis in our education? It should be the head **and** the heart. Universities teach to a syllabus; Bible Colleges have another component as well – we teach a lifestyle, that represented by Jesus. I suggest that the development of His character as well as His teaching in our lives and those of our students needs to have a prominent place in our Colleges.

Three concepts dominate Western university education, namely, *critical and evaluative* examination, *disciplined* research and *orderly* systems of learning offered in a framework of teaching and critical enquiry.²⁶ These are valid and laudable concepts, they may be less relevant for Theological Colleges. They are often methodologically associated with the cities of Athens and Berlin. I would like to add two more cities – Jerusalem, the place where the Spirit guided the Jerusalem Council in *engaging with applied truth*, and Antioch, where the Spirit commissioned Paul to undertake *mission activity*. Pentecostal educators need to be alert to the danger of offering a core curriculum that is static and not Spirit-engaged.

²⁶ Kelsey, D.H., *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (1993) p. 13; Farley, E., *The Fragility of Knowledge*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press (1988) pp. 4-5.

*Oprah Winfrey writes, “We have to steer **our** true life’s course...whatever **our** calling is in life. The whole purpose of being here is to figure out what that is as soon as possible, so you go about the business of being on track, of not being owned by what your parents said, what society said, what other people think...your role is to exceed other people’s expectations and be defined by your own”. Pentecostal educators need to embrace the challenge of helping students fulfil their dreams and achieve their objectives; they are to be facilitators in the process. But they cannot facilitate if they are ignorant of the dreams of those in their care.*

So our aim is to teach with application. This is because there is a great danger that education has spawned a new breed of people...professional listeners. Even this is speculative if the maxim is correct that “a lecturer is a person who speaks in someone else’s sleep”. It has been estimated that, at any one time, only 25% of an audience is actively listening to a preacher; are lecturers likely to achieve better results? If our lectures involve people being talked at, the lecturer won’t be listened to.

Anna was just six years old; she loved playing school. “Why not play Sunday school?” asked her mother. “No”, said Anna, “All we do there is sit and listen. We don’t learn anything”. If lectures involve sitting and listening, we are living in a dream world if we presume that students are always listening, let alone learning. Lectures must be much more than simply spoken books; *in fact, if a lecture simply repeats information that is already included in a multiplicity of books, it is surely advisable and cheaper to buy the books.*

Plueddemann²⁷ devised the rail fence model of education. As a rail fence is made up of two rails held together by fence posts, so also educators must incorporate two metaphorical rails in their education methodology. The top rail equals truth; the lower one equals life and the role of the educator is to facilitate constant interaction between them both. Truth without life will result in deadness while life without truth will result in simplistic and short-lived experience. Harkness similarly speaks of the need of having a “praxiological agenda”.²⁸

²⁷ Plueddemann, J., “The Real Disease of the Sunday School: Rail Fence Analogy for Curriculum Design”, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 8.2 (1972) pp. 88-92.

²⁸ Harkness, “De-schooling...”, p. 152.

Thomas Fuller (1608-1661), English minister and writer, wrote, “The great end of life is not knowledge, but action”. Much earlier, Seneca (4BC - 65AD), the Roman poet and statesman, said, “As long as you live, keep learning - how to live”. Truth without life and application will result in deadness, while life without truth will result in simplistic and short-lived experience; both are necessary.

So, while Colleges seek to excel in the appropriation of truth, we need to be careful that we do not assume that truth on its own will become life – it must be strategically and intentionally applied. When Jesus taught, he did not simply speak but also he demonstrated his message (thus, he did not simply offer facts about demons but demonstrated by action what they were and how to deal with them). In this respect, Lebar²⁹ is right when he concludes that a student’s “growth is determined not by what he hears, but by what he does about what he hears”.

We adapt to our audience

We must beware treating our students like giraffes...or like children. Jesus was sensitive to the needs of his audience. He taught his disciples in bite sized morsels of teaching, easily digestible, but also provided learning opportunities in the context of continuous mission activity. He didn't teach in a vacuum; he only taught that which they needed to know at any given moment and he presented it often in snack form; and when they were full, the feeding stopped.³⁰ The crowds, disciples, the opposition, enquirers - each were dealt with differently. Thus, in a situation of fear aroused by a storm, he taught about trust (Matt. 8:23-27). When the disciples felt alone and insecure, he taught them about the role of the Spirit as helper (Jn. 14:1-17). He sparred with Nicodemus (Jn. 3:1-21) in a highly articulate, complicated and verbally stylish, question and answer session that would have probably been too sophisticated for the disciples.

In the following narrative (4:1-26), Jesus aroused a woman's curiosity, displayed supernatural knowledge about her and led her to himself through pictures of water

²⁹ Lebar, L., Plueddemann, J., *Education that is Christian*, Wheaton: Victor (1989) p. 166.

³⁰ See further Collinson S., “Making Disciples: An Educational Strategy for Use Beyond the Time of Jesus”, *Journal of Christian Education*, 43. 3 (2000) pp. 15-16 (pp. 7-18); Stevens, R.P., “Marketing the Faith – A Reflection on the Importing and Exporting of Western Theological Education”, *Crux*, 38.2 (1992) p. 17 (pp. 6-18).

and worship. To the Pharisees and their scribes, he offered acted dramas to help them in their voyage of discovery. The question to be addressed consistently is how one can apply aspects of his pedagogy to current teaching styles.³¹

Teaching in Pentecostal Colleges is often determined by the length of modules and lectures; it is a constant challenge to ensure that students receive that which is right for them. In order to teach them in ways that ensure that the teaching process is best achieved, it is useful from time to time to reconsider the teaching programme (the times of the teaching sessions, the time of day, the locations, setting, length of time of the teaching, seating arrangements, light and heat). This might involve a paradigm change away from learning how to teach, to learning more about learning in order to teach.

Interestingly, Jesus taught wisdom (and how to develop it) more than he imparted information (and how to enlarge it); “how” more than “what” was of interest to him - “why” more than “when”; who you are more than what you know; who you can become more than what you can retain. Closely allied to the content of his teaching was its context.

The content was imparted in the context of praxis and practising - less knowledge and more know-how; less information and more application, less intensive data presentation and more inspiration and transformation; no notes and handouts but hands-on-experience; less cerebral and more personal development; less intellectual and more intuitive; not just the impartation of information but the directing of self activity; pragmatic not idealistic; not only giving what he thought the person ought to know but also giving what the person was capable of receiving (Mk. 4:33; Jn. 16:12). Jesus is the best paradigm of brilliant pedagogy.

³¹ See further Collinson S., “Making Disciples: An Educational Strategy for Use Beyond the Time of Jesus”, *Journal of Christian Education*, 43. 3 (2000) pp. 15-16 (pp. 7-18); Stevens, R.P., “Marketing the Faith – A Reflection on the Importing and Exporting of Western Theological Education”, *Crux*, 38.2 (1992) p. 17 (pp. 6-18).

The Church and the Academy

A symbiotic partnership needs to be strengthened between Colleges and church constituencies who send students there in order to maximise the learning process for all concerned, recognising the different emphases and expectations stressed by each. The fear of being marginalized from the training of future leaders should cause all involved in Pentecostal College education to reconsider that which they are offering and its relevance.

The local church often functions as a hermeneutical context for the learning and practice of the student. It can provide the College with the knowledge as to whether it is providing that which the churches need; the Academy must never forget that it is the servant of the Church (not its replacement) and that as such, it must prove its value by helping the Church.³²

Discussions between leaders of each institution therefore ought to take place regularly for the purposes of listening to each other, understanding each other's priorities and to celebrate the fact that God has gifted each to the other. Practical measures can be undertaken to facilitate support frameworks for the benefit of both; this demands time, patience and sensitivity but will ensure that they do not miss each other on the way. The danger otherwise is that there will be a clash of priorities without the opportunity to recognise the value of the emphases of both the Church and the Academy.

Lecturers need to offer themselves to churches to act as bridges between the College and the churches. Colleges need to ensure that their communities understand that they are biblically oriented. We need to help our churches reconnect with the Bible; we need to reconsider the issues of "calling" and "vocation".

Syllabi therefore need to be envisaged that reflect the needs of society and the Church as well as students, rather than reflecting a model of the past that is assumed to be normative but is rarely tested. Both groups need to talk to each other with ears open wide. In particular, the increasing biblical illiteracy of theological students prior to

³² Dresselhaus, R., "What Can the Academy do for the Church?", *AJPS* 3.2 (2000) pp. 319-323.

*their entry into theological colleges needs to be addressed; similarly, the aspiration of encouraging theological contemplation in a robust, stimulating and practical way needs to be enhanced. At the same time, Colleges ought to proactively consider ways of supporting learning and training processes that may be taking place in the churches while celebrating their strengths for theological colleges potentially have great value in “promoting deep knowledge, careful research, and critical evaluation of thought” and do not, by default, restrict charismatic expression.*³³

Important factors in the learning journeys provided by Bible Colleges

We need to prioritize a context of spiritual formation

From earliest times, some Pentecostals and others have spoken in disparaging terms of Bible Schools, describing seminaries as “cemetaries”, *lamprooning the degrees earned and questioning their relevance or necessity*. Although these comments have often been exaggerations, nevertheless, some Pentecostal Colleges have lost their expectation of the supernatural, their spirituality has been less clearly Pentecostal and they have been less vocational.³⁴ This has been in part due to the personalities and gifts of those who have functioned in educational contexts but also due to the fact that spirituality is the result of personal discipline, not facilitated specifically by the lecturer.

Furthermore, many students have not benefitted from an adequate spiritual formation in their local church prior to entering College; they come immature, damaged and lacking the emotional and spiritual wholeness that would have enabled a positive experience from the start. All these present challenges to us. Because of these facts, it is even more important that Pentecostal Colleges provide a context for proactive spiritual formation.³⁵

When I first joined Regents, students were assumed to be walking with God – why else would they come? Corporate devotional activities were not made mandatory

³³ Castleberry, J.L., “Pentecostal Seminaries are Essential to the Future Health of the Church”, *Pneuma* 26.2 (2004) pp. 346-354 (351)

³⁴ Tarr, D., “Transcendence, Immanence, and the Emerging Pentecostal Academy”, in Ma, W., Menzies, R.P., (eds.) *Pentecostalism in Context. Essays in Honour of William W. Menzies* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) pp. 206-207, 211-212 (pp. 195-222).

³⁵ Wenk, M., “Do we need a distinct European Pentecostal/Charismatic approach to theological education” *JEPTA* 23 (2003) pp. 61-62 (pp. 58-71).

because everyone went – why wouldn't they? They didn't come for a degree but because they were called; they didn't come wondering what to do because most of them already had a sense of their destiny – or soon did. They came to College, often as a result of significant personal sacrifice, because God had specifically broken into their worlds and rearranged their planned objectives.

However, now, students are less categorised by a longstanding walk with the Lord, less certain as to their future, have received less spiritual mentoring...or even basic discipleship, have much less biblical knowledge and elastic standards of morality and social, sexual and Christian behaviour. They are more driven by a desire to be educated rather than to serve, more socially aware at a superficial level, less confident in their walk with God, more associated with emotional immaturity, biblical ignorance, social inadequacies, hurts, wounds, failures, and more sexual experience than students of only a previous generation ago.

If we simply teach them data, they will simply receive a cerebral education; if we simply give them facts, albeit biblical and theological facts, they will not become the leaders that we would like. Nowadays, Western education is privileged to follow a Greek model where time is given to exploring and investigating, where curiosity is attempted to be satisfied; I relish the privileges that this model brings.

However, there is a danger in our emphasising these features, too often the character of the student has not been strategically developed; so we are good at dealing with their lack of knowledge but not so good at helping them in their spiritual transformation. We cannot simply say that the local church should have sorted them out before they come; the fact is that it hasn't and it doesn't. We have to be cognisant of this.

There is a danger that theology can be taught in the absence of a spiritual framework. As Hudson notes, education and training for ministry cannot be in the context of “a disembodied spirituality”.³⁶ In this respect, it may be appropriate to re-visit the topic of “the call of God”, once the normal reason for people applying to Bible Colleges in

³⁶ Hudson, D.N., “It's not what we do: it's the way we do it. Uncomfortable thoughts for a lecturer in a residential Bible College at the turn of the century”, *JEPTA* 23 (2003) pp. 45-57.

order to encourage the value of recognising the role of God's guidance in the determining of one's destiny.

I suggest that the learning experience must feed in to the spirituality of the student, transform character, impart vision as well as provide the opportunity to learn.³⁷ This must start with the teachers themselves, McKinney encouraging "faculty to model a desire for continual spiritual renewal".³⁸ It is often the lasting impact of the life of a teacher that affects students more than the information they have gained from the lectures. *Also, the occasions where encounters with God are more likely, including corporate worship, need to be centralised in the curriculum.*³⁹ You may want to consider taking regular opportunities to gauge the spiritual "temperature" of the College (students and faculty) and to re-visit the frameworks in place for the development of the spirituality of the community (personally and corporately).

We need to intentionally provide a place for the Spirit

*The best sermon is the one that may be defined as prophetic, that is to say, it includes a particular word or becomes a personal word from God to the listeners. Even though the preacher may not be cognizant of it, the individual hearer may receive it as a specific communication from God.*⁴⁰ In the pedagogical process that occurs in Pentecostal Colleges, there needs also to be an involvement of the Spirit and recognition that the learning journey is a holy one in which the Spirit is present as the great Teacher.⁴¹ Anderson calls for a "renewed focus on the role of the Holy Spirit in terms of learning and spiritual formation".⁴²

³⁷ McKinney, E.L., "Some Spiritual Aspects of Pentecostal Education: A Personal Journey", *AJPS* 3.2 (2000) pp. 253-279; Alvarez, M., "Distinctives of Pentecostal Education", *AJPS* 3.2 (2000) pp. 282-293.

³⁸ McKinney, "Some...", p. 262.

³⁹ Hittenberger, J.S., "Toward a Pentecostal Philosophy of Education", *Pneuma* 23.2 (2001) p. 223.

⁴⁰ McKay, J., "When the Veil is Taken Away: The Impact of Prophetic Experience on Biblical Interpretation", *JPT* 5 (1994) pp. 28-29.

⁴¹ Johns, C.B., "The Meaning of Pentecost for Theological Education", *Ministerial Formation* 87 (1999) pp. 42-47.

⁴² Anderson, B.A., "Missional Orientation and its Implications for Pentecostal Theological Education", *JEPTA* 26.2 (2000) p. 145 (pp. 134-136); Hittenberger, J.S., "Toward a Pentecostal Philosophy of Education", *Pneuma*, 23.2 (Fall 2001) 217-244.

Hudson warns, “The ultimate irony is that the Spirit, that blows wherever he wills, has been codified, systematised and analysed”⁴³ whereas, more importantly, he needs to be experienced and encountered. This need not be identified only in worship settings but by an awareness that he desires to speak through the lecture, the learning journey, the learners, the teachers, the questions, the probing analysis and the silence.

This calls for a particular type of learning environment. *Teachers need to be Spirit-led learners and model Spirit-controlled lives; they also need to recognise the Spirit’s presence in the lives of their students, facilitating the students’ exploration of the Spirit; finally, they need to give the Spirit the opportunity to be a guide and dialogue partner in the learning process.*

That which is fundamental to Pentecostalism is a personal, experiential encounter of the Spirit of God.⁴⁴ Pentecostals aim to know God experientially, whether it is via an intellectual recognition of his being or an emotional appreciation of his character.⁴⁵ It is this that best identifies the Pentecostal heartbeat. Christenson describes Pentecostalism as “Christianity standing on tiptoe, expecting something to happen”.⁴⁶ Hollenweger deduces that Pentecostalism is best expressed as providing an opportunity for believers to engage in “an adventure in fellowship with the Holy Spirit and each other”.⁴⁷

However, the Spirit is in danger of being marginalised and his ability to change the lives of believers is being overlooked. Our Pentecostal DNA suggests that we desire

⁴³ Hudson, “It’s not what we do...”, p. 49.

⁴⁴ Kärkkäinen, V-M., “‘The Re-Turn of Religion in the Third Millennium’: Pentecostals and Postmodernities”, (EPCRA Conference paper, University of Uppsala, 2007) p. 5; Zegwaart, H., “Christian Experience in Community”, *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* 11 (Feb. 2002); Albrecht, D.E., *Rites in the Spirit. A ritual approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic spirituality* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) p. 10; Gee, *The Pentecostal...*, p. 30; du Plessis, “Golden...”, p. 194; Nichol, *Pentecostalism*, p. 55; Anderson, G.L., “Pentecostals believe in more than tongues”, Smith, H.B., (ed.) *Pentecostals from the Inside Out*, (Wheaton: Victory, 1990) pp. 53-64 (55-56); Asamoah-Gyadu, J.K., “An African Pentecostal...”, p. 314; Coss, T.L., “A Proposal to Break the Ice: What can Pentecostal Theology offer Evangelical Theology?”, *JPT* 10.2 (2002) pp. 49-58. For a non-Pentecostal Roman Catholic enquiry of the relationship between power, experience and the Spirit, see Cooke, B., *Power and the Spirit of God: Toward an Experience-Based Pneumatology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). In it, he describes himself as someone who is in search of an experience-based pneumatology.

⁴⁵ Anderson, *An Introduction...*, p. 256; Kärkkäinen, *Spiritual...*, p. 50; Semple McPherson, *This...*, p. 713; Spittler, “Spirituality...”, 1097; Spittler, “Spirituality...”, p. 1096.

⁴⁶ Christenson, L., “Pentecostalism’s Forgotten Forerunner” in Synan, *Aspects...*, 27.

⁴⁷ Hollenweger, “Past...”, pp. 43-45.

encounters with the Spirit but our Pentecostal praxis indicates that such encounters are narrowly focussed; in truth, most Pentecostals do not anticipate they will encounter the Spirit often or much. Pentecostal Colleges need to embrace this challenge, explore and reflect the remarkable Spirit to their students so that they can encounter the teacher of truth and develop their relationship with him with consequences that are potentially world changing.

We need to provide for the possibility of encounter with and experience of God

Groome comments on the two main terms used to describe Jewish teaching methodology. Both (*yārāh*, *yāda*) may be used to define the concepts of teaching and informing others. However, the latter carries with it the notion of learning via experiential encounter with a given subject.⁴⁸ Rice, building on these perspectives, suggests Pentecostal educators should encapsulate their teaching in experiential and dynamic forms.⁴⁹ This will demand creativity on their part and even asking their students how they learn best and adapting to their requirements. Teach with an expectation, a strategy to encounter God, to experience something that will effect change.

In this respect, may I suggest that we never lose sight of the centrally important place of the Bible in our syllabi as well as our College life as an opportunity to encounter God and be transformed in the process. When I joined Regents, I was asked to teach Genesis, Isaiah, Minor Prophets, Luke, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, as well as overviews of the NT for first and second year students...the Bible was viewed as fundamentally important.

Let's beware that we do not become places where theology is our focus instead of the Bible. Of course, our theology is located in the Bible but the Bible is not merely a dictionary into which we dip for theological truth; it is not simply a database from which we glean our dogma. It was intended to be the place where we dialogued with and encountered God.

⁴⁸ Groome, T.H., *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980) pp. 139-151; Becker, M., "A Tenet under Examination: Reflections on the Pentecostal Hermeneutical Approach", *JEPTA* 24 (2004) pp. 38-39 (pp. 30-48).

⁴⁹ Rice, M.L., "Pneumatic Experience as Teaching Methodology an Pentecostal Tradition", *AJPS* 5.2 (2002) pp. 295-296 (pp. 289-312).

For those of us who teach Bible, we must remember that ‘the Bible is associated with activity and experience rather than viewed as a textbook of doctrine’.⁵⁰ Traditionally, Pentecostals have viewed the Bible as a collection of stories intended to lead a person to God and to be transformed as a result rather than a database of dogma to be discussed. It is less to be studied as an academic exercise and more to be seen as the altar of sacrifice to which they bring their lives for renewal, functioning as a guide to better relationships with God and others.

The Bible is thus to be viewed primarily as a place of encounter, an encounter with the divine author.⁵¹ *Ellington notes that Pentecostals expect ‘to encounter in the Scripture the very words of God speaking directly to their needs and guiding them’.*⁵² Let us not so clog the learning process that the transforming God is squeezed out of speaking through his Word in our lectures (PNG U-tube).

The Bible was anticipated by early Pentecostals as being for the purpose of touching its readers emotionally, not simply to teach them intellectually; to result in an experience, not merely better exegesis; to facilitate an exposure of God not only an exposition of truth. Their worldview was one that incorporated a dynamic God who impacted his people – then and now.

Timothy Cargal speaks of the ‘immediacy of the text’;⁵³ Pentecostals do not just want to know what the text meant then but what it means now. Frank Macchia⁵⁴ writes, ‘There is for Pentecostals a certain ‘present-tenseness’ to the events and words of the Bible, so that what happened then, happens now’. *Roger Stronstad concludes, ‘the Pentecostal experience is a valid hermeneutical presupposition’.*⁵⁵ Similarly, *Hattingh states, ‘For the Pentecostal theologian, subjective experience is important not because it becomes the grounds of faith, but because it is in this area that truth is*

⁵⁰ Clark, *What is distinctive...*, p. 101; Anderson, *An Introduction...*, p. 225; Archer, ‘Early...’, pp. 32-70; J. Hattingh, ‘The Proprium of Pentecostal Theology’, in Clark, *What is distinctive...*, pp. 153-57 (155); Macchia, ‘Theology...’, p. 1122; Ellington, ‘Pentecostalism...’, p. 29.

⁵¹ Synan, ‘Pentecostalism...’, p. 39; Kärkkäinen., *Toward...*, pp. 4-5; Johns, ‘Pentecostalism...’, p. 90.

⁵² Ellington, ‘Pentecostalism...’, p. 22.

⁵³ Cargal, ‘Beyond...’, p. 164.

⁵⁴ Macchia, F., ‘Theology...’, *NIDPCM*, p. 1122.

⁵⁵ Stronstad, ‘The Biblical Precedent...’, p. 1.

realised'.⁵⁶ Furthermore, he writes, 'An objectivity which accepts a historical reality by means of reason alone is deprived of that which the Bible proclaims'.⁵⁷

As Kärkkäinen writes, 'Experience came first; theology followed'⁵⁸ while Jacobsen concludes, 'Pentecostal experience has been circumscribed by theology and Pentecostal theology has been grounded in experience.'⁵⁹ Often times, experience bridges the text and its application and can inform one's interpretation of the text.⁶⁰ Thomas explores the Jerusalem council (Acts 15) and notes the value placed on experience (the experiences of Peter, Paul and Barnabas with regard to Gentile converts and the impact of the Spirit on them).⁶¹ Only after this is offered does James refer to scripture (15.16-18), and that somewhat ambiguously (Amos 9.11-12) but dynamically, in arriving at the conclusion to welcome Gentiles into the Church.

Let us re-embrace some of these emphases as best we can in order to hold true to our Pentecostal tradition but also to reflect what is at the heart of God's being – a desire to encounter.

We need to plan strategically for the medium-distance future

I have just returned from teaching at the biggest Theological College in the Ukraine (in 2013). They serve the Church in the Ukraine, Russia, Uzbekistan and other ex-satellite Soviet countries to the East. The Evangelical Church in the Ukraine is just 23 years old. In the class of 50-60, only 2 had been Christians for more than 20 years. There were a couple of interesting lessons that I learned.

Some years, they decided that they could no longer depend on visiting lecturers to teach in the seminary and so they sent one of their students abroad. About 15 years ago, Sergei came to Regents, studied at bachelor and master's level, returned and began to teach at the College with just one other lecturer. They had planned for the future...the *distant* future. Now, they have more fulltime teaching faculty (12) than

⁵⁶ Hattingh, 'The Proprium...', p. 155.

⁵⁷ Hattingh, 'The Proprium...', p. 155.

⁵⁸ Kärkkäinen, *Toward...*, p. 6.

⁵⁹ Jacobsen, *Thinking...*, p. 2; G. T. Sheppard, 'Word and Spirit: Scripture in Pentecostal Tradition. Part 1', *Agora* 1 (1978), pp. 4-22 (14-9).

⁶⁰ Yong, 'Not Knowing...', *JPT* 14 (1999), p. 93; Arrington, 'The Use...', pp. 105-07.

⁶¹ Thomas, 'Women...', pp. 44-50.

we do at Regents. Secondly, their lecturers are all under 45 years of age – they are planning the future with the young Ukrainian church in mind. Thirdly, they are keenly encouraging their tutors into further education opportunities – they are strategically planning on developing the best faculty in Eastern Europe. I talked with two of them concerning doctoral studies – they are planning for the future.

They also invest heavily in supporting the main purpose of the Seminary – which is to provide a teaching base for the Church and the students. Their administrative staff number much more than we have at Regents (2 librarians for a library half the size of Regents – who work all the hours under the sun), 5 people involved fulltime in media, IT, publicity, journalism, fundraising for the College (when there, they interviewed me for 90 minutes for their tv/internet broadcasting, publicising the College), 2 run an Academic Registrar's department plus another admissions person, 3 people supervise their Distance Learning programmes, 2 oversee their Masters programme...

How do they do this? It is not due to the expensive fees of the students – they pay \$500 per year each for tuition and board. They are motivated by the principle of identifying their core mission (teaching and leadership development) and ensuring that this is certainly facilitated. We have talked about this much over past years at Regents. I think we need to carefully consider how we can identify and fulfil our core reason for being in existence.

What I most important to our future – providing academic degrees or training leaders or...? The answer may differ from institution to institution but the question needs to be asked and the answer fulfilled. Two suggestions for the future - We could seriously invest in training children workers (as well as youth) for the largest unreached group in the world is the children. We need to invest in supporting Churches and denominations in the majority World where training of leaders and in the Bible is crucially needed.

Make room for our lecturers to keep learning

Our roles as teachers demand that we continue to be learners; we should never stop being learners (of our subjects and the communication of those subjects). Not only should this process involve developing one's knowledge through the traditional routes

of research and writing, it should also be given the opportunity to occur during the lecture period.

- *Now, I take it as a given that teachers must model that they are learners too and work hard at their craft. In learning, educators also need to be listeners, learners as well as teachers, askers of questions not just providers of answers, indulging in dialogue with fellow learners, not functioning only in a teacher-pupil, expert-novice relationship but also in a Learner-learner relationship. The role of the teacher is not simply to be an expert who gathers together ever-increasing knowledge, some of which may be imparted to the listener; rather, they are to be facilitators, learning as they teach.*

One of the best stimulators to my own thinking and learning is the group of students to whom I lecture at any given time. Not only do I learn from them but also, as part of the educational process, it is important that they know that I am learning from them when this occurs. Both lecturer and student are partners in the learning continuum. However, time to be ongoing students, developing their craft, is not always available. *One is also aware of the fact that the Spirit promises to be the teacher of believers and this promise is just as relevant for the lecture as well as the sermon.*

- May I encourage my lecturing colleagues to hold tightly the aspiration to *become experts* in your chosen fields; be the best you can be. When people are looking for an author to contribute to a particular topic, let it be that they think of you first. When they want a speaker to address a particular issue, develop your expertise so that they email you first.

When a student wants to explore an ethical or theological issue or a pastor to work through a pastoral dilemma or spiritual challenge, may they go to you first. I am not advocating restrictive or snobbish, superior elitism but encouraging you to harness the best that God has given you and give it to your community and back to God, as the best that it can be.

- *Maintain high standards of freshness.* Some people will assume that once lecturers have created a set of notes for the students that they simply replicate them every year. We could do this (and sometimes we are forced to do this because of time constraints) but I do not believe that this is being an authentic teacher, for true teachers manifest a desire to learn in the present and not just regurgitate what they have learned in the past.

Folk who do not come from an educational background often don't understand this aspiration and wonder what we do with our time; don't let such thinking on the part of others determine your own teaching aspirations. Rather adopt the mindset of Kierkegaard (1813-1855) who said, "If God held all truth in (the) right hand, and in (the) left hand held the lifelong pursuit of it, (God) would choose the left hand". An enthusiastic pursuit of one's subject is crucial to the learning journey.

- So, *take advantage of sabbaticals, conferences, extra reading, writing, and meeting others who share your scholarly or vocational interests; plan your future to develop your particular vocational or academic ambitions and emphases.* Learn to sensitively say "no thank you" to some opportunities that do not benefit the development of your central calling. Be jealous for the gift that God has given you, treasure it, guard it – to paraphrase Paul's advice to Timothy – God has given you a gift...keep it burning bright.
- *That involves sacrifice, discipline and study.* Alexander Hamilton (1755-1804) was an American Statesman who wrote these words, "Some give me credit for being a genius. All the genius I have is this – when I have a subject in mind, I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. My mind becomes pervaded with it...the effort which I have made is what people are pleased to call genius. Actually, it is the fruit of labour and thought". My friend, Graham Twelftree, once told me "to be a scholar, one can only be a scholar".

Sherlock Holmes commented similarly to his fictional colleague Dr. Watson. In response to Holmes again solving an intriguingly difficult case, Watson

remarked, “My dear Holmes. How have you done it? I have heard all that you have heard but have not achieved the miracle of solving the case. Why?”. Holmes responded, “Ah, my friend, Watson, you have heard but you have not hearkened; you have listened but you have not retained; you have relevant facts that would fill a page but I have a life that is full of relevant facts”.

Although not all teachers are destined to be scholars exclusively, each of us can aspire to be the best that we can be in our chosen discipline and thus act as role models for anyone watching. Michelangelo (1475-1564), the Italian painter and sculptor wrote, “If people knew how hard I work to gain my mastery, it would not seem so wonderful at all”.

So, some suggestions...

Be creative and strategic

- *Draw up an institutional educational philosophy*
- *Request each tutor to draw up a personal educational philosophy*
- *Aid your faculty to develop their knowledge and skills*
- *Have a 5 year blank-canvas day when you re-visit all you teach and do and see if it can be improved*
- *Consider parallel tracks to fulfil the aspirations of the students*
- *Have annual reviews; ask “why do we do this?”, “could we do it better?”*
- *Identify your long term goals as an institution and target how they may be achieved*
- *Share good praxis with each other, in and outside your institution*
- *Have students participate in the development of your vision and mission*
- *Give yourself permission to dream*
- *Play to your strengths*

Conclusion

At the *Teaching Research and Development Network* annual symposium at the University of Manchester, the keynote speaker was Professor Charles Engel. His underlying proposition was, “the twenty first century will witness an escalation in the frequency and gravity of changes that will affect society world-wide”. Change is here to stay and educationalists must be prepared to embrace this fact, including the challenges and the potential. How we deal with it will define our future. The evidence of how successful we may be in this regard will be identified by how much we have

been willing to change ourselves before we seek to change those who come and learn with us and from us.

John Amos Comenius (1592-1670) was a Christian educator (the first who popularised pictures in teaching) who has been described as the first modern educator. He lived much of his life in poverty though was highly respected in Europe. Wisely, Sweden asked him to reform their schools and England asked him to set up a research College. His major work was entitled *The Great Didactic*. On the title page, he wrote his objective - To seek to find a method of instruction, by which teachers may teach less, but learners may learn more. I suggest that this must always be our aim and with the help of our great teacher, the Spirit, we can hope to move in the right direction.