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DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKERS FOR CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY

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TITLE

DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKERS FOR CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY

EDWARD RONALD DANIELS

A Research report submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

JOHANNESBURG

NOVEMBER 1999

DECLARATION

I declare that this Research Report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Education in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, nor has it been prepared under the aegis or with the assistance of any person or organisation outside of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

EDWARD RONALD DANIELS

25 day of NOVEMBER, 1999

ABSTRACT

A major challenge confronting the Anglican Church in Southern Africa is to maintain a tradition of critical thinking in a post-Apartheid era. If the Church is to maintain an activist stance it needs to cultivate critical thinking in its clergy and laity.

The research uses a definition of critical thinking expounded by Brookfield (1987) as well as the Pastoral Hermeneutical Circle (PHC) of Cochrane, de Gruchy and Petersen (1991) to investigate the ways in which theological education encourages and hinders critical thinking for adult learners.

The research method comprised in-depth interviews with five newly ordained clergy in the Anglican Diocese of Port Elizabeth, who also contributed to a Focus Group Discussion about the PHC. The content of the theological curriculum was examined too. The results of the discussion are documented in biographical profiles of the participants and analysis of their views of the PHC.

The research results reveal that critical thinking is inhibited due to the limitations in the theological education process ranging from the institutionalised nature of the church to the training of its clergy.

Key words: theological education
critical thinking
mentoring
pastoral hermeneutical circle
South Africa

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ABBREVIATIONS

CPSA	Church of the Province of Southern Africa
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HC	Hermeneutical Circle
PHC	Pastoral Hermeneutical Circle

Definition of terms

Andragogy: The way in which adults learn as opposed to *pedagogy*, the way in which children learn.

***Bona fides*:** "In good faith"

Clericalism: The domination of the ordained ministers of the lay people they are meant to be leading or pastoring.

Diocese: The area or district over which a bishop presides which includes a number of church buildings and clergy.

Formation: The act of deliberately forming or cultivating a disposition for pastoral ministry both pastorally and sacramentally within the church.

Hermeneutics: The art or science of interpreting and understanding language or texts within a particular genre or context.

Insertion: Being located within a community where one identifies with the lived experiences of individuals within such a community.

Laity: Derived from the Greek *laos* meaning 'people'.

Phenomenological: A descriptive philosophy of experience.

Praxis: "Practice" i.e. "doing", informed by knowledge or theory.

Sine qua non: That without which it cannot exist.

Terminus ad quem: An end in itself.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

A common theme in adult education practice and theory, and a recurrent education goal expressed by education policy makers in South Africa is the promotion of critical thinking. The two adult education theorists whose works provide a working definition of critical reflection are Stephen Brookfield (1987) and Jack Mezirow (1991):

> While all critical reflection implies an element of critique, the term *critical reflection* will here be reserved to refer to challenging the validity of *presuppositions* in prior learning... We become critically reflective by challenging the established definition of a problem being addressed, perhaps by finding a new metaphor that reorients problem-solving efforts in a more reflective way... By far the most significant learning experiences in adulthood involve critical self-reflection - reassessing the way we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling, and acting.
> (Mezirow, 1991:12,13)

There is also a modern tradition of critical reflection in the Anglican Church in Southern Africa best exemplified by the leadership of Desmond Tutu, an immediate past Archbishop of Cape Town, who has always been "someone who asks awkward questions" (Brookfield 1987:9). His retirement left the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (CPSA - Anglican) at a major crossroads. In the past, critical thinking within the Anglican Church was focused on apartheid, but now the tradition is seemingly under threat.

Does the Church remain silent with a democratically elected government in place or does it redefine its role? Perhaps it needs to take up issues such as abortion, affirmative action or a host of other social and moral issues.

The question remains; "Where to now?" One direction to take would seem to centre on the training and education of candidates who present themselves for ordination, the future leaders and ministers of the Anglican Church who will take over the reins from Desmond Tutu and his successors. A culture of critical thinking needs to be cultivated and promoted amongst the leadership of the Church.

1.2 ORIGINS OF THE STUDY

The genesis of this study stemmed from an interest in and concern for theological education within the Southern African context. Having been involved in the St. John the Baptist Extension Seminary in the Anglican Diocese of Johannesburg where students were being tutored through a distance learning program, I went on to teach at St. Paul's theological college, a residential seminary in Grahamstown in the province of the Eastern Cape. Upon the closure of the seminary, my interest in theological education was further pursued in the Anglican Diocese of Port Elizabeth. My underlying concern has remained to shift students of theology beyond the perception that every text or book is a bible and to raise awareness that being made in the image of God means that people are rational beings in pursuit of discerning and understanding the mind of God. My concern has been stimulated by a prevailing ethos of 'if something is in print then it is gospel and beyond interrogation'.

It is important to encourage adult learners to express their opinions because, as learning is a lifelong process, so too is being empowered for critical thinking. Besides, renegotiating power relationships within rigid structures such as the church remains vital if theological students are going to perpetuate the example left by Archbishop Tutu and for which the Anglican church is still respected.

The perception remains that once people have been ordained, they have to conform to certain restrictions - real or perceived - placed on them by the Church. For example, there are disciplinary procedures to be followed within the Anglican Church regarding the remarriage of divorced persons. The universal implementation of these has driven many people away from the Church. Clergy rarely subscribe to such a policy and consequently responsibility for the casualties it causes is shifted to a higher authority. The danger exists that we could be going backwards to a biblical fundamentalism because individual clergy seem to have lost the nerve and conviction to ask awkward questions both of the institution and the society it serves. After all, one of the marks of critical reflection is the ongoing process of questioning and renegotiating power relationships within any given context.

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY AND POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

One aim for theological training is that it should empower individuals for critical engagement within the context of ministry. In spite of this, few brave people dare to question the status quo, the majority choosing to toe the "corporate" line.

Brookfield describes one of the aims of adult education as follows;

> The aim of adult education is the nurturing of self-directed, empowered adults; such adults will see themselves as proactive, initiating individuals engaged in a continuous re-creation of their personal relationships, work worlds, and social circumstances, and not as reactive individuals, buffeted by the uncontrollable forces of circumstance.
>
> (1985:48)

The aim of the study has been to follow the experiences of a small group of theological students and to reflect on their curriculum with a view to its further development in order to identify factors that hinder and promote critical thinking. It was anticipated that insights provided by this group would provide guidelines for the development of an education and training process which would empower students of theology as reflective practitioners in ministry.

A common conviction exists that *religion* is synonymous with *belief*, and *theology* is theorising about a belief system. Ultimately, belief must translate itself into action. For the purposes of this research report the concept of situation analysis becomes important because it involves critical questioning and reflection on what has normally been taken for granted, particularly with regard to situations within which pastoral praxis happens. In order to embrace and value the process of situation analysis, ministers, located and conscientised within a particular context, need to think critically. This may mean revisiting and revising the taken-for-granted actions that resulted from a previously unquestioned paradigm.

People, by and large, feel much more empowered in a defined or narrow context. The church, whose circumscribed environment imposes a strict code of conduct, by acting autonomously, has a tendency to take the burden of responsibility away from people. The reason for this is that the parameters of action are externally determined. It is only once people see themselves as functioning within a broader social context that they will be truly empowered. They no longer conform but reflect and challenge.

Specific focus in this research was laid on:

i. An inquiry into the factors which facilitate or hinder a critically reflective approach amongst individuals in terms of pastoral praxis.

ii. An assessment of clergy practice using the Pastoral Hermeneutical Circle (PHC) as an evaluation tool for critical thinking.

iii. An enquiry into whether or not the entire process of the PHC needs to be understood and followed for critical engagement and reflection to take place.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central research question was whether or not students are encouraged to be critical thinkers. A list of sub-questions which served the research question were:

* Did prior knowledge or experience seem to hinder or promote critical thinking?

* What teaching strategies seem to encourage critical thinking?

* What is the tutor's role in developing critical thinkers?

In this study the concept of critical thinking is based upon the definition Brookfield gives;

> Thinking critically involves our recognising the assumptions underlying our beliefs and behaviours. It means we can give justifications for our ideas and actions. Most important, perhaps, it means we try to judge the rationality of these justifications.
>
> (1987:13)

1.5 RESEARCH METHOD

The research design was interpretive (Cohen and Manion, 1989) and used qualitative methods. The researcher was looking for people's subjective experiences of an educational process. The pastoral hermeneutical circle was used as an evaluation tool to test if people work through the entire cycle. In order to explore the research question; "Are theological students critical thinkers?", information was gathered through interviews and focus group discussion.

A more complete understanding of the interpretive and qualitative processes can be seen in Chapter 4 where the research design is explained more fully.

The participants in the study were five ordained ministers within the Anglican church who were serving as interns, i.e. those who have undergone theological training and have been ordained for less than three years.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Learning is more than the acquisition of knowledge. It must of necessity shape attitudes and where necessary challenge and change them. Thinking and thinking critically are key components of knowing. Thoughts often produce actions and if theological education is going to evolve into meaningful pastoral practice then the process of cultivating critically reflective clergy within the church is important. It was anticipated that this research might make a meaningful contribution to the way theology is both taught and learned within the Anglican church as well as in other tertiary institutions within a faculty of theology.

1.7 SCOPE, LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

A broad assumption underlying the research is that, for multifarious reasons, most theological students are not empowered to be critical thinkers. Several explanations may be advanced for this:-

i. The curriculum is too narrow and too content based.

Any curriculum needs to be located within a context which is in itself influenced by socio-economic and political factors.

In designing a curriculum the end result needs to be uppermost in mind, namely, a consideration of the roles learners are intended to play after completion of their studies. Furthermore, what is meant by curriculum is more than simply the content of a course but needs to take cogniscance of, "what is taught, why it is taught, by whom, to whom, where, when and how". (Hammond, 1991:84).

ii. Teachers/Lecturers are ill trained.

This is not meant to be an indictment of the ability of lecturers who teach but rather centres on a commitment to the didactic approach. The question needs to be asked whether or not adult learners are being treated as adult children when they are taught theology. There probably needs to be a movement from teacher-directed learning to a form of learning which encourages learners to direct their own learning. I suspect this would be viewed with some suspicion because if it is misused, it could be understood as teachers not taking responsibility for informing learners with regard to the content of the curriculum.

iii. The banking method prevails.

The teacher of theology is at best perceived to be the source of all knowledge and the learner is the object where it is to be deposited. A consequence of this is that many students are too busy studying and not thinking. Information is hardly internalised because it is not processed by the recipients.

"Knowing" says Freire (1970:13), "involves a dialectical movement which goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to new action." It is my observation that the present theological educational system seems to place greater emphasis on studying and passing a set examination than thinking critically and expressing an opinion after reflection. Consequently, critical reflection is either not done or not valued. What exacerbates the situation even further is that many educators do not seem to reflect critically by virtue of the need either to implement or to complete a set curriculum.

iv. Theological texts are inadequate.

The frame of references is often the sources recommended by a lecturer. One of the principles of self-directed learning is the necessity to negotiate learning contracts. The learners need to be empowered to access their own texts and analyse them.

The above list is by no means exhaustive or definitive. A further assumption of this study was that the adult learner was not simply a participant in the process but a stakeholder as well. Part of the rationale for taking critical thinking as a basis for ministry was to move people from a position of disempowerment to empowerment in the church, for meaningful and effective ministry.

The immediate and obvious limitation could be my personal bias. Having been a participant observer in the research heightened my awareness of the dangers of researcher bias and subjectivity and its implications. Other limitations were the small number of respondents, namely, the internship training group from the Anglican Diocese of Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape, one of 21 such Dioceses in Southern Africa. The research findings do not have universal relevance because of the diverse contexts of ministry within South Africa. Generalisations could be drawn provided some of the following common denominators exist:-

- The theological curriculum followed is that accredited by the Joint Board for the Diploma in Theology (Southern Africa).

- Both the residential and in-service training options are followed.

- The minimum requirements for ordination and its processes are condoned by and mutually acceptable to all the Anglican dioceses within Southern Africa which comprises South Africa, Angola, Lesotho, and Swaziland.

1.8 OUTLINE OF REMAINDER OF STUDY

The rest of the study will be organised as follows:

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Chapter 3 - The Pastoral Hermeneutical Circle (PHC)
Whilst this remains part of the Literature Review, it forms a hinge point and serves as the basis for the Research Design.

Chapter 4 - Research Design

Chapter 5 - Research results presented both diagramatically as well as extracts from interviews and the focus group.

Chapter 6 - Discussion of research results, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of the inquiry was to explore factors which seemingly hinder or facilitate the ability to think or reflect critically on the part of theological students within the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (CPSA - the Anglican Church). Whilst the research included examining the theological curriculum from a critical adult education perspective, an investigation needed to be conducted into whether or not the prior socialisation process of the participants in theological education impinged upon their ability or willingness to engage in critical thinking. A particularly useful tool was identified and used in the evaluation process, namely, the Pastoral Hermeneutical Circle (PHC). Finally, the concept and role of the mentor in the ongoing formation of candidates was considered in the process of developing and refining critical reflection. The literature review is organised around these themes. Also, it extends over two chapters. Chapter two reviews literature in adult education which relates to the research, whereas chapter three focuses exclusively on the PHC which serves as a yardstick by which critical reflection may be measured. It is for this reason that it is given extensive treatment in a separate chapter.

2.2 THINKING, CRITICAL THINKING AND ADULT EDUCATION

Much of the literature concerning thinking regards it as a process with consequences.

Also, it is a natural activity like breathing. No one tells us how to breathe, we just do it. Dewey regards reflection as key to thinking. This is how he expresses it;

> Reflection involves not simply a sequence of ideas, but a *con*-sequence - a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each outcome in turn leans back on, or refers to, its predecessors. The successive portions of a reflective thought grow out of one another and support one another; they do not come and go in a medley. Each step is a phase from something to something - technically speaking, it is a *term* of thought. (1933:4,5)

There is a further component to thinking according to Dewey, namely, imagining. In other words, inventing incidence in the mind. The emphasis is thus on creativity rather than observation. But the succession of mental pictures must reach a conclusion. This is the purpose of all thinking. The adage, 'Seeing is believing' has a variation in cognition, namely, 'Thinking is believing.' Admittedly, this is a narrow definition of thinking because it is a subjective activity that needs to be tested by a set of objective factors before it finds a basis in fact. Nonetheless Dewey brings this component of reflective thought to the fore. His definition of reflective thinking is as follows;

> Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends...
>
> (Dewey,1933:8,9)

The end result of the process is that a conviction is established based in rationality and verified as well.

Thinking is deliberate and deliberative because there is always something that triggers it. The pastoral hermeneutical circle as a tool for ministry can only enhance this process.

It is important to bear in mind two attitudes towards thinking. *Firstly*, abstract thought consists in thinking that leads to further thought. *Secondly*, concrete thinking is the precursor to action: a means to an end. Whilst the aim of education should be to inculcate a balance between the two, there is the reality of the inability of some learners to *reflect* upon *thinking*. Hence the need to liberate the learner who has a strong bias towards concrete thought. This begs the question; 'Are some people incapable even in adulthood of reaching the fourth stage (formal operational) of development as outlined by Piaget?' The characteristic of this stage is the ability to reason hypothetically. At this stage reasoning extends beyond the pragmatic. In the words of Long (1979:3); "... the person is able to imagine and reason about events that might never occur in reality, but which are theoretically possible." Two core issues need to be reviewed in working towards some kind of criteria for measuring critical thinking, namely;

i. The importance of critical thinking.
ii. Difficulties in developing critical thinkers.

Cornielje implies that critical thinking is a skill. In a succinct way he highlights it as a life skill for health care workers from which meaningful parallels can be drawn for theologians such as ordained ministers. This is what he has to say;

> Primary Health Care is much more than a methodology only; it is ... a philosophy which helps communities to empower themselves through processes of conscientization and active participation in the development of their own community resources.
>
> (Cornielje, 1994:34)

Manifestations of the skill are more than a cognitive activity; they must influence action. Another component of critical thinking, according to Cornielje (1994) is an implied scepticism of quick fix solutions and universal truths. This is consistent with Brookfield (1987), who goes on to emphasise the critical thinker's awareness of bias in the media and political spheres. Malcolm Knowles' notion of self-directedness is also alluded to as a consequence of critical thinking (Cornielje, 1994:37). In addition to being a skill, critical thinking is regarded as a process. These two 'ingredients' appeal to me in so far as adult learning is a lifelong process. Such a process of education and training should necessarily enhance and strengthen the skill which needs to undergird any theological education program. The point which Cornielje (1994:40) raises, namely, that "It is the content - and the learning process - which truly empowers the learner", is one with which I agree. I contend that the gaining and imparting of critical thinking skills needs to be included as part of the curriculum for theological students.

2.3 SHARED CHRISTIAN PRAXIS

There is another key aspect to critical reflection in theological education that deserves mention, namely, what Groome (1980:184) calls, "Shared Christian Praxis".

The definition he proffers is; "... a group of Christians sharing in dialogue their critical reflection on present action in light of the Christian story and its Vision toward the end of lived Christian faith." Groome proposes five components in Christian pedagogy:

1. *Present Action* which means pastoral praxis or deliberate engagement in a holistic way in the world.

2. *Critical Reflection* meaning engaging the intellect to evaluate what one is presently engaged in. This is how Groome (1980:185) describes it; "... critical memory to uncover the past in the present and ... creative imagination to envision the future in the present." A crucial aspect to critical thinking is imagination. The word "Education" is derived from the Latin *ex duco* (I lead from or out of...). This makes the role of imagination more conspicuous. At a pedagogical level children are capable of discovery with a penchant for discovering the unknown. For Groome (1980:187) critical reflection "requires the exercise of reason, memory and imagination ... [It] engages both the rational and the affective capacities of the human person." Any person at any particular point in life is shaped by their past, present and future. While most of the memory resides in the past, it becomes the function of reason and imagination to reclaim the past in a new way. In essence, this is best referred to as critical memory which moves critical reflection from a debilitating negative activity to a positive creative activity.

3. *Dialogue*. This adds a new dimension to the dialogical approach to pedagogy within theological education.

It is a way of building community within an andragogical context which in turn could be one form of intervention in cultivating critical thinkers. Perhaps seminaries have not harnessed the potential of dialogue sufficiently to their advantage. The two key components of dialogue are *listening* and *narrating* or telling the story. It centres on the aspect of *disclosure*. By listening to others in the phenomenological sense, people come to know and understand themselves and consequently, *I* come to know and understand myself. It provides a forum for people to articulate and share their lived experiences. We need to remember that there is an important distinction between *dialogue* and *discussion*. Groome cites Freire in this regard;

> And since dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanised, this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person's "depositing" ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be "consumed" by the discussants. Nor yet is it a hostile, polemical argument between men who are committed neither to the naming of the world, nor to the search for truth, but rather to the imposition of their own truth.
>
> (1980:190)

For Freire then, real meaningful dialogue presupposes critical thinking.

4. *The Story*. In the realm of theological education this embraces the tradition of the Christian faith and how people express it within their given context. Understandably, religion and religious practice make their own symbols and develop their own language to express themselves.

So, in an analogous way, the *corpus* faith provides the frame whilst the lenses may have a different hue or vision.

5. *The Vision.* In theological jargon it is termed as moving from *orthodoxy (right belief)* to *orthopraxis (right action).* Biblically speaking it refers to conforming to living under the reign of God.

Wood (1985:73) sums up the gist of theological education by suggesting that theological reflection is a *sine qua non* for any ministerial practice. Among its countenances are the following:-

- It is deliberative i.e. reflective.
- It includes making judgements from a theological basis.
- There is a strategy for praxis.
- Pastoral practice becomes informed by empowering the minister to make judgements rather than equipping her/him with ready made ones. It means the practitioner owns the decision s/he makes.

The consequence of the theoretical framework suggested here, is that it forms a natural precursor to *critical thinking* because it becomes an acquired skill. Texts inform a situation and facilitate arriving at a judgement. The context in the end determines how that text is interpreted and applied.

Seminaries have been faced with a dilemma in training students. It has hardly been clear whether the emphasis needed to be on forming people for Christian practice or on providing them with *information* in their ongoing religious quest.

Wood sums it up by categorising theological inquiry in two categories, *objective* where theological abilities are sharpened and *subjective* where the student is seeking answers in the religious pilgrimage. Sadly, this is where much of the emphasis of theological education has been placed. This does not lend itself to critical reflection because the perception is cultivated that it is heretical to question theological texts or tenets of faith. Wood (1985:75) suggests that, "The important thing is to emerge with 'a theology', that is, with an objective understanding of the content of the Christian faith which can serve as a basis for one's preaching, teaching, counselling etc." The purpose of theological education needs to be more than simply giving students a corpus of objective knowledge; that remains the foundation. The principle should be to build on it.

2.4 EDUCATION AND ADULT EDUCATION

Kinsler and Emery (1991:42) state the following; "Learning is not simply the accumulation of information, concepts and knowledge. Equally important are abilities and attitudes." They aptly illustrate the inter-relatedness between the three fundamental dimensions of learning as follows:

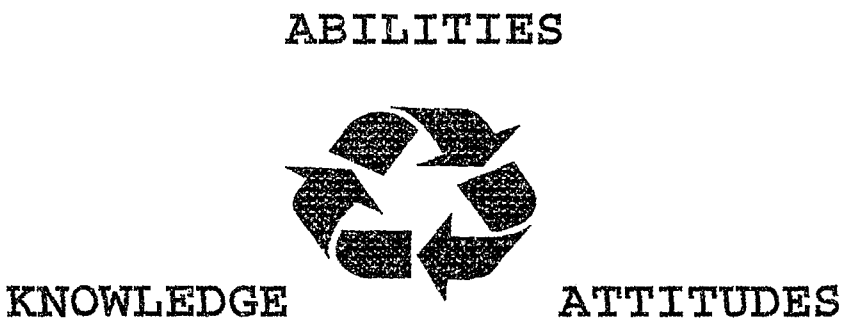


Figure 1 Dimensions of Learning

The *cognitive* dimension (knowledge) of theological education has a large corpus of content and it is complex. Consequently, this is where most of the educational process has expended its energy. It is understandable that Kinsler and Emery (1991:42) suggest that "the greatest need in this situation is to develop effective strategies for building effective learning sequences that lead to holistic understanding".

The *affective* dimension (feelings and values) is often neglected because it is less clearly understood in the education of adults within a theological context. This, however, does not relegate it to a position of less importance than the cognitive dimension.

At this level of education one has to deal with the nurturing of feelings, values and commitments that correspond with the curriculum. The purpose of adult education is to facilitate the challenging and changing of the learner's attitudes.

The *skills* dimension (abilities) are as important and essential for the student of theology. It is not sufficient to focus on curriculum content only, but equally to engender a cognitive flexibility such as applying the knowledge learned or gained to various situations and contexts. Also, it gives the learner a disposition to learn from disciplines other than that being pursued as well as encouragement to draw upon them. In the end the purpose of the pursuit of knowledge serves to inform and enhance abilities.

Mezirow (1981:4) suggests that adult education has a duty towards the emancipatory aspect with regard to the three primary cognitive interests of the adult learner as proposed by Habermas (1972); the technical (knowledge), the practical (abilities) and the emancipatory (changing attitudes). If we are to "cultivate" critical thinkers then it has to happen at each of the points highlighted by the authors. In fact Mezirow (1981:11) refers to it as "critical reflectivity". The terse definition proffered by him is; "Critical awareness or critical consciousness is 'becoming aware of our awareness' and critiquing it."

2.5 ADULT EDUCATION: A DEFINITION

Brookfield (1985:46) defines adult education as follows; "... that activity concerned to assist adults in their quest for a sense of control in their own lives, within their interpersonal relationships, and with regard to the social forms and structures within which they live."

It is significant that the article is introduced with recognition of adult education as an academic discipline. The term used by Brookfield "academic enquiry" suggests a phenomenon that reflects both theory and practice. He dispenses with two widely held assumptions:

a) Every adult is self-directed. Brookfield points out that the role of the educator is simply to assist the learner in attaining that goal.

b) The adult learner and educator (facilitator) complement each other harmoniously making learning a fun and fulfilling experience in self-actualization. Brookfield (1985) in particular mentions that learning is not all fun but that the process can be painful as an opportunity for growth and empowerment. This is too idealistic and simplistic for the complex learning patterns of adults. Successful self-directed learning takes place on two fronts; *firstly*, the resources for learning are rooted within society. Brookfield (1986:47) says the following; "It includes the processes of setting goals, identifying resources such as skills which other learners provide, implementing strategies and evaluating progress." *Secondly*, it empowers the learner to rise above his/her cultural context. Once the perception of the learners has been altered - in a positive way - they are then capable of transforming "their personal and social worlds." (Brookfield 1986:47). This goes to the heart of the empowerment of any theologian for critical thinking. Brookfield (1986) also demonstrates the importance of including adult learners in developing the curriculum. It is another way in which critical reflection can be promoted. Education should always be embarked upon with a view to developing and producing in every learner a critical awareness.

A key concept inherent in self-directed learning for Brookfield (1986) is the *autonomy* of the learner. Implicit in this autonomy is the learner's ability to sense and control personal relationships within the broader socio-political context accompanied by the ability to renegotiate a whole new set of relationships.

The works of Rousseau (1963), Immanuel Kant (1971) and Piaget (1973) have led to increased interest in the development of *rational autonomy* (free, independent, critical thought) as the central trait of the educated person. Now the autonomous person, to put it simplistically, is able to think for himself/herself.

A perplexing question in Brookfield's conceptualising of learner-autonomy remains: to what extent is critical thinking a virtue? For example, a good person, even a saint, is assessed in the light of their docility and obedience in remaining faithful to the cause of the church. The person who thinks critically and asks awkward questions is viewed with scepticism and even marginalised. Consequently, "conservation" rather than "innovation" remains the clarion call and stifles critical thinking. A dilemma arises for me in endorsing Brookfield's exposition in this literature review. I am drawn simultaneously to the utilitarian philosophy, the *summum bonum* (greatest good for the greatest number) as well as to the autonomy of the learner. Whilst it remains tainted by humanism and therefore at variance with Christianity, it nevertheless remains a serious consideration. (Protagoras, an ancient Greek philosopher was the first proponent of humanism. He had a basic theme and idea which was simply that [man] is the measure of all things. It is not difficult to see how this stands in direct conflict with the Christian exhortation of conforming to the standards of Jesus Christ).

Two parties are involved in the theological education process; the learners who are being informed for ministry as well as the ultimate beneficiaries, those they will be pastoring. The learner needs to be immersed into a community during her/his training in order to consolidate theory with praxis, if the process is going to lead to greater autonomy.

Brookfield (1986:121) goes on to dispel various ways in which Malcolm Knowles' ideas have been expounded:

1. There has been too ready an acceptance that self-directedness is innate to adulthood.

2. All adult learning is essentially problem-centred.

3. Adults need to apply what they have learned immediately.

Learning, consequently, is always "attached" to what Brookfield refers to as the development of self-awareness and self-insight rather than the development of performance-based competencies. He rightly points out that there is a place for both *andragogy* and *pedagogy* (see preliminary chapter for definitions) within a rationale for any adult education practice. By an evolutionary process the teacher becomes the educator who builds a liberating learning climate. When the learner has been challenged and exposed to alternative ways of exploring and interpreting life-situations then the facilitation of reflective sceptics becomes more of a possibility. Critical thinking, according to Brookfield, will be promoted and enhanced where a climate of mutual acceptance between learners and facilitators of learning exists and where dissent is not merely tolerated but encouraged. Therefore, this would lead to an examination of the theological curriculum followed, the teaching philosophy adopted in the seminaries and the role of a mentor/sponsor in either silencing or facilitating critical thinking skills.

In conceptualising adult education as a discipline of the humanities, one needs to address both the *how* and *why* of the education process. It is a principle that needs to be kept in focus. Jarvis (1985:36) goes on to say; "One of the results in liberating the mind in this way is that the individual may develop a profound dissatisfaction with the society in which [s/he] lives and wish to transform it either gradually or dramatically in a revolutionary form." The approach must be holistic because both the individual as well as the socio-cultural context need to be liberated in every respect. The popular misconception exists that religion and belief is one and the same thing. Consequently, theological study is regarded as providing a theoretical framework for understanding the belief system.

Such a conflicting notion in interpretation calls for a closer examination or questioning of the persuasive and coercive power of the belief system. Theological students, it could be claimed, are trained in obedience which supposedly makes critical thinking very difficult. I do not see the issues of obedience and critical thinking as juxtaposed. Rather, they complement one another. Much of the literature surveyed implies that critical thinking includes creativity which makes for more meaningful practice.

Historically, certain theological education programs have seen their responsibility as being an allegiance to the Bible, the faith and denomination or ecclesial tradition for which they are forming people for ministry. Within this understanding each of the facets mentioned seem to emphasise their responsibilities differently:

a) To the church in terms of its mission in the world,

b) To the world in terms of meeting its needs.

Yet there exists a relationship between the Bible, the world and the church. The sacred-secular dichotomy propagated is false with no biblical basis.

Theological education needs to impact on all three spheres, lending itself to holistic learning. The stakeholders in the education process may need to examine where the emphasis lies within their own program. There may be a need to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum in equipping students to integrate all three dimensions within their own learning. Kinsler and Emery (1991:33) provide a diagram on an idealised image "of the relationship between these essential elements."

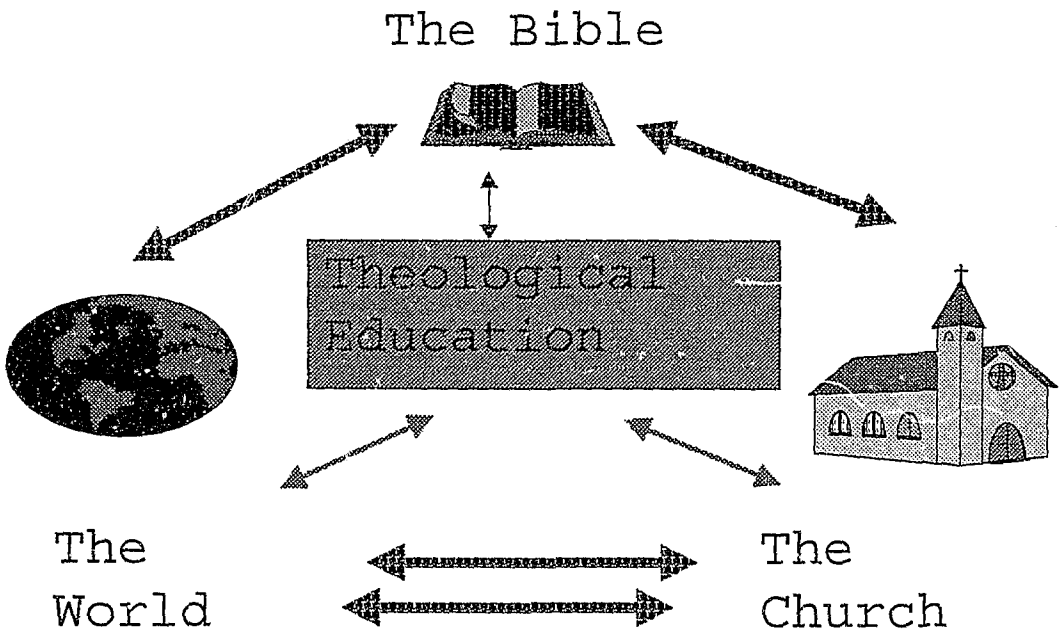


Figure 2 Relationship : Church, World and Scripture

Kinsler & Emery (1991:51) sum up the dilemma we have in theological education within the mainline churches in South Africa and indeed the rest of the world by citing Malcolm Knowles:

> *The kind of learning ... in an organisation is affected by the kind of organisation it is.*
>
> *An organisation tends to serve as a role model for those it influences.*
>
> *In hierarchically structured organisations there is less motivation for self-improvement, and there are more blocks to learning (like anxiety) than in more democratic organisations.*

2.6 THE SCRIPTURES AND CRITICAL THINKING

The Bible is littered with stories and incidents with a number of characters displaying a propensity for critical thinking. The four gospels of the New Testament record poignant instances of Jesus implementing this God-endowed life skill. If theologians needed a role model to emulate, then they need look no further than the fulcrum of their faith. An apt example illustrating the point is recorded in the Gospel of John, chapter 8, verse 3 and following. A woman who had been "caught in adultery" was brought to Jesus by experts in the Jewish Law (Torah). This is what the Scribes and Pharisees have to say to him; "In the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" (John 8:5).

Up to this point, Jesus' adversaries were being confrontational and provocative because they wanted to expose him for claiming to be the Christ (messiah). His response is both terse and cutting; "If any of you is without sin ... throw a stone at her" (John 8:7). Then they leave, one by one. The Scribes altered the law to suit their argument. Jesus confronts them about their own standing before the law and not just that of women. In this confrontation Jesus disarms his opponents by questioning the assumptions of those who come to him and challenges them - a key component of critical thinking. There are many more examples, but these will be discussed in the broader context of the research report.

2.7 PRIOR EXPERIENCE AND ADULT LEARNING

Buchmann and Schwille (1983) raise a contentious issue which has bedevilled education, namely, "Experience is the best teacher." This is due to the immense value placed upon firsthand experience. In their article they question three suppositions about it. It is their third which merits consideration, namely, "How firsthand experience can close avenues to conceptual and social change" (Buchmann & Schwille, 1983:30). The model used in this research for measuring critical thinking, the pastoral hermeneutical circle, is dependent upon practitioners completing the entire process. Pastoral praxis can, at best, be described as a movement between "insertion" and "pastoral action". This becomes an end in itself within the theologising process. The authors cite Friedson (1970) in this regard. He held that, " ... the critical faculties are in abeyance. People who live by action alone may never ask what is happening." (Buchmann & Schwille 1987:43).

The value of prior learning means that adult learners have a basis upon which they can build and hopefully move on as they become empowered through an educational intervention program.

2.8 CURRICULUM EVALUATION AND ADULT EDUCATION

Jansen (1990) makes the point that curriculum knowledge cannot be neutral. This is clarified by the fact that education serves a number of purposes, especially the following: *firstly*, it serves the ideological aims of an organisation and *secondly*, it is a means to empowering learners to transform their context through a process of critical reflection. The fundamental point of this is that knowledge serves an ideology and highlights two dimensions; curriculum change and curriculum continuity (Jansen, 1990:196).

An obvious conclusion to be drawn from the above is that the curriculum for the Diploma in Theology administered by the Joint Board for the Diploma in Theology (Southern Africa), which most seminaries follow and is accredited by most South African universities, is not neutral. It embodies and seeks to perpetuate the symbols and values which sustain an embraced dogma.

Even within a theological context - as elsewhere - curriculum is dynamic. In the past, apartheid influenced *how* the curriculum was taught. This was consistent with the stance the Anglican church took against the government of the day.

Presently, it has to redefine its identity in a democratic climate in terms of what it means to be "Church" variously described in the New Testament text as; "The Body/Bride of Christ" (1Cor. 12:12; Rev.19:7). This, of necessity, affects the implementation of the curriculum followed. Because of its innate dynamism, the curriculum therefore, needs an overall in terms of its content and the way it is taught by facilitators of such education. If society needs to be reconstructed in a postapartheid era, so too does our theological curriculum and discourse.

Curriculum design takes seriously the context for any form of education, and Christian training needs to take this seriously in relating in a creative way to that context. Kinsler and Emery elucidates this point further by citing a report from a "Consultation on Ministerial Formation":

> Inherent in much ministerial education is a lack of social analysis. That...is reflected in the life of the church where there is a woeful ignorance of the nature of contemporary society, and therefore there is also a lack of perception of the real nature of powerlessness. Without such social analysis... Christians cannot be expected to begin to tackle creatively the forces leading to exploitation. Consequently, the church cannot realise its task of being an agent in God's liberating and redeeming action...
>
> Within many theological colleges there is a strong emphasis given to the Scriptures and systematic theology. Yet these are seldom related to social analysis. Indeed this lack of a holistic approach within training communicates itself via ministers to the churches, where few Christians see life in its wholeness.
>
> (1991:55)

If the church wants to move itself back to the centre of debate in South Africa then the present curriculum followed needs to be subjected to rigorous examination with a view to moving it into the emergent dialectical arena. Furthermore, what makes the crisis of the lack of reflective sceptics for the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (CPSA) is that within living memory things were radically different, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s. This is paralleled by Wilkes'(1991) allusion to the pervasive role religion played in America in the 1950s and how its importance was beyond question. Many of that country's most able citizens enrolled themselves in seminaries in order that they might be of service to their congregations.

The opposite seems to be happening here in South Africa, namely, it is by and large the least able who are offering themselves for the ordained ministry.

In terms of a way forward for curriculum development the literature consulted raised a number of pertinent questions such as:

1. In compiling the theological curriculum has any consideration been given to curriculum design models produced by other educational specialists in the field?

2. Were the needs of prospective adult learners and their constituency taken into consideration in designing the curriculum? In other words, what kind of social analysis was done in compiling the curriculum?

3. Does the curriculum have clear objectives such as cultivating critical thinkers? How are these objectives spelled out to both faculty and students?

4. Is the curriculum reflective of the multi-cultural, multi-religous nature of our society? Does it seek to engage other faiths, philosophies and world-views in meaningful dialogue?

The final chapter (6) of the research report will pick up these questions and formulate a response to them as a contribution to the ongoing debate around the "how", "what" and "why" of the theological curriculum debate.

2.9 MENTORING AND ADULT EMPOWERMENT

The word "mentor" has its roots in Greek mythology. The modern translation of The Odyssey (Homer, 1975:45) states that, " ... Odysseus, going on the ships, had turned over the household to the old man, to keep it well, and so all should obey him." His responsibilities included nurturing Telemachos, the son of Odysseus and Penelope, and this principle has evolved into encapsulating the responsibilities involved in the development of those entrusted to someone's care. History is littered with examples of mentoring. In the Bible, for example, it was precisely this role that Jesus played in relation to his disciples.

The management principle there seems to be one of "Walk your talk."

Merriam makes the point that, "The mentor helps shape the growth and development of the protégé" (1983:161). A mentor is always there to do something. Several definitions of a mentor exist. In essence the definitions are complementary. Here are a few from Nasser et al (1992:3,4):

> A mentor oversees the career development of another person, usually a junior, through teaching, counselling, providing psychological support, protecting and at times promoting or sponsoring. The mentor may perform any or all of the above functions during the mentor relationship.
>
> (Zey:1984)

> Mentorship is the process of transmitting the knowledge, skills and life experience from a selected successful manager to another employee in the organisational system for the purpose of growing that employee for greater efficiency and effectiveness.
>
> (Nasser & Buitendag:1984)

The references are set in the world of business management, whereas this research is interested in mentorship within an ecclesiastical context. These sources reveal little consensus with regard to the importance of the mentor in the learning process of adults.

Bova and Phillips (1984:16) make a strong case for it. They cite Levinson (1978) who said that the mentor-protégé relationship is one of the most developmentally important relationships a person can have in early adulthood. Clawson (1985), on the other hand, does not think that mentoring is essential. One of the reasons for that view is that the relationship enshrines a learning opportunity for the "junior" partner only, whereas according to him, education is essentially a two way learning process.

This could be questioned if the role of the mentor is essentially one of coaching. Implicit in the analogy are various stages in the formation of the protégé which could lead to self-directedness. These opposing viewpoints needed to be examined carefully in redefining the role of the mentor in cultivating *reflective sceptics* (Brookfield 1987) in the ecclesiastical context. Some of the questions which needed to be explored were; "What is a critical mentor?" and "What is a mentor in the church?" Does mentoring lead to self-directedness?

2.10 CONCLUSION

The literature consulted formed a precursor to further reading primarily around the fundamental adult education principle of self-directed learning as well as curriculum and mentoring, emerging factors within the broader spectrum of the South African educational system.

Fundamental to the entire research project was not simply how theological students become critical thinkers, but how critical thinking related to adult development and adult learning. If critical thinking contributes to the capacity of meaningful pastoral praxis then theological educators need to acknowledge it as well as cultivate such relationships with learners.

In the ensuing chapter (3) the Pastoral Hermeneutical Circle (PHC) will be discussed more fully. Henriot and Holland's (1983) Hermeneutical Circle has "experience" at its centre. The mentor supersedes that by virtue of the experience he/she acquired through life-experience. Ideally the mentor would be familiar with the model (PHC) and each of its points.

CHAPTER 3

THE PASTORAL HERMENEUTICAL CIRCLE (PHC)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the PHC, based upon the Hermeneutical Circle (HC) of Henriot and Holland (1986), as a model for ministerial practice. The PHC is used in this study as the main tool for evaluating whether or not theological students are trained to think critically. It forms a key component of the research design which is presented in chapter four.

This chapter highlights and discusses the rationale for each moment of the PHC. It is important to note the difference between the PHC and the HC. The HC has four moments, namely, insertion, social analysis, theological reflection and pastoral planning with "experience" at the centre of the circle (Figure 3).

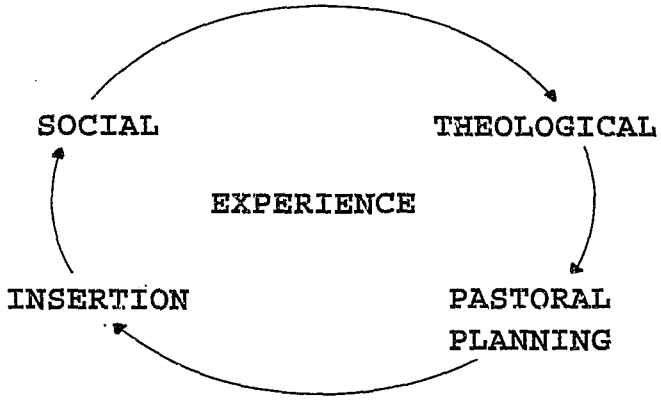


Figure 3 - The Hermeneutical Circle

The PHC has the following additional elements: faith-commitment, ecclesial analysis, and spiritual formation. The reason for these additions is that Cochrane et al (1991) feel that, "certain key elements in the pastoral hermeneutical circle are either absent or insufficiently stressed [by Holland and Henriot]." The authors of the PHC feel that with these additional moments, their model offers a more holistic approach to pastoral praxis.

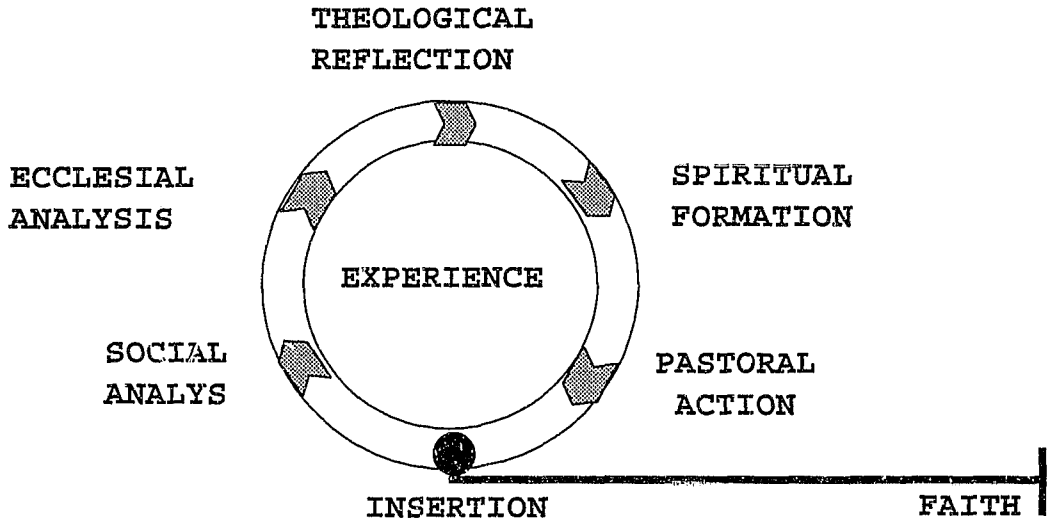


Figure 4 The Pastoral Hermeneutical Circle

3.2 FAITH

Entry into the PHC requires a prior commitment. Cochrane et al put it as follows:

> No one does theology from a position of theological neutrality. We all approach the task, whether at a crude or sophisticated level, whether poorly or well, from some perspective from within some commitment or other, and with an agenda - however vague - in mind. (1991:15)

Faith is an implied commitment for pastoral praxis and therefore precedes the moment of insertion.

3.3 INSERTION

This is the point at which theology (theoria) meets praxis. Insertion is the moment which provides a location for the pastoral responses of the minister in the experience of an individual or community. It is important to note that there are many moments of insertion within the life of a congregation which confront a minister, for example, bereavement. Related to this are the issues of violence and suffering which affect both individuals and the community.

3.4 SOCIAL ANALYSIS

What kind of ministry are people being empowered for? The church has its locus within a community and the needs of people stand in direct relationship to it. What becomes required of ministers is to help interpret events and assist the community they serve in making sense of the things which compete for attention and influence and shape their lives. The crux of this moment is to gain an understanding of the context. It therefore becomes imperative that students of theology understand the context in which they find themselves after insertion. Cochrane et al (1991:18) cite Henriot and Holland (1983) to underline its importance; "Social analysis can be defined as the effort to obtain a more complete picture of a social situation by exploring its *historical* and *structural* relationships. Social analysis serves as a tool that permits us to grasp the reality with which we are dealing".

Of necessity this applies to the stage of doing an *ecclesial analysis* as well. It entails locating the church within its social context. According to Brookfield (1987:8) one of four components of critical thinking is *challenging the importance of context*. He sums up by saying: "Critical thinkers are aware that practices, structures, and actions are never context-free". Briefly, the three remaining components are:

* *Identifying and challenging assumptions*.
* *Imagining and exploring alternatives*.
* *Imagining and exploring alternatives leads to reflective sceptism*.

Regarding the *reflective sceptic* Brookfield (1991:9) defines the person as one who does not take things at face value. Within the church, so rich in tradition, a critical reflective sceptic would ask questions and try to understand the factors which give it its persuasive powers and qualities. Only after such consideration will the individual choose to conform or not. This becomes an informed decision which is vital in critical thinking. Analysis is not enough. What is needed is a critical analysis. According to Cochrane et al this lies at the heart of all pastoral practice.

> Praxis, while literally meaning practice, has in critical theory come to mean practice or action which is subject to critical reflection and which is engaged in social transformation towards the human good.
> (1991:24)

3.5 ECCLESIAL ANALYSIS

This would parallel a form of social analysis with an added proviso, namely, locating the church within its social context. If students have not developed skills to do a social analysis, then there is little likelihood that they will feel empowered to question the church. The prevailing ethos within our organisation is that of autocracy. Theological students tend to be either reluctant or disabled sceptics.

Questioning is important to the adult learning process since it empowers learners to renegotiate new relationships at various levels such as interpersonal, cultural, economic.

3.6 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

The Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other makes for meaningful practice and reflective sceptics. Students of theology and ministers also need to apply hermeneutics of suspicion. West cites Takatso Mofokeng;

> No statement in the history of political science as well as that of Christian missions expresses the dilemma that confronts black South Africans in their relationship with the Bible with greater precision and has whipped up more emotions than the following: 'When the white man came to our country he had the Bible and we had the land. The white man said to us "Let us pray". After the prayer, the white man had the land and we had the Bible.
>
> (West, 1991:35)

3.7 SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Spiritual formation is a conscious practice in that it is a form of empowerment. It should be seen as a way of bringing together two spheres of life, the public and the personal. According to Cochrane et al (1991:75) this forms the foundation "of liberating praxis". Christianity is not ephemeral but a way of life. Therefore contemplating what the Christian Gospel requires and reflecting upon such reflecting should result in new ways of acting. This would indicate whether or not clerics are reflective sceptics by showing how they respond to many and varied situations of pastoral practice.

3.8 PASTORAL ACTION

It is the sole function of the theological curriculum to move adult learners to a position of autonomy where they are not simply followers but innovators and leaders who eventually develop into role models which others want to emulate - not imitate! The pastoral practice should ideally be informed by entry into the hermeneutical circle and going through the process - and then starting all over again. This is linked to the concept of praxis which Paulo Freire (1985) developed, namely, that interpretation takes place continually as older theories become displaced by the force of new ones. Herein lies the importance of critical thinking for meaningful pastoral practice.

A basic definition of 'hermeneutics' is that it is the theory of 'erpretation. In a more general sense it has evolved to become, 'The art of understanding any text'.

Bultmann (1955), cited in Coggins and Houlden (1991), adopted this idea and suggested that "every interpretation moves of necessity in a circle". The prospect of going round in circles does not seem to contribute towards enhancing critical thinking. Rather, because of the hermeneutical circle operating at several levels it would be more appropriate to see it as a spiral. In other words, it is an ongoing process because the context and players are constantly shifting positions. Paul Ricouer (1981) related the circle directly to faith by giving this formula; "To understand, it is necessary to believe; to believe, it is necessary to understand." Most pastoral praxis seems to be a movement between two points on the circle; *insertion* and *pastoral action* - compare figure 4. If ministry is going to be proactive then ministers need to overcome the limitations of such movement. They have to be involved with each moment of the PHC.

Pastoral praxis needs to be informed by the primary data of experience, analysis and theological reflection (Cochrane et al, 1991:25).

3.9 PASTORAL HERMENEUTICAL CIRCLE: A CRITIQUE

The PHC has grown out of the original "pastoral circle" of Henriot and Holland (1986:7). They suggested that the "circle represents the close relationships between four mediations of experience". The function of the circle is to depict the perpetual relationship between reflection and action.

The impetus behind this model for doing basic pastoral social analysis is entering the lived experiences of a community and acting for justice on behalf of that oppressed people.

This is undoubtedly the foundation on which the PHC is built in that the Church has struggled for justice on behalf of the oppressed masses in South Africa over the years. Two key stages were added to the pastoral circle by Cochrane et al (1991), namely, ecclesial analysis and spiritual formation. The rationale for this is not surprising because the Church, in identifying with a specific community, cannot struggle with people without reflecting critically within and upon itself regarding its mission. In the wider context of Christian pastoral ministry, the struggle for justice cannot happen in isolation from the struggle for salvation.

There seems to be a perpetual backwards and forwards short-circuiting the other vital stages in the hermeneutical process which accumulatively could facilitate critical thinking.

Entry into the pastoral hermeneutical circle is not facilitated by an uncritical acceptance of both the text and context on the part of the student of theology. One thrust of the research rested upon using the model for doing practical theology developed by Cochrane, de Gruchy and Petersen (1991). Whilst it remains a satisfactory model, it does lack one vital aspect if the church is going to facilitate the critical thinking process in the empowerment of the students, namely, that of a mentor who lies at the heart of the circle.

The authors of the circle suggest that each phase or stage of the circle must be seen as a distinct part of the process. My own approach was to do an examination of each stage of the hermeneutical circle as follows with a view to discovering more creative and innovative ways to empower people to become reflective sceptics through theological education and training. Consequently, from the moment of *insertion* one must of necessity follow the process through as depicted if ministry is going to be contextual and effective. Key questions unlock the logic and rationale for each point, for example, "What exactly do these [additional] elements involve? Why are they introduced? How are they to be understood?".

3.10 THE PHC, THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND THE CPSA

There are a number of ways in which theological education is viewed as serving the church. These are not necessarily mutually exclusive but there seems to be a broad consensus about it.

3.10.1 Formation

The sense of moulding a priestly disposition becomes a pervading one where there is an emphasis upon the sacramental role of the minister. Understandably, then, the withdrawal of the candidate for training for the ordained ministry from the "world" and into a seminary for at least three years becomes essential. In the seminary the emphasis of the curriculum is upon Christianity.

This model has come under increasing pressure on a number of fronts because of the difference in cost between training a person residentially or non-residentially. The latter becomes a preferred option because it costs less and is less disruptive of family life where such a candidate is a married person. Also, learners can be trained within a particular context because they will be serving in a similar context after ordination.

3.10.2 Skills

The strong tradition of continuity within the CPSA is evidenced by the fourfold emphasis of the curriculum. The core disciplines are; the Bible (Old Testament and New Testament), systematic theology, church history and practical/pastoral theology which concerns itself with "practice". The purpose of skills development is to prepare people who will manage the church.

We live in an age of increasing professionalism where there is a tendency to turn to experts for everything. This creates a dependency on others. Responsibility is not something readily accepted because people look to the experts for answers. Being an ordained minister moves the pastor into the realm of the theological expert. This means that people now look to the church manager for answers as to the meaning of life. The implication of this scenario places a responsibility upon the professional theologian to think.

Thinking is hard. Thinking critically as a learned skill therefore needs to undergird any theological education process.

One of the ways in which this can be enhanced is a dialogical approach where learners are encouraged to probe and ask questions.

The essence of becoming a professional theologian resides in thinking more about the beliefs of people than about one's own or the corpus of belief of the church (Cobb, 1993). This is consistent with the "clerical paradigm" suggested by Farley (1983:85) and it regards the training of pastors as being on a par with the training of professional lawyers and doctors (Bosch, 1991:9).

3.10.3 Critical Thinking

Ecclesial analysis is a key dimension in the dialogical discourse between faith and community. Anselm, a former Archbishop of Canterbury, coined the phrase; "I have faith therefore I believe." Polanyi (1958:266) cogently argues the point that belief is the source of all knowledge. Yet the society which the church serves today goes by the adage; "Unless we understand, we shall not believe". The implication of this for the pastor as critical practitioner is that there is no movement between a secular interpretation of the biblical text when doing theological reflection and the sacred or theological interpretation. In order for change to take place - movement between secular and theological 'texts' - a mentor might be needed because critical reflection is sometimes difficult and painful, as Brookfield noted in the previous chapter. Mentor and protégé are held together in a creative tension when engaging fully in the PHC.

In the final chapter of the report an argument for the inclusion of a mentor within the PHC will be presented as well.

3.11 CONCLUSION

The major shortcoming of the PHC as it stands is that it operates on an assumption that any individual minister is predisposed and equipped to engage in each of the stages. Critical adult education theory presents some ideas which challenge the PHC. It is possible for the PHC to be more in sync with theories and principles of adult education. This will be discussed in the final chapter of this report.

The next chapter presents the design of this research, which is based on the PHC. The PHC forms the basis of the FGD. Interviews provide brief biographical details of each participant within their unique context of ministry. Valuable information was gathered through conferences on theological education within the Anglican church in Southern Africa.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Pastoral Hermeneutical Circle forms the basis upon which the research was conducted. It is a model for ministry which exists along with others. What makes this model a pertinent one is that it provides an adult learner with a map which facilitates meaningful and effective ministry. In addition to a mentor guiding a protégé through each moment it could serve to encourage the learner to engage in critical pastoral practice.

The study, however, was designed to discover whether or not students of theology within a sector of the Anglican church were trained to think critically. With the planning of the research methodology came the realisation that a vast number of factors could be pertinent. This begs an important question; What are the factors prohibiting or inhibiting critical thinking? The theological college in which a person was trained for the ministry and its concomitant, the curriculum followed, the age at which they were ordained, the unique cultural milieu and how it shaped the world-view of the individual, the level of education, political views, relationship with superiors and other clergy, prior learning, reading material (if any) and many other variables were considered and contemplated. Each of these factors could occur in a variety of combinations at any one time.

It soon became obvious that the number of variables needed to be narrowed down by a process of elimination. Among the criteria was my own geographical location in the Eastern Cape. Interestingly, at one point two of the Anglican church's three theological colleges were located within this province. A few years ago I was privileged to have lectured at one of them for two years. Since joining the Diocese of Port Elizabeth and my continued involvement with the ongoing process of theological education, it made sense to locate the investigation within a single church denomination because of the working knowledge gained about it over the last eleven years.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The nature of the research is phenomenological in that it seeks to highlight the unique experience of each individual participant who formed the sample of the investigation. This means that it is grounded in the experience of the individual which facilitates a better understanding of their personal and social context. In essence, the research questions are intended to elicit the story of each person interviewed. This lies at the heart of the research. The research is not intended to make pronouncements upon the theological proprieties of people.

Firstly, they are recorded without judging individuals or their viewpoints but rather to evaluate data. Secondly, it is nowhere implied that people fit into stereotypic categories. No two people in the research are alike. Consequently, a content analysis will be done of the information gathered.

4.3 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The primary source of information for this study were members of the Internship Training Group of the Anglican Diocese of Port Elizabeth. Their membership of the group is obligatory for the first two years after their ordination as part of their ongoing formation for ministry. There were five participants who were all males. Their ages varied from 30 years to 64 years. The racial composition was mixed but reflected the spectrum of South African society.

A second source came by way of serendipity. I was privileged to represent the Diocese of Port Elizabeth at two national Anglican conferences on theological education. This provided a platform in both group work and plenary sessions to discuss many of the salient features of the research. Furthermore it presented an opportunity to organise ideas, present and discuss tentative conclusions and solicit alternative interpretations from colleagues involved with theological education in their respective diocese. All of this information was fed into the research report. These discussions strengthened the validity of the research by providing additional sources of information and perspectives. The complementary role of the two research methods provided a platform for testing ideas and getting feedback.

4.4 TRIANGULATION

According to Cohen and Manion (1981:208) triangulation is "... the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour." Essentially it is a multimethod approach to gathering data in research.

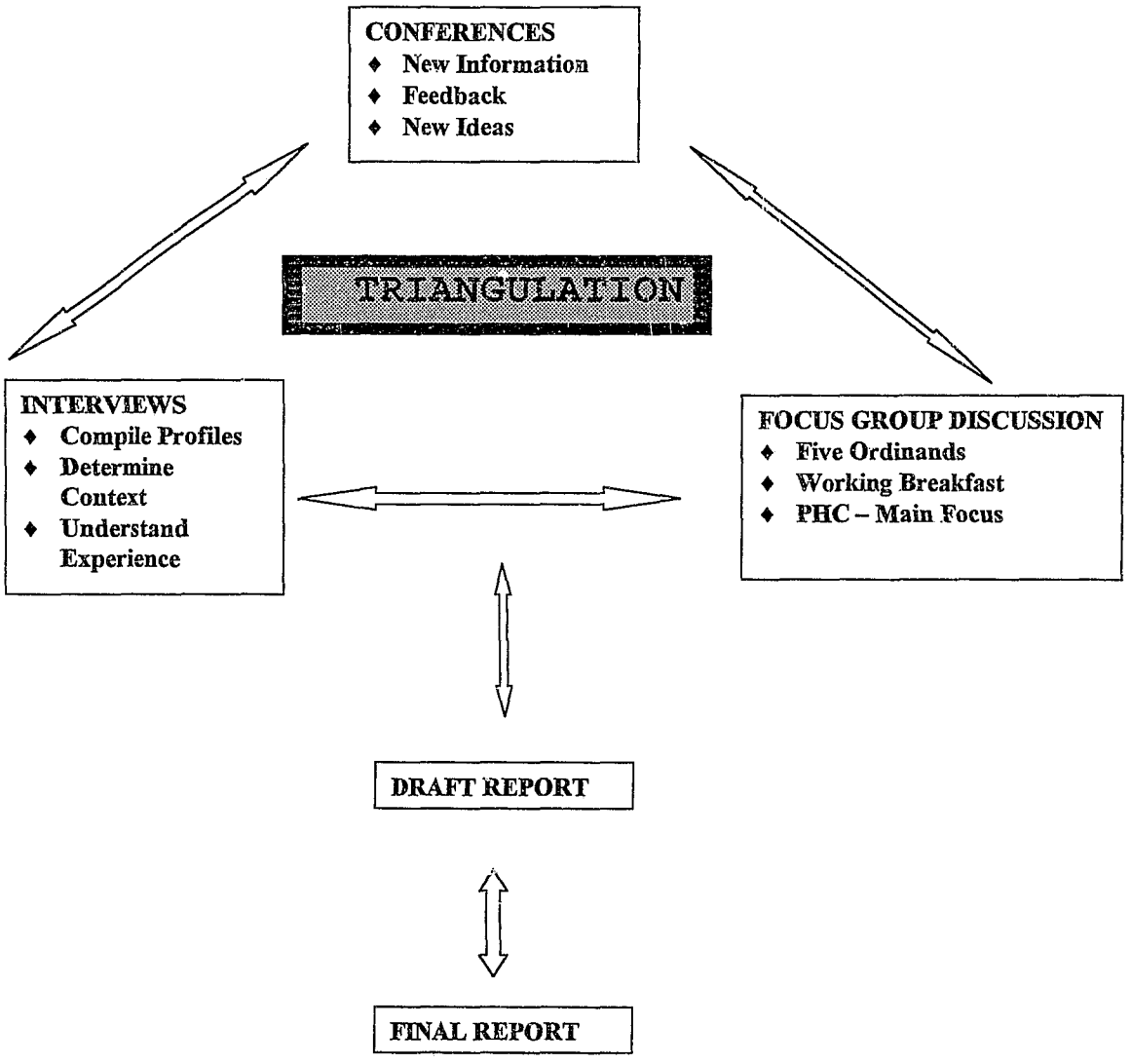


Figure 5 - Research design

Triangulation is a life-skill utilised by judges and magistrates and by people for decision-making in everyday life. For example, people use a form of triangulation to make an informed decision about whether or not it would be feasible to embark on a part-time course of studies when they consider factors such as; prospects for promotion, costs, status (societal or otherwise) and the time factor. Hence the principal of triangulation is not alien to people, let alone educators of adults.

4.4.1 Why Triangulation?

Historically, triangulation was introduced to the social sciences (humanities) in a paper by Campbell and Fiske (1959). They referred to it as "a multitrait-multimethod matrix", and it was used in the discipline of psychology in evaluating findings either for validity or convergence.

4.4.2 Advantages/Strengths of triangulation

Triangulation is a way of thinking. Interpretive and qualitative research wants to understand behaviour as opposed to quatitative research which measures things. A single linear approach in research lends itself to a neatness in coming to a conclusion about something being researched. This single approach though, is limited in terms of its simplicity whereas triangulation brings with it a richness of a multi-method approach. It means that data gathered can either verify or contradict the phenomenon observed.

This research lends itself naturally to a multimethod data gathering approach. This is particularly helpful where a single phenomenon is being researched or evaluated. In this case the phenomenon is to what extent theological students reflect critically.

Whilst triangulation may not lead to a convergence, a conclusion 'beyond reasonable doubt' may be reached. Forensically, it is a principle people like judges and magistrates use in considering a verdict before delivering judgement by weighing up various probabilities. Its singular use to this particular research report lies in the fact that it is inclusive in what it allows rather than excluding data gathering methods.

Triangulation can serve as a safety valve against 'ambiguity'. Now what is meant by this? *Firstly*, it can eliminate a distortion of tne facts. Its utility is apparent when it serves a complementary function as opposed to a supplementary one. *Secondly*, when two or more different methods of gathering data are employed, it can be compared with the results of the other approaches and the results themselves could be verified. This, according to Cohen and Manion (1989) would enhance confidence.

Triangulation can overcome method-boundedness. In other words, it encourages the exploration of alternative research methods other than those preferred by a researcher.

Triangulation can overcome an ecclesial disease called parochialism. There needs to be a catholicity about the appeal of any data gathering method.

By catholic is meant universal. It tells more than a simple story. Rather, it stands on its own and can serve as a point of reference - albeit as a comparison - with other similar instances and situations.

4.4.3 Triangle of error

Triangulation always results in a triangle of error. The point the diagram illustrates is that there can hardly ever be a point of complete convergence. It stands to reason then that where only two perspectives are used there can never be a triangle of error. This probably highlights the necessity for three or more research methods to be employed as opposed to the bottom line of two for Cohen and Manion (1989).

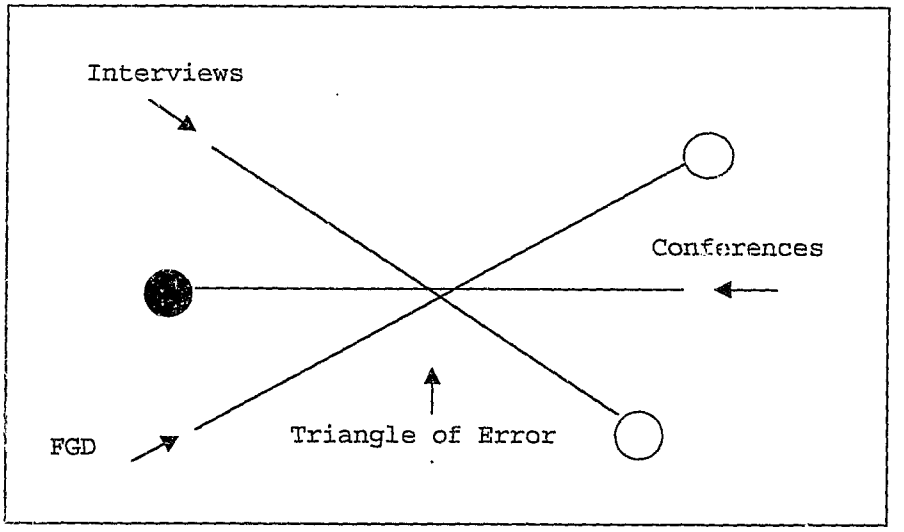


Figure 6 Triangle of Error

In the realm of forensic science the "*Triangle of Error*" is referred to as the area of "reasonable doubt". There is an inherent lack of assurance as to how large the area of error is or should be before it transgresses the bounds of permissibility either in the research or legal spheres. Notwithstanding this situation, the concept of error needs to be minimised not only for convergence but also for reasons of credibility, especially in qualitative research approaches.

4.4.4 Triangulation and Adult Education Research

Triangulation needs a focus. In this instance it centres on whether or not a specific group of adult learners are critical thinkers. A starting point could be *methodological triangulation* - which remains the one most frequently used and has the greater potential within educational research than the other approaches highlighted in this paper - where the following is utilised:

a) The components of critical thinking suggested by Brookfield (1987:7-9), namely, identifying and challenging assumptions; challenging the importance of context; imagining and exploring alternatives; an emergent scepticism in reflection upon a particular context or situation.

b) Interviews in which critical incidents are used to illuminate, complement or enrich data collected in interviews.

c) The Focus Group Discussion with five participants of the Internship Training Group of the Anglican diocese of Port Elizabeth.

In this process the minimum requirements of triangulation are satisfied and a viable approach to researching critical thinking emerges. Triangulation is an illuminative tool. Its role in research and evaluation could serve to illuminate what is 'seen'. In other words, bring out into full view that which has been discovered. This is complementary to its function in research methodology where reliability of data is important.

4.4.5 Triangulation: Validity vs Reliability

This debate centres on the issue of the convergence of data or information gathered. Campbell and Fiske (1959:83) say: "Both reliability and validity concepts require that agreement between measures can be demonstrated." Whilst the validity of all data gathered around a particular research problem is dependent upon a common denominator, they share, for example through a process of triangulation; reliability, on the other hand focuses on the convergence aspect. Earlier, the point of triangle of error was briefly highlighted and the point needs to be reiterated that complete convergence is almost impossible. Forensically, it cannot be a matter of 'beyond **all** doubt' but 'beyond **reasonable** doubt'.

According to Campbell and Fiske (1959:83), "... reliability and validity can be seen as regions on a continuum." Reliability is dependent upon the agreement between two or more approaches in measuring something through similar methods. Validity represents an agreement between two or more approaches in measuring something such as a psychological trait. In qualitative research, reliability is less significant than validity.

A degree of divergence is expected in qualitative research. Triangulation has the potential of enhancing both reliability and validity depending upon how one uses it. Perhaps triangulation could even assist the researcher in getting to the heart of the matter under review or evaluation.

Complete convergence, as most seasoned researchers know, is a phantom image as far as measuring social phenomena goes. More often than not one ends up with a whole lot of data that may be contradictory and inconsistent. But the hard work is not abandoned in despair. The challenge remains to interpret and make sense of what has been observed or found out. This means that a holistic approach is called for in weighing and assessing data within the broader context of a particular situation at a definite point in time. Used in this way, triangulation strengthens reliability and validity and serves to instil confidence in the research design and results.

4.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS RESTATED

The phenomenon under investigation is the theological curriculum. The rationale for the research methods employed is to gain insights into the curriculum by studying the experiences, biographies and perceptions of a small group of learners. Reflection upon meaning remains crucial to the process.

1. Are theological students encouraged to be critical thinkers?

2. Did prior knowledge or experience seem to hinder or promote critical thinking?

3. What teaching strategies seem to encourage critical thinking?

4. What is the tutor's role in developing critical thinkers?

4.6 RESEARCH TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED

The first step in this enquiry was to compile a profile of each participant in the investigation. This was done by setting up individual interviews which focused on the **experience** of the interviewees on three levels:-

i. An account of the individual's socio-political and cultural context.
ii. An account of each individual's experience in a theological and ecclesial context.
iii. Reflection on the meaning of the experience.

The rationale for the interviews is based on the "Three Interview Series" (Seidman 1991:11). The theory behind the interview series is to locate the interviewees and the people around them within a context. This is crucial because context provides the basis for exploring and understanding the meaning of experience. In this study, instead of three interviews as Seidman (1991) suggests, a single composite interview was conducted. The reason for this was time constraints experienced by the interviewees who were involved in ministry and pursuing studies.

The essential nature of the three interview series is as follows:-

- The context of the interviewee's life experience is established in the first interview.

- The second interview makes allowances for the participants to reconstruct pertinent details of their experience within the context.

- In the third interview interviewees are encouraged to reflect on their understanding of the experience and its meaning or significance for them.

The schedule of questions for the interview was posted to each participant four weeks in advance. This provided them with an opportunity to consider their responses to the interview and record them as well. This process seemed to inspire confidence on the part of each individual. This part of the research was of a more formal nature because I went to the homes of each participant and the interview took place in the study. This meant that they felt more in control both of what they were sharing with me, and how the interview was conducted. The structure of the questions of the interview were as follows:

Purpose: To "plumb the experience and to place it in context" (Seidman 1991:11).

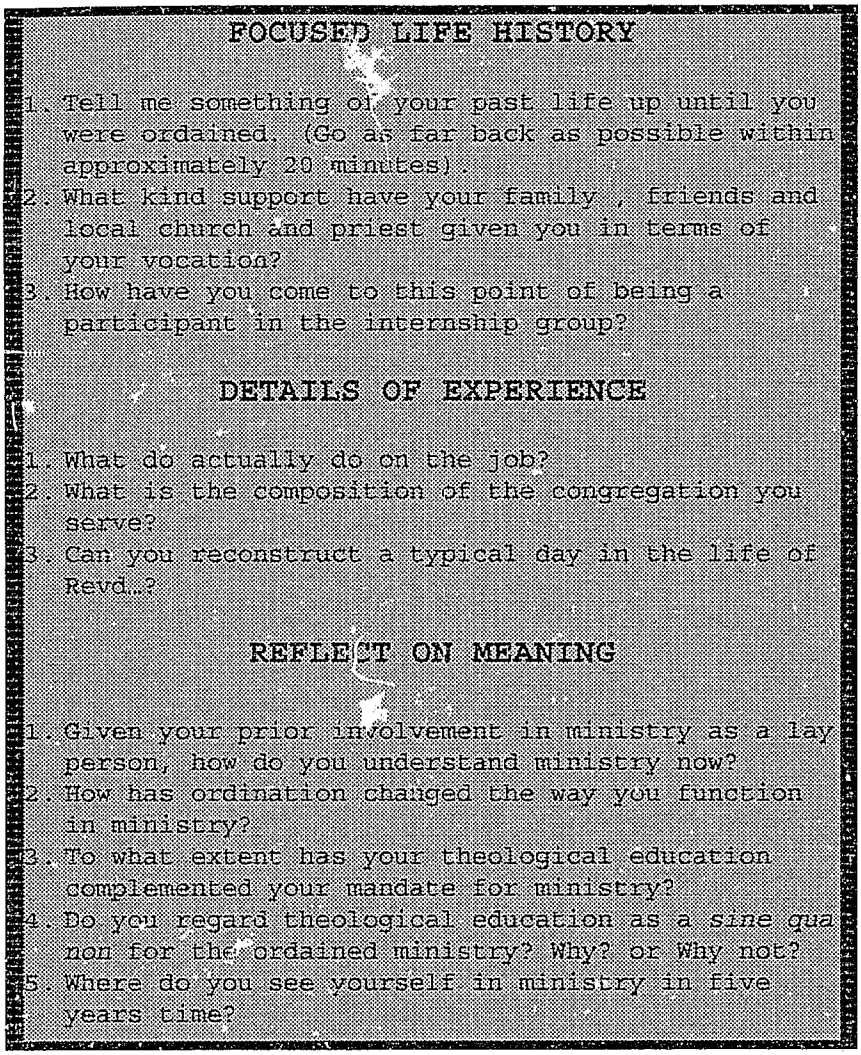


Figure 7 Interview Schedule

The second data gathering method used, which related more directly to the investigation around critical reflection, was a Focus Group Discussion which comprised the five individuals interviewed. This was done by way of a working breakfast. The reason for this was that it formed an informal and consequently non-threatening ambience. The individual participants freely engaged with one another within such an environment. Each participant was given a diagrammatic copy of the Pastoral Hermeneutical Circle (PHC) with the suggestion that it could form the basis for meaningful pastoral practice for ministry. It has the basis for critical pastoral engagement which lends itself, as a model, to facilitating critical reflection. An explanation of each moment of the PHC was provided as well.

The prevailing ethos throughout the FGD was informal, which enhanced discussion. This was due to a number of factors;

- All the participants entered into a contract that they would listen to one another's points of view without commenting upon them in any way. This immediately eliminated any sense of judgementalism. It engendered a sense of each person having a valid contribution to make to the discussion.

- The participants are colleagues in the ministry and there exists a camaraderie amongst them.

- They have a sincere desire to be effective in ministry with regard to the **'what'** of pastoral ministry and more importantly, the **'how'** of the ministry in the 1990's.

The PHC provided an ideal basis to begin answering these two key questions which go to the heart of the investigation pertaining to critical reflection.

Both the FGD and the interviews were recorded upon the agreement of the participants. The intention was to transcribe the FGD verbatim. This part of the research proved to be most time consuming because I had to do it myself. The reason for this was that I needed to listen to the text again and again so that I could familiarise myself with what each person said as it formed part of the background to each individual interview. The participants appreciated it because they felt that I had bothered to listen to what they had said and that I seemed genuinely interested in them. This meant that I could exercise some licence in clarifying certain things from the FGD in the interview. Interestingly, it shed light on their thought processes in gauging whether or not they can reflect upon their reflection. So, in this research process these two research tools **complemented** rather than supplemented each other.

It was a conscious decision not to transcribe the interviews because this would have taken up an inordinate amount of time. If anything, the interviews served the FGD rather than vice versa. Besides I knew each participant well and consequently, the information gathered in the interview supplemented and reinforced what I already knew.

Details from the FGD are catalogued by way of a brief summary of what each participant said. A complete transcript is attached as appendix 1 to the research report.

The strength of both techniques, the FGD and interviews, lies in the fact that they intentionally plumb the depths of every participant's experience. They also encourage people, in a non-judgemental way, to share how meaning is shaped ***for*** them and subsequently ***by*** them. This is important because it influences critical thinking. How? The phenomenological approach helps to shift meaning, namely, to help individuals understand their context and the possible limitations it could place on critical engagement within their respective contexts.

4.7 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Participants' biographical accounts will be presented in the form of a narrative. Each participant will be discussed in turn, and will be identified by her/his initials. A brief background to each person will be given. Significant statements from interviews will be acknowledged as such.

The results of the FGD will be dealt with more fully. Much of the discussion will be quoted and commented upon. The inferences drawn from them, however, will be dealt with in the final chapter as it pertains to the conclusions to be drawn and the subsequent recommendations to be made.

The transcript of the FGD, appendix 3, has been lightly edited in order to make the text more readable.

4.8 REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS

Weaknesses of the research design lie in a number of factors:

1. The sample is limited. There are 21 diocese within the Anglican communion in Southern Africa. Only five newly ordained clergy were targeted for the research project. Therefore a significant number of people were excluded from the study. This makes the findings of this particular research parochial and it will not be possible to make too many extrapolations for the wider church.

2. A pilot study was not conducted with regard to the interview. The interview questions could have been refined.

3. Ideally, three separate interviews should have been conducted so that participants would have had the benefit of time and distance to mull over their responses. This probably would have enhanced depth and accuracy in understanding experience and drawing conclusions.

4. A follow-up Focus Group discussion on the PHC as a model for pastoral praxis would have probed whether or not the participants had been involved in critical reflection.

4.9 CONCLUSION

Overall, the research design was reasonably effective and efficient. The interviews gave insight and clarity as to where the participants were coming from and the FGD yielded useful results.

The discussions at all times safeguarded the integrity of participants and was educational in the sense of promoting learning for everybody where the participants felt challenged by me and one another.

The following chapter contains a summary and an analysis of the FGD. The discussion is recorded and tabulated to present the reader with a summary of what each participant had to say about the PHC as a tool for ministry.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As previously explained, this research investigated the extent to which theological students were empowered to think critically through the educational processes provided by the Anglican church. This chapter will blend biographical information and the perceptions of the participants in the FGD. My own analysis and interpretation of the interviewees' perceptions and a discussion of the significance of the results will form the substance of the final chapter (6).

Figure 8, on the following page, provides a summary of respondents' views on the PHC as a tool for ministry. The clergy involved in the investigation process were mostly trained within the context of a parish church, except one, who was trained at a residential seminary, the College of the Transfiguration in Grahamstown. This seminary was previously known as St. Paul's Theological College. The participants will be identified by the initials of their first name and surname and will be referred to throughout this chapter in this way. The purpose of this is twofold: firstly, it personalises each respondent and secondly, it secures a degree of confidentiality for everyone involved in the process. Each of the profiles will consist of three parts:

1. **A brief biographical profile, in bold print**
2. *A summary of the thoughts of each participant about the PHC, in italics.*
3. A commentary which provides continuity in the statements of individuals regarding the PHC, in normal font.

NAME	JB	AD	CB	GG	FK
FAITH	Size or depth of faith is of no consequence.	Basis of model and centred in shaping consciousness.	Starting point if ministry is to be more that sentimentalism.	Ideal starting point but not a *fait accompli.*	No commentary.
INSERTION	No commentary.	No commentary.	At right moment in the PHC	Faith evolved due to 'work' done after ordination	No commentary.
SOCIAL ANALYSIS	Analyse in order to catagorise people.	Humans are social beings and need to be analysed as such.	Perceived in terms of material or physical needs.	Mutual dependance on SP. can be a precursor to faith.	Not always done before ecclesial analysis.
ECCLESIAL ANALYSIS (SA)	No commentary.	Gathering of congregation to discover the will of God.	No commentary.	No commentary.	Can precede social analysis.
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION	About personal relationship with God.	Discovering the nature of God.	No commentary.	No commentary.	No commentary.
SPIRITUAL FORMATION (SP)	Relationship between church and Holy Spirit.	Questioning text to discern clerical function.	Accept tenets of faith with a disposition shaped before insertion.	Apprehension this could be influenced by SA work of the Holy Spirit.	No commentary.
PASTORAL ACTION	Seen in geographical proximity of pastoral location.	Role of Pastor is to be a shepherd.	No commentary.	Can start here without going through the entire process.	Context is important before going into action.
ASSESSMENT OF MODEL	Useful tool for ministry.	Good model but open to change and flexibility.	Good model which follows logical cycle.	Good working model.	A good circle.

Figure 8 Participants' Response

The figure is helpful because it can be read both horizontally and vertically for different purposes. If it is read horizontally, it provides a synopsis of what each person has to say about a point in the PHC whilst the vertical dimension summarises the viewpoint of each participant.

The essence of this chapter, then, is to present the participants as they are without judging them or drawing conclusions as to what they have to say about the PHC. Furthermore, the profiles highlight just how different the participants are from each other, adding a freshness and uniqueness to each opinion proffered. After each person had given an initial response to the PHC I interjected and suggested that the model under discussion was a job description for the Church. The reader is advised to note the slightly altered responses from that particular point. These people are now described in some detail with their attitudes to the various key moments in the PHC summarised, along with personal data.

5.2 PROFILES

5.2.1 JB

JB is married and has adult children. He is 63 years old and is retired. After many years as a lay minister he presented himself for ordination. At 66 years of age a clergy person has to retire, so JB has only three of active service left. This reflects on his motivation. Ordination is a logical step up from being a lay minister for many years. Also, having retired from his secular job, he could now pursue what was once a part time occupation. JB is a permanent deacon in the church.

This means that he can only minister under the oversight and authority of an ordained priest. Basically, JB can assist with the administration of communion but cannot preside at the Eucharist.

If he wishes to be a priest then he needs to attend another Vocational Direction Conference - a discernment process not unlike a job interview - where the presiding bishop of the diocese and a panel of advisors assist in the interviewing process. He has intimated that upon the completion of his studies he would like to test such a vocation.

He is registered for an Award in Theology through correspondence. The minimum requirement for this course is standard six or grade eight, which is the first year of secondary school. Each course is assessed by an examination equivalent assignment and his studies are near completion. He enjoys wide respect in both the church and the community he serves. JB assures me that his involvement in the church goes back many years and he was privileged to have served under a number of parish priests. So, he brings both a loyalty and a committed faithfulness to this, his second career.

His primary thoughts about the merits of the PHC as a tool for ministry are that it is a useful tool for pastoral praxis. The way he elucidates upon each of its points is interesting. Concerning faith he implies that it is directional, namely, there is no allusion to quantity, which is a popular but incorrect understanding amongst Christians.

Social analysis' importance resides in the fact that, not unlike faith, it is a valid starting point; "...because it is how you will analyse people and be able to put them into various categories". This makes the evangelistic mission of the church synonymous with ecclesial analysis, a problem in the church throughout the ages.

It is convenient to categorise things because classification implies that they can be controlled. Preaching becomes reduced to pre-packaged responses to problems and issues because nothing has changed with the passage of time. The purpose of social analysis is not confined to categorising people. It has to do with people within a context set in the wider context of a community. JB's perpspective shows a lack of critical thinking.

The question which *ecclesial analysis* seeks to grapple with is where does the church stand in relation to the community it serves? It would have been interesting to probe this in order to ascertain if JB saw the Church as only having a biblical mandate to engage the world in terms of the Gospel or whether it has an equal responsibility to care about other needs of society.

Theological reflection is seen as something more personal and JB expresses himself as follows; *"...[it] is people and their God".* In fact, theological reflection has nothing to do with people in general but deals specifically with what happens to the pastor. Cochrane et al (1991) imply that by the time this stage is reached, an analysis of society and where the church stands has been completed. This where nothing is taken for granted and all sorts of questions are wrestled with (Brookfield 1987).

But how is JB to know **how** to critically reflect theologically if no one has taught him to do it? This stage is key because it shapes the next point on the PHC, spiritual formation. It dictates how a pastor will pray, preach and exhort the congregation to live out their Christian discipline. Again, not even the word "formation" served as a clue as to what this could require of the person who engages with the PHC. *In fact JB says that this is the one he has some difficulty with; "...because there are churches today that believe the [Holy] Spirit has only come about now and hasn't been with the church in the past and that I find hard to believe."* In other words, spiritual formation is equated with a charismatic experience. It is interesting to note that this response could reveal either a lack of critical thinking, or an inability to process and understand a question, or both.

Pastoral action is interpreted as the "cure of souls". This is correct provided the movement through the process outlined by the PHC has been followed. However, there seems to be a slight digression which brings into question whether or not the participant has grasped something about the PHC as a useful tool that could enhance critical reflection. In fact pastoral action seems to be associated with home visitations; *"In the past it [pastoral action] was easier because people were closer together and the pastor could move around more freely and do it in a much shorter time than it is possible today. It is still very necessary because people need to have had pastoral care."* It is still unclear whether or not pastoral action is done only after the minister/pastor has engaged with each point of the PHC.

In fact, the question was put to JB if he found it useful and necessary to engage all the points of the PHC in ministry? This was his response; *"I think it would be better if it's a shared type of ministry."* It seems clear that JB's perception is that it is not vital for one person to move through the PHC but that it could be a team effort where members specialise according to their particular expertise and combine their efforts in a joint approach to ministry.

5.2.2 AD

This is a mature man who entered the ordained ministry in his late fifties. He is married and has one adult son. Because of ill health, he took early retirement from his profession as a school principal. By his own initiative he has embarked upon and successfully completed a Diploma in Theology through a distance learning program with the Theological Education by Extension College (TEEC) whilst remaining a non-stipendiary clergyperson.

He functions as a fulltime minister but is not paid by the church. This creates a tension within him in that he has the Bishop's licence to function with the authority of any stipendiary priest but does not enjoy the privileges the church has to offer to a paid minister in its employ. To put it more forthrightly, he is free casual labour. Prior to being ordained, he was active in layministry within the church. He does not reside within the parish boundaries where he serves.

This may not be an important factor within a diocese such as Port Elizabeth where there are no recognised parish borders, but it is significant that he migrates to minister and conduct services.

This priest comes from the same community (geographically) as JB but serves in a more affluent sector of it. *"Faith"* he says, *"is the basis of this model. I define it as I see it. Faith is central in the Christian's thoughts but it is not a human activity..."* It would seem that AD is inferring that faith, according to Scripture, is a gift and God is the giver. Hence the statement that faith is a divine activity.

Interestingly, social analysis evoked a similar response from him as it did from JB; *"...human beings are social beings by nature and the church needs to analyse them socially."* The striking feature of this statement is that it seems to lift the burden of responsibility of doing social analysis from the individual clergyperson and places it upon the church - however it may be defined. He goes on to say that this point of the PHC, social analysis, *"...is concerned with human beings in their relation to each other...[This] brings out [the person's] social nature living together in organised communities."*

Moving on from social analysis, AD's interpretation of ecclesial analysis is interesting, bearing in mind that this point of the PHC tries to understand where the church stands in relation to the community within which it is located.

"Going further," he says, *"ecclesial analysis shows how the church is made up of its members.*

It may be an assembly or congregation...Theological reflection is all about God and humanity in relationship. We put questions to the text (The Bible) in the PHC. We [then] have to define the issues and analyse [them] to see where the needs of the people are. It is concerned with human beings in their relationship to each other. It gives one the opportunity to a better understanding of the clergy role in the church and the church's role in the community and the secular world."

In AD's excursus on pastoral action greater emphasis is placed on this point. His philosophy of ministry begins to emerge and it becomes clear that responding to pastoral needs tops the list of priorities within the PHC for him. Pastoral action is defined by him as follows: *"The church needs to shepherd...It must be true to its identity and it must be seen by the world outside. The theory of 'the care of souls'; that's pastoral care!"*

In chapter 3 spiritual formation was defined as a way of bringing together the sacred-secular dichotomy of life, namely, the public and the personal (Cochrane, de Gruchy and Petersen 1991:75). This is illustrated by the preface AD provides for this point of the PHC; *"People seem to fear when you speak about the spiritual side of oneself...But I believe if the church is more vibrant in its teaching through Scripture about the spiritual dimension, [then] I believe that we will be able to win more people."*

For AD spiritual formation becomes synonymous with evangelism because it essentially means 'reaching out to others' with the purpose of conversion or proselytisation. By way of summation, the PHC, to him, is useful;

"...this model is very important and I also see that, to me, the pattern is an excellent pattern but it is open to change also." One can, for example, engage with the various points of the PHC randomly and not necessarily in the order prescribed by the original authors.

5.2.3 CB

CB is married with no children by choice. His wife is a pharmacist who works in a state hospital located in one of the Black townships. She, too, is involved in ministry to children. Christianity and ministry dominate their lives. CB serves in a Charismatic parish with a primary responsibility for leading music and pastoring the youth. By charismatic is meant a freer disposition to express oneself in worship by way of speaking in tongues, prophesying and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. Prior to entering the ministry he studied architecture at university but did not complete the course.

His primary thoughts about the PHC are that it forms a logical basis for ministry. *"I think it's a good model or approach to ministry...it follows a logical cycle and...the process...starts from a logical point."* He regards faith as essential for engagement in the hermeneutical process because it forms the basis for ministry. If pastoring is to maintain the balance between the head and the heart, then, *"...if there is no faith then we have what is often called a 'social gospel' or it can become some other thing."* Interestingly, CB is the only interviewee who ventured an opinion with regard to the location of the moment of insertion into the PHC.

"I think insertion into the circle is at the right point." But at the same time I think there needs to be flexibility." The cyclical process the PHC outlines does not need to be followed or adhered to slavishly. *"So, I think one can follow the circle but determine whether a particular thing needs to be addressed now or needs to be addressed later."* CB then proceeds to cite an example from the Bible to substantiate what he is saying. *"...discerning a person's spiritual need...where Zacchaeus recognised his problem was a social one, he was a tax collector. He was an outcast so he came to Jesus with a social problem but Jesus said, 'You've got a spiritual problem.'"*

According to CB, then, Jesus was exempt from doing 'social analysis' because it was obvious to him why Zacchaeus had come. He, instead diagnosed a spiritual problem which had been precipitated by a social dilemma. It is for this reason that Jesus entered the PHC at the point of 'spiritual formation'. *"In Zacchaeus' case he could skip 'social analysis' and go on to 'spiritual formation' whereas in the case of a blind man who wanted to see, it was in terms of meeting his perceived need in terms of 'social analysis' which confirmed his faith. He'd already suspected who Jesus was so there had already been some 'spiritual formation'...he could [therefore] make those jumps."*

In his preliminary remarks CB acknowledges that there could be a paralysis to act and engage meaningfully on the part of the Church in its dealings with society. *"And so, for instance, in this country (South Africa), which is supposedly a Christian country...the real crisis here is one of [pastoral] action...more than anything else."*

And for good measure he concludes; *"We [Christian pastors] threaten to be fat cat Christians in this country."*

5.2.4 GG

GG is a married man who, prior to his ordination, trained as a minister in the Congregational Church. Upon completion of a course of theological studies, a Diploma in Theology, he switched denominational allegiance to the Anglican church. He too is serving his curacy in the same church as CB.

His ministerial forte is counselling and he is registered with the University of South Africa for a Bachelor of Theology degree. One of his courses is in marriage guidance and counselling. He is the only member of the internship group who has built on an initial qualification in theology.

Like the previous two respondents GG feels that the PHC is a good model but adds an important proviso. *"I do believe it's a good model not necessarily always...in these steps as we have them here."* GG then makes a statement which will be reflected upon more fully in the final chapter by way of discussion. He says; *"If after 'faith' one goes on to 'social analysis', it is almost as if that analysis (social) will determine things such as 'spiritual formation.'"* He goes on to cite a potential pastoral problem by asking; *"If one is confronted with a situation of someone being an alcoholic, is it my task as a clergyperson to convince this person to stop drinking, that it is bad for them, or to bring them to Jesus - to begin with the spiritual aspect - and let the Holy Spirit then convict them on that.'"* In this way GG makes a plea for flexibility wi[illegible] in [illegible] PHC

As the facilitator of the FGD I called for greater clarity regarding GG's prior statement by changing the analogy from alcoholism to hunger by asking; "Do you give a hungry person the Gospel first and then feed them a plate of food?" This was asked in order to test the priorities for ministry. There is an idiom which states; "An empty belly has no ears." It led him to slightly readjust the point he was trying to make. *"You have to take care of their immediate need which is food but they would have to know that there is more than that. It must not be seen as just a straight hand out."* Most interestingly, GG cites JB and agrees with him that the PHC is a team effort rather than a process an individual minister goes through before embarking on a course of pastoral action. *"...I agree with [JB] that it [PHC] is not a one man show. There is enough scope in this to include the gifts of many other folk within the Church."*

Throughout the history of Christendom there has been a debate around faith and belief. Does faith precede belief or vice versa? Anselm, a former Archbishop of Canterbury in the eleventh century made the statement; "I have faith therefore I believe".

During the FGD GG reflected on this dilemma because it underlies the PHC. *"...I am sitting here looking at it again. The assumption here is that the very beginning of this whole thing (PHC) is faith and I think, while that is ideal, I didn't think it always needs to be [so]. I think faith could use facts [and] slot in on the circle at some point...this is assuming that it is only those who have this living faith who can be effective. I don't think that is always the case."* Faith, for him, can be gained through engagement with individual points of the PHC.

"I think that one can do a social analysis...from the interaction with people. I think faith could almost be a product of the social analysis, spiritual formation and pastoral action...faith can be born in that."

5.2.5 FK

He is a married man, 36 years old and a stipendiary priest. He has two children of primary school age.

He is an assistant priest, is Black and serves his title in a predominantly working class Coloured parish. Adjusting to this context has not been easy for a number of reasons. Firstly, owning a house in a Black township creates an unnecessary burden as to where they should reside, in a black or coloured township. This is further exacerbated by FK's having resided in a predominantly White community in Grahamstown prior to taking up residence with the placement for training. Secondly, the rector was trained overseas in an ethos not remotely resembling the local context. Thirdly, because of the measly stipend paid by the church, employment for his spouse becomes a necessity because the children attend Model C schools and fees need to be paid. He holds a Diploma in Theology.

Like the other participants of the FGD, FK concurs that the PHC is a good model for ministry but also suggests that it needs to be flexible. *"Ja! It is a good circle when I look at it. But to go according to this [model], sometimes they (points on the PHC) can change somewhere...You can take the 'ecclesial analysis' before the 'social analysis.'"*

Another dimension is given to the debate of not engaging in the prescribed order of the PHC. Both 'social analysis' and 'ecclesial analysis' are intricately linked but for FK's own argument. *"Let's say a certain church is in a poor area. Perhaps the people of that particular area are not attending that church there. So, you cannot judge the 'ecclesial analysis' by the society around that particular church. You ought to look firstly at what the people in the church are. What I am saying is that you can judge the church by the society around it."* FK is questioning the relevance of the outreach or lack of it to the community it supposedly needs to serve.

At this point questions were put to FK in order to clarify his assertion made earlier. The essence of these questions was: "Does context precede a course of action or does one embark on a course of action and then relate it to a context?" This was FK's response. *"I'm sure it's the context first which comes before action."* After probing for the reasons for doing an ecclesial analysis before social analysis, he gave the following explanation; *"Why I make this change is that in my mind...you look at the people inside [the church] first; what type of people [they are]...When you talk of an 'ecclesial analysis', I take it not to mean society outside."*

5.3 THE TURNING POINT

At a midpoint of the FGD, I interjected and made a few additional comments about the PHC being an integral part of any ministerial practice. Here is a brief extract:

> ...hermeneutics is a way of life. We are always decoding or encoding, interpreting and reinterpreting things...I'm wanting to suggest that most of the ministry happens from the moment of insertion straight into pastoral action...If we [ministers] are going to be more effective then we need to go through this hermeneutical process.
>
> A few years ago the catch phrase was "see-judge-act". In the church we first act, then we judge, and then we look again at what we were supposed to have looked at in the first place. My contention is if we don't use this as a blueprint for pastoral action we run the risk of answering questions people are not asking.

It then became noticeable how the responses became more terse, measured and deliberative. FK was the first to respond and made a telling statement about some of the other major religions of the world. *"People like Hindus and Muslims who live in our society, in a way, affect our ministry. What we are preaching has to mean something in our ministry."*

JB picks up this same theme and takes it a step further. *We know that there are people and God, irrespective of who we are and what we believe in. God has created everyone; Muslims, whatever religion they are. Why is it that the church does not go out and try to bring these people into the fold instead of just leaving them on their own? Isn't that what we are supposed to be doing?"*

The responses became more reflective and I sensed there was a struggle beginning to emerge from the participants. It was almost as if the participants gained renewed vision of what the PHC was suggesting. AD highlighted the detachment of people, who having been to church, who disengage from the reality of their context. He says that when people come to church,

"We come to be with God and need to be renewed and refreshed and when we leave we say; 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord'. The response is, 'In the name of Christ. Amen.'

Now, what we obtained in the service that particular morning we have to live out for the week ahead. But in many cases it is left there. It is locked up until sometime next week when I feel like going to church again. There is no actual contact with the society outside and their needs."

The obvious sign of movement towards critical reflection comes with AD's next statement: *And this model as you have it here, I agree that those are the steps you have to take, especially from the clergy's point of view. I concede that we need to be prepared before we can face the world."*

One of the more vocal participants in the discussion was GG and he was not to be totally persuaded that the PHC is a blueprint for ministry. *"I still don't know whether I go along with it as a blueprint but it is a very good working model for ministry. Under normal circumstances you won't improve on this model.*

After I stated my concern at moving from the point of insertion directly to pastoral action which could lead to ministerial burnout, he had this to say; *"Your criticism about the church; concerning moving from insertion into pastoral action, I don't think you'll ever get away from that totally...There are times when the world is actually going to fall into your office in a state of brokenness and you have to go into a state of maintenance whilst you implement all this stuff? This is where flexibility comes in."*

In other words, one cannot follow each point of the circle when a pastoral emergency arises. The need has to be met without engaging the entire process outlined by the PHC. This remains an important issue and forms part of the discussion in the final chapter. However, GG concedes this to the PHC; *"If you short circuit the process, you'll burn out...and if I am going to err, I'd rather err on the side of action. At least the church is with the people."*

CB then asked a pertinent question which one of the other participants grappled with; *Practically, how is this (PHC) possible?"* Then he went on to affirm the PHC as a good model for ministry. *"... it's an excellent model and I think one should follow it. But I think the realities of ministry should allow one to question the process. You can't make a law out of this system."* Also, spiritual formation seems to be a given in a situation and not part of a process: *"...the thing of spiritual formation, there may already be some there in that context in which we are going to work."* He suggests something interesting about 'context': *"If you've been in a White middle class suburban parish and your next appointment is to another white suburban parish, you can probably do 75% of your social analysis before you've arrived in that context...One's got be careful about making assumptions, but you can hear what I'm saying. In those kinds of things context doesn't necessarily change. You might be pretty much informed about things already."* In response to this a question was put to CB as to how one discerns between people's deepest needs and their greatest needs? The distinction is an important one because it dictates how one functions within the parameters of the PHC.

There is the risk of burnout if there is vacillation between 'insertion' and 'pastoral action'. This was his response to my expressed concern; *"Ja! I know. I hear that and I think somehow we've actually got to get out of that [cycle], but I think maybe there's a process of education involved in getting out of that vicious cycle."*

A final attempt was made to question the participants about the usefulness of the PHC. FK replied by alluding to the sacred-secular dichotomy. *"You said something about reading with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. I want to know, there are people who believe that what is in the [news] paper is politics and they don't believe that you take that into the church. They don't want stuff like that. In such a situation, what can you do?"* AD provided the answer to the question posed by FK which marked the end of the FGD. *"I believe that we need to be equipped in order to minister to the people outside in the world and in order to do that we have to follow, not necessarily the steps as laid down in the hermeneutical circle, but in some way we have to incorporate all those steps in order to, achieve the call of the church in the world."*

5.4 CONCLUSION

These profiles and the FGD reveal a gap or chasm between the way theological information is understood and a lived experience of that paradigm in ministry is enacted.

The ensuing chapter contains a discussion of the issues raised by an apparent lack of critical engagement on the part of the participants with a text such as the PHC.

The rediscovery of mentoring as a way of overcoming an inability to think critically will be discussed. A curriculum structure which could further enhance the theological education process is presented.

CHAPTER 6

THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS, THE PHC AND CRITICAL THINKING: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter discusses the main research questions, focussing on whether or not theological students are encouraged to think critically. Strategies are proposed for overcoming a lack of critical thinking displayed by learners. Then follows a consideration of incorporating mentoring within the PHC as an intervention process to change the perceptions of theological students about engaging critically with the text and context. The enquiry was based on a model for theological praxis, the Pastoral Hermeneutical Circle Cochrane et al (1991). The PHC was used as a tool to gauge to what extent the participants in the FGD could engage critically with a given text.

This researcher subscribes to the definition of critical thinking as defined by Brookfield (1987). Critical thinking as a life skill implies a questioning of events, context, culture, and relationships with a view to challenging underlying presuppositions in order to renegotiate power relationships. The following four components of critical thinking were presented in chapter one:

An emphasis on the importance of context. A critical thinker realises that any world-view is influenced by its context. This affects practices and structures of any paradigm.

Nothing is taken at face value. Critical thinking both identifies and challenges the presuppositions underlying anything that is assumed to be true without interrogating it and arriving at a conclusion for oneself on the balance of all probabilities.

The third component of critical thinking flows from the previous one where imaginative ways are explored in an attempt to finding alternative ways of acting.

All of the above lead to reflective scepticism.

Chapters two and three provided an overview of literature pertaining to a theoretical and practical approach in critical thinking in the ongoing formation and information process of theological education. The essence of the review was to questioning tradition, that which is so often taken for granted. In the case of the Anglican church as an institution, critical thinking questions things such as rites and the inherent power structures and relationships in the church and wider society with the purpose of exploring alternate ways of thinking and acting. This would hopefully lead on to a discovery of new ways of approaching or doing ministry. Cultivating critical thinkers helps to liberate adult learners and, in this instance, students of theology from self-perceptions of dependency. Ministry can thus be moved from a present reactive mode to a proactive self-directed praxis leading to the transformation of both the individual and the church. Consequently, this research report attempts to discover an alternative approach to the dominant process of theological education within the CPSA by drawing upon basic tenets of adult education and practice.

Chapter four of this study presented the research design. Two qualitative research methods were used to gather data. Personal interviews were conducted with five newly ordained clergy of the Anglican diocese of Port Elizabeth who were members of the Diocesan Internship Training Group. The FGD comprised the same five clergy. The PHC formed the basis of the discussion of the FGD in which the researcher observed with the research question in mind; "Are the participants able to engage critically with a given text?"

In chapter five the results were presented by way of brief biographical details of each participant of the FGD. These were enhanced by quotes from the participants of the FGD. The perceptions of each participant's view of the PHC as a tool for pastoral praxis were recorded without comment. Whilst there was general approval amongst participants in the FGD of the PHC as a useful tool for pastoral praxis, it is evident from the individual responses of the participants that there was some dispute with regard to the sequence it suggests. This is understandable when looking at it from the unique perspective of each member of the FGD. For example, in one instance GG suggests that where an urgent urgent pastoral problem "drops into your [minister] study", then pastoral action is demanded without the prior steps of social analysis, ecclesial analysis, theological reflection, spiritual formation and then pastoral action. This highlights the perennial problem of *praxis*, the tyranny of the urgent. Critical thinking, within the PHC, would immediately set the pastoral problem in a wider social context. It would better inform the minister about causes of the problem and options available as to how best to meet the felt need.

Facilitators of learning within a theological context have a particular responsibility to empower ordinands and devise ways of overcoming this negative reality of the church.

A place to start is the curriculum and the process followed in its implementation. A basic assumption of the curriculum should be a resolve to cultivate critical thinking amongst adult learners who are courageous enough to confront the ecclesial context. A further issue of mentoring is raised as a possible way of meaningfully overcoming the lack of critical thinking skills for ministerial praxis. The question raised is this; 'To what extent would a mentor, practising within the parameters suggested by the PHC, enhance the disposition of interns to engage critically within a given ministerial context?'

It is the contention of this researcher that each of the key components raised above will need to be informed by the steps outlined in the PHC.

6.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED

Firstly, the fulcrum of the investigation rested on whether or not students of theology are encouraged to think critically. The PHC was used as an evaluation focus for critical thinking. Secondly, a brief outline of the process and content of the theological curriculum was done on the basis of adult education principles. Thirdly, ascertaining whether or not each step or moment of the PHC needed to be followed in the suggested order of the authors, Cochrane et al (1991), as evidence of critical thinking.

a] To what extent are theological students encouraged to think critically?

The organisational structure of the CPSA, is essentially hierarchical and engenders a mindset of conformity driven by a fear of transgressing accepted protocol. This often shaped the ambience of learning, let alone engaging critically within the theological education process. It was often difficult to encourage students to express their opinions about a given subject. The logical consequence of such a process is that conformity becomes the perpetuated tradition. The participants of the FGD seemed similarly reticent to venture an opinion about the PHC. When they did it mostly reflected a lack of understanding of what the model for pastoral praxis suggested.

b] Curriculum

Because of the fourfold emphasis on the Bible, systematic theology (doctrine), church history and practical theology, the content of the theological curriculum is driven by having to prepare students for an external examination. The emphasis is shifted from formation for future ministry to having to impart information without a developed skill to implement what is learned. It is therefore not inconceivable to see a problem of dis-location happening in the educational process. By this is meant, there seems to be an incongruency between what **needs** to be learned and its **relevance** for future ministry.

Theological students need to form part of the partnership of compiling the curriculum.

The partnership does not end there but moves on to the implementation of the curriculum. The entire process can be meaningfully informed if it is based upon the moments of the PHC in the order that they are enunciated by the authors. This makes learning a collaborative experience for both the learner and the facilitator of the learning process. Since critical thinking remains essential to the ongoing development of the adult learner who enters the ordained ministry, it ought to take precedence over course content. Knowledge is power and the content of the curriculum in conjunction with the learning process leads to greater empowerment. The role of the facilitator remains vital in the approach to imparting knowledge that could lead to critical thinking.

c] Teaching strategies

All education should maintain its focus on the students. The concern of adult education should be directed towards the quality of life and should maintain relevance to what the learner is doing in life. The excellence of teaching and the prestige of the institution are peripheral to the task which is one of empowering adult learners.

The rationale for adult learning and methodology must inculcate in its learners a process of self-development. It is here that the tutor plays a critical role as a facilitator of learning. In certain circles it is referred to as *conscientization*. Why? Students are not simply receptors of knowledge but they are conscious capable agents of learning. Self-discovery is the goal and self-directed learning is the process in life-long education.

It is unfortunate that much of our teaching within the seminary has been teacher-centred rather than learner-oriented. The syllabus has held the teacher to ransom in a manner of speaking and has paralysed the discipline of andragogy. The result has been a dependency on the tutor rather than the excellence of the learner within their own sphere of work. This tendency needs to be reversed. The reason is quite simple. Whilst we need to "inform" people from the corpus of knowledge, we need to respect and nurture the autonomy of the adults we engage in the classroom. Another way of putting it is to instill in all the stakeholders a sense of the learning process being a partnership with a shared responsibility for learning. This can only happen where students take responsibility and initiative for their own education as adults.

The autonomy of the learner needs to be a dominant factor in the process of adult education. There are various approaches adult educators could employ to encourage greater learner autonomy. For example, asking questions is one way in which students could be guided into increasingly complex issues. What people need to realise is that discovering the answers to these complexities is as important as formulating questions of their own. Through various teaching methods educators have discovered that learning can be broken down into rules or principles. Consequently, it becomes important that the learners themselves, *via* this self-same process, should take responsibility for giving examples of their own and also for defining rules of their own.

Brookfield (1986:294) has described adult education as a "transactional encounter".

By this he means that participants in an adult education encounter, interact with each other in a dialectical way, testing ideas and challenging assumptions in search of alternative ways.

6.3 INTERNS' VIEWS OF THE PHC AS A TOOL FOR CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT

In the first chapter of this report it was stated that thinking and critical thinking are key components of knowing. If theological education is going to produce critical thinkers in the tradition of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, then the education process needs to produce clergy who can reflect critically. Hence, the need to move students beyond a blanket acceptance of the printed text and to a point where they begin asking awkward questions of the text as well as its context.

Adult learners who enter any theological education program in the church bring a corpus of life experience with them. These are second career persons. They have prior learning and experience by virtue of their previous jobs and training. Since the candidates have been earthed in the church for at least five years prior to their embarking on a course of study, they would in all likelihood have:

- Listened to and preached sermons.
- Led preparation classes for Baptism, Confirmation and in some instances, prepared people for marriage.
- Facilitated a Bible study group or acted as a house church leader.

All of this involves preparation and a familiarity with the basics of Christian doctrine.

It is important then, that the theological information process should develop critical thinking, creativity and a problem-solving ability to increase the competency of the adult learner for critical pastoral praxis. This takes on a greater urgency when one considers where the church has comes from. For a long time there was a tradition in the Anglican church where clergy were mostly imported from the United Kingdom. These people were trained at two of the bastions of theology, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and were often held in high esteem for their learning. As the church adapted itself towards indigenisation, the academic criteria were not set as high as for British clergy. The emergence of this change in educational trend was started with the charismatic renewal in the Anglican which started in the early 1970's. The thrust of the renewal was the rediscovery of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in ministry. This shift in emphasis from a university degree to a diploma in theology is sometimes equated with the compromising of standards. Be that as it may, there has been a reversal of an earlier trend whereby the laity are far more qualified than the clergy, particularly during the last fifteen years where the church seems to be competing with the "world" for the best brains.

This makes an ability to think critically all the more important with this emerging scenario because clergy need to engage themselves in the new dialogue otherwise they run the risk of becoming the local village idiots.

Furthermore, critical thinking skills will enhance the capacity to make and take critical decisions with all the consequences that may follow.

Any educational process which encourages critical thinking encourages both the minister and the ultimate beneficiaries, the congregations they serve which is where power relationships within the church are constantly negotiated and renegotiated.

As an adult educator with experience of tutoring in a residential seminary as well as tutoring in a non-residential seminary, I have discovered that educational backgrounds of the learners could not be more diverse. In truth, learners represent a microcosm of the South African schooling system. This posed an immediate problem for someone trained in the discipline of andragogy at the University of the Witwatersrand, namely, where does one "pitch" any discussion? This was compounded by the problem of language. Then there was the problem of White university trained students and largely unemployed Black matriculants. Black students seemed to experience an insecurity when confronted by a Western paradigm of thinking and doing theology. The black students' insecurity was exacerbated by a prevailing culture of not questioning things in an organisation with a top-down management structure. It therefore becomes crucial that issues such as these be addressed in any educational program. Brookfield proposes that a central aim of adult education is to help learners be more self-directed which seems to be particularly difficult to achieve in the church.

It is often the case that upon the completion of a set theological program, candidates are placed homogenously. This affects the working conditions of ministers and so they need to be resourceful.

Where there is a higher illiteracy rate, the minister as critical practitioner and thinker will need to explore alternatives to overcome such limitations as they seek to empower people to reflect critically. The PHC is a vital cog in the process of nurturing and developing critical thinking. It is more than a life skill; it becomes a tool for ministry.

6.4 FACILITATING CRITICAL THINKING

Mezirow (1981:4) drawing on Habermas' categories of learning interests suggests that adult education has a duty towards the emancipatory aspect with regard to the three primary cognitive interests of the adult learner; the technical (knowledge), the practical (abilities) and the emancipatory (changing attitudes).

If we, in the church and theological education, are to cultivate critical thinkers then it has to happen at each of the points of the PHC highlighted by Cochrane et al (1991). In fact Mezirow (1981:11) refers to a process outlined by a tool such as the PHC as "critical reflectivity". The terse definition proffered by him is; "Critical awareness or critical consciousness is 'becoming aware of our awareness' and critiquing it." It remains vital to the *what* and *how* of the theological training process that critical thinking be part of the curriculum at seminary as a learned skill. Self-directed learning (Knowles 1985) and theological education share a common denominator, namely, "Both aim for involvement, ownership and self-determination" (Cornielje, 1994:40).
The theological tutor therefore needs to develop skills too by way of working from the experience or prior learning of the adult learner.

This would mean gathering information from individuals with a view to understanding their context.

6.5 MENTORING

One key to breaking the vicious cycle regarding 'reactive' ministry where clergy stumble headlong into repeating mistakes is mentoring. The Literature Review suggests that mentoring could be a useful approach to teaching and guiding junior clergy. The way in which mentoring and the PHC fit together is a complementary one provided the mentor is placed at the heart of the process outlined by the PHC. The experience of the mentor subsumes the experience of the individual pastor as suggested by Henriot and Holland's (1983) pastoral circle. Ideally, the mentor would plug the gaps of the prior educational process and guide the newly ordained person through a process of critical reflection in pastoral praxis. A revision of the PHC and the HC would diagrammatically be represented as follows:

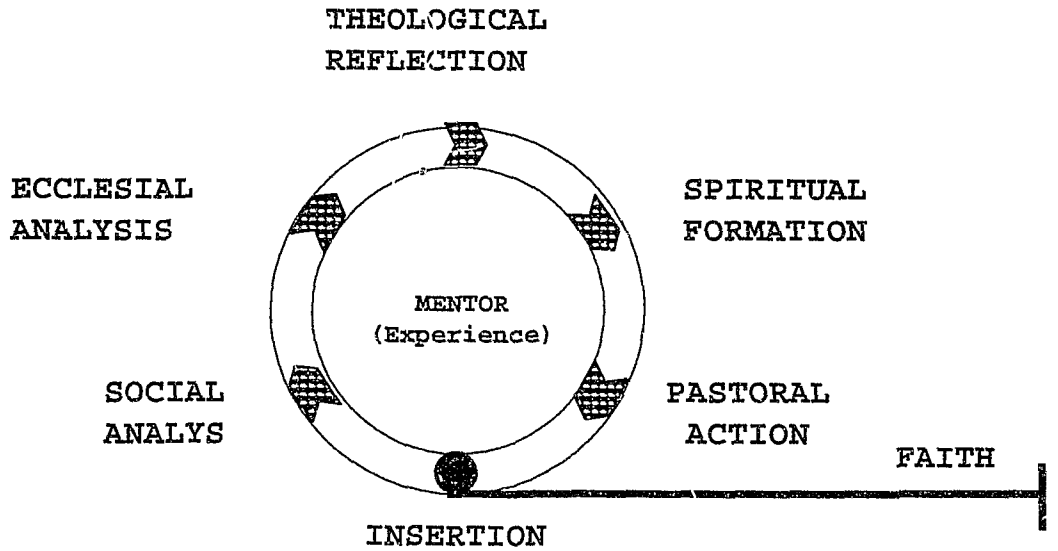


Figure 9 Revised PHC

However, it remains imperative to this investigation that an attempt be made at developing and consequently piloting a mentor-protégé relationship unique to the needs of ministerial praxis.

Reasons for this are multifarious:-

a] Junior clergy are sometimes perceived as a necessary nuisance with regard to the financial constraints it places upon an already over-burdened potential mentor as well as on the financial resources of a parish church.

b] Clergy are often seen as an additional pair of hands to highlight the workload of the omnicompetent rector.

c] Following from [b], an increasing demoralised clergy have a lack of self-esteem and therefore question their own abilities to impart anything worthwhile to an apprentice.

d] Time pressures.

e] A curate protégé is a luxury only more affluent parishes can afford. Hence this would skew the weight of the experience any protégé would get. More often than not, the mentor is likely to be white rather than black.

This study has been guided by a search for authenticating the PHC as a useful model for ministry. The usefulness of the PHC could be enhanced by a mentor at its centre to empower a protégé to interact meaningfully in ways which lead to increasingly critical ministerial practice.

A number of principles have emerged for educators of adults in the seminary and for the pastor whose ministerial mandate entails the empowering of the laity.

6.5.1 Mentoring: Purpose and Function

The key to critical thinking is the fact that behaviour is self-directed. Increasingly we live in a society where the mindset seems to be one of claiming rights and shirking responsibility without having to be accountabile for one's actions. The latter is a fact of the choices we exercise. Ministers of religion are not above this reality. Not unlike other organisational structures, the strength of the church is dependent upon the environment, productivity and resources (people and money) in establishing a strong infrastructure.

It has been shown that where individuals take responsibility for their own personal development and where this happens within a supportive environment, the long term impact on its constituency is inevitably positive. Mentoring is a process. Therefore it has to be integrated within the existing ecclesial systems in so far as it pertains to the *culture, values* and management *structure and style* in the church.

6.5.2 Advantages of Mentoring

Adopting and implementing a mentoring program can provide enduring benefits for the protégé, mentor and the wider church.

1. *Protégé Benefits*

a] Owing to the past activist posture of the Anglican Church in opposition to apartheid, ministry was shaped by a social gospel. It has since been confronted with realigning itself since the *status quo* has changed. In essence, the church has moved from providing a political platform, which placed it at the forefront of the political struggle to the margins of the broader socio-political scenario. This has precipitated a crisis of identity for the church. Its clergy had to renegotiate a job description. This makes the role of the mentor all the more crucial as ministry is transforming itself.

b] The socialisation of a protégé is also a significant benefit since the mentor would be a connected person operating within an established network of people and resources.

c] Where people have been part of a mentoring program, they in turn are likely to mentor someone else, particularly when it has been a good learning experience. This adds momentum to developmental associations in an organisation such as the church, which gives impetus to a more "helping" oriented culture.

d] A protégé has immediate access to the mentor's existing network which in itself, is empowering. This can be of mutual benefit to both mentor and protégé. For example, in the case of the mentor it can provide subtle pressure for him/her to update and modify the network.

Also, where necessary, it can lead to establishing new relationships with the real possibility to renegotiating "power" relationships.

e] A number of mentor-protégé relationships have led to friendships within the network which have persevered long after job changes have taken place. This has led to an ongoing exchange of ideas. Again, it can only enhance critical thinking.

2. Mentor benefits

a] Each protégé provides an opportunity for a new learning experience. As she/he reflects on the relationship, and continue to reflect then critical reflection can become the habitual life-long learning experience. Shifting in thinking, by way of learning from the protégé too, makes adult education a two-way learning process. This in turn reinforces the importance and vitality of mentoring.

b] The mentor is given a new challenge with each new protégé who has identified her/him as someone they may wish to emulate. It presents new challenges and the accompanying need to update their approach with a view to continually extending themselves and their protégés.

c] The skill in developing mentors augurs well for the ongoing development of the church as it comes to terms with coping with the changing demands of the ministry.

The mentor/protégé model ensures that a tradition of critical thinking remains a trait the church has developed and seemingly lost over the years.

6.5.3 Theological Mentoring Program

The first placement (PHC - "INSERTION") of a candidate is crucial if a mentoring program is to be developed. It means that the placement of clergy needs to transcend the usual criterion of whether or not a parish can absorb the financial costs for an assistant clergyperson. This already implies that accommodating an assistant clergyperson is burdensome. The placement needs to be considered where the incumbent of a parish has been identified as one who is able to mentor a protégé. The importance of such consideration depends upon the value placed on such a move by the bishop and his advisors. According to the Mellon Postgraduate Mentoring Programme of the University of the Witwatersrand (1998);

> Mentoring should be holistic, not confined simply to the production of a thesis or dissertation, but intended to advance the career and professional development of the student.

This implies that on an academic level, the supervisor's role extends beyond simply guiding a student through a research process. It means that the ability to conduct research is placed within a context, meaning is sought and the facilitator has to walk-the-talk with the person they are guiding. If this is the case at a tertiary institution then it places an awesome responsibility on the church to provide each new priest with the best possible mentor.

In a well developed and structured mentoring program, mentors, also known as "Spiritual Directors", should be identified carefully by the bishop, his chapter and the dean of studies. Once this has been done, a carefully developed program for the training of mentors needs to be set in place. This needs to happen after broad consultation with, *inter alia*, tertiary institutions who offer management training as well as industry.

As in any other process there are potential pitfalls. If it is not harnessed, then mentoring can be misused and subsequently be abused, which could be a devastating experience for the participants and stakeholders. Amongst the potential hazards of a mentor/protégé relationship in the church could be:-

* Time constraints.
* Overdependency (the mentor becomes a crutch).
* Emotional involvement and resultant loss of objectivity.
* Sexual involvement.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The essence of liberation theology was the recovery of the praxis dimension of theology. Liberation of the oppressed came to be regarded as the primary responsibility of theology. Dawid Bosch (1991:12) put it rather poignantly; "The emphasis is on *doing* theology, so the hermeneutic of *language* is challenged by a hermeneutic of the *deed*." The revised PHC serves as an induction of the pastor into a mindset of critical reflection.

Its purpose would be to cultivate a different way of thinking and doing.

This research has shown that the PHC is useful in providing possible answers to questions as to how best the limitations of the present curriculum structure can be overcome where it hinders critical thinking. The process the PHC outlines can also undergird the way in which the curriculum needs to be re-evaluated. It might be expedient for the Joint Board for the Diploma in Theology (Southern Africa).

There are other possible directions the curriculum should move in. Case studies should be developed to cover each of the theological disciplines followed. These are possibilities for a revised curriculum which might best be served by further research and practice based on sound adult education principles.

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Appendix 1

22 November 1994

Dear Bishop Eric & Members of Chapter

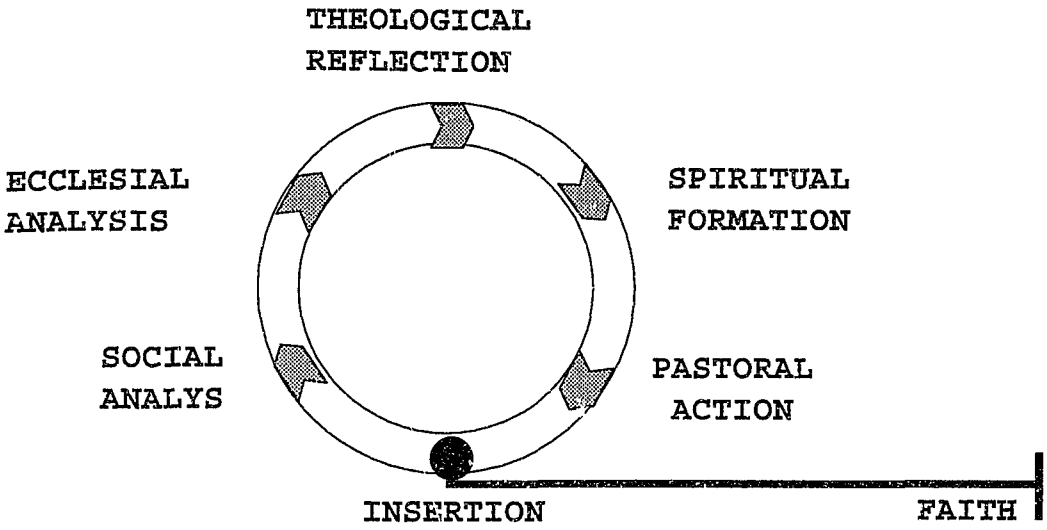
I greet you in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

This letter is the result of much reflection and discussion with family, friends and colleagues. It centres around a concern I have about the 'state' of the ordained ministry with particular reference to our diocese. I would prefer to set the main points out numerically if for no other reason but expediency.

1. INTERNSHIP TRAINING

The particular concern here is threefold; *firstly*, the dearth of residentially trained/exposed interns *secondly*, the age of the participants and *thirdly*, most of the people are non-stipendiary. The second point raises a number of further issues in my mind which I intend to expound upon a little later.

The purpose of internship training, according to the main directive, remains the **formation** for ministry and not essentially **information**. Well, a *sine qua non* in the formation process is developing the skill for theological reflection but this presupposes the individual has enough theology (information) if they are to minister with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. Allow me the indulgence of a graphic depiction of the pastoral hermeneutical circle which I believe facilitates meaningful pastoral praxis:



It is of great concern to me that most of the interns have a "difficulty" in relating to the process of the hermeneutical circle partly because of a seeming reluctance or inability to rise above the limitations of their parochialism. Resultantly, there seems to be a movement from the moment of "insertion" immediately to "pastoral action" because of their disempowerment due to the lack of skills to handle each of the other moments individually and in turn. Now this is not entirely their fault. Perhaps the concept of "community" priests has been transplanted somewhat uncritically from its original South American context into our situation. The social ethos is essentially different though some parallels exist but such a discussion falls outside of the brief of this letter - for the moment. Also, I would like to suggest that the concept of Mentoring needs to come into its own by way of helping interns develop skills to engage in the hermeneutical circle as a process and model for meaningful ministerial practice.

In this regard we need to develop a course for training rectors if they are to be empowered as mentors. In a word, I suppose I want to argue a case for being proactive rather than reactive in ministry.

In research circles there is an adage that goes; "There are lies, damned lies, and statistics". Having said that here is an interesting statistic: during the past year there were 8 interns. Two had completed their theological qualification and only two, Shane Fraser and Gary Griffith-Smith are approximately thirty years of age or there about. Furthermore, only three of the members of the group are stipendiary.

A question that needs to be grappled with is whether or not the urban area of Port Elizabeth needs more non-stipendiary ordained clergy? Should we not be looking at this as a strategy for the rural part of our diocese? On the other hand, are we deliberately adopting the diocese of Pretoria's model of the function of ordained clergy? If the answer to the latter is affirmative then may I suggest that it needs to be examined very carefully using, the hermeneutical circle as a basis for trying to understand the reality of our context.

2. STIPENDIARY VS NON-STIPENDIARY

We seem to be "laying hands" on or conversely, ordaining many people who are relatively aged. Let me hasten to say that I would not like to be accused of "ageism" (anti-old aged people). The particular concern here centres around the image of the Church we are portraying to society i.e. a haven for people other than the young; people who live out their retirement years in the ordained ministry. I am a proponent of ordination being a second career. By this is meant people who have had a previous job and who feel called by God from that situation into full time ministry in the Church. After all, these are the hands that would shape the souls of the people of God. The immediate advantage is twofold:

a) It has the potential of restoring a sense of **vocation** back into the ordained ministry.

b) Having established oneself in some other sphere of life means that people who present themselves for theological training and education bring a richness of their prior experience into ministry with many more "active" years of service.

Consequently, ordination increasingly becomes God's gift and privilege to the Church and is not simply a *via media* for sheltered employment. The next heading will deal with a criterion which could assist in the selection process of whether people will be stipendiary or non-stipendiary. The non-stipendiary ministry must not become an option for the church in order to save money whilst providing a 'sacramental' service. In financial terms people must pay for the service they need. If saving money is a factor then we run the risk of the non-stipendiary ministry becoming a **supplementary** ministry in a derogatory sense. The function between the two options should remain a complementary one.

3. THE PRIESTHOOD: PASTORS - TEACHERS

It would remain foolish to separate ministerial ordination from ministerial gifts. Regarding the "job description" of the priest, Paul in Ephesians 4:11 is quite explicit. It is the *pastor* (shepherd) who provides "food" (*teaches*). Does this not put the onus on the church through its selection process to discern these God-given gifts, latent or obvious, in candidates? Ordination needs to move beyond the bounds of being a reward for people for faithful service because herein lie immense problems for the future. In management terms, we are beginning to make the structure "top-heavy" with increasingly little to manage. The model Jesus gives us is one of service and the way in which the ordained ministry needs to serve the people of God ideally needs to resemble the following; Jesus allocated his time to *preaching* to the multitudes, *counselling* individual people and *training* the disciples. Most priests faithfully spend time doing the first two and tend to neglect the third important task.

Inadvertently, I suppose, this becomes another criterion which could be considered in the selection process. John Stott in one of his books entitled ONE PEOPLE cites a former Archbishop of Canterbury, Cyril Garbett who said;

"...no effort should be spared to build up in every parish a band of lay men and women who are not only devoted to their church but who can give an intelligent reason for their membership." Way back in 1954 the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches made the following statement:

> ... the laity stand at the very outposts of the Kingdom of God. They are the missionaries of Christ in every secular sphere. Theirs is the task to carry the message of the Church into every area of life, to be informed and courageous witnesses to the will of our Lord in the world. To this end they will need training and guidance.

Are we not in danger of ordaining people **out** of an important God-given ministry where they presently find themselves i.e. in the secular world? After all, that is where the evangelism "battle lines" are drawn. Surely, it is incumbent upon the ordained ministry to provide training for people to be functioning disciples where they are. This remains my conviction and I concede that I cannot impose my ministerial paradigm on someone else. Nonetheless, I commend it to you. If you find that you can concur then help me move beyond a palliative towards tangible solutions in meeting this need. The issue becomes more urgent where the ordination of people over 70 years of age are still occurring within our diocese.

4. "DOCTORS" OF THE CHURCH

There seems to be a movement towards 'locally' trained clergy. Euphemisms used are "in-house" or "in-service" models and it is with some curiosity that I note it is often by those who themselves have benefited from tertiary studies. In all probability it is one way of preserving an intellectual élitism.

Hence, we need to be "sniffing" people out in whom we can invest money to pursue further study both locally and abroad even before they are ordained. The priest as scholar seems to be an endangered species. The adage given to us at seminary haunts me to this day; "You know when a clergy person has died by looking at the date of publication of the latest book on their shelf." Theological education seems to be the great casualty in most diocesan budgets and it is my opinion that we are laying the axe to the root of the tree.

I recently learnt with surprise that one of the stipendiary clergy in the diocese has, to this day, no formal theological qualification of any level or kind. Now I know the argument of Jesus' disciples not having a theological degree but there was a certain dispensationalism for them in planting and establishing the Christian Church. Can we still afford such a luxury in the Church? One of the members of the Thelejane Theological Commission put it aptly when he said; "The clergy are increasingly becoming the village idiots". Our laity are becoming more empowered in their own work spheres as well as theologically. Can we still afford the luxury of a faithful heart and a lacking intellect on the part of the clergy?

The research question I am investigating for my Research Report has a single focus question: "Are theological students critical thinkers?" The reason being the concern I have that we are reluctant to be reflective practitioners because we are putting out one fire after the next in ministry. How, then, can we help ourselves break out of this vicious cycle? It remains one of the questions I need to live a little while longer.

This letter is intended to convey a concern I have and engage you in discussion. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

.....
Rev. Eddie Daniels

Appendix 2

14 June 1995

Dear Bishop Eric

I greet you "in the name of theological education!" Perhaps I need to call it an irregular column to my pastor called, "From Where I Sit."

The reason for writing is to share with you some of my reflections on Internship Training which could influence and hopefully, shape policy as to how we, as a diocese, nurture the newly ordained and their families. Again, for expediency I would like to discuss them under headings.

1. Extension of Internship Period

The present policy is that a newly ordained stipendiary person is an intern for the first two years of their ordination. My proposal is that it be extended to at least three years. Before I proceed let me say that I am aware of the financial implications involved. Nonetheless the rationale for it can best be summed in two words; *stability* and *continuity*. A variation on a popular TV advert, as it is, they are a short term investment and we are looking for a long term commitment. Hence, finance should not be the only persuasive factor in determining how long Internship lasts. My own bias towards the magical "3" years stems largely from my own experience. During the first two years my rector saw to my **formation** as a matter of priority. Added to this was the opportunity to study i.e. consolidating the theological information I received at Seminary. Having grown in confidence and built relationships, I was expected to "produce the goods" during the third year. Even though the parish could not afford me, the diocese made a commitment to give them a "tax rebate". If I were to take the analogy further, it is a bit like investing in Units Trust - it is a long term investment. Let us therefore help people to establish themselves in one place before launching them into other pastoral contexts.

2. *"A second curacy".*

In a word, I am pleading for a second tenure as an assistant in order to consolidate the Internship period. It could serve as taking the edge off ambitiousness i.e. "the ecclesiastical community is waiting for the saviour-rector". These proposals must remain a framework for forming people for ministry and I realise that individuals are different and the suggestions here are simply guidelines.

3. *Mentoring*

This is key to the whole process. It is my contention that we move beyond placing people in parishes without prior consideration of whether or not a rector has the disposition of Mentoring. Again, the suspicion is that the criterion which decides placement is whether or not a parish can afford the luxury. Mentors need to be identified and offered support by way of workshops etc. Perhaps the process can be taken even further, namely, timeous meetings of these Rector-Mentors who can become a mutual support for each other and continue the networking process. In Adult Education circles networking is an emergent phenomenon some regard as a life skill.

4. *Ordinands and Driver's Licences*

Before I went to a Selection Conference, one of the questions on my personal application form was whether or not I had a valid driver's licence. Initially I thought it a superfluous question but with hindsight, it was a necessary question because it is **vital** to ministry. At the moment we have an internee who does not have a licence. He is hamstrung without it and it is going to be a major upheaval to get it because of the multifarious demands placed upon someone in his position. Now this predicament could have been alleviated if we start saying to people that obtaining a valid driver's licence is a *sine qua non* before embarking on a formal theological training program. I believe it has to be a condition we should not compromise.

For the internees, one could consider a pro rata payment of a travel allowance i.e. 50% - year 1; 75% - year 2 and during the third year the full quota when, hopefully, they are productive in delivering growth! This would go some way to alleviating the financial burden on parishes. A spin off of this could encourage better stewardship. Even though many clergy own their vehicles, we need to remain vigilant stewards of the tools of our trade.

Bishop Eric, these remain random thoughts and I look forward to engaging as many people as possible in arriving at workable and attainable "standards" for ministry. It is not my intention to shift goalposts but rather to circumvent eventualities where possible.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in His service.

.....
Revd E.R. Daniels

Appendix 3

FOCUS GROUP: Internees, Diocese of Port Elizabeth
COMPOSITION: Revd's Bramwell(JB); Davids(AB); Bell(CB) Griffith-Smith(GG); Kula(FK).

Do you find the pastoral hermeneutical circle a useful tool for doing ministry? If you say "Yes", please qualify and if you say "No", qualify that as well.

JB: Yes, I think it is a useful tool; and I would start with 'faith'. No matter whether your faith is small or great, faith always grows. If you have a little faith, that is where you will start. 'Social analysis' - I think that is important because, there again is a starting point; because [it] is how you will analyse people and be able to put them into various categories. On 'Ecclesial Analysis', I think that [it] is important because - I don't know if I'm right in saying - that is where we are called out as a Church. 'Theological Reflection'; that is people and their God. One thing I find more difficulty in is the 'Spiritual Formation' because there are churches today that believe that the Spirit has only come about now and hasn't been with the church in the past and that I find hard to believe. 'Pastoral Action'; Yes. In the past it was easier because people were closer together and the pastor could move around more freely and do it in a much shorter time than it is possible today. It is still very necessary because people need to have had pastoral care.

Do you find it useful for yourself to do all of those things? Do you think it's necessary to do all of those things?

JB: I think it would be better if it's a shared type of a ministry.

Gary, do you want to have a go?

GG: I do believe it's a good model. Not necessarily always though in these steps as we have them here. If after 'Faith' one goes on to 'Social Analysis', it is almost as if that analysis will determine things such as 'Spiritual Formation' and a practical example is that if one is confronted with a situation of someone being an alcoholic, is it my task as a clergyman to get to convince this person to stop drinking, that it is bad for them or to bring them to Jesus - to begin with the spiritual aspect - and let the Holy Spirit then convict them on that. As much as all these things are important one must be allowed to vary the way it is implemented. You understand what I'm saying here?

Ok. Can I put a question to you in that regard? If I understand you correctly, in terms of the alcoholic, maybe you need to get their spiritual side right before you get to their physical side. Now let me give you another analogy of somebody who is hungry; do you give them the Gospel first or do you give them a plate of food first?

GG: I don't believe you give them either; I don't believe you separate them. They come together. You have to take care of their immediate need which is food but they would have to know that there is more than that. It must not be seen as just a straight handout. It would have to come in the context of you doing it love which is in you through Christ and it's love he's wanting to impart to them. So, the motivation for giving that meal would be pretty clear... Otherwise I agree with Jack that it is not a one man show. There is enough scope in this to include the gifts of many other folk within the church.

FK: Ja, it is a good circle when I look at it but to go according to this [model] sometimes they can change somewhere, somehow, like you can take the 'Ecclesial Analysis' before the 'Social Analysis'. For example, let's say that a certain church is in a poor area. Perhaps the people of that particular are not attending that church there. So, you cannot judge the 'Ecclesial Analysis' by the society around that particular church. You ought to look first what the people in the church are. What I am saying is that you can judge the church by the society around it. But the people who are attending that particular church are not the people who [live] are around that particular church.

Let me ask you a question on that score and I suppose I am coming from a position of doing 'Social Analysis' before doing 'Ecclesial Analysis'; "Do you think that the context of the community that the church serves is more important or should set the agenda for the program of the Church?" What I am asking is; "Does context come before a course of action or do you start with a course of action and then take it into a context?"

FK: I'm sure it's the context first which comes before the action.

So why would you then put 'Ecclesial Analysis' before you do an analysis of society?

FK: Why I make this change is that in my mind, what I have, was that you look at the people inside first - what type of people.

Isn't that a 'Social Analysis'?

FK: I take it when you talk of an 'Ecclesial Analysis', I take it not in society outside. I take it terms of people who are inside. That is how I analysed this 'Ecclesial Analysis'.

Chris, do you want to have a go.

CB: I think it's a very good model or approach to ministry. Again, I think it follows a logical cycle and I think the process as it goes, starts from a logical point. Obviously there has got to be an element of 'Faith'. If there is no faith then we have what is often called a "social gospel" or it can become some other thing.

So you've got to start from the point of 'Faith' and I think 'Insertion' into the circle is at the right point. But at the same time I think there needs to flexibility. Seeing it as a model, I think - again, discernment in spiritual leadership to me is absolutely critical. So, I think one can follow the circle but determine whether a particular thing needs to be addressed now or needs to be addressed later. For instance, as Gary mentioned, you know, the thing of discerning a persons spiritual need, the different examples we'll find in Scripture, the story of Zacchaeus, where Zecchaeus recognised his problem was a social one, he was a tax collector - he was an outcast. So he came to Jesus with a social problem but Jesus said you've got a spiritual problem.

So, you can almost say Jesus skipped the 'Social Analysis'. But then again, one can go to other examples where Jesus asked the person; "What do you want?" And that person said; "I want to be well. I want my sight back". And so I think in both cases the 'Social Analysis' was supplied by the person. Jesus' response was different. In Zecchaues' case he could skip 'Social Analysis' and could go on to 'Spiritual Formation' whereas in the case of the blind man who wanted to see, it was in terms of meeting his perceived need in terms of 'Social Analysis' which confirmed his faith. He'd already suspected who Jesus was. So there had already been some 'Spiritual Formation'. So, he could make those jumps. I think it is a good thing in terms of following [it], yes. I don't think that as a law we have to follow it through at each point. I think there has to be sufficient flexibility to be able to move around that circle and actually discern at what point one is. And also, I think that sometimes I suppose the story of the blind man, there was already a level of 'Faith' there. We are not building from the ground up. Often there's already stuff there. And so, for instance, in this country - which is supposedly a christian country - I mean you've already got such a level of ... the real crisis here is one of action, you know, more than anything else. We threaten to be fat cat christians in this country.

Would it be safe to assume up to this point, the four of you who have spoken, you more or less share the same sentiments? It's a good model in principle?

ALL: Acknowledge, Yes.

Aubrey, your turn. I am going to take you [all] on, on this in a little while.

AD: Well I also started ..... Faith is the basis of this model. I define faith as I see it. Faith is central in the christian's thoughts but it is not a human activity in the ..... of God. It is not. Going on to the social side, human beings are social beings by nature and the church needs to analyse them socially. It is concerned with human beings in their relation to each other dealing with other aspects of peoples lives liking or living together with others seeking companionship like in company this brings out his social nature living together in organised communities.

Church social the getting together brings mutual sharing. The principal is useful for reasons just given. We are nurtured in fellowship and the saying that goes " No man is an island unto himself is a part of the continent" so one cannot be independent, all the time. Going further on the ... analysis how the church is made up of its members. It may be an assembly or congregation its members may be united as a church. The .... existing full ..... communion, there is an active participation of worship and irrespective who they are just as long as they have thorough understanding of who they are, where they are and why they want to be together. This brings me to the following points. The nature and will of God as seen in about human beings in the church and in the world. It is all about God and humanity in relationship. We put questions to the text in the..... circle. We have to define it, we have to analyse it to see where the needs of the people are. It is concerned with human beings in their relationship to each other. It gives one the opportunity to a better understanding of the clergy role, in the church and the churches role in the community and the secular world. The pastoral action. The church needs to shepherd, work on the ministry, it must be true to its identity and it must be seen by the world outside. Theory of the care of the souls, that's pastoral care. This is vital, it's important. The pastoral action points to the whole life and work of the church but there is some aspect that I have left out and that is the spiritual side. As Jack said, the notion is people seem to fear when you speak about the spiritual side of oneself. As we look at the situation today we have had it in the past too. But here I believe if the church is more vibrant in its teaching through scripture about the spiritual dimension I believe that we will be able to win more people. Not specifically denominationally, to become christians to identify with Jesus in the world. And today we really need this and this model is very important and I also see that to me the pattern is an excellent patten but it is open to change also.

Thanks Aubrey, just going back to Gary.

Just one thing as I am sitting here looking at it again. The assumption here is that the very beginning of this whole thing is faith and I think while that is ideal I don't think it is always needs to be that. I think faith could use facts slot in on the circle at some point that in fact, this is assuming that it is only people who have this living faith can be effective, I don't think that is always the case.

Why?

I think that one can do a social analysis and from the interaction with people I think faith could almost be a product of the social analysis, the spiritual formation, pastoral action really. I think faith can be born in that. So just think we don't always, you know the assumption is that we always come from a position of fail I think very often we don't.

I think it's a kind of a job description where the church has a job to fulfil. And kind of by chance they almost stumble onto faith at a later point. Just thought I'd make that point.

Thank you, I'm going to try be a salesman now, deliberately and I just want to get your response, and then I will let you go. I'm wanting to sell this pastoral hermeneutical circle as a "Blue print" for your and my practise as clergy in the church of God. Alright I mean you know hermeneutics is the art or the science of interpretation. And very often we think hermeneutics is synonymous with the scriptures. hermeneutics is a way of life, I mean we are always decoding or encoding, interpreting - reinterpreting things Is that a fair comment? Okay now, this is you and me, we start from a position of faith that's why we are where we are. That is why we were accepted in the church for theological training. From our point of faith we go to the moment of insertion which is where we find ourselves know in terms of our parish life and work. Okay, I'm wanting to suggest that most of the ministry that happens, happens from the moment of insertion into pastoral action. Very often, we are very good at putting out fires, you see we'll go minister to the sick, council the disturbed or bereaved, we'll preach from one Sunday to the next without having visited anybody. Now I'm saying that if we going to become more effective and not simply go from the position of insertion to pastoral action, then we need to go through this hermeneutical process, in order to make us better practitioners of our trade. And so the reason I would start at a position of doing social analysis is to examine the community in which I live. More to the point to examine the community contexts where the church is located. Let me carry on then you can question me. Once we've looked at the community context, because the church doesn't live in isolation of a community.

There could be Hindu's there could be Muslims which is going to affect how you minister. So that is why social analysis for me is the starting point, and you can take me to task on it.

Then to do an analysis of our church. What is our church's official policy towards Muslims or Hindu's or non-believers or agnostics, does the church have a policy? If we are going to go into the community to do evangelism, is our church structure or structures necessary the place in which to bring the people into. That is why ... analysis for me must follow social analysis - alright. Then when it comes to theological reflection now we needed to have done the social and ... analysis before we go into our studies or wherever with the newspaper in one hand which reflects the society and the bible in the other which ought to some of the churches ... or whatever you want to call it is the churches blue print and then to prayerfully consider where to now. That's theological reflection. Once that has happened then that must of necessity inform both our preaching, our teaching and our praying. You know I mean if there is family murders happening around us why thank God still for the sun that comes up, when there are people who are affected by it in our parishes. It is a difficulty I have at church where a lot of our lay-ministers don't listen to the sermons, they come with their pre-planned prayers.

So they are not helping people pray and reflect further through what is said. Once our prayer or spirituality has been informed only then do we go out and minister to people. A few years ago the catch phrase was "see, judge and then act". In the church we first act, then we judge and then we look again at what we were supposed to have looked at in the first place. You see my contention is if we don't use this as a blue print for pastoral action we run the very real danger of answering questions people are not asking. Meeting needs that are not felt because we actually come with our agenda and not the agenda that the people have and our best scripture and our learning can inform that situation. Now after that sermon I would like to hear your response. I'm trying to sell this model to you.

FK: People like Hindus and Muslims who live in our society in a way affect our ministry. What we are preaching, really, has to mean something in our ministry and our preaching. It's what I was battling with in answering the first question.

JB: We know that there are people and God and irrespective of who we are, what we believe in and that God has still created everyone; Muslims, whatever religion they have. Why is it that the church does not go out out trying to bring these people in instead of just leaving them on their own. Isn't that what we are supposed to be doing?

Can you now see why I am saying that we need to do the social analysis and an analysis of where the church is, 'theological reflection' and have our prayer life informed before we go and minister? And not simply do a maintainance ministry? If we go through that whole process we'll start taking seriously where the church is in relation to the community it's supposed to be serving. I'm still trying to sell the model as it stands - unaltered.

AB: I always struggle because you have some people who are there and some who are not. For the simple reason, I haven't found a very good reason for their lethargy. It is a matter of "I'm alright, Jack, it doesn't affect me". Whatever we expound in the church through the services - worship services, eucharist, teaching - people come to church and they go home. Most of them go home empty. When they come in, they switch off. When they come to church it's a social gathering. This is experienced everyday. And I'm critical of other churches too, other parishes that ... I believe that when we come to church, when we set aside that hour and a half - in inverted commas - we come to be with God and we need to be renewed and refreshed and when we leave we say; "Go in peace and serve the Lord, in the name of Christ." Now what we obtain in the service that particular morning we have to live it out, say for the week, for the month ahead. But in many cases it is left. It is locked up in the cupboard again until sometime next week when I feel like going to church again.

And there is no actual contact with the society outside and their needs. And this model as you have it here, I agree that those are the steps one has to take - especially from the clergy's point of view. Gary, you mentioned about 'Faith' - I'm not now sure whether I'll be able to ... you must please tell me, faith is confidence. It's obedience and trust in the reality and power of the love of God known through His acts and not those of humankind. So, I'm inclined to say, as Eddie said, one must have faith before you can venture into where we are now.

GG: Ja, one reads - I've got books at home - of clergy, who only after being in the ministry 20 years come to faith. They never believed in Christ; they know all about him without knowing him personally - that's what I'm saying. We can't assume that everyone who goes out is in that place already. I just put that in as a thought. And the folk I've been reading about are people who came to that position of knowing Jesus through doing this work. So, their faith actually came after doing this.

AD: I concede then the point is this we need to be prepared before we can face the world. Thank you.

GG: I still don't know whether I go with it as a blueprint but a very good working model. I think under normal circumstances you won't improve on this model. You know your criticism from the church that you from insertion into pastoral action - I don't think you'll ever get away from that totally. One is here working on the biblical mandate of go into the world and make disciples - an action initiated by us - we will go and do the social analysis etc. but there are times when the world is actually going to come fall into your office. Really, in a state of brokeness where you are going to have to into a state of maintenance whilst you then implement all this stuff. That's where this flexibility comes in.

CB: I was actually trying to work out to say exactly what he has just said... Practically how is this [circle] possible? From that point of view it's an excellent model and I think one should follow it. But I think the realities of ministry should allow one to question the process. You can't make a law out of this system. I think too, for instance, the kind of approach that I was taking to it - to express what Gary is saying - for instance, one can argue that it's not right but say for instance you go as a rector into a parish where maybe there's been an interregnum of six months or whatever, now you go in with this system and you say, "This is the process I am going to follow", what happens is what Gary says, the church crashes through your door in the first week. Now you've got to actually meet those people right then and there - you've got to sort out something before you can actually start. Sure, you may in fact actually find in meeting those needs - one could call it pastoral action or spiritual formation - would in actual fact form part of your ecclesial analysis or whatever.

So the one can inform the other in the formation or following of that process through. ... The other thing too, you go into a parish and say to the parish; "The first three months that I'm there you going to get bread and butter kind of thing because I'm actually working on my pastoral hermeneutical circle", kind of a thing, you know. And when I've followed through the cycle I'll start... And one could argue that that's the way we should do it. But the fact of the matter is the church says; "I want it, and I want it now. You're here and if you don't perform them in those three months." Never mind your five years assessment, you're probably going to need ten years to patch up the damage.

And that is why I say I think the thing of spiritual formation, there may already be some there in that context in which we are going to work. You've actually got to work in a context which is not from the grass up. These various sort of elements... they are evident. I mean, you go for instance to ... if you've been in a white middle class suburban parish and your next appointment is to another white suburban parish, you can probably do 75% of your social analysis before you've even arrived in that context, you know what I mean?

One's got to be careful of making assumptions but you can hear what I'm saying. In those kinds of things context doesn't necessarily change, you might be pretty much informed about things already. And you go into an existing context where you've got to pick up from somebody else actually who has already built up - whether he's worked through that as a circle or not isn't so important - the fact is that someone's been doing work there and so you're going to have these various elements within that context. It will be at various stages of development.

Chris, I can find little to contradict you. But I would have a few questions for you; Do we break the cycle or do we perpetuate what the person who has preceded us done? I think that spiritually we deal with people's deepest needs and people's greatest needs. How do we discern what the difference is? Bearing in mind that in terms of the work we do the urgent is often the greatest enemy of the important. If somebody phones up, somebody's sick in hospital now and they need the priest; hasn't it occurred to you that they probably need the nursing staff or the medical staff more than they need the priest? Or do we actually go because that is how its always been done or our credibility is at stake if we don't do it. Are we prepared to risk once or twice to step out of the vicious cycle I see ourselves often in of going from pastoral action to insertion, eventually suffering from burn out.

CB: Ja, I know, I hear that and I think somehow we've actually got to get out of that but I think maybe there's a process of education involved in getting out of that vicious cycle.

I can put it quite succinctly by suggesting you become a disciple with me of this route.

FK: You said something about reading the Bible with the newspaper on the other side, I want to know, there are people who said - let's say you read the newspaper and then interpret the bible - I want to know there are people who would believe that what is in the paper is politics and they don't believe that you take that to the church. They don't want stuff like that. In such a situation, what can you do?

Does anybody here want to respond to Fumi's question?

GG & CB: You've got to educate those people.

John Stott, in his book, Issues facing christians today, highlights the point about the word, "politics", it Greek derivative, *polis* or *polites*, which is the art of living together in community. So the question is, 'Was Jesus involved in politics?" And his answer is, in the narrow sense of that word, No - in terms of government, he wasn't involved. In terms of how people live together in community, Yes!

In the broader sense of that word, he was involved in politics. Politics affects your life and my life, directly, in this sense that for eample, I am in a white parish now and affirmative action is a government policy. I've got to minister to young white matriculants and university and technicon graduates who don't have work. Why? Because they're white. Their black counterparts are going to get it before them. So, my work and your work is directly affected by politics. I don't think we live in a cuccoon in the church. We are earthed in the real world and we are affected when our people are affected. Our peoples pain becomes our pain - that's politics for me. I don't know how you feel about that.

FK: Ja, I know it's .. I'm feeling OK.

There is equally a group of people who will say you've got to go to the context and that affects the way in which we read our scriptures. I can hear that but I am equally opposed to a situation where we impose Scripture on a context - do you know what I'm saying? It's like before we actually assess what the issues are, we quote scripture and we haven't heard where people are. Again, Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well; he didn't throw scripture at her, he engaged her in conversation first. The woman who was caught in adultery, did he say to her; "Don't you know the commandments?"

No, he sat and scribbled. He didn't judge her. When those who had brought her to be condemned had gone, he says; "Where are those who judge you? Where are your accusers?" She says; "I don't know they're gone". And askks; "Are'nt you going to judge me too?" What does he say to her? "Go and leave your life of sin behind". Do you know what I am saying? He didn't say; "This is what the Torah says..." and then minister to her. He went to the heart of the matter and then used scripture to inform his decision. You see, that is what I believe this model does for us. After we've done our homework, then we pull out the scriptures and ask how best does God's word inform the situation? Light up the darkness, or shed more light on the lighter parts?

GG: You start with social analysis and then go to ecclesial analysis is; what does our church say about this? So, somewhere in between this you've got to implement all that you've been saying now otherwise you could just be going from one to the other.

Theological reflection must always serve as the corrective in all of this. *Sola Scriptura*!

GG: A danger that exists in social analysis is; let's see what the church says about this and implement that.

No, not at all. It must go to the Scriptures because the scriptures will not only be the correctives for the church and society it will also of necessity then inform our spirituality. Once our "geestes toestand" is right then we will be able to engage meaningfully in pastoral ministry.

JB: In other words, what you are saying; you can't separate the two like spiritual and the world, you've got to use the two together.

CB: Your concern that one has to take it seriously is actually right because maybe to some degree you can argue it is the realities of ministry we are discovering or have discovered. But I think there is a danger of falling into a trsp of not actually taking seriously enough the trap of band aid ministry. Eventually you will run dry.

GG: If you short circuit the process you'll burn out. I suppose the other extreme is that one can spend 50 years in ministry and one can be a spring chicken if you spend your whole life "analysing" and never implementing. So, if I'm going to err, I'd rather err on the side of action, at least the church is with the people.

AD: I believe that we need to be equipped in order to minister to the people outside in the world and in order to do that we have to follow, not necessarily the steps as laid down in the hermeneutical circle but in some way we have to incorporate all those steps in order to, not make success, to achieve the call of the church in the world.

Thank you.

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