

## Chapter 6

### THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BY EXTENSION

So this is TEE: home-study lesson materials, regular seminar meetings, and useful field experience. TEE goes to the men who are working now in the churches and who are using their spiritual gifts. It takes up the work which they are already doing and teaches them to do it in a better way (Holland 1975:14).

Theological education by extension is for a growing number of people both a vision and a movement, a philosophy of theological education and an instrument for change, a new conceptualization and a new methodology of ministerial formation (Kinsler 1983c:1-2).

It is useful to look at theological education by extension as a movement and a vision rather than a specific technique or system... But whatever the specific reasons for each extension program, the shared vision has been to encourage and enable local leaders to develop their gifts and ministries without leaving their homes, jobs, communities, and local congregations (Kinsler 1981:31-31).

... the immense, truly immense significance of extension is the fact that few church movements in the world today operate in such a way as to assimilate to pastoral leadership those members among them most gifted for such ministry (Winter 1981:x).

Tragically, and ERRONEOUSLY, many casual observers have mistaken Theological Education by Extension (TEE) for just another form of education, and an inferior one at that. However, the crucial and astounding fact pressing for recognition is that TEE is actually a superior form of leadership discovery, selection, and development (Winter 2000a:vii).

TEE [is] a Vehicle for Ongoing Personal, Ecclesial, and Social Transformation (Kinsler & Emery 1991:3).

#### 1. Introduction: The emergence of a new paradigm

In the previous chapter we saw that up to the middle of the previous century there were five basic paradigms of ministry formation. But then a new paradigm appeared on the scene. “The movement called theological education by extension has come to the horizon at this particular moment of history as an alternative to the traditional schools of the past 150 years” (Kinsler 1981:42). The new paradigm came into being as missionaries tried to respond to the practical need for leadership in the church.

In the 1960s theological education in Africa, Asia, and Latin America underwent a phenomenal paradigm shift through the emergence of a movement called Theological Education by Extension (TEE). The cause

necessitating the new movement was the lack of funds and personnel to train leaders quickly enough for the growing churches in those contexts. This need propelled a dramatic rethinking of the nature of ministry formation, a rethinking that has yet to dissipate. Beginning in a Presbyterian seminary in Guatemala and spearheaded by, among others, Ralph Winter, Ross Kinsler, and James Emery, TEE has spread all over the globe, transforming the way the churches conceive of preparing their leaders (Van Engen 1996:247).

Harrison (2004:315-316) recounts the history of this event as follows:

In the early 1960s the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Guatemala faced an enviable problem: their churches were growing too fast to provide adequate shepherding for their flocks. The theological college simply could not keep up with the demand for trained pastors, so congregations often had to make do with untrained leaders, *functional pastors*. Their problem was replicated in a number of Latin American Protestant Churches at the time. These pastors were usually mature men who could not leave their jobs and their families for years of training in a city seminary. Searching for creative solutions, the Presbyterians first decided to move their seminary from the capital to the village of San Felipe in a rural area nearer to many of their churches. However, they soon discovered that leaders in need of training could no more leave jobs and families to attend a seminary twenty miles away than one two hundred miles away.

Undeterred, the Seminary staff and faculty concluded that if the students could not come to the seminary, the seminary must go to the students. So in rural Guatemala in 1962, Theological Education by Extension (TEE) was born... They never dreamed their model of theological education would reverberate around the world.

The founders of TEE were not deliberately trying to transform theological training. They were just responding to the need of the church.

We ought to be fair and recognize that the birth of this new model was not the result of a preliminary study nor did its initiators consciously seek to make a significant contribution to the philosophy of theological education. It was simply an attempt to respond to specific situations with no more pretensions than to take seriously the problems these presented to a modest seminary in Guatemala. The following list of difficulties they faced will help us understand their context:

1. The growing number of churches required a large quantity of prepared leaders.
2. The majority of seminary graduates did not return to their churches. Especially those coming from rural areas preferred to stay in the city. Statistics indicated that in the previous twenty-five years only ten out of more than two hundred graduates remained

- in the pastorate.
3. Gifted leaders who arose in the churches were not able to be involved in the traditional program, either for work or family reasons.
  4. The cultural and intellectual diversity of the leadership required diversity in study programs so that this variety did not become an obstacle but an opportunity for mutual enrichment (Saracco 1988:27-28).

It was only after the experiment started that the founders of TEE actually realized that their work was actually bringing about a fundamental change in the way in which theological training was viewed. “The pioneers of TEE soon realized they were developing not just a method for training more people, but a radical new concept of theological education” (Harrison 2004:316).

What started out as a small experiment quickly spread all over the world. “The TEE model could not be long confined to one small country. Word spread quickly across Latin America through mission and denominational networks” (Harrison 2004:316).

The increase in the number of students involved in TEE was astonishing. Barely ten years after its start in Guatemala, the movement had more than 11,000 students in fifteen Latin American countries. Other continents experienced similar growth. In 1976, Wayne Weld indicated there were 25,625 students on five continents, with the largest growth in Africa and Asia. In 1978, Ross F. Kinsler, a world authority on TEE, estimated that there could be some 40,000 participants in extension programs in seventy-five countries around the globe (Maldonado 1988:39).

TEE became a global phenomenon.

The numerical and geographical expansion of the extension movement – from a handful of experiments in Latin America at the end of the 1960s to 300 or 400 programmes with perhaps 100,000 students around the world at the end of the 1970s – has been extraordinary. During this decade the initiative of the extension movement has passed from small, marginal, ill-equipped schemes led by expatriate missionaries to large, well-endowed efforts run by major theological institutions and promoted by associations of theological schools (Kinsler 1983c:15).

Although it started in South America, TEE also made a major impact on theological training in Africa. “Since very early in the 70’s, TEE has been in constant growth in Africa” (Battle & Battle 1993:6).

## 2. Description of TEE

The fundamental difference between TEE and traditional theological training is that the student is trained right in the context in which he is living and ministering. “A helpful distinction is made where *extension* education is contrasted with *extraction* education.

This latter is any form of education whereby the student extracts himself from his everyday environment and circumstances and pursues his studies elsewhere in a specially prepared environment. By contrast, extension education educates a person where he is without requiring any change of environment (Hogarth et al 1983:28-29). The implication of extending training to the life situation of each student is that the teacher can for the most part not be physically present with each student. Gatimu (1993b:64) describes “Separation of the tutors and students during most of the learning” as one of the “fundamental characteristics of the extension movement in theological education”. Therefore “material ... is consciously produced to facilitate teaching and learning activities at a distance.”

Although there are many differences between individual TEE programs, TEE has developed a distinctive format. Harrison (2004:319) explains: “As developed in Guatemala, TEE has three specific components: *self-study materials*, *regular seminars* and *life experience and ministry* in the students’ own context. It was intended that these be closely intertwined. None of these components was unique or new in the sixties. It was the particular *combination and inter-relationship* of these elements that was distinctive.”

The importance of the relationship between these three components is stressed when the East African Consultation on TEE (1979) defined TEE as “the integration of three fundamental components”. These are:

1. systematic individual study by the student;
2. on-going involvement in ministry by the student in his own local context; and
3. regular seminars between students and tutor to ensure the integration of thinking and action, theory and experience, individual and group learning (Hogarth et al 1983:29-30).

Harrison (1991:84) elucidates the important role played by each component by saying: “In TEE proper, the weight of the cognitive input is carried by the home study materials; it is not given in lectures. The seminars provide opportunity for interaction and for learning experiences which cannot readily be obtained through home study, e.g. drama, videos, group study and discussion. The three strands of TEE – home study, seminar learning and practical ministry — should be integrated as far as possible”. Kinsler (1981:34), one of the founding fathers of TEE agrees: “Although there is no magic formula for theological education by extension, every program should include and integrate these three elements: self-study materials for individual study, practical work in the congregations and regular class encounters or seminars. All three of these elements are essential”.

Let us now look briefly at these three components:

## 2.1 The self-study materials

Harrison (2004:319) describes the role of the self-study material as follows:

If theological education is to *extend* geographically, it must break away from dependence on lectures to deliver content. But mere provision of

'notes' is an inadequate substitute for a good teacher, especially when students have had limited education. The architects of TEE believed that study materials must be genuinely self-instructional. They do not replace a teacher, since regular seminars are still a critical part of the process; they do replace most of the teacher's *lecturing* function.

There is a crucial difference between TEE and a part-time lecture course with homework. When students work through self-instructional materials in TEE they are not simply doing 'homework'. Rather, *the bulk of the course content — the informational input — is provided by these materials*. This dispenses with the need for a subject-matter-expert to visit all the centres to deliver lectures. Hence the materials make it possible to *extend* training far more widely than is possible with, say, an evening lecture class.

Because the main burden for the informational input in TEE is placed on the study material, Hart (1990:26) says: "The success of a TEE programme is largely determined by the quality of the teaching materials. The textbooks and the tapes are the teachers. In them the authors move through the learning steps. In order to grasp the course serious home study is necessary. In developing each weekly seminar, the course writer's concern is to make this group time catalytic to a fuller, integrated understanding of the week's work".

In the light of this, the designers of TEE hit on programmed material as a good way to achieve the transfer of information. Hogarth and others (1983:30) say:

Because the bulk of the work is done by the student on his own the lessons will not only have to give him the basic information in an understandable form, but also have to keep him motivated, and in the end have to enable him to actually use the material in his ministry and life. The three components that educationists have defined as necessary to bring this about are firstly, *information* where the student receives the basic material of the study; secondly, *response* where the student shows his understanding of the teaching materials by some form of answer or application of the material taught, and thirdly *confirmation* whereby the response of the student is checked and discussed with the aim of producing lasting results from the teaching.

The most highly systematized method for achieving this is called 'programmed instruction'. Here the material for study has specific aims or objectives for each study, and then short steps of carefully progressing study enable the student to reach the objective which in its highest form will include ability to use the information taught in actual ministry.

Although different types of study material can be used in TEE, most exponents of TEE believe that programmed material is the best way to go.

These lessons, which are to be learned at home, can be written in

different ways. They can be ordinary text books which the students read. They can be workbooks where students search for answers and write them in. Or they can be correspondence school lessons. Some people have prepared good books of these various kinds for use in T.E.E., and have run very good extension schools. So it is not necessary to have programmed instruction books for T.E.E. However we believe that students will learn best from lesson materials that are prepared as programmed instruction (Holland 1975:15).

Lyra Srinivasan (quoted in Padilla 1988:114-115) lists the specifications to be followed in the preparation of programmed instruction materials as follows:

1. Objectives must be clearly stated in specific and measurable behavioural terms.
2. The learning tasks must be analytically designed in relation to desired end behaviours.
3. Content must be broken into small steps which are easy to master. These steps must be designed to encourage self-instruction and require an overt response by the learner (e.g. filling in the blanks or selecting a response from multiple options).
4. Materials should provide a means for immediate feedback so that the learner will know if his response was correct and so that he can be aware of the pace of his progress.
5. The subject matter and activities must adhere to a set sequence and process conducive to mastery.
6. The successful completion of each step and the chain of steps must provide its own reward or incentive.
7. The responsibility for ensuring that learning takes place must rest with the materials themselves as learning instruments and not with any instructor, leader or helper.

## 2.2 The regular meetings

Because the students study on their own, the regular group meetings are essential to encourage them to persevere with their studies. Ross Kinsler (quoted by Hogarth et al 1983:45) says: "The center meetings are really the heart of the programme; the effectiveness of the other two elements, self-study materials and practical work, is to a great extent determined by what goes on in the brief but vital meetings of students and teachers at each center".

These meetings tie the whole process together. Hogarth et al (1983:34) quotes Winter who said: "We emphasise that the weekly session ties together the academic, the personal, the practical and the spiritual aspects of theological training. In order to achieve all this the weekly meeting should be run as a seminar. The seminar method allows for maximum expression and participation, and yet it is directive and constructive".

The meetings are not supposed to be lectures to cover the study materials. Students come to the meetings having already covered the study material. Harrison (2004:320)

explains: "... the use of home-study materials alters the purpose of these meetings. With no need for lectures, class time is freed up for clarification, discussion, reinforcement, enrichment, testing, practical exercises — indeed for anything that cannot be adequately taught in the printed materials. The tutorials are intended to be highly participatory learning experiences, and to include an important element of bonding through worship, sharing and mutual pastoral care".

From the above it is clear that the role of the class leader is not to be a lecturer who is an expert on the specific subject matter. He is more of a facilitator who guides the students on their journey of discovery. He may even be one of the students himself, as long as he has been trained to understand the role he is to play. "The tutor ideally is also one of the community of students, but this is very often not possible because there is at present a scarcity of trained leaders or tutors in most areas" (Hogarth et al 1983:33-34).

The fact that the class leader is not a lecturer, puts him in a very different role from that of the traditional teacher. Harrison (2004:320) puts it this way: "This dramatically alters the role of the tutor, who needs not be the author of the materials nor even a subject matter expert. What is essential is to have a good overall grasp of the subject, to have prepared adequately, and to be willing and able to serve as a facilitator of learning rather than as a lecturer".

Although the class leader is not a lecturer, the role of the class leader is nevertheless of great importance. Hart (1990:26) explains:

Each course is shaped by the local class leader or tutor, who functions like a player-coach. For the student the class leader becomes an interpreter of the learning materials, and the one who affirms each in their learning struggle. The leader also helps to clarify inter-relationships in the lesson material that assist learners in making applications. They function as player-coaches because in addition to leading the TEE class, they are playing key roles in local church ministry. For the TEE programme the class leader performs a special function by providing feedback for revising teaching materials.

### 2.3. On-going involvement in ministry by students in their context

TEE is training in context. The life experience of the student who is engaged in his community while serving God in ministry is an essential part of the learning that takes place in TEE training. "The third important part of TEE is the life and work which a student carries on while he studies. We can call this field work or experience" (Holland 1975:11).

Through this practical involvement of the students in their contexts while they are studying, TEE overcomes one of the serious shortcomings of the traditional residential academic model. Hogarth et al (1983:32) explains:

We must here remember again that the aim of a TEE course is not so much academic excellence as efficiency in ministry. We remember also

that a strong criticism of traditional institutional programmes has been the difficulty they face in training students for real-life ministry. In actual fact in recent years many of our institutions have seen this need for practical content and experience in their courses; but it is still true that if used well TEE gives a ready-made environment for such involvement. Ideally TEE students are those already involved in some form of ministry and not just those seeking a higher paper qualification. Bible schools have often reported that a number of students have read their courses not so much with ministerial competence and Christian service in view, but simply to get more education, the Bible school being the only place where they could get it. By contrast, the practical orientation of TEE courses has often been seen to weed out those students with no specific Christian aim in their studies as they are put off by the practical spiritual work required of them.

But it is not only from a selection point of view that the involvement in practical ministry is important. It also helps the students to internalize the lessons:

The practical involvement in ministry is also important from a pedagogical viewpoint, as it strengthens the learning process. "... practical work is an essential part of all TEE courses. The aim of all educationalists is good teaching, and good teaching is evidenced in changed behaviour. In turn a lasting change in behaviour very likely will only be achieved through opportunities given to practice following on from teaching received. Ideally in Christian training facts should become acts, but they need special tending to become so" (Hogarth et al 1983:32-33).

At the same time the students' involvement in the ministry makes a big impact on the life of the local congregation, as is confirmed by this example from Botswana: "Another principle, considered vital to the whole TEE method, has been reinforced to the organisers of this programme by their own experience. It is that of the need of practical involvement of the student in ministry whilst he is studying. The programme reports that the practice of this principle has proved quite revolutionary to the ministry of the church" (Hogarth et al 1983:91).

### **3. Advantages of TEE as training method**

#### **3.1 TEE inaugurated a new paradigm of how the church should function and how its leadership should be trained**

TEE set out to solve the practical problems of training church leaders in poor communities. By addressing many of the shortcomings in the traditional academic model, the advent of TEE caused a major shift in the thinking not only about how leadership training should be done, but even about the nature of the ministry and the way in which the church should function.

Battle and Battle (1993:8) explain:

Not too long after the Second World War, the need for other modes of

rationality in ministerial formation emerged which encouraged an interest in a philosophical reflection on the means and ends in theological education. Some questions asked were:

1. What is the Christian ministry?
2. Who are the learners and what should our attitude be towards them?
3. What kind of theological training is required today the churches in developing countries can afford?
4. How can the learners be relevantly trained theologically and pastorally?
5. Who should preferably be the recipients of theological training and how should they be recruited?

... These questions were posed in the 1960's in Latin America, with answers that created an alternative to traditional theological education...

TEE created this alternative "... by allowing the daily practical life and need of the churches to determine what thinking was to be about. Of course, this took the task of ministerial formation out of the hands and monopoly of the traditional and minority elite and made it possible to move toward a contextual training of men and women ..." (Battle & Battle 1993:8). By so doing, "TEE popularized the ministerial training that for a long time had been kept for an elite clergy that ran everything, and now moved more and more into the hands of all the people of God" (Battle & Battle 1993:9). Thus TEE took on the Professional Church Syndrome to which we have referred in previous chapters by overcoming the sharp divide between "laity" and "clergy" on which it is based. Banwell (1993:60) reports: "TEE is becoming in some places a bridge between *clergy* and *lay training*".

TEE represented a new movement in the life of the church. It was:

- a. A move away from a professional towards a more charismatic ministry.
- b. A move away from the ministry being your first occupation, to the ministry as a second occupation after you have already proved yourself in the context of another occupation.
- c. A move from pre-service training to in-service and mid-service training.
- d. A move from residential to extension training.  
(Kritzinger 1979:131)

"One of the basic concerns of extension advocates has been the nature of the ministry. The Western pattern of theological education has projected a professional model of the ministry, which encourages the non-trained to take a very secondary role" (Kinsler 1981:31). TEE encouraged the growth of ordinary church members into leadership, without them expecting to make a career of it. "Many students who graduate from resident Bible School expect to be given jobs with high salary. They expect to be appointed to special churches. TEE students do not usually have this problem since they have gone right on leading their own churches as they studied"

(Holland 1975:13).

By questioning theological education as the preserve of the privileged minority who could study full-time and become professional ministers, TEE questioned the way in which the church has come to understand the ministry itself. Kinsler (1983c:6-7) puts it this way:

One of the enigmas we face is that theological education along with all other kinds of education, leads to privilege and power, whereas ministerial formation is fundamentally concerned with servanthood.

Once again it appears that theological education by extension is a significant alternative response to the spiritual and social dynamics at work in the churches and in the world. By placing the academic as well as the practical aspects of training in the normal context of life and ministry, it may be possible to integrate them more effectively in relation to real human problems. By taking theological education to those who are already serving in their congregations, supporting themselves and their families, and making their contributions in society, it may be able to avoid the professionalization and elitization of the ministry.

TEE awakened the church to the truth that its welfare was not only dependent on the professional clergyman, but that Christ can and does build his church through ordinary Christians who are obedient to His call.

In the past it was assumed that the churches “health” and “development” depended upon professional clergy trained at the highest academic level possible. It is now evident that the vast majority of congregations in Africa, Asia and Latin America will not be able to hire seminar graduates for a long time to come. Moreover, dependence upon professional clergy, particularly as it has developed in Western Christianity, alienates the people from their own ministries and from their own spiritual health. Theological education by extension encourages and enables all kinds of congregations — poor and rich, Western and non-Western — to develop their own ministries among their own members. It may also become a channel for the transformation of those ministries to embrace the concerns of the kingdom, holistic evangelism, and community health (Kinsler 1983c:5).

Most ecclesiastical traditions and their theological institutions affirm that the basic call to ministry is given to all the members of the church by their incorporation into Christ’s body. It is increasingly evident that ministry must be undertaken by God’s people if it is to serve the needs of the whole church and the needs of the wider human community. Theological education by extension brings these truths to fruition not only by equipping many more people for ministry but also by engaging those whose gifts and service most qualify them for leadership among the people of God (Kinsler 1983b:xv).

In this way TEE also offers a solution to one of the problems created by the Professional Church Syndrome, namely the unbearable financial burden on poor congregations of the support of full-time pastors.

Even more critical than the cost of preparing pastors is the cost of supporting them in the ministry, especially in the Third World but also in the First World. As theological education moves up the educational pyramid and the ministry becomes increasingly professionalized, the students develop, very naturally, rising expectations as to their own status and support level... On the other hand the churches do need, urgently, leaders who are highly trained, and one of the strategic roles of theological education by extension is to provide that kind of leadership. Rather than train young ministerial candidates up to university level, we must design and provide theological training for more mature leaders who have already established their economic base in some other profession. If young people are trained at that level, they will have to be supported more or less at that level in their future ministry. If older professional people at that level are trained theologically by extension, they can support themselves and carry out a voluntary, part-time ministry or enter into a full-time ministry, if that is economically possible, and/or serve in the ministry on retirement. In this way the churches could reduce greatly the cost of high level training and avoid the burden of supporting highly trained pastors, and they would begin to draw upon their most capable members for leadership in the ministry (Kinsler 1981:20).

But TEE not only questioned the nature of the ministry. By opening theology to the rank and file church member, it also impacted theology itself. As Kinsler (1983b:xiii-xiv) says: "... it opens up theological education itself to the experiences and perceptions and gifts of God's people. TEE establishes new relationships between theological education and the church, teachers and students, theory and practice, theology and context, clergy and laity". By reminding the church that the purpose of ministry is to fulfil its mission in the world, it also again confronted the church with the very reason for its existence in the world. As Kinsler (1981:xiv) put it: "All who contemplate the extension movement cannot but ask what is its potential for the renewal of the ministry of the church for mission".

"The changes taking place through the extension movement are not just institutional or programmatic. They concern the nature of the ministry, the vitality and renewal of the church, and the mission of the church in the world. The significance of extension lies precisely in the way it relates theological education to the ministry, the church, and mission" (Kinsler 1981:xii).

### 3.2 TEE helps overcome the Professional Church Syndrome

In previous chapters we have seen the problems created by the Professional Church Syndrome. Kinsler (1981:12) sums it up by saying: "History teaches us that professional system of clergy tends to static, incapable of responding to the needs of the masses, preoccupied with position and privilege at the expense of dynamic, corporate ministry. Theological education can in fact be a major obstacle to the growth

of the church and the fulfillment of her ministry”.

While the Traditional Residential Academic Model of training is to a large extent aimed at maintaining and servicing this model, TEE opposes it by empowering ordinary church members.

Traditional training patterns reinforce the dichotomy between clergy and laity; they debilitate the dynamics of ministry at the congregational level; and they make the churches dependent upon highly trained professional pastors... Theological education by extension on the other hand breaks down the dichotomy between clergy and laity by encouraging all kinds of leaders to prepare themselves for ministry. It stimulates the dynamics of ministry at the local level by training those men and women in the context of their own communities and congregations. It enables the congregations to develop their own leadership for ministry so that they do not need to depend on outside highly trained professional clergy (Kinsler 1981:8).

Thus TEE breaks down the idea that ecclesiastical power must be centralized in the hands of a privileged minority. “Extension is a necessary alternative for theological training because it enables us to break into the hierarchical patterns of the past, to encourage local leaders to develop their gifts, to allow them to gain recognition as pastors and teachers as well as deacons and elders, and to build a plural, collegiate ministry of the people” (Kinsler 1981:94). “... this new approach to ministerial formation put into practice the belief that the theological task of the Church belongs to the whole people of God” (Saracco 1988:28-29).

Finally, the extension movement challenges and humbles because it brings down the high altars of academic prestige, professional privilege, clerical status, and institutional presumption. It goes against the elitist tendencies of our societies and against the selfish bent of natural man. It calls in question our own position and self image in the light of Jesus’ example and his commandment to his disciples: “It shall not be so among you . . . whoever would be great among you must be your servant” (Mk. 10:43) (Kinsler 1981:xii).

While working against any elitism, TEE is not anti-intellectual or negating the value of training.

On the other hand the extension movement opens up the possibility of preserving the self-evident values of theological education without destroying the dynamics of leadership formation and church life. Local leaders can obtain a profound, integral training while carrying on their ministry in the streets and in the life of the congregations (Kinsler 1981:12).

In the light of all this, it is no wonder that the church establishment did not always welcome TEE and the leaders it produced with open arms. “The impact of this paradigm has been felt by the hierarchies of churches and denominations. In fact,

around the world this paradigm (including TEE) has had a quite controversial relationship with the institutional structures of the churches. Many wonder if that controversy itself is a signal that this paradigm is pointing in the right direction” (Van Engen 1996:250).

### 3.3 TEE changes the way in which church leaders are selected

As we have seen, one of the major problems of the Traditional Residential Academic Model is that to a large extent it takes the selection of church leadership out of the context of the congregation. It selects the wrong candidates, because it uses academic prowess as criterium for leadership selection instead of spiritual maturity and leadership capability. By catering for young people, it is mostly used to train people who have not yet had the opportunity to prove their spiritual maturity and leadership capabilities. It therefore often produce people who want to make the ministry a career, but who are not effective in leading God’s people. TEE overcomes this problem to a large extent, because the training itself also has the effect of a screening process.

We have already seen that the very nature of TEE course, with their emphasis on practical work and ministerial orientation, will draw the type of student looking for effectiveness in Christian service. The careerists are not drawn to it as it is not a purely academic type of training if it is done properly (Hogarth et al 1983:35).

Later on Hogarth and others (1983:161) spell it out even more clearly when they say:

Firstly, regarding motives for joining TEE courses, there is little evidence at all from the programmes surveyed in this work of ulterior motives bringing students into TEE. This is not to say that these motives are non-existent. However it is far more evident that, according to programme leaders, students joined the programmes at lay (award) levels simply to increase their knowledge of the faith. The commitment required of TEE students will dissuade those with the wrong motives. In the first place, TEE courses take much longer time, and therefore a certain discipline, to complete well. In the second place, the practical work required throughout true TEE tends to dissuade and even embarrass those who have joined purely for the need of some form of certification.

TEE is able to train more mature people who are already involved in ministry and leadership in their local church, who are not doing it as a career, but who are doing it sacrificially while they work to support themselves and their families. “These twenty years of experience with education by extension have proved that it readily reaches the natural leaders. Today, the majority of those who have completed extension programs are actively participating in different levels of leadership in the churches” (Sarocco 1988:31).

The result is that “... those being trained were primarily those who had demonstrated their commitment to ministry” (Harrison 2004:316). These students are normally not the unproven young candidates that the Traditional Residential Academic Model recruits. Holland (1975:13) explains: “Many times the men with spiritual gifts are older men.

They are accepted by the people as leaders in the church. They are respected by the community. They have not been taken out of their surroundings. They do not hold themselves higher than their people. They understand the people among whom they live.” This is borne out by the experience of Mulholland and De Jacobs (1983:36) who report:

By training persons where they lived, the seminary was able to reach into various sub-cultures without uprooting persons from their environments. Thus, it was able to enlist and equip for ministry those persons best suited and gifted for such ministry. The extension study proved more difficult than expected, because it placed a great demand for personal discipline on the student, yet it also proved to be valuable as a vast screening process. It filtered out unequipped or unmotivated candidates without exposing them to the trauma of re-entry into their previous environment.

Because people are trained while they are living and working in the congregation, the congregation can gauge their suitability as possible spiritual leaders. “By means of TEE it is possible to return responsibility for the selection of church leaders to the local congregation” (Kritzinger 1979:135). In the light of what we have seen in previous chapters, this is a very important issue.

Another important issue is the fact that TEE can be used to train church members who want to serve the Lord but who are not called to do it as a full-time job. For example Mulholland and De Jacobs (1983:36) report: “In addition, a full theological education was made available to many lay leaders in the congregations who wanted to deepen their faith and understanding without committing themselves to candidacy for ordination”. Experience in Botswana confirms this aspect according to Hogarth and others (1983:91):

The programme has unearthed two encouraging factors about the local church. First that there are many Christians prepared to give their time and gifts in Christian service on a part-time basis but who could not do so on the more traditional full-time basis. In addition it was found that many of the already existing leading laymen were beginning to discharge their duties much more effectively as a result of the exposure they had to systematic Christian teaching made available to them through the BTTP programme. Many students are doing the shorter course to improve their ministerial skills.

In other words, “TEE makes it possible to train the whole people of God for their ministry by using the existing congregational structures” (Kritzinger 1979:136). The advantage of this process is not only that it builds up the believers in their faith, but it also brings a big new pool of potential spiritual leaders into play.

### 3.4 Training in context

One of the major differences between TEE and the Traditional Residential Academic Model is the fact that people are not extracted from their context, but they are rather

trained in their context. TEE is geographically accessible. Students are not extracted from their social and ministry contexts. The training is brought to the students. Seminar centres are established close to the students. Instead of students having to travel to a central location, lecturers travel to these decentralized locations (Kritzinger 1979:133).

This overcomes the problem created when young people go away for training and are extracted from their context, to which they do not return, because the training process itself has caused them to grow away from the community in which they are to serve.

At the same time the fact that it is in-service training, means that what is being learned, has immediate application. This means that the student's studies are much more relevant to him. This immediate relevance also means that much more is retained. "TEE solves the problem of the traditional system of how to bring theory and practice together, and the problem of giving answers to questions that are not asked, because the students are trained right in the context of practical ministry" (Kritzinger 1979:137).

Many of the students are already in leadership positions in their churches.

T.E.E. is able to train these men who are already leaders. It can teach them in their own surroundings. The lesson materials cause them to begin reading and thinking. They learn new things, and immediately after they have learned them, they use them. They preach in their own churches what they have learned. They feel the need to learn more because they are in the middle of the work and problems of leading a church. In this way, field experience makes students eager to learn (Holland 1975:13).

### 3.4 TEE makes training accessible

One of the big problems of the Traditional Residential Academic Model is that the training is not accessible to many people for many reasons. "Theological schools are designed primarily to prepare *potential* ministerial leaders: are they in a position to give at least equal priority to serving the needs of *actual leaders* already in the forefront of mission, the vast majority of whom never were and never will have the chance to be in such schools?" (Sapezian 1977:6). In contrast, TEE makes training available to many categories of people who were unable to access traditional residential training. "First, TEE *extends geographical coverage* well beyond the environs of the seminary... Second, TEE greatly *extends the potential student body*" (Harrison 2004:320-321).

TEE aims to make theological training accessible in various ways:

- a. Geographically: By decentralizing the training in locations close to the students.
- b. Chronologically: The training sessions must be done at a time when working people can attend.
- c. Culturally: The meetings and trainers must fit into the local culture.
- d. Academically: Training must be available to people on all academic levels in the church.

- e. Socially: Training must be accessible to people of all classes in society.
- f. Ecclesiastically: Training must be accessible to all church members, not only those who are preparing for professional ministry.
- g. Numerically: Training must be able to train enough people of all types in the church (Kinsler 1981:32-34).

In this way TEE "... opens up a wide range of degree and nondegree theological education options to the whole people of God, whatever their age, educational level, family situation, social position, language, race, sex or occupation" (Kinsler 1983b:xiii-xiv). One of the categories of people who have gained access to theological training is women. "From Botswana again it is reported that not only have many gifted people been discovered and trained to be effective as preachers, teachers and ministers, but in addition the role of women in ministry in general and the formal ministry in particular has been encouraged" (Hogarth et al 1983:156-157).

This opening up of training to many people who did not have access to it before, is borne out by the experience in the Anglican diocese of Morogoro, Tanzania:

There is not the slightest doubt that the TEE movement has made available, and will continue to make available, basic theological education and Christian education to enormous numbers of people who did not previously have their benefits. Many hundreds of pastors and priests have been trained who would never have been trained by residential methods. Thousands of evangelists have received basic Bible training and many hundreds of thousands of lay Christians the same. The church must be better off for having exposed these multitudes of workers to the Word of God and for having the means to continue to do so. In fact this is one belief that has driven the movement on with such initial enthusiasm (Hogarth et al 1983:146).

By making training accessible to people who cannot go to residential training institutions, it opens the way to train the natural leaders of the congregation who are already in ministry. This benefits those churches that are not caught up in the Professional Church Syndrome, but which are making use of its natural leaders. "Understandably, the TEE structure and method suit the ministerial style of these churches, as most of the trainees are mature self supporting persons with some sort of leadership responsibility in their respective congregations, and could not afford the time, cost, and formalities of a protracted residential programme away from their localities" (Sapezian 1977:6).

By bringing the concept of distance training into the mainstream, TEE has helped to make training accessible to many people. "The number of people in training, both full-time and part-time, has risen appreciably over the past decade. However, the method of training is changing. In 1997 the number of full-time students peaked, then declined in 1999. Students are now choosing to study part-time, probably because of financial constraints. The number of people studying theology through distance education is increasing rapidly" (Siaki 2002:40).

### 3.5 TEE is able to produce greater numbers of leaders than the Traditional Residential Academic Model

By training in context and making training accessible to many people to whom it was not accessible before, TEE also addresses one of the other major criticisms against the Traditional Residential Academic Model, namely that it is unable to produce the vast numbers of leaders needed for the rapidly growing church in Africa and elsewhere. As Kritzinger (1979:134) puts it: “TEE helps to fill the need for many more leaders in the church, because it is able to produce many more students than the residential model is able”.

Saracco (1988:32-33) reports that TEE has dramatically increased the number of trained pastors in South America:

Recent years have witnessed an interest in raising the level of study of the extension programs by offering a wide range of possibilities to the candidates. It has been generally noted that extension studies are geared to a low level and have little to offer those interested in a higher level of studies. This is true. But we need to recognize that this low level is representative of the level found among a large part of the leadership of the Latin American Church. The reality, even today, is that almost half of the pastors leading the churches have not even finished primary school. This is our sad but true reality. The extension model has the virtue of meeting them where they are and leading them along a path of constant self-improvement. This methodology also allows us to pass through the barrier many churches especially Pentecostals have raised against any type of study. As things were in traditional seminaries, it would have been impossible to reach this numerous sector of the Church. However hundreds of pastors and leaders for whom study constitutes a threat today not only actively participate in programs, but have opened the door so that others in their congregations might do so too.

But it is not just addressing the problem of training people for the ministry. By training people who will support themselves, it also addresses the problem of unaffordable leaders in poor congregations. “Theological education by extension is capable of serving large numbers of students, particularly the leaders of the congregations. These students are certain to serve the church, whether they are paid a salary or not, and they generally do not raise their support level expectation by taking extension studies” (Kinsler 1981:21).

### 3.6 TEE makes learning easier

“From its beginning, then, TEE primarily included among its students mature leaders established in their congregations and communities. This has been one of its major virtues” (Maldonado 1988:40). As we have already briefly mentioned, the fact that TEE trains students in their ministerial contexts has a big advantage in terms of the internalization of the content of the studies. “Studies apply immediately to their local-church ministries thus enhancing the learning process” (Beals 1995:185).

Kinsler (1981:18) says:

It has, moreover, become evident, from an educational viewpoint, that the new relationships brought about by extension structures provide significant pedagogical advantages for theological education. Theory and practice can be integrated as never before. Professors and students can establish a genuine peer relationship as colleagues in theological reflection and in ministry. The theological institution itself can now be integrated into the life of the churches it serves. Instead of preparation *for* ministry we now have training *in* ministry.

Holland (1975:13-14) explains this “pedagogical advantage” as follows:

1. When new teaching relates to life, it is used.
2. When it is used, it is valued.
3. When other students agree with the teaching, it is valued.
4. When teaching is valued, it is learned quickly.
5. When it is valued, it is also remembered well.

Therefore, even though TEE training will take longer to cover the same amount of material covered in a residential training course, it will make a bigger impact on the student. For example, Holland (1975:41), referring to the programmed texts produced by the TEXT-Africa project, says: “ We believe that the material taught in these 35 books will be equal to what is taught in a three-year resident Bible school. Of course the student in T.E.E. will take the courses more slowly and it will take him longer to finish. But in addition to the Bible teaching, he will have gained much experience and will have had much practical use of what he has learned”.

#### **4. Problems with TEE**

##### 4.1 Problems with the concept as such

According to Kritzinger (1979:138-139) the criticism that was brought in against the concept of extension was surprisingly mild, given the radical new approach which it demands. Many churches and institutions chose to ignore the whole affair, while others asked careful questions like:

1. Can theological study do without the concentrated and intensive period of study?
2. Do the students not lose the forming influence of lecturers and fellow students?
3. Is the practical work properly guided?
4. What about the libraries, magazines, silence for study and the encouragement of class fellows?
5. The academic communion and the opportunity to come to know future colleagues are lost.
6. Will the method fit everywhere?
7. Will this not create different types of pastors?
8. Is it really cheaper?

##### 4.1.1 The cost argument

One of the arguments for TEE which was often used, was that it is cheaper than residential training. As Beals (1995:185) puts it:

More leaders at less cost can be prepared by theological education by extension. Students are not obliged to leave their livelihood or familiar cultural surroundings... Extension education is more economical for all concerned. Existing buildings may serve as classrooms for weekly seminars. After self-instructional courses have been tested and produced, they serve many students beyond the personal presence of the teacher...

However, although the cost to the individual student may be cheaper, is it often because the hidden costs – like the cost of producing the training materials, the administration of the program, the travelling costs of the tutors and the other costs involved in maintaining the tutors – are not passed on to the students.

Finally, the calculations on the operational costs of extension programs that were excitedly asserted to be one of the most convincing arguments in favor of TEE over residential programs apparently failed to take into account the extent to which those programs used foreign personnel supported by missions. TEE remains much too expensive for those national churches that still must fight laboriously to be self-supporting in economies deteriorated by devaluation, inflation and unfavorable commercial exchange (Maldonado 1988:47).

Therefore, “One of the biggest problems of TEE in Africa is to find enough finances to support projects” (Ludike 2001:104). “Most theological institutions have great difficulty in financing theological education on the whole. As we have noted, TEE programmes in Africa, as those in Kenya, are heavily dependent on overseas financial support” (Hogarth et al 1983:80). This was also borne out by a survey done in 1994 as Steyn (2004:9) reports:

In a survey that was conducted in October 1994 by the Accrediting Council of Theological Education in Africa amongst 17 African TEE programmes, the following five greatest needs - in order of priority - were identified:

- Lack of financial resources
- Difficulty in obtaining books
- Lack of co-operation and support from church leaders
- Difficulty in finding enough qualified tutors
- Learners do not have money to pay their fees.

Although TEE is cheaper than residential training, it is still expensive to people who are very poor. Therefore projects to provide training to leaders of the church amongst the poor have to cope with all kinds of financial constraints. As Steyn (2004:9) explains:

At the top of the list is the lack of financial resources. Due to its philosophy and nature, TEE programmes in general always have severe

struggles in connection with the lack of resources. Because TEE reaches the poorest of the poor, it will always be financially handicapped. This leads to a constant lack of staff (particularly highly skilled and qualified staff); lack of operational resources and, in particular, a serious lack of technological ability to deliver theological training sufficiently and successfully by means of distance education.

It is therefore no wonder that “Many institutions rely heavily on overseas funding. In the last few years, even at a well-established programme such as the TEE College, self-supportiveness has decreased from 65-70% to 50%” (Steyn 2004:9). Without adequate financial support from outside donors, TEE programs run into all kinds of problems.

The result is that institutions start falling behind on their budgets (already cut to the bone) and balance sheets. They can no longer offer an efficient service. Staff become demotivated, overworked and underpaid. They cannot compete with large distance education institutions or with institutions that are better equipped and resourced. This leads to a fight for survival on all levels and it becomes impossible sufficiently and effectively to stick to the core business, i.e. the development of appropriate new courses and programmes to address the needs of the day (Steyn 2004:9).

Financially, one of the drawbacks of the TEE system is the fact that lecturers have to travel at a regular basis to meet with the classes, which brings about the problems of travel cost, maintenance of vehicles, etcetera. In urban areas, where the distances are not so great, this may be easier to overcome, but in rural areas with its vast distances and bad roads between seminar venues, this can indeed create big problems. All of this led Crider (1980:50) to observe: “My observation in Transvaal was that TEE is well suited to the urban areas. The roads are good, mechanical parts are available and less expensive than in the more remote rural areas. People are concentrated around the cities so one has people and ready access to them for classes.”

#### 4.1.2 The time factor

Another factor inherent in the TEE concept is that, because it is not done full-time, TEE students take longer than equivalent residential programmes to complete their training. Although this may have a positive effect in terms of the internalization of the material, it can easily cause people to lose hope, especially those who have to complete their training before the church will ordain them.

While theological education by extension did extend the resources of theological education to the people, at the same time it usually extended the time necessary to complete the requirements for a diploma or degree. Slower assimilation of content coupled with more immediate application probably provided more efficient education and effective ministry. However, the expanded length of time needed to complete the total course sequence also produced impatience, frustration, and even discouragement, particularly to those who were candidates for ordination

vows. To meet this problem, intensive courses are offered at the seminary campus or even occasionally in strategic urban centres (Mulholland & De Jacobs 1983:38).

#### 4.1.3 Acceptance of TEE as a valid training model

Because of the dominance of the Traditional Residential Academic Model of training, the major problem facing TEE is its acceptance both in the church and in the academic world. “Credibility is a serious issue and probably the greatest weakness facing the TEE movement. This has two aspects. First, those who look down upon TEE training as theological education with an inferior content. Second, those who doubt the rootedness within context and the practical usefulness of this training for the ministries of the church” (Steyn 2004:6-7).

People are willing to accept TEE as a way to train ordinary church members (the Americans call it “Christian education”), but do not see it as an adequate way to train church leaders. This is not necessarily true. TEE can also operate on a high academic level.

For a time it was commonly assumed that TEE was only acceptable for low-level training, for non-industrialized countries, or for lay people, and that extension training must be of lesser quality. In third world countries it is still true that most extension programmes operate at “low” academic levels, because that is the overwhelming need of the churches, but extension programmes in all regions now prepare students for the same examinations and qualifications as the parallel residential programmes, and these students are beginning to prove themselves not only by their academic achievements but by their leadership in ministry in their churches and communities (Kinsler 1983c:16).

Many people hang on to their prejudices and they are not convinced even by the fact that students who have been trained by TEE are successful in ministry. “The fact that mostly, neither traditional tertiary institutions nor churches and candidates for ministerial formation have placed TEE training on a par with study at a residential seminary is proof of a perception of a second or inferior class of theological training” (Steyn 2004:7).

This prejudice is based on the dominant Professional Church Model coupled with the false premise of the Academic Model which makes academic performance the key quality used to select spiritual leaders. As Steyn (2004:7) says: “One could justify the fact, quite rightly, that this is a wrong assumption and that the theological training provided at TEE is often better focused towards the needs of ministry than that of traditional institutions. That it is deeply rooted in the contexts that will be served without underplaying at all the substance of the content that it offers.”

What are the reasons for this misperception? Probably one of the major reasons is that TEE is not always seen to be *academically* up to standard (Steyn 2004:7). So we see that the new paradigm is still being evaluated in terms of the values of the old paradigm. The unquestioned presumption that a high academic standard is the

measure for good training of spiritual leaders, is still maintained. The criteria which are used in the Academic Model are applied to TEE, even though they are not relevant to the church which has broken with the Professional Church Model. In such a process, TEE will always come off second-best.

Here Ross Kinsler, who has made the most thoroughgoing call for evaluation of TEE worldwide, points out that traditional criteria for the evaluation of TEE programmes may not be appropriate for the extension type of programme. Coupled with this observation, he then calls for new procedures for evaluation to be developed. If the methods used in TEE programmes lead to a type of training not able to be evaluated simply in academic terms, we will certainly need new ways to evaluate them. Yet it is also true that at this stage of the movement there must be more effort to relate what is being achieved to traditional programmes, or else there will be a continuing lack of confidence in this new tool by a large part of the church still orientated solely to the old method (Hogarth et al 1983:149).

Unfortunately, alternative training programs cannot just ignore the dominant Academic Model. Because of its nearly universal dominance, people who are trained in alternative ways will be in a dead-end street if their training is not recognized in terms of the dominant Academic Model. This pressure to conform to the dominant model can tear the heart out of the new paradigm. Therefore advocates of TEE sought a way of comparing the standards of the two models while measuring TEE programs on its own terms. They called this “dynamic equivalency”. Hart (1990:30-31) explains:

More and more churches will attest to the value of the TEE programmes as TEE students fill the leadership roles of local churches and denominations. Many will be licensed, commissioned, and ordained for various forms of ministry.

When these local churches and denominationally certified ministers desire to pursue further studies, they will face the inevitable barriers of relatively closed secular and theological training institutions. These institutions will naturally ask, ‘In what ways do the previous study and work experiences of these persons relate to our objectives and course offerings?’ I believe that evaluation services developed by TEE associations will need to become interpreters to these institutions in order to explain the viable relationship of TEE curriculum and campus curriculum.

There will be the temptation to accept the requirements of existing accreditation bodies that were designed for campus-based education. I believe that this would be inappropriate initially and disastrous in the end.

We need to concern ourselves with preserving the values crucial to TEE educators. There are the items that need to be examined as we evaluate ourselves. This is what ATA has done in developing its scheme for accrediting TEE academic awards. Theirs is a values based approach.

The values remain constant. The door is open to programme innovations that reflect commitment to underlying values. The appropriateness of educational processes and activities is judged internally by the TEE programme and its stake holders. The external services of the ATA visitation team verifies that these kinds of assessment activities have been made and necessary adjustments begun.

TEE programmes will seek to show that their students have the dynamic equivalency of various academic and professional awards. They will demonstrate that their programme completers have the professional competencies necessary for reliable church ministry. When one relates only to a local church, these considerations are secondary. But when local churches are in associations which relate to other organizations, for the sake of meaningful communication, evaluation and accreditation services are valuable.

But even if the problem of accreditation is solved, it will not guarantee smooth co-operation between TEE and traditional academic training institutions, because it is seen as criticism of the Traditional Residential Academic Model.

... although TEE is put forward by its advocates as a servant of the church, its very nature brings it into collision with much of traditional training. It is a young and as yet somewhat idealistic child of the church. The bases upon which TEE stands can easily be taken as straight out criticisms of the status quo as regards theological training. In other words, in its most radical form TEE could be taken and is taken, as a fundamental criticism of residential institutions of training (Hogarth et al 1983:103).

The natural human reaction to criticism, especially to criticism which threatens to destroy a system in which one holds a privileged position, is not to weigh the merit of the criticism carefully, but to act defensively and to try and destroy the source of the criticism. So it all too often also happens in the church and in its leadership training programs.

#### 4.1.4 Strain on students and teachers

By taking the seminary to the students, instead of expecting the students to come to the seminary, TEE has many advantages over residential institutions. However, it means that the trainers now have to go to the students. While lightening the burden of the student, it places a new burden on the trainers to travel from meeting point to meeting point on a nearly constant basis. Holland (1975:38) describes his experience as a travelling tutor: "That is what was done at our Bible School in Zambia as our programme started. My wife and I were the seminar leaders. We travelled on a 205 mile circuit each week, sleeping at each church after we held the seminar meeting. We taught about 80 church leaders in six centres". It is clear that this places a tremendous strain on the trainers. It is therefore no wonder Ludike (2001:104) comments: "It is also difficult to put competent facilitators in place".

At the same time, the fact that the student is normally involved in fulfilling the demands of his daily livelihood as well as taking up leadership in his local church, can cause the extra demands of self-study to be felt as too heavy a burden. “The students are sometimes not committed enough to their studies due to the demands of their bi-vocational (tent making) situation” (Ludike 2001:104).

#### 4.1.5 Difficulty in monitoring the students’ ministries

With reference to the fact that the students are involved in practical ministry in their congregations while they are studying, this being one of the key factors in TEE, it is in reality not easy for the trainers to monitor their practical work. Because they meet at set times with different groups who are geographically far apart, the facilitators usually do not see the student in action during church services, etcetera. They can therefore not mould him in that context (Ludike 2001:104).

This is confirmed by a report from Botswana which says: “One weakness acknowledged has been the difficulty in monitoring the practical outwork of the programme in the lives and ministries of the students. As they report, ‘It is impossible for tutors to know what happens in 100 congregations all over the country on a given Sunday’ “ (Hogarth et al 1983:155).

#### 4.1.6 The curriculum

Because the largest part of the content in a TEE program has to be carried by the self-study materials, the material tends to guide the students among a predetermined path rather than to provoke critical reflection.

... the contribution of programmed instruction to education in general cannot be ignored. In theological education, however, this becomes a two-edged sword. On the one hand it facilitates the assimilation of the content of a subject by dividing the information into small steps, by encouraging active participation of students in the process, by defining specific behavioral goals, etc. On the other hand, since it originates from a behavioristic, pragmatic, and mechanistic frame of reference, programmed instruction tends to restrict horizons rather than broadening them (Maldonado 1988:45).

This leads Maldonado (1988:46) to comment: “In their eagerness to provide easily accessible tools to a new clientele, the pioneers of TEE could not establish the difference – and the contradiction – between the meaning of **theological education** (an endless, dialogical, on-going process) and **programmed instruction** (step-by-step transmission of information with the least possible degree of distortion).

To this Harrison (2004:328) replies:

Some criticisms of TEE centre on concerns that indoctrination may replace education, and piety, critical thinking. Such concerns may be justified, especially in countries where the whole education system is essentially domesticating. But the problem is hardly confined to TEE; it

is just as real in many Bible schools. The difference is that printed TEE courses are more visible to outsiders than what is taught orally within the four walls of a college. Sound theological education needs to help students develop discernment, thinking and problem-solving skills, and ability to draw upon the biblical text and theological understanding in relating faith to life. Pastors who lack such skills typically resort to legalism. But it is no small demand to achieve these ideals, especially at basic educational levels.

Because the programmed material is designed to transfer knowledge, it usually transfer the knowledge of its designers, who were normally themselves trained through the Traditional Residential Academic Model. So in many cases the material does not take enough cognizance of context of the students and the needs and questions of the students which arise from it. This gives rise to the following criticism by Maldonado (1988:45):

First, the radical change that TEE hoped to articulate in contrast to the traditional ministerial training programs was never sufficiently radical. While it is true that many practices were questioned and new bases were established, a central aspect of the educational process was never questioned: the curriculum. A quick glance at the attempts to outline the study programs suffices to prove that they were faithful copies – with a few variations in a given topic here and there – of the residential programs.

I am not so sure that this is a valid criticism, because although I pointed out the danger of false teaching also in academic theology, I do not think that the basic teachings of most theological education institutions are unbiblical. Perhaps in his context Maldondo wants to make more of the social and liberation aspects of the gospel. This is not such an easy matter, as there are often no agreement on how to handle such matters amongst Christians. Additional input about the local situation and the Christian response to it could also be made by the tutors in the weekly seminars.

## 4.2 Problems with the way in which TEE is implemented

### 4.2.1 TEE programs are often set up for the wrong reasons

Too often TEE programs were set up as an emergency measure, because of the inaccessibility of traditional residential training, rather than because the people involved bought into the underlying presuppositions on how the church should function and develop its leadership.

The pioneers of TEE soon realized they were developing not just a method for training more people, but a radical new concept of theological education. However, the significance of this was not always grasped by those who adopted the model. TEE was sometimes adopted more as an emergency measure to cope with unprecedented church growth, or because it was seen as cheap leadership training. Limited goals and understanding accounted for some of the problems subsequently

encountered (Harrison 2004:316).

This results in that “Too often TEE is initiated more because of its presumed economy than because of its inherent value as a form of theological education. Expecting people to staff a program they do not really understand or believe in quickly leads to discontent and perfunctory performance” (Harrison 2004:323-324).

In the following account of how TEE was set up in Botswana, it is clear that pragmatic reasons, rather than a commitment to the underlying premises of TEE, played a major role in the decision to implement TEE:

...at that time there was a shortage of trained men for the ministry of the church. Consequently when a special commission was set up by the Botswana Christian Council in 1973 three basic points were agreed upon: firstly, that there were no funds with which to establish a residential theological seminary; secondly, that recruitment of suitable people for full-time service could not go ahead for lack of being able to offer adequate salaries; and finally, that resulting from their historical background Botswana itself had very few workers able to set up theological programmes (Hogarth et al 1983:89).

Secondly, very often TEE is seen as a second rate training, at best only good enough to train ordinary church members, not to produce church leaders. Winter (1981:x) says: “I see extension used not for theological education but for lay training, thus preventing key leaders from ordained ministry when it was designed and first used to do the opposite. I see it as a second class auxiliary when surprisingly, in God’s sight, its students may outweigh the young men in any residential program”. The leaders who do develop from this training are seen as second rate pastors, only fit to assist the “real” pastors who had the “real” training at residential institutions. Therefore Kinsler (quoted by Hogarth et al 1983:161) asks pointedly about the role TEE graduates are expected to play: “Are these lay leaders simply becoming clergy assistants or clergy substitutes oriented primarily to the church’s inward focus, or are they discovering meaningful ways to minister within the social structures, to challenge those structures prophetically, and to turn the church’s vision outward?”

“Too often, in practice if not explicitly, TEE is viewed as secondary or inferior to the traditional residential school and is resourced accordingly, virtually guaranteeing inferior quality” (Harrison 2004:323). An example of this how TEE is sometimes implemented with this negligent way, comes from Natal:

Another observation I make which comes from my contacts with the early stages of TEE in Natal was that it was not organized with a solid concept which accepted this as valid, sound training for the ministry. It did not seem to enjoy the complete blessing and recognition of the conference there. Rather it was conceived as a type of “add-on” to the real training program at UBI. It was a sort of glorified Sunday School class (Crider1980:45-46).

Because of this, the program was not given the necessary priority in manpower and

finances. It is therefore no wonder that this program did not succeed.

Both Rev. Crist and Rev. Clyde reported that TEE in Natal/Transkei had ceased to function since late in 1979. Rev. Clyde mentioned the problem was leadership. By this he did not mean that the leadership in those areas was faulty. Rather the idea was that the leadership had other responsibilities so TEE administration and teaching was something that was added to an already heavy load... In regards Natal/Transkei someone needs to be completely freed from all other church responsibility so he can place TEE on the very top of his priority list and thus give full-time to its administration and instruction (Cridder1980:45).

#### 4.2.2 Lack of ownership, co-operation and support by the church

Closely tied to the previous point is the fact that where the church does not take ownership of TEE, it cannot succeed. "This relationship between the TEE programme and the member churches is a vital one" (Steyn 2004:15). "For reasons such as lack of finance, lack of personnel or lack of solid support from the churches, many programmes have to be satisfied with less than their aim" (Hogarth et al 1983:94). "One reason some TEE programs have struggled has been that they have never really been 'owned' by the national churches, TEE was sometimes initiated by keen missionaries who failed to consult sufficiently with local church leaders. Such programs are vulnerable, especially in an unstable political situation. If the mission has to withdraw, the TEE program will soon run down or close" (Harrison 2004:324). But it is not always the case that the programs are started without the church's approval. Often it is started with the church's approval, but without its support. Gatimu (1993a:37) describes how it happens:

In its early stage, the personnel were in many cases, expatriate. They raised their own support for their programmes from overseas. Financial and other human resources, inputs from the local church for programmes of the initial stages of TEE development were nonexistent. The expatriate personnel approached church leadership and offered to introduce: a) A novel way of offering training to lay and clergy without having the students attend residential institutions; b) The expatriates offered to initially raise the support for the programme, an offer the church could not refuse!

This is a case of an offer that is too good to refuse, because "To the local churches TEE did not, therefore, have a financial obligation during its launching period... TEE started with near total dependence on overseas financial and human resources" (Gatimu 1993a:37). The church leaders are willing to accept the proposal, not because they believe in TEE, but because it will cost them nothing.

In my own experience I have seen that church meetings often agree to something, while in practice they do not buy in to it. All that their approval means is: "We do not deny you permission, go ahead if you want to". It does not mean: "We are behind you all the way and we shall support you with our whole hearts". Advocates of TEE have sometimes fallen into this trap of believing that the church's approval means its

support. If they truly buy into a TEE program, church leaders will not only give permission. They will personally take part in the training and support it financially, as is envisioned by Pobee (1993b:83-84) when he says: “There is need for African churches to take ‘ownership’ of the opportunities for training through TEE. By that is meant that churches, particularly the leadership, should be seen to be acting as facilitators and mentors to the programmes and the participants in them, as well as to put their pockets where their mouth and heart are. There is too much dependency on resources from abroad.”

However this often does not happen in practice, as Steyn (2004:14) explains: “TEE programmes are the constituent seminaries of the member churches, which makes them ‘partners in this ministry’ ... However, the very same churches often treat these programmes as a secondary form of training. Churches do not take full responsibility for the TEE programmes as their own seminaries, neither on a financial, nor on a personal level”. Practically “There is a general lack of commitment and dedication amongst church representatives towards the TEE ministry” (Steyn 2004:15). This attitude is demonstrated by the fact that “Church representatives are either not being sent to Council and board meetings by their churches, or they opt not to come” (Steyn 2004:15).

It is clear that there are varying degrees of co-operation between church administration and TEE administration. Although courses are started with the approval of the church administration, it seems that as a programme develops it often does so on its own without a very close link to the ongoing administration of the church including its budgeting and planning for theological education as a whole. Some factors which make this situation clear are the continuation of many missionary-led courses, the high level of overseas funding in many courses, ... and most notably the difficulty that some TEE graduates find in being accepted alongside the trainees of the traditional institutions (Hogarth et al 1983:76).

While the church may approve of the institution of a TEE program, it will not necessarily open the doors to the products of TEE to function as fully accepted ministers, because deep in their hearts they still feel that residential training is the only legitimate training. “Church leaders may want a college like those of other churches. Pastors who were themselves trained in a residential college may feel this is the only ‘real’ theological education; they suspect the missionaries are offering them a cheap, ‘second-best’ alternative” (Harrison 2004:324). The pastors who have been trained in residential institutions play an important part in propagating the idea that residential training is the only acceptable form of training. “Some pastors feel threatened at the prospect of members of their congregation embarking on serious theological studies. They may then believe it is in their interests to emphasize the superiority of their own seminary training” (Harrison 2004:324). Again, the element of protecting their own interest comes into play. Pastors are themselves the product of the Professional Church Syndrome and they feel threatened by the idea of releasing God’s people into their ministries.

Church leaders in some areas are showing concern as to the effect TEE will have on the formal ministry of the church and on the nature of the church itself...TEE is rapidly bringing into being a second type of

clergyman or pastor. If the church then accepts, increasingly, this type of man with this type of training, then undoubtedly the face of the church will change. People are asking whether the church is ready for, and willing to accept, this change. If the answer is Yes, then what are its motives for saying so? (Hogarth et al 1983:158)

An example of this type of protection of the status quo is given by Winter (2003c:10):

But this program [TEE training] was not launched by any existing school, and its graduates are not routinely incorporated into existing denominations. The latter polite rejection becomes understandable only when you recognize that a large proportion of those studying under TAFTEE [The Association For Theological Education by Extention] are people coming out of midlife, doctors, engineers, university graduates. Existing pastors who control the ordination process are mostly the output of traditional Bible institutes, and may actually fear the competition on this non-traditional source of leadership.

One of the results of the lack of church support is that congregations do not select and send potential leaders for training. Instead individuals decide that they want to study, as is illustrated by this example from Malawi given by Hogarth and others (1983:93): “For all that, it is still true that many of the students registered in the courses are doing so individually rather than as official church sponsored candidates”. The result is of course that the church has no hand in selecting the candidates and therefore feels no responsibility to open leadership positions for them once they are trained.

#### 4.2.3 Training material is not sufficiently contextual

One of the points on which advocates of TEE pride themselves, is the fact that training takes place in context.

The major value of TEE is its commitment to training in context, to the selection of students by the local church, and to a basic understanding of service to a specific community in which the church is set, of which the church is a part, and to which the church is called to serve, TEE generally operates on the principle that the responsibility for recruiting students and for participating in their formation lies with the local church. Educational programs should aim at meeting the needs of the local church as that church in turn seeks to minister to the needs of the larger community. It follows that the TEE program should be related to the local church and to the local community context. The question is *How?* The answer is that, ideally, the relationship should be a two-way, reciprocal one between the TEE program on the one hand and the local church and community on the other (Kinsler & Emery 1991:60).

The problem is that TEE is still training leaders for the church. It is still not the church selecting and training its own leaders, and therefore there is often a gap between the ideal of taking the local context seriously and the reality of students being trained through material prepared at a central point far removed from their local context.

Another question we need to raise is whether theological education by extension is considering seriously and taking advantage of the challenges presented by the student's own context. We have already noted that one advantage of this model is that it allows students to participate in the learning process without losing contact with their surroundings. If this is compared to the protected and artificial atmosphere offered by the majority of residential programs, we cannot help but note the pedagogic value of questions formulated within a real situation. Traditional programs have to simulate case studies, worship situations and the resolution of issues that arise from imaginary daily problems. This is not the case with education by extension. The relationship between what is learned and personal, ecclesiastical, or social life is recognized in an immediate and natural way. But are these factors taken into consideration when programming the courses? A quick glance at the available materials reveals that the majority provide no way for integrating these life experiences into the learning process (Sarocco 1988:31).

It is, however, not always possible to produce materials for each context, as is illustrated by the creation of TEE manuals which were used widely all over Africa. "The TEXT-Africa TEE materials were launched, at least in part "to overcome the problem of TEE books ... The off-the-shelf availability of TEE materials in Eastern Africa was good news to those launching TEE programmes that needed pre-produced materials for immediate use. They did not have the skills and other resources needed to produce their own materials" (Gatimu 1993b:66).

This means that in practice TEE programs use existing materials which do not necessarily take the local needs into account. Gatimu (1993b:66) comments: "Conventional approaches to andragogy generally stress on the importance of the needs of the learner in determining the materials to be used. In this instance the study materials determined the characteristics of the would-be students. Availability of TEE materials in some cases, leads to the launching of TEE programmes – supply creating its own demand!"

This use of standardised material can also be included under the criticism of Manning (1993:70-71) who said:

When TEE compares itself with residential colleges and university departments, the feature which we pride ourselves in most is "in context". TEE programmes claim that we are not taking people out of their context but theological education takes place "where people are". This would be a useless point to make, unless by implication we are paying due attention to the interest where people are. If we are training *in situ*, but ignoring the context of people, how are we different from Residential Colleges against whom we make our claim, that we train people where they are?

It is true that materials that are to be used over a wide area cannot deal with the micro context of each student. However, before one criticises too quickly, one must

remember the situation of poverty in which most TEE programs function. Developing and publishing training materials are a long and costly process, and not all trainers are capable of developing their own material from scratch. "... not every church worker has skills or resources to write TEE materials unique to the needs of their programme. To some it appears as a futile attempt to reinvent the wheel" (Gatimu 1993b:68). Thus the availability of the published materials makes training programmes possible and training available to people who would otherwise have had to remain untrained. The regular seminars should also help the students to relate their studies to the local context.

The TEE Text-Africa project, which was initiated in 1972 aimed at the following aspects in order to ensure contextualization:

- a) Course design according to the specific needs of African students.
- b) Selection of topics according to doctrinal significance combined with practical orientation.
- c) Evaluation on the basis of student responses with ensuing revisions all as part of the preparation procedure.
- d) Teaching and illustration designed for the African context.
- e) The inclusion of discussion topics and ministerial tasks designed to encourage immediate application of the teaching materials (Hogarth et al 1983:65-66).

While taking the general African context into account when materials are developed, it can be virtually impossible to contextualize the material for every local context. This has to happen in the weekly seminars. "The seminars used in TEE at this level also have a large role to play in facilitating the all-important process of encouraging self-awareness. It is through these regular seminars that there takes place local contextualization of the teaching materials, including both self-realization and local application of these materials" (Hogarth et al 1983:152). This will especially happen when the material is aimed at getting the students practically involved in ministry in their local context.

It is this aspect of the TEE method that also demands practically-oriented teaching materials rather than purely academically-oriented ones. Here also we can say that TEE is achieving its goal. Regarding the Text-Africa materials there has been a warm acceptance along the lines that they actually do facilitate immediate responses. Other programmes such as the Lesotho Independent Churches programme and the Arusha Synod programme in Tanzania have also achieved significant progress at this point with practically-oriented materials that demand this type of involvement on the part of the student. This is a major contribution of the TEE movement to African church life. Observers of the TEE movement should not be allowed to undervalue this combination of locally placed indigenous leaders and practically-oriented materials with great possibilities for locally-contextualized education and ministry (Hogarth et al 1983:154-155).

To really achieve this practical involvement, the teaching materials have to be tested in the context and adapted in the light of this experience. Because of time and cost constraints, this does not always happen. "Although many TEE educators lay stress on training in context, looking at most of the TEE materials produced, there is little

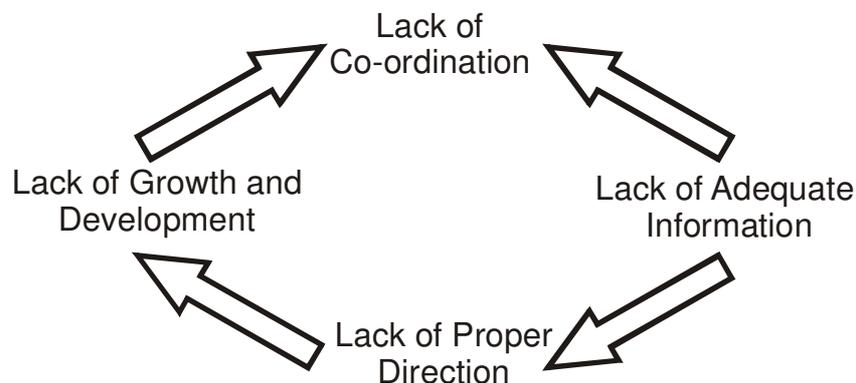
evidence of periodic material review” (Gatimu 1993a:40).

#### 4.2.4 Isolation and exclusivism

The fight for financial survival of many TEE programs can easily lead to an inward focus.

Constantly experiencing the threat of closure and operating with limited resources easily lead to a tendency to put up barriers and protect oneself. This becomes true of TEE institutions as well as others. Most of these programmes tend to be occupied almost exclusively with their own business. They only look inside, tend to focus almost exclusively on themselves, protect their little assets and feel threatened if anyone gets close. Soon they are operating in isolation and in a mode of exclusivism. Tending only to "mind their own business" they easily become an organism which struggles to maintain itself financially, structurally and institutionally (Steyn 2004:11).

The result is that most of the TEE programs in Africa operate in isolation from one another. Very few TEE associations have been established for co-operation among programs (Anum 1993:43). This lack of co-ordination leads to serious problems, as Anum (1993:43) illustrates with the following diagram:



##### a. Lack of Co-ordination

Most programs seem to be doing what they deem fit without any references, linkage with each other or even with residential institutions (Anum 1993:43-44).

##### b. Lack of Up-to-Date Information

The lack of co-ordination has resulted in the scarcity of adequate or up-to-date information on TEE on the continent... So presently, there is no up-to-date data on the types of programmes on the continent, the types of materials being used, as there is no proper directory of TEE programmes, there is also no idea of the number of TEE programmes in operation on the continent. All we have is conjecture or projections (Anum 1993:44).

#### c. Lack of Proper Direction

Due to lack of up-to-date information it is difficult to help someone who wants to know something about the operations of TEE on the continent. We know it is in operation in almost all the regions on the continent but we know very little of the various models being operated in various regions and how to direct someone as to what to do if he/she wants to start a programme in that area. What we most often have are reports of a few individual programmes (Anum 1993:44).

#### d. Lack of Growth and Development

There seems to be a kind of stagnation in the growth and development of TEE on the continent, as most TEE practitioners do not have very clear guidance and direction to know how to start, develop and maintain an effective programme in their contexts. Some of the TEE programmes that started with great momentum are either losing momentum or folding up. This is partly because most of them seem to be "loners" in their programmes, so that wherever they encounter serious crisis and since there is nowhere to turn to, they either reduce the size of the programme or fold up (Anum 1993:44).

To solve these problems, Anum (1993: 45-58) suggests that more research on TEE should be done in the short term and in the long term bilateral and multilateral co-operation should be established, resources should be exchanged, training programs launched, workshops held and the matter of accreditation addressed.

#### 4.2.5 Empire building, power hunger and egocentrism

Unfortunately TEE has not always remained pure instruments for the promotion of the gospel as its pioneers have hoped. "With the institutionalisation of the TEE movement, many programmes fall into the trap of becoming autocratic and bureaucratic institutions in which some individuals are working towards empire building, many times operating along dictatorial lines. Characteristics similar to the church – as it ought NOT to be – are also to be seen in some TEE programmes" (Steyn 2004:13). This causes deeds that are contradicting the nature of the gospel which TEE is supposed to promote and causes damage to the church. Sarocco (1988:30) spells it out:

The potential of the extension method to reach a wide public heightens its dangers. Misused, extension could cause a great deal of damage. Some missionaries have seen in this methodology a chance for promoting their personal enterprises and have tried to set up programs by preparing all types of programmed texts which in reality are no more than a set of teachings with a few questions appended. Such programs often transmit irrelevant information, manipulate and domesticate students, and establish ministerial stereotypes that have nothing to do with our Latin American ecclesiastical context.

Steyn (2004:13) also gives a further picture of what happens when people use the

ministry to further their own aims, rather than to be obedient to God:

Even worse is the fact that these very same institutions (which stand for democracy and the equality of all) because they have such a small staff often become entangled in power struggles. Sometimes these run along organisational functional lines (such as divides between administration and maintenance versus academic integrity), or along personality lines (such as visionary and leadership profiles versus organisational maintenance and managerial desires). This leads to hidden agendas, paranoia during which everyone is mistrusted with almost every move they make and unnecessary gossip with Council members in order to put key people at the institution in a bad light. Much time and energy (precious resources that can be measured financially) are wasted to disentangle these power struggles and to resolve conflict. This is a misuse of time, energy and money which small institutions do not have and cannot afford to waste.

It must be said that this is not unique to TEE. It is the result of the flesh in operation (Gal 5:19-21). Whether in leadership training, in the church, or in secular organizations, wherever people have not completely died to themselves, this type of behaviour will surface. This problem is not inherent to TEE as such. Any program of training is open to abuse.

#### 4.2.6 Lack of tutor training

In any TEE program tutors play a critically important role. To the students they are the face of TEE. Steyn (2004:15-16) quotes Peters who says: "The whole of the extension process stands or falls with how the tutors handle the study materials". He goes on to say:

The tutor has a central position in any TEE programme. The tutor should be able to be a facilitator of an integrated process of learning. It should be a person who has the skills of combining theoretical knowledge with practical experience and with life skills. The tutor in many ways redefines the traditional role of the lecturer. S/he becomes a role model and mentor along the journey of self-discovery and of learning through doing and through experience. S/he draws lines, guides, assists in pausing and reflecting, evaluating, etc (Steyn 2004:16).

From the above it is clear that a very high standard is expected of the tutors. "Tutors ought to be not only practicing Christian people, but also dedicated church people and committed community citizens. They ought to be good listeners and enablers. They ought to know the detail of group dynamics and must be mature, emotionally stable and psychologically strong. They should be a praying group of people with a caring and kind nature" (Steyn 2004:16).

"Just looking briefly at these qualities needed for a TEE tutor, it became evident that the training of TEE tutors should have a very high priority" (Steyn 2004:16). Unfortunately the training of and employing enough suitable tutors are major problems

for many TEE programs. For example, Steyn (2004:15) reports that this aspect was a problem from the earliest days of TEE College (in South Africa). He quotes Hughes who wrote that "The constant lack of adequate finance limited the number of seminars for training tutors which could be held in different parts of the country" and that "the finding of tutors was often a hit or miss affair, done at a distance and without personal knowledge of the people concerned".

Many programs have not given enough attention to the training and support of its human resources. "The principle asset of TEE programmes are human resources and leadership strength. Human resources are critical... Staff development and training of TEE personnel in distance education skills has been episodic and fragmentary. This has tended to concentrate on a) training of writers and b) teaching skills through TEE" (Gatimu 1993a:37-38).

The neglect of the human resources is usually a result of the financial constraints under which most TEE programs operate. Staff costs money. The cost of staff salaries is usually not passed on to students, because it will make the course too expensive for the very poor. Thus the programs are dependent on outside donors for subsidies and paid staff. With barely enough people to keep the program running, there is usually no extra money for "luxuries" like human resource managers. As Gatimu (1993a:39) says: "Human resources are inevitably the most scarce resource in institutional and professional development. A survey of the history of theological associations in Africa is depressing because of the almost routine manner in which this scarce resource is overlooked at the initial launching of associations. Institutions stagnate or decay, grow and flourish with staff arrivals and exits. Some institutions expire for lack of new blood!"

Fortunately this is not uniformly the case:

Some TEE programmes do have creative tutor training models in place. The Open Theological Seminary (formerly PACTEE) of Pakistan is an excellent example. All learners are required to do a tutor training course - with practical work in the field - as part of their own TEE studies. This not only provides a continuing resource of TEE tutors, but also takes the equipping of tutors seriously. Other programmes, such as Kgolagano College in Botswana appoint full-time, paid tutors who travel through the vast and sparsely populated semi-desert country. Different contexts require different models (Steyn 2004:16).

## **5. The relationship between TEE and residential training**

Although TEE operates on a different paradigm, it cannot ignore or separate itself from the dominant residential model. "At first the relationship between extension programs and residential seminaries was rather antagonistic. The latter were the target of all sorts of attacks by partisans of the extension model. The numeric success of the former seemed to grant them this right. But as the initial euphoria has passed, the trend has been to recognize the complementarity of the two models (Saracco 1988:29). Some TEE students will also need further training that can only be provided by residential institutions. "One of the dangers to which those promoting and developing extension programs need to remain alert is that these could become obstacles limiting access to other levels of preparation" (Saracco 1988:32).

Part of the reason why the two models must co-operate, is that although TEE can in principle train people to any level, in practice the systems are not in place to do so.

It is that whilst TEE continues to have a lack of higher-level materials it must be seen to remain dependant on residential institutions for lessons and courses at those higher levels. Whilst in theory TEE can teach anyone at any level, it has not reached that maturity yet in Africa. It still has a current and ongoing debt to residence training at this level. At this stage of its existence, TEE does not lend itself to those looking for advanced studies on this continent. Whilst this situation remains true it is presumptuous for TEE administrators to believe that they can do without residential institutions (Hogarth et al 1983:104-105).

It must, however, not be assumed that the blame for the lack of co-operation between TEE and residential institutions can all be laid at the door of the advocates of TEE. Residential institutions are often less than enthusiastic about the TEE concept, as Saracco (1988:29) explains:

Other residential institutions have their own extension programs, but in practice these do not prove to be committed to the philosophy of this model. That is to say, they have incorporated an extension department so as not to appear out-of-date, but its budget and prestige within the overall scheme of the institution clearly indicate that the extension program is the Cinderella of the residential seminary. Thus there are programs that combine the worst of residency with new programmed-learning techniques. They think that what needs to be "extended" is the seminary. Such a presupposition once again places the theological institution as the primary beneficiary of its own work. Thus it is that some extension programs have "extended" things that should never have been extended.

Fortunately there are examples where TEE and residential training work well in combination, as Hogarth and others (1983:105) report: "The Baptist School of Theology for West Africa in Lome, Togo, provides an impressive example of a curriculum in which residential courses and non-residential extension studies are combined". They also give another example from Sudan: "Due primarily to the character of the church [in Sudan], it has been found that the most suitable approach to theological education within the church is a combination of residential and extension models... It was seen that with the ongoing increase in the Christian population, as well as the revival of interest in the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, the old method of total reliance upon the residential method was no longer adequate to meet the need" (Hogarth et al 1983:108-109).

## **6. Evaluation**

We have looked at the advantages as well as the drawbacks of TEE. Now we must try to make an overall evaluation. This is no easy task, because we must differentiate between the success of TEE as a system and the quality of any particular TEE program. As Harrison (2004:322) reminds us: "TEE is not a single program. It is one

*vehicle* for delivering training. Aside from general comparisons of delivery systems, questions about efficacy can most usefully be asked of a *particular* TEE program: Is TEE the best training choice in *this* situation?"

On the one hand one can evaluate a particular TEE programme by asking questions like the following: "Are quality materials being used, and are these properly matched to students' educational levels? Is there a sound theological base? How well contextualised are the materials, and do they lend themselves to real-life application? Are the seminars run properly, and how well trained are the tutors? How effective is the overall administration?" (Harrison 2004:322).

However, we cannot measure the success or failure of TEE as a system by evaluating just one or two TEE programs as it has sometimes been done. "... criticisms of TEE frequently turn out to be criticisms of one or two aspects of a particular program" (Harrison 2004:322). This is not a fair evaluation, because "As with any other type of training, there is a continuum of quality. TEE programs can be excellent, mediocre, or by any criteria, quite poor" (Harrison 2004:323).

In general we must start by acknowledging the tremendous benefit that TEE had for leaders who were forced by circumstances to step up to take leadership without being trained for it. "TEE has been a great boost to the lay ministers who are functioning pastors... These are men who would never have the opportunity of attending a residence Bible School yet are so desirous of serving God. TEE has enabled them to learn basic Bible truths and in this way gain self-confidence in their ministry" (Crider1980:48).

Now we have to try to look at the effect that the introduction of TEE had on the church.

## 6.1 The relationship to the church

As we have seen, there are reasons why TEE does not always find acceptance by the church leadership. In that light it is easy to say that TEE is something foreign that is being pressed on the church. However, the picture is not that simple, as Hogarth and others (1983:147) explain:

Movement or mission? Firstly we return to a subject mentioned in our chapter on administration of TEE programmes, asking just how much TEE really is a movement from the heart of the African church and how much on the other hand its occurrence can be described as a mission to the church from outside. Here if we were to judge only from statistics as regards missionary-led programmes, and percentages of programme budgets that come from overseas, we may be pessimistic as to just how African the TEE movement really is. But from another aspect, anyone who has worked with African nationals in a grassroots TEE programme, and anyone who studies the movement or phenomenon of TEE in the African church as a whole, cannot help being impressed with the enthusiasm with which it has been accepted by both the escalating student numbers and the translation permissions documented to date.

So it seems that although the official leaders may not always be enthusiastic, the people on grassroots level are eager for any systematic training they can get and they benefit from it. The “AICC/Fambidzano programme of theological training, for Shona independent churches, is an example of this.” The staff recently undertook an evaluation of their programme and found students consistently mentioning revived preaching technique, deeper prayer life and more systematic Bible study habits” (Hogarth et al 1983:123). It is therefore not surprising that the program is deemed to be of great practical relevance by those church members on congregational level.

Programmes of training... must keep that element of practical relevance. This is their greatest strength and blessing as it is carried out in the power of the Spirit of God. It is precisely here that TEE is having, and perhaps for many years will continue to have, its greatest contribution in the African church. Parish level TEE has come to Africa as primarily in-service training for those already in some form of ministry. With its practical orientation both in methodology, content and context, it is making an enormous contribution to equipping ministers in their rural congregations to continue on in strength and with greater maturity (Hogarth et al 1983:127-128).

## 6.2 The effect of TEE on the ministry and the church

Although TEE has not succeeded in overcoming the Professional Church Syndrome, by opening the way to ministry for people who would not have had access to it with the residential training system, it has made a start in causing people to question the system. “The inspiration and the challenge to change have come from those who had previously been excluded from formal patterns of theological education and have thus been excluded from formally recognized ministry... TEE has been and continues to be a movement for the full incorporation of God’s people in ministry, mission, and theology” (Kinsler & Emery 1991:3).

TEE reminded the church that the ministry, mission and theology of the church belong to the whole people of God, not just the professionals. Kinsler and Emery (1991:3) sum it up as follows:

### Ministry by the People

- Overcoming academic, clerical, and professional limitations
- Overcoming limitations of class, gender, race, culture, and age
- Overcoming dependence and elitism

### Mission by the People

- Contextualizing the Gospel, the church, and its mission and ministry
- Awakening God’s people for their mission
- Engaging God’s people in their theological vocation

### Theology by the People

- Seeing the world from the underside
- Rereading the Bible and rearticulating the faith
- Recreating the church, its ministry, and mission

Looking at this list, it is clear that TEE found a way to empower ordinary church members, thereby making the universal priesthood of the believers a practical reality. "The panorama of theological education in Latin America will never be the same. The lay ministry, present throughout the history of the Church, has been strengthened in light of the possibility of obtaining the academic and professional credibility previously reserved for an elite. This means that the scriptural principle of the universal priesthood of believers, espoused by the Reformation, has been united with the extension movement in Latin America" (Maldonado 1988:42-43).

The influx of people who did not fit the traditional pattern of ministry of the Professional Church, could not but stimulate debate and renewed reflection on the nature of the ministry.

Another development is the increased number of full-time pastors trained through the non-residential method. As we have said before, not only has this increased the numerical strength of the ministry in areas with a shortage of trained men, but in addition the training method itself has begun to lead to challenges to existing methods and conceptions of the ministry. This is healthy if it leads to productive exchange of ideas rather than militant opposition to the current structures of ministry within the church (Hogarth et al 1983:157).

### 6.3 Stimulating thought on the nature of theological training and leadership selection

Just as TEE has stimulated thinking on the nature of the church and its ministry, so also it stimulated thinking about the way in which church leaders should be trained. It has impacted even those who did not choose to go the TEE route. "Today few people doubt that changes are needed in theological education. Increasing numbers of Bible institutes and seminaries are rethinking and modifying their structures, methods, curricula, and concepts of ministry. The extension movement is both benefitting from and contributing to this process" (Kinsler 1981:3).

According to Maldonado (1988:44) TEE has stimulated reflection on the bases of ministerial preparation in at least six important areas:

1. By raising the question "What is ministry?" and discovering the false dichotomy between laity and clergy, the theological basis of ministerial formation is being reviewed.
2. By pointing out that the Western system of professional training for clergy tends to be static and incapable of responding to the needs of the masses, the historical basis is questioned.
3. By asking "What is leadership? Who are leaders? How are they formed?" the sociological basis is being reviewed.
4. By questioning the philosophy, methodology, and structures of education and in defining education in terms of life and service. The educational basis is being discussed.
5. When the question is "What kind of theological education can we support with our own resources?," the economic basis is being

re-examined.

6. From a missiological perspective TEE tries to respond to the question "What are the goals of theological education programs – in terms of spreading the Gospel, pastoral care, edifying the Body of Christ, and its presence in the world?"

TEE has questioned the system of bringing in professional leaders from the outside, by emphasising the value of the natural leaders who surface in the local context. "The formation of the ministry at the local level is a structural problem, and theological education plays a crucial role... The extension approach to theological education can and does break these patterns of ecclesiastical and theological dependence. It reverses the elitist tendency of the ministry. It recognizes and values and elevates local leadership in a process of contextualization" (Kinsler 1981:44). "The goal of TEE has been to provide ministerial training for those who were most ready and best qualified. Therefore, it has emphasized a new way of selecting, inspiring, and enabling local leaders for the development of their gifts and ministries without their having to leave home, work, community or congregation" (Maldonado 1988:40).

Where traditional theological education can easily focus on matters that are only of interest to professional theologians in their academic pursuit, TEE brought the focus of training squarely back to serving the ministry of the church as it pursues its mission in the world.

Kinsler indicates that the changes which TEE has brought are directly related to "the nature of the ministry, the vitality and renewal of the church, and the mission of the church in the world. The significance of extension lies precisely in the way it relates theological education to the ministry, the church, and mission". Since its beginnings, TEE has consistently been defined as a movement or vision rather than as a new technique or novel teaching method. It is "a philosophy of theological education and an instrument for change, a new conceptualization and a new methodology of ministerial formation" (Maldonado 1988:39-40).

However, we must not make the mistake of thinking that TEE was just another philosophical fad in academic circles like so many others which come and go. TEE arose from a practical need in the field and took concrete steps to fill the need. "In the first place, the dizzying growth of TEE in South America and in the rest of the world demonstrates that it has responded to a real need in the area of ministerial preparation – the need to include indigenous leaders of the churches in this educational process, without removing them from their context, while recognizing the academic level and personal learning pattern of each student" (Maldonado 1988:42).

#### 6.4 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

In the light of everything we have said up to now, it suffices to stay with Burton's summary of the strengths, weaknesses and problems of TEE:

##### 6.4.1 Strengths of TEE

1. The training of people without cultural extraction. The "Two-Thirds" world church should be allowed to develop along its own cultural lines rather than being forced into the model of another culture.
2. The people are trained *in* ministry rather than *for* ministry. TEE trains leaders where they are and the student does not see "the better life" nor is he spoiled by it.
3. There is the training of leaders who need training and cannot obtain it through residence situations. Rapid church growth makes it impossible for training them fast enough in traditional methods.
4. Many Third World leaders are poor. TEE is one of the cheapest and best ways to educate them.
5. TEE trains many more people than will ever be trained in residence situations. This gives a better biblical perspective of the Body of Christ and the priesthood of all believers.
6. TEE provides relevant training in doing practical service for the leadership context.
7. TEE provides a flexible educational system in time considerations, teaching situations, and role applications (Burton 2000:71-72).

#### 6.4.2 Weaknesses of TEE

1. Failure of students to complete assignments. There needs to be continual awareness in the weekly seminar session to see if the students are doing their homework.
2. Inadequate programmed materials. This problem has been alleviated to a large degree, and there are excellent materials available as well as continued production of materials.
3. Lack of teachers trained in the use of programmed learning materials. This is true and a constant challenge. We hold workshops to help in this area of need.
4. Lack of programmed textbooks prepared by nationals. This continues to be a vital need.
5. Lack of culturally adapted materials: This also is a continuing need although writers are conscious of this and try to write from cultural perspectives.
6. Cross-cultural problems in the areas of communication and understanding between teacher and students. This may be true where missionaries are involved with nationals, but if the co-ordinators/leaders are nationals this should be lessened.
7. Lack of identification of the extension teacher with the students. This would be true if the teacher is traveling in from the outside. But, if he is "one of them," this should be alleviated.
8. Lack of sufficient theological preparation on the part of the teachers. This is and can be a problem. The teacher, indeed, should have a better preparation than those he is guiding, although he himself can be one of the learning group.
9. The extended time in order to graduate. Yes, this is a great problem, and many can become discouraged even though we try

to teach them a philosophy of lifetime, on-going, continuous education.

10. The high subsidy necessary to maintain the program. This is true. We try to have the students only pay for their books which means that traveling, postage, promotion, and books must be subsidized (Burton 2000:72-73).

#### 6.4.3 Problems confronting TEE

1. A general unacceptance of the TEE method as equivalent training – it is usually thought of as a lay training, an improved type of correspondence course.
2. Failure to recognize TEE as a legitimate track to ordination – not accredited.
3. Failure to have dynamic interaction in the seminars which adequately deals with experiential learning and spiritual formation.
4. Failure to integrate courses into ministry experience.
5. Increasing pressure to formalize (Burton 2000:73).

### 7. TEE today

The boom time, when TEE was new and therefore created a lot of discussion and literature, is past. In some cases people have moved away from TEE. For example, Winter (2000:130) reports that an association of Theological Education by Extension was formed in Brazil in 1965. By 1985 he found that the word “Extension” was dropped from the name of the association and most of the members did not know much about TEE.

However, this does not mean that TEE is a spent force. “... even if the boom in the rise of extension programs and the production of texts has passed, creative models for theological education in Latin America that incorporate elements of TEE continue to appear” (Maldonado 1988:43). Despite the setback in Brazil, Winter still maintains fifteen years later: “However, although the seminaries are moving away from extension, the church movement is out of control and the ‘standard schools’ have little relation to it” (Winter 2000b:130). As recently as 2004, Harrison, who consults globally on theological training, wrote: “There appears to be an idea in some circles that TEE has had its day. In fact reports of the death of TEE have been greatly exaggerated! Admittedly, for a variety of reasons, some extension programs have disappeared or have been replaced by other forms of training. Not all have functioned well. Nevertheless numerous programs, many fairly recent, continue to operate today ...” (Harrison 2004:321).

In 1983 Jonathan Hogarth, Kiranga Gatimu and David Barrett published a book called *Theological Education in Context*. In this book they surveyed the existing TEE programs in Africa at the time. They also included a register of TEE programmes that were operating at that time.

In order to find out to what extent TEE was still being used in Africa, I adapted their original questionnaire and sent it out to the 77 programs they listed. Unfortunately the

response was very poor. I also did a search on the Internet and through e-mail contacts expanded the list. I sent the questionnaires by e-mail to the currently operating programs which I traced. Despite all these efforts, I only received 9 completed questionnaires and one partial one. It is clear that this is too small a sample on which to base any conclusions concerning the extent to which TEE is still being used in Africa. This field is thus left open for further research.

However, the questionnaires which were completed do give some useful insight in the practicalities of TEE in Africa.

The major obstacle faced by all the programs is the lack of sufficient funds. It manifests in different forms.

One of the Ethiopian projects prepare their own material themselves, but they have they are hampered by lack of money for this purpose,

In Guinea Bissau the importation of the books is the major problem, with books costing them \$8 each either to produce them or to import them. At the moment they are just using their stock of previously accumulated books, as the program does not even have a budget. It is run on a part-time basis by a missionary and some local pastors.

The reply from Burkina Faso also shows that the material is not only expensive, but also very difficult to obtain.

As Burkina Faso is a French speaking country we have been using the TEE material produced by CPE (Centre de Publications Evangéliques) 08 BP 900, Abidjan 08, Côte d'Ivoire. It is becoming increasingly difficult to receive their books, many of which are now out of print. They are also too expensive for the average Burkinabé and if the Mission did not subsidize them no one would buy them. Since the war in Côte d'Ivoire in 2002 contact with CPE has also been limited, but we have asked some ... missionaries who are passing through Abidjan to ask CPE if it would be possible for us to photocopy their books which are out of print so as to still help those here who want to study at home. The CPE courses are in very basic French.

In Kenya many students do not pay their school fees and the resultant lack of money causes transport problems for the tutors. In Nigeria it hampers the timeous production of training materials, while another program has stopped for two years due to a lack of funds, because the cost per student is more than what the students can pay. In Madagascar the program is funded from overseas, but they are struggling to find ways of making the program self-supporting in a country where the congregations do not even pay their pastors. A rapidly expanding program in Zambia has to expand the work on a budget that remains constant.

Despite these difficult circumstances, most programs succeed in reaching large numbers of people with a limited staff. The numbers for 2008 were reported as follows:

Program	Number of students	Number of staff	Expatriates	% of budget from overseas
Ethiopia 1	1199	4 full-time, 1 contract worker, 1 secretary	0	0
Ethiopia 2	762	4	0	Gifts
Guinea-Bissau	12 -15	3 who each contribute 5 hours per month	1	No budget
Kenya 1	1800	3 office staff 56 teachers	0	10
Kenya 2	800 (Just one region)			
Madagascar	196	2 at headquarters 2 volunteers 1 translator Volunteer seminar leaders	1	90
Nigeria 1	1654	19	1	25
Nigeria 2:	43	1	0	0% for 5 years, 5% for 2009
Zambia:	10 000	10 full-time, 1 intern, 1 part-time volunteer	Only the intern	70

From these numbers it is clear that if a program is properly supported and adequately funded, it has the potential to reach more people than residential institutions. The number of full-time staff per student is also amazingly low compared to most residential institutions. Although some of the responses did not specify it, it seems that to a large extent the tutors are local pastors who do the work on a volunteer basis. The Ethiopian program on diploma level opens the way for degree studies and several of their students have gone on to obtain degrees. Reports from Kenya and Ethiopia specifically indicate that the people who have finished the courses, are fully accepted in the church. This may be part of the reason why they attract such large numbers of students. The fact that nine churches (denominations) are members of the Zambian program also seems to indicate a wholehearted acceptance of the concept of TEE. It seems most unlikely that so many people would take the trouble to be trained in a program that is not acceptable to their churches.

Some of the programs mention the positive effect the training has on the lives of those who take part.

The old situation where TEE programs were basically the property of missionaries seem to have passed. In all the programs the number of expatriates involved is very small and the local church has taken ownership of the programs.

Text-Africa materials, translated into the local language, are used in many cases, while other programs create their own material and thus feel that the material is sufficiently contextualized. Mostly it is programmed material, but the Ethiopian program uses a variety of material types, including prescribed books for which they provide study guides.

The program in Guinea-Bissau reports “We have tried running seminars to train TEE co-ordinators, but while these are very popular they do not produce new co-ordinators”. It is difficult to analyse the reason for this because I do not know the situation well enough, but a general lack of acceptance of the TEE concept by the church may cause people to attend the seminars for what they personally can gain even though they have not really bought into the idea of training others. In contrast, the Zambian program reports that they not only run regular courses for new tutors, but also refresher courses for existing tutors.

One of the Nigerian programs reports an interesting innovation. They are planning to make programmed instruction material available on video CD.

From Gambia I received the following reply:

Together with the local evangelical church we have been trying to run a TEE programme in this country, but have not been successful. Many people can't read and those who can read do not like to do so very much. Therefore the motivation to study on your own is very limited. Additionally there are not many Christians in this country and so it was almost never possible to get groups of people together, who would study the same book at the same time and could meet regularly for mentoring. We were using the books from Evangel Publishing House, Kenya. The books are very good. Some churches use the book in their adult Sunday school, e.g. the teacher alone has the book, prepares the lesson from it and goes through it orally with the whole group. This can then even be done in a local language. Presently one of our missionaries has it on his heart to record the lessons in one of the common local languages. He is just about to start so we do not have any experience with this yet.

In general the programs seem to struggle on in isolation. This is expressed poignantly in the covering letter that came with one of the returned questionnaires: “Thank you very much for your remember [sic] ... School after 25 years of ministry life. We feel that there is a friend who remembers the school”.

## **8. Conclusion**

TEE introduced a new paradigm of training leaders for the church. “The TEE movement began from scratch. All shibboleths of theological education were negotiable. In constructing their new paradigm the leaders of the movement consciously borrowed

from earlier ones, yet with a creativity of adaptation and reconstruction not seen for centuries. The heart of this paradigm is the search for a way to integrate the individual's being, knowing, and doing for ministry in the church and world" (Van Engen 1996:248).

As a new paradigm of training, TEE has had a tremendous impact.

Without doubt, whether as an alternative to residential theological training or as a complement to it, Theological Education by Extension (TEE) has gained a place in ministerial training in Latin America and the world. The swift growth of this new type of training for Christian leadership has stimulated critical reflection on the meaning of ministry. It has developed a methodology which has extended through five continents. It has also produced a considerable quantity of literature in various languages and has to varying degrees made an impact on the life and mission of the Church (Maldonado 1988:28).

Although it did not set out to do so, TEE became the catalyst for much thought on the renewal of theological education. "Although TEE literature rarely mentions renewal of theological education, the effect of TEE has been to focus dissatisfaction with present patterns of training for ministry and nourish the hope that more effective strategies exists. To that extent, at least, it must be viewed as contributing to the present context for renewal" (Ferris 1990:14-15).

Overall, we must recognize that TEE has had a tremendous impact and many successes. "It must be recognized that, despite some undoubted failings, TEE has made a major contribution to theological education in many countries, and has brought biblical knowledge and practical training to thousands who could otherwise never have had access to it. This is a tremendous achievement" (Harrison 2004:323).

However, this does not mean that the last word in the search for more effective models of developing leaders for the church has been spoken. As Maldonado (1988:47) has said: "TEE certainly has fulfilled an important role in the search for new alternatives in theological education and the renewal of the Church for mission. This does not mean that we cannot, with God's help, surpass it".

It is to an effort to do so we now turn in our next chapter.