

A history of ministerial formation of Uniting Churches at the University of Pretoria: 2000-2017

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Acknowledgement

Having now completed the research journey for my PhD I wish to take this space to thank those who have been influential in this journey. I use the term journey purposefully as this has not been an easy undertaking. Just like any long journey, I set out full of hope and optimism, yet on the way, there were challenges I had to overcome before finally I arrived at my destination and can look back with fondness on what I have learnt along the way.

Building on from my master's thesis (*An appreciation of the correlation between academic theology and the local Church: John Calvin as a vision for contemporary South Africa*), I wanted to do more to help the local church in present day South Africa. Installed through my time studying at the University of Pretoria, I had developed a strong conviction that academic theology must serve the local church. Having been recently ordained in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa this conviction has grown even stronger. As such, I wish to thank my Parish, St Wilfrid's and Rector, Fr Grant Thistlewhite, for the exposure it has given me to the everyday happenings of the local church. I also wish to thank them for allowing me to undertake a PhD and accepting the time constraints this would put on me and my availability to serve in the parish

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To God be the Glory

I can do all this through Christ Jesus who gives me strength

Philippians 4:13

Abstract

This research has focused on the history of ministerial formation in the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (UPCSA) and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA). This history falls within a focus period from 2000 to 2017. This work was inspired by a perceived lack in contemporary history surrounding ministerial formation from an ecclesial perspective inside South Africa. Ministerial formation is the way in which leaders of the church are formed and trained. As such, an understanding of the recent history of ministerial formation is important, not only in understanding the current situation but also in its future development.

This research worked through the method of comparative histories. This methodology allowed insight to be developed that was relevant and meaningful to each denomination (Ideographic insight) as well as the development of general principles pertinent to ministerial formation in general (nomothetic insight). Working from this perspective, a recent history of ministerial formation was established. This history has importance in its own right, as well as in how it can educate and guide future endeavours in ministerial formation. In order to establish the history of ministerial formation, a theory surrounding the discipline was first outlined. This theory focused on both the ideal understanding of ministerial formation and the contextual relevance of such a theory. Once established this theory was used to help guide the development of the historical narrative of each denomination. First focusing on each denomination as an independent case study, this research worked to draw out key events in their approach to ministerial formation. Here each denominations success and struggles with ministerial formation were presented. Following the case studies, a comparison was undertaken. This comparison allowed for confirmation of the significance of each individual history. Further, the comparison allowed for the development of general principle relating to ministerial formation.

Working predominantly from the discipline of church history, but also incorporating church polity, missiology and practical theology, this work has brought forward information from an ecclesial perspective relevant to the wider dialogue on ministerial formation. This work has challenged current discourse which tended to focus on theory and demonstrated the vital importance of practicality. Working from an ecclesial perspective has allowed it to give insight

to the two focus denominations, highlighting success and challenges. Beyond this, it has shown the importance of understanding, and being rooted in, the local context and developing approaches to ministerial formation which are practically achievable and guided by a strong theoretical understanding of the nature and aims of ministerial formation.

Keywords

Ministerial, Formation, Theological, Education, Contemporary, Comparative, History, UPCSA, URCSA, south, Africa, Contextualisation

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Chapter 1

1. Introduction

Ministerial formation is a vast and dynamic topic which has been receiving growing attention from academic circles in recent years. In fact, all throughout the history of the church ministerial formation, as the task of those elected to leadership, and theological reflection, as the task of all believers, has been a topic of reflection. Origen, one of the first ‘true theologians’, with his theological education for new believers (Gonzalez, 1989: 25; Kannengiesser, 1989: 116) and Calvin, with the company of preachers (Borgh, 2010: 418; Manetsch, 2016: 85), are just two examples of historical conversations around ministerial formation. This research is concerned with a more recent focus than Origen and Calvin; it is concerned with ministerial formation in contemporary South Africa. Specifically, it focuses on drawing out and analysing the history of ministerial formation within the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa and The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa from 2000-2017.

This present chapter will introduce this research explaining the current presenting problem and the aims of the research in relation to this. From there, an analysis of recent literature shall be undertaken. This will enable the reader to see what is currently available on the topic and how this research, by working from an ecclesial perspective, fills a gap in the current literature. The ecclesial perspective portrayed in this research is from a reformed perspective and specifically relates to the perspective of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in South Africa and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. Through this research, the method of comparative histories will be used. As such, this chapter shall outline what this method entails and its advantages and limitations when used in a study of this nature. Finally, this introductory chapter will close by laying out the structure this research follows. In this way, the reader shall be able to see the need for a contemporary history of ministerial formation and how this study brought forth new information to guide further conversations. Working from the perspective of the church and focusing on two uniting churches formed post-1994 makes this study one of the first of its kind.

1.2. Presenting the Problem

Since the foundation of the church, theological reflection has been an intrinsic part of its nature. While not originally occurring in a formalised way, theology as a rational reflection on

God has always been a part of Christianity (Bevans, 2009: 208). From the Patristic Period onwards, theology, as a more sustained reflection, began to appear. Then, with the rise of the European university, theology became the queen of the sciences. While today theology may have lost its academic crown (see Hiestand & Wilson, 2015: 44), it is still considered a vital part of the Christian faith. As Gonzalez (2015: IX) asserts, if we take the command to love God with all our mind seriously¹, theological reflection becomes an act of “devotional obedience” and so “a church without theology or theological education is falling short of its calling”. Yet what the nature of theological education is and what it aims to achieve is a grey area. The topic of theological education and ministerial formation are receiving a great amount of discussion within all concerned circles in South Africa at the present time. Both the academy and the church have committed to discussing the vision and aims of ministerial formation within South Africa. Within the ecclesial context ministerial boards discuss whether or not they should remain in the university; while those not in a formal partnership discuss whether they should join a university, or if they should develop their own teaching programme. While within the academy, academic theology faces challenges over its continued existence in a public university, whether it should engage in more academic studies or focus on training students for the ministry in churches.

Whether in crisis or merely in painful transition, the fact is that many churches, Christian groupings and theological institutions are engaging in a radical review of their theological education and ministerial formation programmes. (Naidoo, 2013: 1)

As such, it is clear to see that theological education as a broad task, and ministerial formation as the task of potential church leaders, continues to be an important topic. Yet, apart from revealing a commitment to theological education and ministerial formation, this literature has also revealed significant shortcomings with the current state of affairs. In the view of Gonzalez (2015: ix) “theological education as we have understood it in the last few centuries is in crisis”. Issues such as the colonial nature of theological education (see Kaunda, 2016a; Le Grange, 2016), its commodification (see Hadebe, 2017; Naidoo, 2017), its relevance (see

¹ Here referring to the Great commandment “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” (Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:13, Luke 10:27)

Maluleke, 2006; Wahl, 2013) and its future at a public university (van de Beek, 2012; Ford, 2017; Pillay, 2017a) contribute to this feeling of “crisis”. As such, each of these topics forms a motivation for this study.

The ultimate responsibility for ministerial formation lies with each denomination, with the church itself (cf Kritzinger, 2010: 214; Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 4–5). It is not the academy which is ultimately responsible for the formation programme, but the church. However, the church is not finding this an easy task. As Boesak (2012: 105) states, "theological formation in South Africa has become a serious problem for the churches". Each denomination needs to understand how ministerial formation has been addressing the call for decolonisation/Africanisation and transformation in general, as well as how it is preparing candidates for the ministry who can operate in this context. Further, ministerial formation requires theological education to be affordable, accessible and relevant. The denominations also need to make sure theological education adequately equips the next generation of ministers to serve in their local community. Finally, ministerial formation needs to address the question of what the appropriate arena for such theological education is. It is clear that Ministerial Formation is a key topic of concern for the church. The Academy, as a provider of theological education, also plays a key role in ministerial formation and has a duty to uphold the quality of education which candidates receive. Yet it is the church that has the final responsibility for this programme. As such, the church needs to form the prime area of investigation.

A further presenting problem that has motivated this study is the lack of historical investigation into contemporary ministerial formation within South Africa, especially from an ecclesial perspective. Very little has been done to plot the recent developments of theological education. While it is well known that over the last 20 years there has been a decline in the number of theological students enrolling at public universities (Naidoo, 2012: 160), and that this is in an inverse relationship with the uptake of the Christian faith (Kombo, 2013: 105), very little research into the surrounding history of theological education during this period has been documented. Current research highlights certain problems and issues within theological education, yet only minimal investigations have been conducted to discern the historical background to this situation. Further, the literature that has been published comes

from the context of the academy with little focus on an ecclesial perspective. Without the historical knowledge of how ministerial formation arrived at the current situation, it will be very hard to guide the future of ministerial formation out of this situation. If the church has the ultimate responsibility for formation, then ultimately the perspective and history of the church need to be understood. As such, this research investigated the recent history of ministerial formation in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) in order to understand better what the current situation in theological education is and how it developed to be in this situation (the choice of these two denominations will be justified below). The focus of this research was on plotting the history of ministerial formation in these two denominations and then drawing out what that history is telling us.

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the historical development of ministerial formation within the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (hereafter UPCSA) and the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (hereafter URCSA) at the University of Pretoria (hereafter UP), from 2000-2017², to develop a history of ministerial formation from an ecclesial perspective. To retain a tight focus on the research, question the specific ecclesial perspective invoked in this research is that of a reformed ecclesial perspective. The perspective of the church is quite naturally a board term and varies depending on which church is being investigated. As such, in this research ecclesial perspective refers to the perspective of the UPCSA and URCSA which has been categorised as a reformed perspective. This will give a specific historical window into the much broader challenge of ministerial formation. From this window success, failures, challenges and opportunities facing ministerial formation will be drawn out. The underlying intention is to plot and analyse past trends within ministerial formation to help guide future plans. To discern the future direction of ministerial formation, the recent past needs to be well understood. As such, in drawing out the recent history of ministerial formation in the UPCSA and the URCSA new knowledge, that can contribute to

² These dates have been chosen as they are convenient markers in the history of the University of Pretoria. In 2000 two departments (section A of the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa (NRCA) and section B of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC)) of the university combined and opened the door for other churches to become formal partners with the faculty. While 2017 marked the centenary of the Theology faculty

guiding the future of formation, emerged; knowledge relevant to each denomination individually and ministerial formation in general.

Both the UPSCA and the URCSA are no strangers to the challenges of ministerial formation. A recent article by Mogashoa and Makofane (2017) highlights ecumenism, responsibility and cooperation between the university and denomination, and africanisation as issues which the UPSCA is struggling with in its ministerial formation programme. While the recent arrival of URCSA at UP and a few publications on ministerial formation (Kritzinger, 2010; Kritzinger, Maponya & Mokoena, 2019) show that this too is a matter of discussion within the URCSA. As such, these two denominations present a typical example from the Reformed family of churches of the challenges faced within ministerial formation outlined above. Thus, these two denominations have been selected as focus case studies, as their investigation can bring out both specific and general results. Further, the commonality they share, through training at UP, as well as their relatively young nature³, furnishes the opportunity to impose a cross-comparison on the historical struggles with ministerial formation in each denomination. It needs to be highlighted that the UPSCA and the URCSA are the only two mainline uniting churches to be formed in democratic South Africa. This strong similarity is vital in aiding the research in establishing general conclusions. Shared challenges have a high probability of being attributed to shared natures. While different challenges can come through the difference in natures. This is known as the 'method of agreement' and 'method of disagreement' respectively. Developed by John Stuart Mill, both approaches work by investigating points of comparison and seeing agreement or differences as causal factors (Schutt, 2012: 403). This approach shall be explored further below when outlining the methodology.

More practical issues have also influenced the selection of the UPSCA and URCSA. Both churches, for the period of investigation, have recorded their minutes in English which the researcher is more acquainted with. Further, both denominations, for the period of study, have had some form of relationship with the UP. This is beneficial in two regards. First of all, this shared factor not only helps the comparison but allows the research to focus on a specific geographical region. In this way, the research will be able to remain focused on ministerial

³ The URCA came into being in 1994, while the UPSCA was formed in 1999.

formation, in each denomination, occurring in Pretoria. Secondly, the researcher has a historical connection with the institute and the theological education provided there. While not associated with either of the denominations under investigation (the research comes from an Anglican background), having a connection with the University of Pretoria has allowed of the development of an intrinsic theory of ministerial formation. Unavoidably, the choice of these two denominations will impose limitations. It will only allow two of the four official partner churches at UP to be investigated and will not assess the Afrikaans perspective (which undoubtedly has challenges and insight unique to its nature). Further it will limit the investigation to a reformed perspective at a public university. However, as will be discussed in the methodology, this research will investigate two denominations in-depth, opposed to a high quantity of denominations in less depth; this will yield more useful results for the nature of this research. This approach will make data sets more manageable and keep the research project focused. In this way, findings will be more certain allowing proposals to be more relevant to the immediate situation. In this regard, the UP forms a geographical delimitation for the investigation of each denomination's programme of ministerial formation. The UP does not form an area of investigation in its own right, but only comes up as and when the investigation of the UPCSA and URCSA dictates.

1.3. Research question

Taking the above presenting problems into account, this research will assess the needs of ministerial formation from a church perspective. In doing so, issues of contextualisation, relevance and the appropriate sphere of theology will be discussed. Tackling these questions will help to provide a theory through which to assess the state of theological education in the UPCSA and the URCSA. Yet the main focus of this research is a historical focus. This research ultimately aims to piece together the historical narrative within each denomination and to critique these through the method of comparative history (explained below). As such the basic research question is:

How do the theology and practices of the ministerial formation programmes of the UPCSA and URCSA compare in terms of their contextual relevance to South Africa today?

In order to adequately answer this question, various sub-questions relating to different dimensions of ministerial formation will be included. These questions will be:

- What is theology and ministerial formation?

- What challenges face ministerial formation in South Africa today?
- What was the theology(ies) and practices in relation to ministerial formation in the UPCSA and URCSA (2000-2017)?
- How did the programmes conducted by the UPCSA and URCSA compare?
- How are these programmes to be evaluated in terms of “ministerial formation theory” and contextual South Africa challenges?
- Which general principles for ministerial formation can be drawn from this exercise?

It will be through the historical narrative that the contemporary challenges facing ministerial formation find their guidance. Each denomination has to take responsibility for its programme of ministerial formation. Yet, to do this effectively, they need to understand where they have come from, what challenges have been faced, and what successes have been achieved. In doing so, the history that is drawn up from this research can guide future formation programmes. This research aims to investigate the presenting problems of ministerial formation from a reformed ecclesial perspective through a historical approach and, as such, is guided by a basic historical question (What has been the approach of each denomination to ministerial formation?) to which sub-questions which critique this history will be applied.

1.4. Research Objectives

In summary, it is the aim of this research to track the recent history of ministerial formation within the UPCSA and URCSA and to bring these histories into comparison. In doing so, this research will meet both specific and general objectives. In terms of the specific, this research will allow the two denominations to become more aware of how ministerial formation came to be in this current situation, what the current situation actually is (the strength and challenges of the current approach) and possible ways in which to rectify the situation if and where necessary. With regard to the general outcomes, this research will contribute to the wider dialogue around ministerial formation. Working from the perspective of the church, it will discern what is involved in the formation process, and what potential benefits and drawbacks certain approaches may have. It will also help to organically bring forward the key needs of the church into academic discussions. It will further start to provide a recent history through which to frame the current discussions on theological education within South Africa. As such, one key objective which will emerge in both general and specific is to see if the

system of ministerial formation were adequate. Drawing from the previous point, a final objective is to help direct the conversation between academic institutes and local churches.

Listed below the following are the main objectives of this research:

- To provide a contemporary history of ministerial formation for the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
- To provide a contemporary history of ministerial formation for the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
- To provide a historical narrative through which to assess the future direction of ministerial formation on a specific level for each denomination
- To provide general principles to guide ministerial formation as a whole in South Africa
- To help discern if the current process of ministerial formation is adequate

1.5. Literature review

As mentioned above, there is currently a large volume of publications being released on ministerial formation within South Africa. These publications can be broadly grouped by topics which have a varying degree of relevance to this research. Working from a broad to a more direct relevance the author will now provide an overview of the current literature to help frame this research.

1.5.1. Nature of Theological education in South Africa

The broadest category is the general output of academic research on the nature of theological education within South Africa. These contributions are useful in gaining an understanding of current challenges, as well as establishing a theory of what theological education and ministerial formation should constitute. The challenges for theological education are broad with scholars usually focusing on a specific challenge or providing a broad perspective. Thompson (2004) gives a broad overview of challenges with university learning but argues that ministerial formation should still be located in the academy. Phiri (2009) focused on gender discrepancies in theology and challenges facing women in relation to theological education. While Naidoo (2011) conducted an empirical study into spiritual formation which discerns the need for more integrated education. Amanze (2012) and Kritzinger (2012) discussed the loss of theology's voice in the public domain. Wahl (2013) focuses on contextual

relevance and factors preventing this relevance. Lombard (2016) emphasises the need for more ecumenical and inter-disciplinary theology. While van Wyk (2017) provides a broad critique of the “hunger games” nature of current academic theology.

Then there are certain challenges which have received more sustained attention. Discussions around Africanisation/contextualisation look at the need for theology to adapt to its environment. Mashabela (2017) provides a recent article on the long-standing debate of the Africanisation of theological education. In fact, the Africanisation of theological education forms a major branch within the study. This topic appears in a number of papers (Wahl, 2013: 271–272; Duncan, 2016: 6–9; Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 6–8) and forms the sole focus of others (Maluleke, 2006; Balcomb, 2015; Naidoo, 2016; Resane, 2016; Mashabela, 2017). The paradigm in which theology is practised has changed, and theology needs to adjust its practices if it wants to continue in the postmodern world (Amanze, 2009; Hendriks, 2014).

Another key approach has been to look at the opportunities and danger presented in technological advancement. Oliver (2014) sees this embrace as vital for the future success of theological education. While Cloete (2017) adds an emphasis on limitations or dangers of technology. Both authors outline the benefits and dangers of using technological advancement in education.

Other scholars have focused on the commodification of theological education and usually emphasised the negative impact this is having (Hadebe, 2017; Naidoo, 2017; Van der Walt, 2017). In these articles, it is argued that turning theology into a commodity has developed it to be a subject attractive to the highest bidder and not a discipline focused on contextual relevance and development of theologians/ ministers.

A common suggestion to overcome these challenges has been for theological education to adopt a missional focus. Gatwa (2010) argues that the opportunity for Africa to be a leader in Christian mission can be grasped if theological education improves and develops a *missional* focus. Saayman (2013) highlights the need for an ecumenical, *mission* focused, theological education. Du Preez and Hendriks (2014) put forward a *missionally* focused curriculum and highlighted the benefits of such. Hendriks (2012) also sees a missional focus as a way to handle the global change in paradigm. Articles focused on missional theology more readily provide a theory of theological education. All the above-mentioned help to give an

understanding of the complex nature of theological education and certain focus areas of investigation

1.5.2. History of ministerial formation

As this research is primarily historical in focus it is also important to assess what recent publications have focused on in relation to a history of ministerial formation and the UPCSA and URCSA. Wingate (2005) provides guiding questions around the theological curriculum which help emphasise what its nature could be. Duncan (2004) overviews the closing of FedSem and sees this as a lesson to be learnt from. While Gonzalez's (2015) book, *A History of Theological Education* provides an overview of theology from its earliest inception. The work by Gonzalez in particular highlights the growing global awareness of the need for discussion on the nature of theological education.

As the focus institution of this research is the UP, publication in relation to this institute will help the research establish what the nature of theological education at the University is portrayed to be and what current challenges the institution is facing. Duncan (2016) provides a critique of the Africanisation process or lack thereof. Buitendag (2016; Buitendag, J. & Simut, 2017) has produced two articles focused on the rankings of the UP which serve to highlight the main focuses of the department. Veldsman, Buitendag, Fourie and Van Wyk (2017) focus on the aim of systematics. Pillay and Dreyer (2017) highlight the importance of historical theology not just in learning the past but in helping shape the future and are also aware of the need for curriculum change. Pillay (2017a) also highlights the importance of historical theology at a public university. While De Beer and Van Niekerk (2017) express the need for curriculum change to happen in light of socio-political climate and with focus on the marginalised in society. The above shows a university aware of its high ranking but also aware of the need to adjust its curriculum.

Before assessing the focus denominations, a brief survey of writings in relation to ministerial formation with a denominational focus is given to help see what the wider ecclesial picture looks like. There have been several publications on various denominations and their struggles with theological education within South Africa. Trisk and Pato (2008) assess challenges facing the College of Transfiguration and Anglican ministerial formation. Brodie (2011) outlines challenges in Pentecostal tradition with regards to ministerial education. Ramantswana (2015) gives a historical and contemporary look at the theological training of the Black

Reformed Church. Pali (2017) provides a historical and contemporary overview of challenges facing the 'Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, Orange Free State' ministers. This small selection helps demonstrate the wider need for conversation on ministerial formation within South Africa.

Work on the UPCSA covers a broad range of foci. Daka (2003) assessed the Africanisation of UPCSA in Zambia and saw the need to root the denomination in a local context. Duncan (2005) has looked at challenges and hopes around the formation of the UPCSA. Duncan (2008) has also outlined the history of UP theology and early Presbyterian involvement in the UP theology faculty. Mudena (2011) focused on tribalism/racism within the UPCSA Zimbabwe and the challenges this is presenting to ministry. Mushayavahu and Duncan (2014) explain how the UPCSA in Zimbabwe is declining due to a lack of cultural relevance and needs to change to address this issue. Lediga (2014) focuses on the need for developed support and care of retired ministers (Emeriti). Mshumpela (2014) explores the lack of true unity in the UPCSA and focuses on the need for a change in liturgy to help address this. Pillay (2016) describes the development of the Presbyterian church among the Indian community in South Africa. Makofane (2017) explores how the union of the UPCSA is only skin deep and the denomination needs to decide if it wants to actively pursue a true unity. Mushayavanhu and Pillay (2018) look at the UPCSA's involvement in development in Zimbabwe. Two key topics which emerge from these articles is a struggle for the UPCSA to truly unite and overcome racial/tribal divides and for the denomination to take on a more "African" nature.

In specific relation to theological education, Duncan (2007a) calls for ministerial formation to work closer with academic education to allow ministers to go into ministry after graduation. Mogashoa and Makofane (2017) analysed current challenges facing ministerial formation in the UPCSA. This last article, in particular, will act as a springboard into the analysis of theological education within the UPCSA.

Besides these sources, this research will also look at primary documents, specifically minutes from the general synod and executive commission will form the main focus. This research tried to gain access to the reports of the ministry committee of the UPCSA but was unfortunately not granted access. Fortunately, the ministry committee reported yearly to either the general synod or the executive commission. These reports, being produced yearly, are both detailed and regular enough to provide a good window into the operations of the

ministry committee. When it was possible to obtain, primary documents relating to discussions in the ministry committees report were included in the analysis. In addition, interviews were conducted with a wide demographic basis to help give further insight into the historical situation.

As with the UPCS, publications on the URCSA cover a broad range of topics. Du Preez (2005) thesis focused on the need for part-time church leaders in rural congregations which hints at the need for change in theological training. Matsaung (2006a) assessed the possibilities and challenges around “tent making” ministers within URCSA. Plaatjies-van Huffel (2013) lists many environmental challenges and URCSA’s response to these. Saayman (2010) recounts the founding story of URCSA congregation Melodi ya Tshwane. Nell (2011) calls for a change in leadership style and church setting due to a reaction to the paradigm change. Matsaung (2006b) focuses on the need and challenges of youth participation in URCSA. Kgatla and Saayman (2013) describe a history of racial separation and dependency and how the creation of a church complex in Serala View, Polokwane, is a vision of change in overcoming that past. Tshaka (2015) argues that URCSA is not a true “black” church. Monhla (2014) promotes Church order as ill-prepared to deal with marriage in the African context. Meiring (2015) offers an exploration of the concept of *ubuntu* as a way to bridge the divide between the DRC and URCSA. Pitikoe’s (2016) thesis looks at the centrality of discipline as a mark of the genuine church and the need to establish this in a healthy relationship with the sacrament and word of God within the URCSA. Motsei’s (2016) thesis looks into the decline in youth membership and involvement in URCSA and the need for change in leadership practices. Beukes and Plaatjies-van Huffel (2016) promote Belhar to be a guiding confession of URCSA as it tackles current issues. Key issues that emerge from these documents are a continued dependency on the DRC as the original founding church, as well as the need of the denomination to adapt to context and incorporate the younger generation.

With regard to theological education within URCSA Kritzinger has published two articles on this topic. The first gives an account of the ministerial formation process nationally (Kritzinger, 2010). The second article, published in the church newspaper gives a brief history of Northern Theological Seminary from 2003-2018 outlining its growth and relationship with the UP and University of South Africa (UNISA) (Kritzinger, 2018). Both articles will provide background information to the history of theological education at the UP.

It will again be the primary documents in the form of minutes and reports which will provide the bulk of information into the process of ministerial formation within the denomination. Both the reports to general synod and the yearly reports of the Ministerial Formation Task Team in Pretoria formed part of the analysis. The yearly reports from the Curatorium/ Ministerial Formation Task Team provide regular detailed information while the reports to general synods give a broader overview. Again, a wide demographic of interviews was conducted to give further weight to the findings.

In general, the above literature has highlighted the need for theological education to be contextual and to overcome racial barriers. What has not been discovered from the above is a detailed history of the process of ministerial formation within the two denominations. In fact, a history of ministerial formation, in general, appears to be lacking. Also, as denomination specific publications show, only a small percentage account for a focus on ministerial formation and so there is a great need within each denomination for a historical critique of the formation process. Further, the above literature also lacks a cross-comparison between denominations. Approaches are either general summaries of the whole situation or specific and focused on one detail of the situation. As such, there is a need for a comparative history which starts to bridge the divide between general and specific information. The above literature shows the extent and as such importance of discussions on theological education/ministerial formation in South Africa, but there are still gaps. Therefore, this research will fill a much needed gap in relation to each denomination's understanding of the process of ministerial formation, the general history of ministerial formation, as well as a link between specific and general comments which will be beneficial in guiding the future of the discipline.

1.6. Methodology

From the above, it will have become clear that this research will have both a specific and a general outcome. Results need to fit both the specific ecclesial context, as well as the wider context. Both the specific and the general context need guidance. Researching the UPCS and the URCSA and ordering that information in a critical manner will provide vital guidance for both denominations. Thus, this research cannot afford to gloss over the specific focus. Yet the wider topic of ministerial formation will also benefit from the contribution of an academic study conducted from the perspective of the church. As such, there is a need for more general

principles to be put forward from the critical findings of this research. In light of this dual need, this research has chosen to employ the comparative histories methodology.

Comparative histories “attempt to offer a combination of ideographic and nomothetic insight” (Lange, 2014a: 2). That is, they attempt to offer both specific/ideographic outcomes (the establishment of meaning) as well as general/nomothetic outcomes (the establishment of laws). In its early development, this method received criticism for attempting to apply a comparative approach to historical writing. History was viewed as non-comparative and opposed to the social-sciences (Welskopp, 2010, para. 1). Yet through the 20th century, the method gained popularity and demonstrated its worth through a number of key studies by scholars such as “Karl Marx, Max Weber, Barrington Moore [and], Charles Tilly” (Lange, 2014b: 1). More recent and geographically relevant, works have been produced by Fredrickson (1995) *Black liberation: a comparative history of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa* and Nugent (2012) *Africa since independence: A comparative history*. The strength of comparative history was proven in its ability to test historical hypothesis and correct previous scholarly mistakes, as well as highlighting the uniqueness of individual societies (Sewell, 1967). As such, this is a tried and tested method which has established its worth in being able to combine both ideographic and nomothetic insight.

Within this approach, there are certain defining features as listed by Lange (2014a, b). The first of these is that the unit of comparison be an aggregate social unit. The unit of comparison is not an individual but a structural phenomenon. Comparative histories thus “retain a structural focus and considers the interrelations between individual and structure” (Lange, 2014b: 6). Traditionally these social structures were national states but it soon came to be accepted that religions, social movements, classes and “other macro-sociological concepts” could form units of investigation (Lange, 2014b: 6). So while an aggregate unit forms the object of comparison, which “units are to be delimited depends on the explanatory problem” (Sewell, 1967: 212). In this research, the explanatory problem is that of ministerial formation from a reformed ecclesial perspective. This research explains the recent history of ministerial formation within the UPCS and URCSA. As such, the units of comparison in this study are the denominations which send candidates for training at academic institutions. Specifically, the focus institutions are the UPCS and URCSA which share the commonality of (1) sending

candidates to study at the University of Pretoria, (2) representing the Reformed tradition and (3) being the only two mainline uniting churches to form since 1994 in South Africa. While individual candidates will form sources for this study, the focus remains on an institutional level and with research putting forward the perspective for the denomination as a whole.

The second and third defining features of comparative histories are the presence of *within-case* and *comparative* analysis. “Within-case methods pursue insight into the determinants of a particular phenomenon” (Lange, 2014b: 5). This is where the specific focus of the method arises. Here the individual unit is investigated historically. In the typical comparative model, this would be the investigation of an individual country and the phenomenon at play within its borders. In this research, however, the specific focus is the denomination and the historic phenomena at play in the process of ministerial formation. This allows in-depth, rich, but case-specific knowledge to be gathered. Comparative methods “treat cases as singular, whole entities purposefully selected and constituted as instances of theoretically, culturally or historically significant phenomena” (Ragin, 2007: 67). The individual case is as important as the comparisons. Within comparative histories, the focus is on a thick description of specific cases rather than “serial comparison” which can be superficial (Nugent, 2012: 5). Here the method holds the logic that it is better to know a few examples well, rather than lots of examples in not so much detail. This focus on quality over quantity tends to place comparative history within the qualitative paradigm of research although this is not a given. In the instance of this research, however, a qualitative approach will be followed and the information gathered on a case-specific level will follow more of a narrative, rather than statistical, form. Specifically, this will involve the use of archival material, such as minutes of various meetings and reports. These documents shall form the main source for this study. Archival material will also be backed up through the use of oral histories gathered through interviews. Through these sources the story of how each denomination has approached ministerial formation will be gathered in-depth (see below).

The third defining feature is *comparison*. Here the case studies are brought into conversation with each other and a comparative method is used to draw out any insights. The aim of these comparisons is to “explore similarities and differences in an effort to highlight causal determinants” (Lange, 2014b: 5). In terms of this research, a narrative analysis will be

employed to determine similarities and difference in relation to theological education. Each individual narrative shall be brought into correlation with the other to see where there are similarities and differences. The method of agreement and the method of difference is then used to bring forth meaning from this comparison (Schutt, 2012: 403). In this way causal relationships in ministerial formation were determined and, depending on if this was a positive or negative relationship, actions were suggested in relation to these. The comparative section thus allows the research to highlight factors that could be general occurrences as well as factors which are specific to individual cases (Sewell, 1967: 211).

Due to the complexity of the data collected in the in-case phase, comparative histories often work off a small number of study units and focus on in-depth knowledge. Another limitation to the sample size is imposed by the need for a common point of reference; in this research, the UP and the fact that the UPCSA and URCSA are both uniting churches fulfil this function. The presence of a common point of reference is vital as it allows meaningful comparisons to be made (Welskopp, 2010, para. 17). This is why the UPCSA and URCSA have been chosen as the denominations of investigation. The shared commonality of training at UP, being the only two uniting denominations to be formed in post-apartheid South Africa and reformed in nature allows a much stronger comparison to be made. To choose more denominations would have introduced fewer common points, making it harder to establish a meaningful comparison. In this way, general conclusions can be established without overlooking the more complex case-specific findings and conclusions.

The final determining factor of comparative histories is its epistemological framework. The outcomes of this method are based on the ability to determine cause and effect relationships. To move from the specific to the general presupposes that all the information gathered is not only relevant to its immediate context but also holds meaning in other contexts. As such, this method presupposes an epistemological framework in which inferences from one causal relationship can be applied to others. This approach opens up the proverbial can of worms. With the development of a post-modern view that popularises the narrative construct of reality (cf Berger & Luckmann, 1966; see Meylahn, 2012), positivism has become unpopular within academic circles (Lange, 2014b: 5). Yet in order for any study to extrapolate its findings it needs to assume some form of positive epistemology. However, this does not negate the

need to be aware of subjective realities at play on both the research and researcher. Rather, this research, aware of the effect of the subjective, strives to avoid epistemological defeatism and establish general principles to help guide the future of ministerial formation. This will be done by acknowledging the subjectivity of the research and that any causal relationship determined is only a relationship of high probability (opposed to a definitive causal relationship).

From this overview of the characteristics of comparative history, the function of the method starts to become clear. In short, comparative histories will construct historical case studies valid in their own right and then brings these into comparisons with each other to draw out conclusions relating to the specifics of the case study (ideographic insight) as well as more general conclusion relating to ministerial formation (nomothetic insight). However, there is one vital step which must precede all of this. While comparative histories lead to the construction of theory, it is also dependant on theory to function effectively. Indeed, as Ragin (2010: 106) states: "all social research should be both theoretically driven and relevant". So, before the case studies on theological education can be conducted theories on theological education need to be stated in order to guide the historic construction. This is the theory-praxis loop which can be summed up as follows: "all empirical observations must be related to some kind of theoretical construction, and no theoretical construction has any value unless it bears some relation to empirical observations" (Øyen, 1990: 4). The historical case studies need a theoretic framework depicting what theological education is supposed to look like in order to guide their investigation. It is this theory, which is stated first, that can allow comparisons of the two case studies to occur (see Welskopp, 2010, para. 5; Lange, 2014a: 6). Comparative histories thus have a theoretical starting point which needs to be presented before the case studies can be constructed and analysed. Not only does this theory act as a guide for further research, but it serves as an opportunity for the author to state their subjective position from which they are addressing the research.

The key benefit of a comparative history methodology is that it allows general and specific/ideographic and nomothetic insight. While methods such as learning histories can provide a great means of applying history to contemporary situations (see Burger, 2013) they struggle to transpose their findings to more general levels. One approach that attempts to

have general application is that of Constructive Narrative Theology⁴ (see Graham, Walton & Ward, 2005). However, methods that follow this approach rely on inspiring stories to illicit actions from the reader and struggle to give a meaningful interpretation of the data. Then, on the other side, methods that follow the quantitative paradigm struggle to bring forth ideographic insights with direct relevance (see Garwood, 2006: 250). These approaches are wonderful for establishing a general picture but not for bringing meaning to a situation. As such, comparative histories mark a middle way. As phrased by Skocpol, “comparative historical research has successfully developed valid generalizations about many phenomena of great importance without ignoring contextual particularities” (2003: 414). For this research this is a vital benefit. The key focus of the investigation is the UPCSA and URCSA, as such, the research needs to give specific results in relation to both denominations and be aware of the complexities in each. But, as the general climate of theological education in South Africa needs guidance, the ability to abstract generalised points from this research is also a desirable outcome which this method can bring forth

Another key advantage of comparative histories is the method’s ability to deal with complex data sets. As this method focuses on social units, such as nations or religious institutions, it is accustomed to handling large volumes of complex data. In this regard, it shares the same advantage that case studies do in their ability to access “complexity and historical specificity and in its holistic grasp of the ways in which different factors are interrelated” (Platt, 2007: 108). Yet through the method of comparisons it can overcome some of the limitations of individual case studies. One such advantage is the ability to cross-check findings. The ability to handle complexity is vital when addressing theological education. This situation involves at least three parties, the church, the training institution and the trainee and there are various factors in each area which affect the nature of theological education. In other words, a study of the history of ministerial formation cannot be reductionist or limited in its approach and needs to be able to incorporate the complexities of the situation in its methodological approach.

⁴ Constructive narrative theology is based around the idea that narrative has the power to change reality. Inspired by the Parables of Jesus, this approach relies on the creative potential of narrative to bring about a mystical experience of the divine. This experience is then used as a source of inspiration to direct current society (Graham, Walton & Ward, 2005:47).

A final key benefit of comparative histories is its ability to cross-check findings. As two cases are being employed, the findings from each can be used to critique the other. This cross-comparison provides a tool through which to validate findings. Historians that work from a singular perspective, while striving for great methodological rigour, can easily draw mistaken conclusions by not testing their conclusions against other similar occurrences (see Sewell, 1967: 218). Thus, as this study is focusing on contemporary history, it is important to have a cross-comparison through which to provide some validation of the conclusions.

A challenge with contemporary history is that the dust of recent events is yet to settle and the full benefits of hindsight yet to emerge. The author's closeness to the situation has an impact on the research. However, as Nugent (2012: 2) highlights, the benefits of contemporary history and its need within Africa should outweigh the methodological challenges. Duncan (2007b: 11–15) also supports this argument and gives a substantiated argument for the need of contemporary history to be produced. So, in employing a methodology with a built-in fail-safe, these methodological challenges are slightly reduced.

So far it has been mentioned that a method of comparative histories shall be employed for this research. The primary reason for this is that it overcomes the alternative of only providing either specific or general outcomes. This method works by establishing theory, then investigating two case studies on the UPCS and URCSA before comparing them to bring forth an awareness of challenges and potential solutions for ministerial formation in South Africa. Yet further clarity needs to be given on how the case studies will be conducted.

Predominantly this research will be a study arising out of archival research supported by interviews. The archival documents are primary sources which have been created through each denomination's discussion on the process of ministerial formation at board meetings, annual reviews and conferences. As stated above, for the UPCS this will predominantly be the ministry committees report to the general synod and the executive commission⁵. For the URCSA this will first be the Curatorium, and then later the Ministerial Formation Tasks Team's, yearly report as well as the reports to general synod.

⁵ Minutes from the meetings of the ministry committee are in existence but the authors were not granted access to these.

Interviews were also conducted with those currently or previously directly involved in ministerial formation. These interviews followed a semi-structured nature. As the interviews had a specific aim, to bring forth a historic window into ministerial formation, structured questions were necessary to help focus the conversation. Yet, as the interviews also wanted to bring forth a personal perspective room was left for further comments. In this way the questions acted as a guide to keep responses directed towards the research question but the conversation was allowed to flow. A structured interview would not have allowed for this freedom in the conversation, while an unstructured interview would have failed to collect all the relevant information. Before the interviews were conducted, key questions were produced and ethical clearance was sought from the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria as well as the research committees of the UPCSA and URCSA. Questions were designed to focus on three areas, general views, the denominations formation programme and the university. In this way, the three major aspects of ministerial formation, the personal, church and academic, were covered. This formation was strongly impacted by the theory of ministerial formation as presented in the following chapter. General questions were designed to give a broad response to ministerial formation. The formation questions were then designed to focus more on each denomination. While university questions were designed to focus more on attitudes towards the University of Pretoria.

With regards to the respondents, these individuals were a mix of lecturers, students, recently trained ministers and members of formation committees, both male and female and across racial lines. In this way interviews gathered multiple perspectives. In total 14 interviews were conducted for this research. Of the 14, 11 were male and only 3 female. This disproportional representation of gender is also seen throughout this historic investigation and as such is further proof that ministerial formation is male dominated. In terms of race, 9 respondents identified as black, 4 identified as white and 0 identified as other racial group. With regards to age half of the respondents were below 35. The largest response group came from those aged 18-25. With regards to denominational affiliation 9 were from the UPCSA and 5 from the URCSA. In total 35 individuals were directly contacted to participate in the research; 18 from the UPCSA and 17 from the URCSA. This gives a response rate of 50% within the UPCSA and 29% within the URCSA. Interviews were conducted solely with individuals associated with either the UPCSA or the URCSA. They were selected due to their current or historical

involvement in ministerial formation. This involvement varied from primarily being a formation candidate, to being involved in the development and implementation of ministerial formation. An effort was made to contact all previous ministry committee secretaries in both denominations. However, despite sustained attempts, it was not possible to get responses from all current and previous ministry secretaries. Interviews were treated as a source valid in their own right. As part of the ethical clearance, each respondent has remained anonymous. As such, each respondent has been given a three-digit code, for example 002 for respondent 2, in order to differentiate responses. Responses were used to triangulate information gathered from archival sources providing a further reference point to more accurately gauge the location of ministerial formation. Both archival evidence and oral interviews were treated as historic narratives analysed internally through the direction of the narrative itself. Taking these various narratives in their own right and then cross-checking them in a method of triangulation was then used to accurately plot the historical picture. On top of archival research and oral interviews, secondary research in the form of academic articles were used to give a more general and extensive background.

Archival research is a long-established approach within history. Archives present the possibility of a large amount of primary literature through which to construct an account of theological education within each denomination. As such, for this research archival evidence formed the predominant source used. Yet archives also have their limitations. Archival records are not the value-neutral preservation of the past they were once assumed to be (King, 2012: 17–18). Rather, archives present the preservation of powerful or dominant narratives. Nor is the treasure trove of information held within the archive so easily discovered (King, 2012: 14). As was the case with this research, it is not always possible to gain access to all the archival material. As such, while archival material was the predominant source of information, interviews were also conducted to provide a cross-check to the dominant narrative. Working across multiple sources allowed for a triangulation of facts, with each source important and valued in its own right.

Oral histories⁶ have a less well-established use within historical research. Being critiqued for their bias, oral histories are often treated with suspicion. However, it is becoming clear that “no historical sources ... provide a direct, unmediated and uncomplicated access to the past” (Thomas, 2012: 102). Therefore bias cannot be a ground on which to exclude a source. Rather all sources must have their inherent bias acknowledged. It is the potential worth of the source which should be the focus and this is one of the strongest strengths of orality. Orality offers a source rich in meaning which archives are often lacking. Further, oral histories are openly biased and provide a way to counter the hidden bias of archival evidence.

Despite these benefits, the challenges of oral history do have to be acknowledged and dealt with. Thus, archival evidence in turn also provides a way to cross-check the legitimacy of the oral testimony. Our long-term memory is formed “through a process of cognitive articulation that creates meaningful neural connections within the brain” (Thomas, 2012: 104). In other words, we only remember that which has meaning to us. This presence of meaning is what makes orality such a rich source. But, if the narrator does not see the meaning in an event, it will most likely be forgotten. However, this does not mean the event was insignificant. As such, archival evidence is important to make sure forgotten events do not slip through the cracks of historic reproduction. Another challenge within oral histories is their recording. Oral histories are recorded most often through the initiation of a researcher and not the storyteller (Thomas, 2012: 105). This immediately adds a dynamic of performance to the recording. The teller performs to the audience (the researcher) and aims to meet their expectations and provide what they want to hear. “Oral communication is not unilateral, but multilateral seeing that the performing artist takes on his/her cues from the moods and reactions of the audience” (Naudé & Makutoane, 2006: 730). As such, great care needs to be taken in question design in order to make sure the research captures the necessary information but at the same time, avoids jeopardising the narrative. This is why a semi-structured approach to the interviews has been chosen. In this way, a set of questions were asked to make sure the required data was recorded. But the interviewee was given the opportunity to add any

⁶ Oral history, as defined by the Oral History Association; is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events. Oral history is both the oldest type of historical inquiry, predating the written word, and one of the most modern, initiated with tape recorders in the 1940s and now using 21st-century digital technologies (Oral History Association, 2018).

information they feel was important that didn't arise through the questions. So, while oral histories have their limitations, they also offer immense benefits. It offers a perspective and meaning which all other sources are incapable of capturing. As such, if orality as a source is left out, the legitimacy of the historical picture put forward could be seriously jeopardised (Portelli, 1998: 71). Therefore, this research included orality to fill in the gaps of the archives and as a cross-check for archival information. Its use was predominantly to back up the historical narrative and to provide deeper meaning to the occurrences through the provision of a personal perspective.

To summarise the methodological approach, this research worked through the broad method of comparative histories. First, a theory of ministerial formation will be provided. From this, case studies on the UPCSA and URCA and how they have engaged ministerial formation were constructed. Then, these case studies will be brought into comparison to assess the strengths and challenges of each denomination, as well as those facing ministerial formation as a whole. In this way, both specific and general conclusions will be reached which not only provide the historical background but also much needed guidance for the future of theological education within South Africa.

1.7. Chapter outline

Chapter 1: Introduction – this chapter has outlined the focus of the research, what it aims to answer and how it will do it

Chapter 2: Theory of ministerial formation – this chapter will introduce the concept of ministerial formation differentiating it from theology at large and academic theological education. In this way, it shall put forward the theoretical driving force behind the research. This theory shall be built on a traditional understanding of theology and draw from both theoretical and practical examples.

Chapter 3: Setting the historical scene: education since 1994 (what changed with democracy) – this chapter will build on the previous one and explore local peculiarities within South Africa which impact the traditional theory of ministerial formation making sure that the theory of chapter 2 is contextually relevant. Issues such as: the call for free education, the introduction of modern technology, and the contextualisation/Africanisation of theology will be explored to develop a theory of theological education appropriate to the needs of South Africa in the

21st century. This chapter will also serve to set the macro-historical framework which the case studies are based in.

Chapter 4: Case study on UPCS – This shall fulfil the specific focus of the methodology treating the denomination as a singular whole entity and provide the historical narrative for theological education/ministerial formation within the UPCS from 2000-2017 and close with a within-case analysis of the UPCS.

Chapter 5: Case study on URCS – This again shall fulfil the specific focus on the methodology and provide the historical narrative for theological education/ministerial formation within the URCS from 2000-2017 and close with a within-case analysis of the UPCS.

Chapter 6: Comparison of theological education in South Africa, past problems and future hopes – in this chapter an analysis of the case studies shall be performed and the two narratives shall be brought into conversation fulfilling the comparative nature of the methodology employed in this research. Here the ideographic and nomothetic findings of the research shall become apparent.

Chapter 7: Conclusion – this chapter will sum up the findings of the paper, what is answered and where to go from here.

Having introduced the main motivation, method and aim of this research, this paper can now start to present the theory which will undergird the historical analysis. This chapter has shown the need for a contemporary history of ministerial formation from a reformed ecclesial perspective. If churches wish to have effective leaders, they need to have effective formation programmes. As such, plotting this history of ministerial formation will aid in this wider discussion. Yet, before the history can be plotted, the theoretical background of this research needs to be presented. As explained in the methodology section, theory needs to inform praxis and vice versa. As such, the theoretical perspective of this research will first be presented. This will allow the reader to see the theoretical approach taken to ministerial formation and the interpretive lenses used in the historical analysis.

Chapter 2

Theory of ministerial formation

2.1. Introduction

What is theology? Or more directly related to this research what is ministerial formation and is it different from theological education? These are the main questions which this chapter aims to answer. In line with the method of comparative history, the next two chapters of this research will establish the theory behind ministerial formation. This is a theory developed from a reformed perspective and somewhat intrinsic to the UPCSA and URCSA own theoretical understanding of ministerial formation. The theory shall, in turn, be used to guide and critique the historical investigation of the UPCSA and URCSA. As Overend (2007: 133) points out “individuals involved in both academic and ministerial education may be operating with a variety of understandings as to what theology is and how it is learned”. One understanding of theology may differ from another and so it is important not to assume a definition of the term. As such, this present chapter aims to give an explanation of theology and put forward the broad definition and theory of ministerial formation that will be used throughout this research. It shall start not by asking *what* is theology, but *why* do we have theology. The current *what* could be misdirected. As such, it is important to start with the core, the *why*. In establishing this ‘why’ a strong scriptural focused is presented. In line with reformed theology, scripture is seen as the number one guide and the prime inspiration for why we have theology. From the *why* this chapter will then briefly look at *how* theology has been practised historically. Here the concept of the Pastor-Theologian will be brought forward. The *why* and *how* sections will provide the groundwork for the *what* section; for the definition of ministerial formation. The *why* and *how* sections in themselves will not put forward a definition, but will draw out the basic logic behind ministerial formation and theological education. This chapter will then close by providing a working definition of theology and ministerial formation. Here the previous two sections which have been slowly building up to a definition will be applied to explicitly draw out what is meant by theology and ministerial formation. The aim is not to delve into theology per se but to see the theory undergirding the investigation on ministerial formation. Starting with the *why* and *how*, as explained below, will ultimately allow for a more adequate definition of theological education to be put forward at the end of the chapter.

Yet, it needs to be stated upfront that this chapter is not arguing for a new way of doing theology. That would require a whole research project in itself. Arguments around the best approaches to theology, concepts such as the Alexandrian school (see Ferguson, 1988) or the Chicago school of theology (see Pointer, 1988), are not engaged with. Nor are hermeneutical or exegetical issues dealt with. This chapter is not arguing for the 'best' way of doing theology, but showing in detail what understanding of theology and ministerial formation shall be employed in this research. When detailing the context of the researcher below, it will be explained how pure neutrality and objectivity cannot be achieved. As such, this research is laying out the theoretical framework that shall be used (1) to keep in line with the proposed methodology and (2) to show the perspective from which the author shall critique ministerial formation. This chapter is not a debate over theological method but an exposition of the theory to be used in this research.

In line with the methodology, drawing out the theoretical basis for theological education will allow the empirical analysis in chapters four and five to have a theoretical reference point to be assessed from. Theology is a dynamic term and context strongly affects what theology is understood to be. This research will thus narrow down the focus to be on ministerial formation as a subset of theology. In this way, this chapter shall provide a basic theory on which the historical analysis can build. However, ministerial formation is contextually bound and, as such, the following chapter will deal with contextual peculiarities. This analysis of context will also include an exposition of the authors own context. Not being attached to either of the churches under investigation means that the research will have approached the topic from an external perspective. As such, this external perspective will be provided to allow the reader to see the lens through which this history has been interpreted. The third chapter will then close by drawing the contextual analysis (of chapter 3) and the theoretical framework (of chapter 2) together. It will be this contextually aware theory that will be used as the basis for the historical analysis in chapters 4 through to 6. It must be remembered that this present chapter does not focus on issues of 'doing' theology, concerned with hermeneutical challenges and the starting point. Rather it is focused on drawing out the essence of theology.

Broadly speaking, theology can be understood as the study of God (Wright, 1988a: 680; Pillay, 2017a: 2; Cross, 2018: 84). While in this research theology will refer to Christian theology, the

term is wider than Christian theology and originated from outside of Christianity. In the original Greek, the term is a combination of *theos* (God) and *logia* (science). It is a pre-Christian term adopted from the likes of Plato and Aristotle (Farley, 1988: 63)⁷. As such, the original theological practices of the early church were informal, only later taking on a formalised form and adopting the term theology⁸. Christian theology, at its birth, was the task of every believer and came into being in the daily conversation as followers of Christ “gossiped the gospel” and tried to live out their faith (Bevans, 2009: 208). As Gonzalez (2015: ix) is keen to point out, we are called to love God with all our heart, mind and soul: This core task of the gospel is a theological task and, as such, all believers are called to theological reflection; to study God. As Moltmann (2002: 94) asserts “we are theologians wholly and completely or not at all”. We are either committed to loving God with all our being, a theological task, or we are not believers; there can be no middle ground. To be a Christ-follower is to be a theologian.

So how does the theological task change when theology becomes an object of instruction? What is the study of God which should be studied by those coming to lead the church? This question shall be clarified in this present chapter. Then, in the following chapter, local peculiarities of South Africa will be investigated to see which theological tasks should be prioritised in the current context. As such, this chapter is purposefully abstract from the local context. It aims to develop a theory of ministerial formation, to answer what is ministerial formation in a theoretical form. Yet to focus on “what” ministerial formation should be, can lead to a formless definition; a definition which merely changes with each new age and lacking substance. So then to start with *what* is to start with the wrong questions, but what is the right question? This chapter seeks to expose the core of theological education, what its very essence is, which takes on different expression in each age anew. In order to do this, one has to start with *why*. Why do we have theology? Why does the discipline exist? Why are we

⁷ Understood broadly theology, as *theos logia*, can refer to any discourse about the divine. It is not exclusively Christian nor does it focus only on the Christian God. In this research it shall be Christian theology which is explored. As such, unless otherwise stated, the term theology in this research refers to Christian theology. For the sake of space and to avoid tedious repetition, however, this Christian theology shall be referred to as theology

⁸ Originally Christian leaders were trained through pagan schools and in pagan philosophy. However Christian theological schools, such as the one founded by Justin the Martyr in Rome and another by Jerome in Alexandria, did start to come into existence slowly. Yet these schools were for all believers not just those aspiring to ecclesial leadership positions (see Gonzalez, 2015: 3-6).

called to rational reflections on God? Starting with this *why* establishes the core values of the discipline from where the rest of the theory and a definition can be built. As Bultmann (1997: 33) states, "its object is therefore not to be read off from the actual doing of theology - this may have gone astray - but from its *why*, its purpose". Moving from *why* this chapter will come to briefly look at *how*. How has this core purpose of theology been presented in the past? And what meaning does this start to evoke for the discipline? Finally, this chapter will come to *what*; what is theology? and what are theological education and ministerial formation? It is in the *what* section that definitions will be provided. In line with the method of comparative histories, the definitions of theological education and ministerial formation will provide the theoretical understanding which this research will work from throughout.

Yet before this research proceeds to the more abstract definition, it is first important to state the context from which this research is being conducted. As mentioned in the introduction, theory and practice work in combination with each other. Thus, the praxis (context) of the author will play a strong, if not always conscious, role in the establishment of theory. The author is writing as someone connected to both church ministry and academic theology, working formally in both environments. This has allowed the author to have an awareness of the church context as well as the academic context. However, it should be highlighted that the church context is that of the Anglican church of Southern Africa. The author is not formally associated to either of the churches under investigation. This external perspective helped to navigate any unintentional or hidden bias brought on through commitment to a particular institution. However, it did also mean that the author will have limited access to any knowledge intrinsic to each denomination. Yet, if a researcher were to have intrinsic knowledge through association to one denomination this would create a discrepancy with regard to knowledge of the other institution. As such, being external to both denominations does mean that the author is approaching the investigation equally. Further, their major prior research endeavours have focused on theological education in contemporary South Africa and the need for changes in the educational environment (see Womack, 2017). This could lead to criticism of the objectivity of the study. Yet, as it has been amply pointed out, "it is possible to perceive a historical phenomenon only from a special point of view. To this extent, the subjectivity of the historian is a necessary factor of objective historical knowledge" (Bultmann, 1957: 118–119; see Duncan, 2007b: 3–4). Total objectivity is not possible (Black &

MacRaid, 2007: 11) and the subjective reality always impacts one's research. Further, in explicit relation to historical theology, "Theological and atheological assumptions are inescapable in historical investigation" (Abraham, 2013: 398). Rather it is a better historical practice to state this reality openly to allow the reader to see potential impacts this may have. Working inside the church and university will thus give a more internal and personal approach to the research. While not affiliated to the denominations under investigation in this research, being planted in an ecclesial context creates sympathy for the challenges faced in ministerial formation. Being outside of the denomination does create challenges in that the internal narratives of each denomination are not known to the author. Yet, at the same time, being external also presents benefits. Working from the outside means that sentimental attachments or interior political objective will not obstruct the analysis and allows a fresh perspective on events to be gained. While working within the University of Pretoria again creates sympathy to the challenges faced by the department of theology and religion. In this way a more reflective and conversational historiography shall be put forward. This will result in a study that puts forward a meaningful analysis over a strong statistical viability which, as stated in the introduction, is in fitting with the aim and methodology of this research to provide meaningful information to the concerned parties around ministerial formation at the University of Pretoria.

2.2. Why Theology?

In a public lecture, delivered on the 2nd of August 2018, at the University of Pretoria Prof. Naledi Nomalanga Mkhize (2018) asserted the need for educational institutions to know what sort of learners the schooling system aimed to produce. She critiqued the current ambivalence towards the outcome of the education system and highlighted the vital need to know why we are educating in a certain way. It was put forward that without a clear why, a clear purpose, a substandard education was being provided. In the following chapter, a sustained investigation of theological education in South Africa will be provided. For now, it will suffice to state that Mkhize is not alone in her critique. Cloete (2017: 5) states how academic institutions have gone from "being in the business of education into being in the education business". The main difference being that financial gain, not academic development, is not the main focus. Naidoo (2015: 177) highlights that:

Academics are appointed less for their personal capacities to be midwives of students' coming to an understanding of God and of themselves; rather the focus is on their ability to cultivate capacities for scholarly research in students.

Amanze (2012: 194), in critiquing the voiceless-ness of theology in 21st century South Africa, also puts forward a similar point of view:

There is a loss of direction as to what theology should be concerned with now after the fall of apartheid, and there is a great deal of uncertainty among theologians concerning the future of theology in the new South Africa

All four authors indicate that current approaches to education are substandard. What's more is that these authors also highlight that current forms of education have lost connection with their why, their reason for existence. As such, in order to establish a sound theory of theological education, the why behind theology needs to be unearthed.

While economic gain may be an outcome, it cannot be a why (Sinek, 2009: 39). As Sinek (2009) explains, the why is the core of an institute, it is what it believes, it is what drives it and it is this belief which should drive and shape the institution. What the institution does is "tangible proof of their cause", their *why* (Sinek, 2009: 41). Financial profit can be an outcome of an institute, but it should not be the main driving force. So, in line with both Sinek (2009) and Bultmann (1997: 33), this research aims to start with why; why do we have theology?

AS the above shows, the why of theological education is the driving force behind all that it does. What ministerial formation consists of should be the tangible representation of that driving force. So, what is the driving force behind ministerial formation? What is the purpose of theology? Why do we have such a thing as Christian theology? Above all else, scripture forms the centre of reformed faith (Grenz, 2003: 22; Plantinga, Thompson & Lundberg, 2010: 13; Abraham, 2013: 393). It is discerned to be, in some form, one of the key expressions of the divine word of God from which the beliefs of the Christian faith are established (DeVries, 2003: 310; Grenz, 2003: 23; Naudé, 2003: 446). Thus, to establish the *why* of theological education scripture must form the starting point. This is not to argue that scripture is the starting point of theological reflection, although there is a strong case for that (see Packer, 1988; cf. McGrath, 2001a: 159–195). Rather, scripture as the divine word of God gives

inspiration to the meaning and purpose of theology. The following is a short exegesis of a few key verses which give the why to theology.

2.2.1. Deuteronomy 6:5-7 (c.f. Deut 11:18-20)

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

This text forms a central part of the Israelite religion and is foundational in establishing the idea of loving God (Clements, 1998: 345). Basically, it is a call to love God and to teach his ways consistently throughout all generations. It is a call to learn about things divine and to teach them to others. It is a call for all believers to practise theology, to practise a sustained and rational reflection on God's word and presence in their life.

This theological task is important for a number of reasons, first, as Deuteronomy continually reiterates, it is through applying one's heart, mind and soul to reflections on God and living out the law that the Israelites will receive the Promised Land. In an echoing of the verse in Deuteronomy 11:18-20 it is the land which forms the main focus (see Christensen, 2001: 211–212). Living in the way God has prescribed will lead to success and to emulate this lifestyle effectively the law must be studied. Applying one's whole being to discern the Lord is both the way to come to know God and a command of God. This reflection is thus done from both a faith and a rational perspective. This discerning of the divine, this theology, is not a legalistic following of the law. "Commitment to God cannot simply be presented as the performance of certain outward duties that will be publically observed and recognised. Rather, all knowledge of God becomes a matter of heart-searching and looking inward" (Clements, 1998: 346). The study of scripture and discerning of the divine is to be brought about by a love of God. The task of learning about God involves our whole being. "Love of God is to embrace the whole of our mind, both conscious and unconscious" (Christensen, 2001: 143). As this is such a widespread call, to love God and devote oneself to his law, it is a call to all believers. All citizens of Israel are called to commit themselves to study of scripture, reflection on things divine and

its application to their lives. Here theology comes forward as a rational act of faith which is the task of all believers and aim at understanding and applying the Word of God in one's life.

2.2.2. Joshua 1:8

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

This verse comes in the call for Joshua to be strong and courageous when crossing the river Jordan into the Promised Land. In the grand narrative, it follows the death of Moses and the start of Joshua's rule over the Israelites as they cross the river Jordan into the Promised Land. It serves to establish the authority of Joshua as a ruler over the Israelites (Coote, 1998: 584). As such, the fact that a call to engage in a sustained rational reflection on and application of God's scriptures comes at the beginning of Joshua's appointment to lead the Israelite's is of great importance. In effect, this short verse is calling God's ordained leaders to a study of his word and to apply what they find to their lives. The call is not just to study but to study and meditate. This is in continuation with the call for kings to study scripture (cf. Deut 17:18-20), but as close as Joshua may have been to a king, he was officially never appointed as such (cf. Coote, 1998: 585; Butler, 2014: 202). Thus it can be generalised that to be a good leader, to have success, one needs to be grounded in the study and application of scripture; "it is the way of life corresponding to the order of the created universe, the only way promising success" (Butler, 2014: 220). While the call in Deuteronomy was for all believers, this passage shows how leaders are expected to engage in a greater reflection on God's word, specifically in the study and application of scripture.

2.2.3. Psalm 1:1-3

Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree

planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.

In this short opening Psalm, the focus is really on creating a duality between those who study and dedicate themselves to God's law and those who do not. It presents the rationale that those who study and reflect on God's law will prosper, while those that do not will quickly fade away. While in the first two scriptures the study of the law can be assumed to almost exclusively refer to the Torah law⁹, this is almost certainly not the case here (see McCann, 1996: 684; Craige, 2004: 60). Rather its reference seems to refer more "broadly to the whole sacred tradition of God's revelation" (McCann, 1996: 684). The one who is blessed is the one who commits to the study of this revelation. "The state of blessedness or happiness is not a reward; rather it is the result of a particular type of life" (Craige, 2004: 61). It is the result of studying and reflecting on the sacred tradition of Gods revelation; it is the result of a life of theological reflection. Just like the tree which draws from an always present, life-giving source, so too can the believer grow and prosper if they continue to study the life-giving source of God's revelation. But just as the tree needs to be planted close to water to grow, so too do we need to be centred around understanding God's revelations if we wish to grow. This Psalm is strongly "God centred" (McCann, 1996: 686). Thus, while a call to dedicated study, which emphasises the benefits of such, it also highlights the importance of the contents and focus of that study. Reflections must be God centred. Here it becomes clear that theology transcends a purely scriptural focus. Divine revelation is the key content which all believers are called to reflect on. The purpose of theology is thus to focus on God's revelation and to seek to understand and apply this in one's life. It is about all believers discerning the God they worship. Its why, its cause, is God's revelation.

2. 2.4 Timothy 3:14-17

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation

⁹ The law contained in Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus and Deuteronomy

through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

These verses come in a section where the author of 2 Timothy is warning the reader about deceitful teachings and calling them to focus on God's teaching. Paul is highlighting the danger of these teachings to Timothy and reminding him of the truth which he has been taught since childhood (Mounce, 2000: 568). What scripture refers to is debatable. At the very least it is the Old Testament scriptures, which would have been canonised at the time of writing (Mounce, 2000: 565). It is also likely that the reference refers to the gospel and the Old Testament in light of the Christian message (Mounce, 2000: 568). What is clear is that Scripture is fully capable of making one wise and equipping them to lead a congregation and defending them against false teaching (Dibelius & Conzelmann, 1972: 120). Scripture achieves this status as it is Gods revelation. "Paul is encouraging Timothy to centre his ministry on scripture because it comes from God and will fully equip him for service" (Mounce, 2000: 566). Just with Psalm one, it is Gods revelation which is ultimately to be studied. The importance of this divine origin is not so much in the content of scripture but in its sufficiency and usefulness (Dibelius & Conzelmann, 1972: 120; Mounce, 2000: 571). In fact, its content is not total and should not be stretched beyond its limits (cf. Dunn, 2000: 582–583). Ultimately it is divine revelation which Timothy is called to study and it is this revelation that will sufficiently prepare him for his ministry. While the scriptures are not total and should only be studied according to what they present, they are still part of Gods revelation. As such, for believers in Christ, it is natural that one should be taught the scriptures from birth. This rational and sustained study is to expose individuals to Gods revelation to allow them to grow in a relationship with God and to equip believers to identify deceptive worldly philosophies. In this section, theology is understood as a study of Gods revelation primarily focused on scripture as a clear presentation of this. This revelation is to be studied for the benefit of one's faith life and to allow them to discern false beliefs.

2.2.5. Hebrews 5:12-6:1

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a

child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

Therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God ...

Hebrews 5:11-6:1 is commonly understood to form a literary unit (Lane, 1991: 133) in which the writer diverts from the main focus of the epistle to reprimand the community for a lapse in learning, and laments that the community has not advanced in their understanding of God. The writer likens them to babies, still dependant on their mother's milk, yet expects them to be teachers, helping to raise the next generation themselves. This lack of knowledge is not mentioned to directly affect the salvation of the community (Lane, 1991: 135). Rather, it is seen to be an essential outworking of faith. The community has learnt the basics, the strong foundations have been set, but they need to carry on moving forward to higher concepts. The "need, is not, in fact, the 'basics' but more advanced doctrine" (Attridge, 1989: 156). As such, this verse, drawing strongly on Greco-Roman imagery, serves a pedagogical purpose to call the Hebrew community back to a dedicated study of God's oracles and to continue to live out their faith as they had been called to do (Attridge, 1989: 158–159; Lane, 1991: 137). This verse thus continues to present theology as a faith study, a rational reflection on the divine, in which the believers strive to apply divine revelation to their lives. Yet it also emphasises the continual need for study. Study of God, theology, is to be a lifelong process with the believer continually aiming to understand higher concepts.

From the above exegesis, it is emerging that believers are called to study the scriptures and to meditate on God's law. They are to have a sustained reflection and discourse about God. Theology is something all believers are called to, a rational exercise, grounded in faith and belief which is a lifelong process. Yet scripture also contains warnings about being caught up with the deceitful wisdom of this world and false philosophies. As such, the *why* of theology is not only because we have been called to study divine revelation in order to know God better, advancing our faith and relationship with the divine (although this is a strong factor). Another factor to take into consideration is the way in which we are to study. Hints of this

have already been seen from the above exegesis so here it will suffice to provide only one detailed example in order to illustrate this point¹⁰.

2.2.6. Corinthians 1:18-30

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

This verse was central in influencing Tertullian’s (1995: 5) famous maxim, “what is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem, between the Academy and the Church?”. For Tertullian the philosophies of the world, “stoic”, “platonic” or “dialectic”, would only lead to heretical doctrine. Rather, Christian doctrine should come from “the Porch of Solomon”; from Godly Wisdom (see Tertullian, 1995: 5–6). As Paul is highlighting, it is only Christ who can give

¹⁰ Other versus which challenge worldly rational are 2 Peter 1:20-21

insight and wisdom. So what worth are worldly philosophies and the “wisdom of the wise”? In continuation with 2 Timothy, the Word of God, the *logos*, is put forward as that which is true and profitable. Yet where the Timothy verse remains implicit, here Paul is explicit. Godly wisdom must be sought over worldly wisdom. Traditional interpretations have put forward the idea that this verse is, in a sense, wisdom/rationality versus faith/ spirituality. Yet while a strong dualism is put forward, wisdom is not ruled out. Rather the tension is between earthly wisdom and Godly wisdom (Sampley, 2002). “God is the wise one ... wisdom comes to man only from God” (Conzelmann, 1975: 46). In contrast to the Greco-Roman worldview, the idea of the cross, a form of capital punishment, did seem folly. Yet, for those who believed, the cross becomes the way of salvation (Orr & Walther, 1976: 159–160). Christian theology, then, should not rest on worldly principles which requiring the puffing up of human knowledge and continually change with each age. Rather Christian theology should be based on the wisdom of God (Sampley, 2002: 812). It is not our standing in society but our relationship with Christ that is prime (Orr & Walther, 1976: 160–161; Sampley, 2002: 813). But how does one find Godly wisdom? And what use, if any, are the philosophies of the world? And what does Godly wisdom look like? And how is this call to Godly wisdom to be combined with other scriptures calling for wisdom gained through rational study?

There is no easy answer to this tension in theology and it is a tension that should not be avoided (Higton, 2008: 4). Yet it is not the aim of this research to investigate the answer. Rather, the purpose served here is to show the complex and dynamic nature of theology. As Stevens (2011: 167) describes, “[b]iblical theological education is a complex reality involving many strands of learning, faith development and active ministry evoked by [an] authentic relationship with the living God”. Theology cannot be presented as a simple rational study of God. One must consider the fact that it comes forth from a position of faith. It is not a worldly endeavour but inspired by Christ. “If God is the object of faith and accessible only to faith, then a science apart from faith or alongside it can see neither God nor faith” (Bultmann, 1997: 37). As such, the *why* of theology is not only because we are called to reflect on God’s Word, rather this reflection is faith inspired and spirit guided. We have theology as God’s revelation allows it. Thus, the *why* of theology in its most redacted form is to get to know God, to be changed through that divine relationship. God wills that his disciples dedicate themselves to a study of his word and that through this their faith may grow. Theology, then, could be seen

as the development of spiritual wisdom. It is not a dry academic study, but a spirit-filled searching for the truth of God (Bultmann, 1997: 34; Brodie, 2011: 61). Without the Holy Spirit's life-giving presence there is no life, no real theology (cf. Barth, 1958: 614; Hendriks, 2012: 2). Theology exists as faith does. So, without the foolishness of the cross, rational reflections on God lose their core value, their *why*.

To summarise, the *why* of theology is seen to be scripturally ordained. Theology exists as it is a biblical call to all believers to study God's revelation and reflect on this application in their lives. This study helps bolster one's faith and walk with the LORD. While spiritual leaders are called to a more sustained and dedicated study, this study is the task of all believers. As such, theology exists in a dynamic relationship with faith. A call to rational reflection is behind why theology exists, but these reflections are also guided by the Spirit. This combination can feel uncomfortable at times as it makes the practice of theology challenging. Yet this discomfort should not be forgotten. Rather it should be wrestled with within the theological task. Ford (2011: 1–3) describes this theology as wisdom, wisdom engaged with and applicable to all of life. "The goal of theology is wisdom, which unites understanding with practice and is concerned to engage with the *whole* of life" (Ford, 2011: 1)[emphasis added]. In short, the cause of theology is divine revelation and its purpose is to nurture a love of God and depends on both faith and reason.

2.3. How

The above has provided the *why* of theology. The main cause of theology was seen to be divine revelation which was to be studied rationally and spiritually to discern its application in one's life. Yet, to produce a more robust theory of theology and theological education through which to interpret the current situations, it is important to see how this theoretical understanding has been practised historically. It is becoming clear that theological reflection is the task of all believers, while it is also important for leaders of God's people. As such, theological education could be regarded as a broad category concerned with the theological task of all believers. Ministerial formation then forms a more specific category within theological education¹¹ which is focused around the more advanced training of spiritual leaders. This research will focus on historic examples of ministerial formation, the form of

¹¹ This idea will be explored further in the next section which explains more fully the difference between theology and ministerial formation.

theological education designed to develop leaders of the church, as this is the category of theological education on which this research is specifically focused. As was discerned from the introductory chapter, the current state of theological education is being strongly critiqued. Beginning in the 1970s a growing amount of literature from church, and increasingly academic circles, emerged critiquing the current form of theological education (Naidoo, 2011: 119). The classic example of this critique comes from E Farley's (1983) *Theologia*. In this work, Farley looks at the fragmentation of theological education and the loss of *Theologia*. *Theologia* can be understood as the intermingling of an individual's cognition of God, which relates most directly to one's faith and a "self-consciously scholarly exercise", relating mainly to rational reflection (Farley, 1983: 31). Others have described it as a "reflective understanding, shared by members of a Christian community regarding who they are and what they are to do, given their concrete world-historical situation" (Hough & Cobb, 1985: 3). As such, this definition of *Theologia* can be seen to have a strong connection to the *why* of theology detailed above. Yet, in the view of Farley and a growing number of scholars, education in this form of theology has been lost. For Farley (1983: 22) this loss was due to the rise of the critical scientific methodology and the demise of classic Christian authority¹². The rational came to overtake the importance of faith in theological reflection. The result of this has been that some have come to view current approaches to theological education as a distraction (Cross, 2018: 81) and something for which learners no longer hunger (Oden, 1990: 15). Yet, as Farley has hinted, this was not always the case. Prior to the modern period, it was impossible to conceive of theological reflection detached from spirituality (McGrath, 2001b: 28). Thus, it is particularly to the pre-modern era that this research looks for a historical application of the above understanding of why we have theology.

Documenting the history of theological education is not the purpose here. This history is well documented and Gonzalez (2015) gives a good overview of this history. The focus shall be to look at the type of church leader this education was producing. Specifically, the pastor-theologian will be shown as a long-standing historical example of an individual subjected to

¹² For a brief overview of the demise see Womack (2018). The Correlation and Separation of Academic Theology and the Local Church, or Hiestand and Wilson (2015), The Great Divorce: the demise of the pastor theologian in Europe and North America

ministerial formation consistent with the why of theology presented above; namely, an education incorporating rationality, spirituality and discernment.

The Pastor-Theologian is argued to be the stereotype for renowned church leaders from the inception of theology all the way to its modern demise (see Hiestand, 2008; Hiestand & Wilson, 2015; Strachan, 2015). The pastor-theologian, also titled the ecclesial theologian, is someone who is well versed in both the academic and ecclesial settings.

an ecclesial theologian is a *theologian* who bears shepherding responsibilities for a congregation and who is thus situated in the native social location that theology is chiefly called to serve; and the ecclesial theologian is a *pastor* who writes theological scholarship in conversation with other theologians, with an eye on the needs of ecclesial community (Hiestand & Wilson, 2015: 85)

The training of an ecclesial theologian takes on an academic nature in order to serve in a spiritual environment, the church and God's people. While their service in the church is based on their academic understanding and rational reflection, "[e]cclesial theologians approach theological scholarship in the hope that their findings will deepen the integrity of the church, inspire faith, and birth in the Christian a love for God and others" (Hiestand & Wilson, 2015: 91). In other words, the Pastor-Theologian is an individual who conducts their theology rooted in the local context and their praxis routed in their theological education. They are individuals "engaged in careful biblical and theological reflection for the purpose of enriching their pulpit ministries, guiding and nourishing their spiritual flocks, and protecting the church at large" (Manetsch, 2016: 82). In this model, theology is completely inseparable from context, especially the church context.

Ministerial formation in this modus thus involves a strong intermingling of faith and rational reflection centred on divine revelation and discerning its application. These individuals do not see their education as a "distraction", but as central to their role and identity as leaders of God's people. In the church fathers one finds a continual example of reason used not for speculative debate, but to bring forth the dense meaning of scripture to create a knowledge of God within the Christian community (Thompson, 2004: 271). In the Reformers, in the example of John Calvin, "the theological impulsion and the pastoral impulsion are so entwined that it is impossible to separate them without destroying both" (Parker, 1992: 8). So how were

such approaches to theological education and ministerial formation created within these individuals? What follows is an exploration of two key features which helped to establish an ecclesial theologian. While the cultural milieu in which theology is taught and practised does have a great impact on the potentials of theological education (cf Hough & Cobb, 1985: 16), the following principles are still key to note. Even if societal limitations have come into play, the following features can still find a valuable application in establishing a theory of theological education.

2.3.1. Lifelong

Theological education was not viewed as an end in itself but as a lifelong process. Formal training, in the form of degree granting education, did not arise until the 12th century and did not take a principal role in society until the late 18th and early 19th century (Olesko, 2003). Studying theology merely to receive a degree would have been an alien concept to the ecclesial theologian. Studies were undertaken not as an entry requirement into the “job” but as an intrinsic part of conducting one’s ministry. One of the first Christian schools, created by Origen, first taught new converts basic doctrine before being opened to all believers (Gonzalez, 1989: 25). While Irenaeus, in *Against Heresy*, writes “it is not necessary to seek the truth among others which it is easy to obtain from the Church” (*Against Heresies*, 3.4.1)¹³. Thus, education was intrinsic to the mission of the church. Theology’s “place within the academy is not an end in itself, but to serve the mission of the Church in the world” (Lausanne Congress, 2011: 52). To focus too much on the academic task, at the expense of the ecclesial mission, will leave church leaders ill-equipped (Thompson, 2004: 266). The pastor-theologian has seen their theological education as a continual process. It is not a once-off, but, as the exposition of Hebrews showed above, it is a lifelong process. Augustine of Hippo was no stranger to this concept. In Letter 73 (c.404), he writes:

Whatever abilities I may have for such study, I devote entirely to the instruction of the people whom God has entrusted to me; and I am wholly precluded by my

¹³ Translation of Book Three of *Against Heresies*, unless otherwise stated, is taken from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, found in *The Church in the Roman Empire* (Morrison, 1986: 230–234)

ecclesiastical occupations from having leisure for any further prosecution of my studies than is necessary for my duty in public teaching¹⁴.

From this quote one can highlight Augustine's dedication to studying for the benefit of the church and that this study was a lifelong process. He goes as far as to write that he has no time for any other leisure activities as he is consumed by his commitment to continual study in aid of his duty as a minister. While in the life and works of John Calvin, a clear example of the commitment to lifelong teaching of other believers can be gained. Calvin's insistence on the creation of the Geneva Academy is a clear example of this. Yet a clearer example of Calvin's desire and understanding of the need for continual education is seen in *La Congrégation* (The Congregation). This weekly meeting was closer to a lecture than a casual bible study (see Manetsch, 2016: 84) and comprised of exegetical and homiletic training, disputation and fellowship (see De Boer, 2006: 398–402). In this way, all interested parties, both lay and ordained, could have a form of continuing theological education. As such, it is clear to see that theological education for the ministry, just like the broader task of theology, is a lifelong process. Any formal, degree granting education only forms a part of the overall picture.

2.3.2. Church – Academic relationship

In their discussion on re-establishing the pastor-theologian, Hiestand and Wilson (2015) provide eight guidelines for the ecclesial theologian¹⁵. Underlying all these principles is the need for a church-academy relationship. While the 7th point explicitly states this, all of their points are dependent on a relationship being in existence. The two cannot see themselves as two separate institutions but two parts of God's total mission. For as Wood (2008: 291) highlights "when classroom-based formation is not complemented with congregation-based formation the 'very best seminary curriculum is lost or wasted'".

The need for theology aimed at ministerial formation to be rooted in the ecclesial context becomes clear when the effects of one's social location are considered. One's location affects

¹⁴ Letter 73, Chapter 2, paragraph 5. The translation used here is taken from Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Schaff, 1887) [accessed online on: 9/04/2017]

¹⁵ Namely Hiestand and Wilson (2015) mention that the ecclesial Theologian: Inhabits the ecclesial social location (:88-90); Foregrounds ecclesial questions (:90-91); aims for clarity over subtlety (:92-93); theologizes with a preaching voice (:93-94); is a student of the church (:94-95); works across the guilds (:96-97); works in partnership with the academic theologian (:97-99); and traffics in introspection (99-100)

priorities, perspectives and their reality at large (cf Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Freedman & Combs, 1996). As such, it is important for those engaged in ministerial formation to remain linked to the ecclesial context (see Hiestand, 2008: 361–362). The daily realities of church life help to guide and enrich theological education as persons train for the ministry. “[W]ithout spirituality theological education is empty and barren, Theology is not merely an intellectual exercise; it is an act of adoration of the living God” (Walls, 2011: 1). The ecclesial context provides a lived context from which to discern the worth of academic reflection. This, in turn, allows integration between the classroom and reality to happen more naturally (Naidoo, 2010: 363). Maintaining the link with the ministerial context also has knock-on effects in other areas. It allows the trainee to ask questions coming from the ecclesial context. It highlights the importance of establishing clear teaching that can be taught to those outside of the academic context. It reminds the learner that theology is for God’s mission and not just an academic end (Ford, 2007: 4).

Yet those coming from an ecclesial context need to also maintain a relationship with the academic world, this allows them to keep up to date with the latest in research across the board. The academic context also provides a vital environment in which to critique concepts and ideas (Pillay, 2017a: 4), which, in turn, is beneficial in guiding introspection personal and spiritual development of church leaders. Ultimately it is the combination of both church and academic context which allows fruitful development (cf. Farley, 1988: 99–100; Chiroma, 2017: 64–65). Or as Pope John Paul II (1988) put it in *Fides et Ratio*, “faith and reason are the wings on which we fly”.

From this brief analogy, we have seen that a theology stemming from a scriptural *why* - that is, theology that is both a rational and faith-based reflection coming from a love of God – needs to be more than just an end in itself. Further, this theology needs to be located both in a faith-based and academic environment. It was through this formula of being seriously rooted in the local church and seriously applied to academic thought that theological education could be practised in relation to its *why*. While engaged with, it was not distracted by purely cognitive thoughts of academia. Rather, the academic was always applied to the need of the church. Then, while working in an ecclesial environment, this did not form a reason to end theological studies or dilute the intensity of that study.

2.4. What

So, what is ministerial formation? Building on the background information provided in the introduction of this chapter, and enlightened by the discussion above, the following definitions can help develop a more conclusive understanding of what theology, ministerial formation and theological education can be defined as. Seen from the position of the academy; “theology is a scholarly endeavour, by believers in the public sphere, in order to come to grips with multi-dimensional realities in a manner that matters” (Buitendag, J. & Simut, 2017: 4). Here the emphasis is on the rational or *scholarly* aspect of theological education and its task is to be in service of the world. Definitions that focus on the contextual necessity of theology come from Naidoo (2013: 7), “[t]heology must create a critical awareness of the situations and must be present and involved in the lives of people and enter into dialogue with the reality of the situation” and Pillay (2017a: 3), “[i]n simple terms, theology is about understanding God in life and context”. Here the focus is on the outcome of the theological task, discernment, and that reflections on God should be of relevance and use to the local context. For Bultmann (1997: 33) this contextual task is guided by the immediate situation of the local church: “theology is in the service of a church whose task is in any event proclamation, preaching, teaching”. Here then the task of theology becomes to proclaim, teach and preach the gospel in each age anew. All these definitions help to highlight the complexity and multidimensional nature of theological reflection. Theology is still a thinking about God and theological education a formation of that thinking (cf Farley, 2002: 16), yet it is becoming clear that theological education covers a broad spectrum, deeply affected by context, yet, with faith in Jesus Christ remaining consistently at its core. Theology is impacted by scholarly/ academic thought, the context in which it is practised and taught, as well as the needs of the local church. In short, theological education is the multidimensional task which seeks to provide all believers with the skills and tools to practise theology where they are. Theology, as already shown, is a dynamic term affected by context, yet at its core, it is the response to divine revelation which seeks to know more and apply this revelation to one’s life. As such, theology and theological education are the task of all believers, and ministerial formation forms one category within this greater task. “If theological education is a process of learning to be human by fulfilling God’s will through one’s ministry, then the process begins even before students join a theological institution” (Raja & Rajkumar, 2010: 194). Theology is the task of all believers to discern who they are through God’s divine

revelation. Ministerial formation is sustained theological reflection with the specific aim of training church leaders. However, this formation begins with the general theological task of all believers and is intensified through further study. The focus of this research is the specific task of ministerial formation. As such, we shall depart from the broad definition of theology and focus in-depth on ministerial formation

As stated above, Ministerial formation can be seen to form a subsection within the broader category of theological education. As the *why* of theology showed, all Christians have a theological task. As such, theological education is a part of what it means to be a believing Christian. However, the *why* also showed a dedicated reflection for church leaders to be of importance. Hence those called to the ministry should receive a more dedicated form of theological education. This can be termed ministerial formation. Ministerial formation is still a multidimensional task; narrowing to focus on the training of clergy does not narrow the nature of theological education. The broad base of theological education is kept, while also introducing more specific training to equip individuals to be leaders of their faith community. In the *how* section this ministerial formation was seen to be achieved through the combination of church needs and academic learning, as well as a lifelong commitment to learning. However, strictly speaking, the above section only focused on the higher education received as part of ministerial formation. Seen holistically ministerial formation is “a multi-faceted activity involving critical thinking, the acquisition of knowledge, skills development, religious identity formation and the development of ministerial and spiritual maturity expected of church ministers” (Naidoo, 2015: 175). Higher education forms a central aspect of this formation but not the only aspect. The development of spiritual maturity and the formation of a religion’s identity is not easily acquired in only a lecture hall. “Formation takes place in three distinct but overlapping settings, that is, in formal education, in congregational life and in situations of social engagement” (Naidoo, 2015: 167). Formation takes place in the interaction between rational and spiritual via continual contextual discernment. Formal education occurs in the academy. Here critical thinking, knowledge acquisition and skill development can be taught. Yet what is taught in the lecture hall can be refined when combined with the needs of the church within the context in which it is found. Congregational life provides meaning to knowledge acquisition and gives a lived situation in which to exercise the skills learnt: while social engagement dictates what skills are needed. Both congregational

life and social engagement help to develop a mature religious identity and spiritual maturity. Further, the congregational and social contexts form the individual who comes to undertake academic study.

Their faith and worldview shaped by the context of their church and society. Therefore, there is a need to recognize the role of the church and the socio-cultural context in which the theological student was brought up (Raja & Rajkumar, 2010: 194–195).

As such, it is in the interplay between the three contexts that formation can take place. With the overlapping of academy, church and context an environment is formed which acknowledges the dynamic nature of ministerial formation. The development of religious identity and ministerial and spiritual maturity is a combined task between the church, academy and individual. The specific locality the individual finds themselves in, coupled with the individual's own commitment, further affects the nature of theological education and ministerial formation. While this means personal development should form part of academic learning, it also means the sending church has a responsibility in this development (see Naidoo, 2010). As such, it is becoming clear to see that ministerial formation is distinct from both theological education as a broad category, as a task of all believers, and higher theological education as a more specific category within ministerial formation.

To split ministerial formation from higher theological education, though, would be unnatural. As mentioned above, it is through the interplay of various social locations that a dynamic situation from ministerial formation is created. Higher education forms a strong part of ministerial formation and must not be abstracted from it. However, this research focuses on ministerial formation in its broader task. Higher education will form a focus, yet the denomination and the individual will form a strong part of the research. As this research is working from the perspective of the denominations, focusing on the whole task of ministerial formation, opposed to the more specific aspect of theological education at a higher education institute, will form the focus. In this way, how the denomination has developed and guided the programme of ministerial formation will come into view. Institutes of higher education will naturally arise in the research, yet it must be remembered that the focus is much broader

than just academic theological education. It is the ministerial formation programme in its totality, as directed and guided by each denomination, which will be investigated.

2.4.1 What is Ministerial formation?

Ministerial formation is the term that will be incorporated in this research to refer to the formalised training process each denomination provides for their ministers in preparation for ordained ministry and under which academic theological education forms a specific sub-set. Chiroma (2017: 69) has likened ministerial formation to an apprenticeship:

a task that typically requires both the acquisition of knowledge, concepts and perhaps psychomotor skills and the development of the ability to apply the knowledge and skills in a context-appropriate manner.

In an apprenticeship both the acquisition and application of knowledge are important. Here the individual acquires knowledge in multiple contexts and is formed through the interaction of each. The same is true for ministerial formation. The candidate for formation needs to acquire knowledge in both the academic and ecclesial circles and develop an application of this through the interaction with their context. It is the interaction and balance between all three settings which allows the development of relevant skills, knowledge and values. Ministerial formation thus refers to the learning and development of the individual candidate through the various contexts through which their training takes them. As such, it is vital that ministerial formation does indeed incorporate multiple settings. The formation of ministers is a specific training, broader than the priesthood of all believers. It is training for those called into the ministry. Yet this training, this formation, is broader than purely knowledge acquisition through an institution of higher learning. Those called to ministry need to be trained in multiple contexts.

Ministerial formation is thus the education process to equip the next generation of church leaders. Its purpose “is essentially the equipping of men and women for appropriate leadership and ministry within churches and associate institutions” (Naidoo, 2012a: 1). This focus affects the desired outcomes of ministerial formation. It is a training which needs to empower future leaders to competently discern God’s revelation in their community and to equip believers to engage in their own theological reflection. Ministerial formation thus looks to create pastor theologians. “Pastor-theologians are there to help the church grow in its

understanding and enable its better handling of God’s word” (Cross, 2018: 83). To help others understand, ministers themselves must have a profound understanding. Theological training is thus

crucial for ministers in encouraging a mature development of occupational and personal identity and enabling a coherent understanding of role and function in ministry (Naidoo, 2012a: 7).

This focus on ministerial formation requires it to be holistic in nature and contextual in focus. Ministerial formation needs to develop more than just a cognitive understanding. Cognition is vital to the work of the minister. They need to understand what they are preaching/teaching to function effectively. But Ministerial formation “must go beyond a restrictive cognitive qualification to more integrated human development” (Naidoo, 2013: 2).

Ministerial formation also needs to encompass faith development. Focusing only on academic formation creates the danger that faith formation is neglected or assumed to happen organically (Burger & Nell, 2012: 21). While organic maturation will occur, academic learning will pose challenges to one’s faith that needs to be assisted. Further, to be effective spiritual leaders, ministers themselves will need spiritual guidance. The church is primarily a community of all believers, not an academic community. As such, ministers need to be equipped to deal with all aspects of their congregation. Academics may form one part of this, but it should not take the prime role in training. Ministers need to be trained to work effectively in the ecclesial environment. They need to be capable of translating the academic into a form accessible to the local congregation. While the academic may provide the highest standard of knowledge, this knowledge remains irrelevant if the minister is unable to translate it into their lived context. “Because theological education leads to ministerial formation, there is a need for closer interaction between theological institutions and churches” (Raja & Rajkumar, 2010: 199). Theology as a broad task of all believers comes first; ministerial formation needs to be able to assist the task of all believers.

A key part of spiritual development needs to be moral development. Pastors and ministers enter an environment where abuse of power becomes an easy option. Ministerial formation needs to help develop a Christian ethic that enables ministers to do what is right, not what may be permissible (Naidoo, 2013: 8). Further, the formation process needs to prepare

ministers for the challenges they will face. In this regard, it is not only theological knowledge and faith development which are important. But practical skills, capable of dealing with the challenges of everyday life need to be developed. Moral formation needs to develop individuals who do not abuse their own power but can also handle abuse directed towards them.

Ministerial formation also needs to nurture personal development. Besides cognitive knowledge and spiritual maturity, the formation process needs to encompass the individual's personal development. "If people have not come to terms with who they are as individuals, then no amount of preparation and training will help" (Naidoo, 2013: 8). The ability to understand oneself and how others may differ from that is vital in developing effective leaders. As such, ministerial formation needs to enable one to be contextually aware; to be aware of self and the community around them. Without this awareness, cognitive knowledge and spiritual development will be wasted. With this awareness, the cognitive and spiritual can be applied to the context with great efficiency.

As such the idea for ministerial formation is a spiral between theory and practice which incorporates the development of knowledge, spirituality and contextuality (self-awareness). An upward spiral in the interplay between theory and practice is the best way to foster student development and nurture effective ministerial formation (Gonzalez, 2015: 126). It is not only the passing on of knowledge, but a dynamic phenomenon that involves a lifetime of learning. "Theological language is partial, and inevitably indebted to the mentality of its time" (Gutiérrez, 1996: 178). Thus, there is always a duty to appropriate God's revelation in each context anew

Understood in this way theology is "a framework for personal and spiritual development ... and therefore of lived action" (Overend, 2007: 145). Theology as ministerial formation is alive. It is alive in the interplay between academy, church and self and is a lived process which sees the simultaneous development of all three aspects. Just with any living organism, though, ministerial formation needs intentional feeding to survive. Thus, for effective ministerial formation to be achieved it has to be pursued intentionally by all involved. Ministerial formation is a lifelong process and, as such, is not located in one institution or sphere of life. It is contextually shaped but not contextually bound. That is, the context of the university or

denomination will affect ministerial formation and the development of the individual, but it should not limit them to only function within these spheres. These spheres form the institutionalised approach to ministerial formation but it should be remembered that formation is an on-going process and that the institutional formation should equip the believer for continual learning. The starting point of theology is always divine revelation; this is its *why* (as discussed above). The purpose of theology is to come to know God better, to explore this divine self-revelation. Yet divine revelation can only be understood in a context.

The gospel does not indicate a precise social or political path to take. But it does present the demands that Christians will have to take into account when they come to select the route they regard as most effective for eliminating unjust inequalities and the marginalization of the most helpless (Gutiérrez, 1996: 183).

As such, understanding context is just as vital as understanding *why*, hence the following chapter will focus on the South African context. Theology cannot be devoid of reality. Cone (1996: 189) argues that Martin Luther King Jr. should be classed as America's greatest theologian as he brought his theology so clearly in line with the most pertinent issue of American society in his time; racism. Theology cannot remain in scripture, it cannot remain in its *why*, but must show its *why* through its *what*, through what it does in the context in which it finds itself.

2.5. Chapter summary

In the opening of this chapter theology, understood as science about God, was explored to determine how it can take on different meanings; thus, it was established why it was important to ascertain a clear understanding of theology, theological education and ministerial formation that will guide this research. In starting to layout this theory, the social context of the author was provided to help the reader see the context from which this work was emerging, the approach it wished to take and any potential bias that may affect the theory presented.

Following this contextual grounding, a more hypothetical and abstract approach was followed. It was argued that starting with *why* was essential in order to flesh out a true purpose of theology and ministerial formation. The current *what* of theological education could be misdirected. As such, rather than starting straight away with a definition,

background and foundational information were provided. After a biblical exegesis, it was established that the *why* of theology and ministerial formation lay in the complex interplay in the call to reflect rationally on God's Word (which has been partially revealed in scripture) and to be guided by faith by the believers trying to discern the significance of this for their lives. This gives theology a multifaceted nature which promoted the importance of both church and academic context, or, phrased differently, faith and reason.

In looking at *how* this understanding of theology had been practised in ministerial formation, the concept of the 'pastor-theologian' was suggested as a guide. The Pastor theologian was a concept borrowed from other academic works and used to explore how theology had been practised in the past. Its use in this work was to guide the development of a theory around theological education and ministerial formation. In this way, it was highlighted how theological education was a lifelong process and that ministerial formation was a part of theological education dedicated toward the development of spiritual leaders. Ministerial formation thus depended on a strong church-academy link in order to help the candidate develop appropriately for their ministry.

In the final section, brief clarity was given regarding the term 'theological education', 'ministerial formation', and 'theological education at an institution of higher education'. This was followed by a detailed explanation of ministerial formation. The three terms were seen to be related to each other in a concentric manner; theological education being the overarching term, with higher education theological education forming a part of the education received through ministerial formation. In closing, a detailed definition of ministerial formation was given. This definition highlighted the need for the research to focus on the individual, denomination and academy in assessing the process of ministerial formation. In this regard, it was highlighted how the focus would be on each denomination and their management of ministerial formation at large. Further, the need to investigate the church-academy relationship and to be aware that ministerial formation comprises more than just knowledge acquisition was highlighted. Ministerial formation also includes personal development and establishment of spiritual maturity and the confidence to practise theology in the locality one finds themselves.

The following chapter will now build on this understanding of ministerial formation. Working from this definition it will look at the challenges the South African context poses to ministerial formation and assess how a theory needs to adapt to take account of these. This chapter has provided a basic framework from which to work. Now it is time to add in the contextual details found in the current reality of South Africa.

Chapter 3

Analysis of the current context of ministerial formation in South Africa

3.1 Introduction

Traditional theology, which dominated the colonial period and immediately after independence is not adequate to address the various social, religious, economic and political problems and challenges prevalent in the African continent. In order to address these problems and challenges, new theologies are being developed, which are relevant to the African reality on the ground (Amanze, 2009: 120–121).

Theology is never performed in a vacuum. Therefore, while the previous chapter provided a basic theory of ministerial formation, the contextual dynamic within which this formation takes place also needs to be analysed. One's context affects one's reality. "An awareness of the tradition, faith, and worldview with which a student joins a theological college needs to be the starting point of theological education" (Raja & Rajkumar, 2010: 195). Local peculiarities have a huge impact on the needs and expectations of individuals and society at large (cf. Bosch, 2016: 187). To not take the local context into account could, in the best case, lead to the development of an irrelevant theory around the history of ministerial formation. Theory is always contextually bound:

All of us are plunged into the assumptions of our times and places, even when we practise something as far removed from today's public passions as the editing of old texts (Hobsbawn, 1998: 364).

Church history practised in the 21st century can no longer afford to be "Eurocentric" and cut off from wider socio-economic development (Dreyer & Pillay, 2017: 118). As such, to develop a relevant theory through which to analyse the recent history of ministerial formation within the UPCS and URCSA, this research needs to analyse the South African context. This chapter will unpack some of the key challenges for ministerial formation in contemporary South Africa. South Africa is a diverse and complex society. In this society, many new challenges are arising while more long-lasting challenges continue to impact contemporary society. The challenges facing South Africa will thus be split into new and old, change and continuation. Challenges will be delimited to only include issue with a clearly identifiable link to ministerial

formation. For example, changes in the political landscape are only investigated in as much as it affected the accreditation of theological courses. Any greater investigation would move away from the focus of this research. The areas deemed necessary for investigation are: the use of technology, the impact of commodification, accreditation, ecumenism, gender, decolonisation, the religious state of society and the church university relationship. From the analysis of these challenges, this chapter will then close by exploring the key impacts for ministerial formation and the research into the UPCS and URCSA.

3.1.1 Contemporary History

Yet before proceeding further, it is necessary to delimit the term *contemporary history*. This research is concerned with the contemporary history of theological education. As such, it is a contemporary context which needs to be analysed in this chapter. If one assumes contemporary to only refer to the last 20 years (prescribing a fixed amount of time to the term) then an analysis of apartheid South Africa would not need to feature in this analysis. Yet, alternatively, if one views contemporary as that which exists in living memory, then an analysis of apartheid South Africa becomes essential. So, what is contemporary history? The definition of the term seems to be somewhat subjective as it ultimately depends on one's understanding of time and the interplay between past, present and future (Duncan, 2007b: 11).

History is generally understood as the study of the past. Yet as the present is never truly present, but always past, then all our experience is history. 'Everything that happened in the past is history; everything that happens now is history' (Hobsbawm, 1998: 78). Contemporary history can be seen as that history in which the historian is still "present". It is the history of their own social-cultural context which is analysed through their own social-cultural context. Collingwood (1999: 242) defines it as "history of the recent past in a society which the historian regards as his own society". This undeniably increases the risk of bias and subjective research. However, as has been well established, all historical research is located within a certain bias and subjective approach (see Duncan, 2007b: 12). Yet it cannot be ignored that the dangers of historical research are heightened in contemporary history. Another danger of working within one's context is the loss of hindsight and the decreased likelihood of the durability of the account (Hastings, 2005: xiv). It is easy to collect current facts but to reflect on them critically and to see what they add up to is challenging in contemporary history

(Nugent, 2012: 1–2). Yet history is not written for the future. Its *raison d’être* is its contribution in the present and the formation of the future. As Thucydides’ (a contemporary historian of his own time) writes, in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*:

It will be enough for me ... if these words of mine are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is), will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future (1972: 48; cf. Marwick, 2001: 54).

In contemporary history it is felt that the necessities of the present outweigh the risk of not producing long-standing historical work; it is worth “rendering a service of genuine importance in running the risks involved in evaluating developments so close to their happening” (D’espine, 2004: xv). Within Africa, historians have a demand to produce history that is usable and they cannot ignore the need for contemporary history (Nugent, 2012: 2). Contemporary history is thus history focused within the current epoch of the historian. For this research, then, contemporary refers to democratic South Africa, South Africa Post- ‘94.

All boundaries in history are imposed externally. 1994 is the year in which the ANC came to power in South Africa’s first democratic election. Yet this does not mean the peculiarities of democratic South Africa were already in play or that the peculiarities of apartheid South Africa would not continue to exist. Transition is gradual. Yet transitions occur and the new reality they create needs to be accounted for. Especially as this new reality creates a completely different paradigm in which ministerial formation is to take place (cf. Kuhn, 1996: 111–112; Bosch, 2016: 188, 194)¹⁶.

It is generally agreed that, since the arrival of western influences, that there have been four epochs in South African history. Each of these epochs has had corresponding challenges and theological peculiarities. Denis (2016) has described these eras as *Padroão* era (:250-251), which is characterised by a Portuguese (Roman Catholic) presence and failed mission attempts. The second era is titled *Failed attempts and missionary breakthroughs*. Starting in the late 18th century Protestant denominations started to take an interest in missionary

¹⁶ Bosch (2016) argues for the importance of understanding paradigm changes in general and in Christian mission. He highlights how changes in paradigm create completely new situations which will require a new response and transformation from and within theologians.

campaigns in South Africa. The 19th Century was thus characterised by increased missionary presence and a general expansion of Christianity (:252-254). The next period is titled *Colonialism and Mission*. Starting in the second half of the 19th century colonial powers started to expand rapidly into the whole of Southern Africa. The early missionary stations were thus joined by political powers and became entangled with colonial politics (:254-256). The final period is titled *Post-Independence Christianity*. In South Africa, this is marked by the year 1994 and is characterised by a change in the political landscape and the role of the church within the nation (:256-258). In the words of Ramantswana (2015: 9)

The political changes in South Africa in the late 1980s and the early 1990s – the undercover contacts, the release of Mandela, the unbanning of the ANC and other political parties, the National Peace Accord in 1991, CODESA in 1992, the Transitional Executive Council and associated bodies in 1993–1994, and the first democratic election in 1994 – all reflect a significant paradigm shift in the South African context.

In unison with these epochs, there have also been eras of theological education. The first era spans the missionary breakthrough and colonial rule. Through the success of missionary efforts and the spread of colonial influences, a western theological education that undermined the African world views came to be imposed (Richardson, 2007: 132). The second and third era of theological education overlap with the last stages of colonial rule, apartheid South Africa. Within South Africa, 1948-1990 “saw the imposition of the notoriously oppressive political system known as apartheid” (Naidoo, 2015: 168) and its theological justification. In rebellion to this developed a theological education in resistance to apartheid. This saw a strong ecumenical spirit, churches commitment to acting out their theology and the rise of black theology. The final era started in 1994 and is still in continuation (Richardson, 2007: 134). Here “churches are trying to make sense of their new role in terms of culture, political profile and social influence” (Naidoo, 2015: 168). 1994 marks a new historical chapter both generally and in terms of the nature of theological education in South Africa. It is this chapter in theological education, from 1994 onwards, which shall form the focus. There can be no doubt that this year ushered in what is presently contemporary South Africa. In 1994 “everything” changed for South Africa and a new epoch was born. South Africa became a democratic society where all, constitutionally, were to be treated equally. It became a multi-

religious society; open to the rest of the world. And it became a post-modern globalized society. Yet in another sense, despite the early hopes and dreams of democracy “nothing” changed. Racial tension continues to persist, education forms find themselves entrenched in colonial patterns, and poverty and inequality continue to define the country (Le Grange, 2016: 5). This post-apartheid South Africa is the contemporary context to which this research refers. This section has thus established the meaning of contemporary history and helped delimit the focus of this research. It is now to the details of this contemporary context that this research shall now turn its attention. As mentioned above, it is vital to understand the context in which ministerial formation operates if it is to be analysed effectively.

3.2 *Everything Changed.*

The advent of democracy radically changed South African society almost overnight, “suddenly becoming a modern – secular, plural, democratic, fragmented – society” (Smit, 2003a: 308). This somewhat sudden turn to democracy also brought South Africa suddenly into the post-modern world coupled with all its complexities. The world in which South Africans lived had changed and it would never be the same again. So “If you have a new world, you need a new church. You have a new world” (McLaren, 2000: 11). “Now framed by a new paradigm, theology will need to make some adjustments in order to remain relevant within a new world” (Beyers, 2016: 3). Old forms of education and theological reflection were no longer relevant and needed to change. A few voices in a young democratic society recognised this. De Gruchy (1995: 13) highlighted that while the churches’ mission never changes, its context does and, as such, the church had to adapt to this new context. One of the things that needed to be addressed was poverty, for, as he writes, “democracy cannot be sustained and flourish where there is large scale poverty” (De Gruchy, 1995: 22). Commenting on the SACC, Raiser (1995: 33) remarks how the council had done the right thing for the right time but now the ground was changing and so the council also needed to change. Chipenda (1995: 39) also highlighted that with the loss of the single evil of apartheid, multiple social evils would perpetuate in South African society and the church should not lose these foci. What these three authors serve to highlight is that there was an awareness that a new dawn had risen on South Africa and that the context was now very different to before. It should also not be forgotten that the fall of apartheid coincided with the fall of the Cold War in Europe and the rise of the ‘war on terrorism’ with growing tension between Western and Middle-Eastern countries. Further,

this period also saw the rise of the “neo-liberal economic vision driven by the USA and its partners in the G8” (De Gruchy & De Gruchy, 2005: 224). Closer to home, and in direct relation to ministerial formation, the closure of the Federal Theological Seminary impacted the landscape of ecumenical theological education (cf. Duncan, 2004: 64–65)¹⁷. Classed as a tragedy among many in theological educational circles (cf. CUC, 2018), the closure of this institution saw the closure of a church led ecumenical platform for ministerial formation. Further, it left many of the “black churches” with no formal training institution (Richardson, 2007: 141).

One of the impacts on South African society was the sudden onset of postmodernity. Being in a modernised, globalised world had a vast effect on the context in which ministerial formation and theological education took place. The effects of globalisation are vast and it is sometimes difficult to distil what was a direct result of globalisation and what came about by its own accord. In this research, though, the topics of technology, accreditation, commodification and ecumenism shall form focus areas. These four peculiarities have had a large impact on the nature of ministerial formation. They are by no means presented as an exhaustive list, “opportunities are lurking everywhere” (Oliver, 2014: 4), but are considered key focus areas. Another area with large scale effects is that of poverty. However, as the effects of poverty are so far-reaching its investigation has been delimited. The effects of poverty will thus be explored through and in relation to each of the four key focus areas.

3.2.1 Technology

The rise of modern technology has drastically changed the world in which we live. The development of the internet, computers, mobile phones and smart devices has completely changed access to information, the way business is conducted and the way in which we interact with the world at large. One can now search for the rugby results, order a pizza, buy a new TV and participate in an international conference call all from the comfort of one’s own home and in many cases all from one device. As Oliver (2014: 2) explains, we are living at the

¹⁷ Fed-Sem, was a shining example of the potential of ecumenism in its day. It became an ecumenical environment for Ministerial Formation for Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Evangelical Presbyterian members. Yet with its decline the partner churches began to grow weary of each other. Thus, when it closed its doors this greatly affected the ecumenical scene. The closure of such a crowning example of ecumenism created serious doubts about the possibility of ecumenism. Further the circumstances of its closure created division and hostility between denominations that had once trained clergy together leaving a bitter environment in which to operate. (see, Duncan, 2004: 64–65)

beginning of the 4th social revolution. The first social revolution was the development of language. This allowed more advanced communication and the transference of knowledge. The second revolution was the invention of writing skills. This allowed for easier transfer of knowledge and for it to outlive the writer. The third social revolution was that of the printing press. This rapidly increased the production of written materials making them affordable for the masses. The 4th revolution, also termed the 4th industrial revolution, is thus the invention of the internet, allowing ideas to be spread like never before and truly putting the power of knowledge at the figure tips of the individual (see Oliver, 2014: 2–3). “Information technology based on the World Wide Web (www) is restructuring the economy, capitalism and society” (Hendriks, 2012: 2). A revolution is stressful as it involves entering the unknown and brings about a complete paradigm change (Oliver, 2014: 2–3). It does not mean we need to do away with our old tools, but we do need to consider their function in this new paradigm. “[T]he ‘technological bluff’ that creates the impression that there is almost nothing that is not possible with technology” needs to be avoided (Cloete, 2017: 2). Yet, there are certain benefits of technology that should be taken into consideration. Again, what follows is not an exhaustive list but a few key suggestions.

First, distance/online learning can take the classroom to the learner. This can provide huge benefits for learners who cannot afford, for whatever reason, to leave their home community to go and study. Distance education brings the material to the learner and often at a reduced cost. In terms of ministerial formation, Naidoo (2012b) suggests that a few benefits may be attached to this approach. Firstly, distance education is more accessible and, as such, can train laypersons as well as those seeking ordained ministry (Naidoo, 2012b: 2). In South Africa and Africa at large, where the growth of Christianity far outpaces the growth of Christian leadership, the ability to reach the masses through technology can have a positive impact. Another benefit is that the learner remains in their local context and, as such, can immediately apply their theoretical knowledge to the lived situation (Naidoo, 2012b: 7). As will be explored below, the lack of contextualisation of theological education is a key challenge facing the discipline. Thus, it is argued that distance education is more contextual and can aid in the contextualisation debate. Then, a further benefit, raised by Cloete (2017: 5), is that online education has greater interaction within the class as introverts feel more comfortable to take part in discussions. In theology where formation, not merely knowledge acquisition, is the

goal then increased discussion can be beneficial to personal development (see Cloete, 2017: 6).

Second, digital libraries and textbooks can reduce publication cost and further help access to information. This works in connection with distance education in allowing course materials to be accessed by students wherever they are as long as they have an internet connection. In relation to course design, not committing the material to print allows a fluidity to remain in the course and for it to adapt to needs and contexts as phenomenon arise (cf. Naidoo, 2012b: 4–5).

Then, the rise of technology has also brought with it an increased ability to network. One example is *academia.edu*; a platform specifically designed for students and lecturers to share and comment on their latest work and ideas (Academia.edu, 2018)¹⁸. While within the classroom the increased ability for networking also has its benefits. Just the simple creation of a *WhatsApp* group allows for easier communication between students and lecturers. Further, in the view of Oliver (2014: 4), Technology

... will ensure a link between theology and other academic disciplines, as well as society in general. Technology and the mind-set of the network society can provide opportunities for interaction, broadening the audience for theology.

However, there are also dangers and challenges attached to technology. While technology has the potential to increase access to learning, individuals still need access to appropriate devices and sufficient infrastructure for these devices to function effectively. Without a laptop and/or an internet connection, the potential benefits are irrelevant (see Cloete, 2017: 4). In the 2013 household survey it was estimated that only 10% of the population had access to the internet at home, with the statistic rising to only 40% by the time access at a workplace, internet café or other locations were included (Statistics SA, 2014: 52). With regards to household ownership of computers, this was estimated to be around 19.4% nationally. In areas classified as rural, household ownership of at least one computer was down to 6.6% (Statistics SA, 2014: 56). In effect, the number of South Africans who have access to

¹⁸ Academia.edu (2018) describes themselves as “a platform for academics to share research papers”. With Academics using the platform to “share their research, monitor deep analytics around the impact of their research, and track the research of academics they follow”

technology and its potential benefits are very few. For the majority these assets are not affordable. As a nation South Africa is deeply gripped by a poverty crisis. This crisis deeply affects households' disposable income and access to technology. Statistically it was estimated that, in 2015, 25.1% of the population was unemployed (The World Bank, 2018: 77). However, youth unemployment was higher. Between 2005-2015, 40% of those aged between 20 and 29 were unemployed (The World Bank, 2018: 78). While in 2015 it was estimated the 55.5% of the population were living in poverty (The World Bank, 2018: 7)¹⁹. As such, around half of those living in poverty are in employment; yet do not earn enough to break the poverty cycle. In other words, it is the minority which has a disposable income to spend on technology and access its potential benefits.

The disembodiment of the learner also poses challenges. While "information could be stored via technology" it is argued that "construction of knowledge and especially a lecture, cannot be replicated online" (Cloete, 2017: 2–3). The lecture is a lived performance which adapts to the mood and tone of the physically present class (Verene, 2013: 300). There is something in the physical presence that cannot be replicated in a digital presence. The loss of face to face learning also poses ethical challenges. It is much easier to fail a student when we do not know them or their personal situation (cf. Milgram, 1974: 32–36)²⁰. "Online education reduces students to clients and consumers of information" (Cloete, 2017: 3). This comes to the final problem, commodification. Technology, with the disembodiment of the individual and the mass production and distribution of material, is aiding the commodification of education. Commodification also presents a challenge in its own right and not just as a subset of technological advancements.

3.2.2 Commodification

With the rise of globalisation and changes in economic models, educational institutions went "from being in the business of education into being in the education business" (Cloete, 2017:

¹⁹ 55.5% is taken from the upper bound poverty line. In terms of food poverty, it was estimated around 25.2% of the population (see The World Bank, 2018; 7-8). On all counts the percentage of those living in poverty in South Africa has decreased since 2005 but is still a high percentage.

²⁰ In Milgram's (1974) *Obedience to authority* experiments an electric shock is administered to a learner by a teacher at the request of an instructor every time the learner answers a question incorrectly. In experiments 2-4 the proximity of the learner to the teacher is increased with a recorded decrease in the mean maximum voltage administered. This experiment thus shows how personal contact makes it harder to administer damaging/ painful consequences

5). Previously excluded from the global market, at the fall of apartheid and with the lifting of international sanctions, South Africa soon found itself on a very different playing field.

Commodification refers to “the action or process of treating something as a mere commodity” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018a). A commodity is a material or product that can be bought or sold, this traditionally referred to raw materials or primary agricultural products but now can be stretched to any product which meets a human need (cf. Oxford English Dictionary, 2018b). The “two qualities that transform an object into a commodity is that it has value and can be exchanged for money, priced or traded (Jacobs, 2009: 393). As this research is focusing on a recent history of ministerial formation, it is the commodification of education which forms the specific interest for this section.

As a commodity needs to be sold globally it is intentionally stripped of subjectivity becoming a-contextual in order to reach a mass market. In terms of education, its commodification strips it of its essence and identity (Hadebe, 2017: 2). When we reflect on the task of ministerial formation, to prepare individuals for ministry in their local context, it is clear how the loss of context and subjectivity in education is detrimental to its very essence. “Knowledge production is not an end in itself but must result in transformation of the society from which it arises” (Hadebe, 2017: 7). Yet when it becomes a commodity knowledge production does become an end in itself. “Universities are portrayed as businesses offering knowledge packaged and branded in the form of teaching programmes for sale to interested clients” (Naidoo, 2017: 2). Curriculum design thus comes to be tailored around the client with the greatest financial influence, rather than the needs of the local community. In a public lecture given by Mkhize (2018) the effects of this became clear. She highlighted how research projects are not chosen on their potential worth but on their ease and likelihood of publication. Their retail value, not their social value is what mattered most to the university. Bali and Kim (2010: 163) describe how this has created a “fast food” approach to education which lacks any real depth or development. A few of the key impacts of this approach are listed below.

Education comes to be about knowledge production, losing focus of personal formation. As such, “the value of education is measured in terms of what can be produced or consumed and becomes crassly utilitarian” (Naidoo, 2017: 2). Individuals are not treated as learners but as customers. Their education becomes about knowledge acquisition and not personal

development. In the case of Africa, Maluleke (2006: 69) highlights how this leads to black/African students being targeted as “consumers of theological education rather than as interlocutors”, where Africanisation becomes a “cosmetic enterprise”. Real change is not sought; rather that which will produce capital and does not upset the system becomes the focus. “Commodification comes with the uncritical adoption of western knowledge, which marginalises local customs and traditions”(Hadebe, 2017: 2). This then strongly relates to the conversation around contextualisation/Africanisation which will be discussed later in this chapter.

With the focus on economic gain, competition not co-operation becomes the framing environment for education. Van Wyk (2017) wonderfully illustrates this by comparing the current climate in theological education to that of *The Hunger Games* trilogy by Susan Collins. In the Hunger Games, competitors compete inside the ring (a panopticon environment) in a fight to the death until only one is left. This is likened to academia where we know the rules and engage in combat in the midst of our circle. In the academy we fear for our job security and fiercely compete to keep publications and economic gain up. But outside the ring is a population trying to overcome an oppressive system. Much like South Africa, outside of the academy is a population struggling to survive and make sense of the world. This is a population struggling to adapt to a new paradigm. A paradigm in which the “West” is no longer the norm and Christianity no longer the “superior” religion, in which awareness of social inequality and ecological awareness are growing (Bosch, 2016: 192–193). It is also a context gripped by vast inequality (The World Bank, 2018: 43–44) where very few have access to higher education (Statistics SA, 2014: 17)²¹ and a means to change their reality. But the battle in the academic ring has become a distraction. While focused on competing, academic theological education has lost its relevance and it will only become relevant again if it deconstructs the arena it is trapped in (van Wyk, 2017: 260–261). Beyers (2016: 7) highlights how theology can either continue this status quo, entrenching itself further within its “ivory tower” accessible only to those with financial means, or engage with society and work for

²¹ In 2013 it was estimated that of individuals over the age of 5 that attending an educational institution only 4.7% were attending a tertiary institution. In other words, there is a large drop out between school attendance and tertiary attendance (see Statistics SA, 2014: 18)

social transformation. Yet he highlights how this is no longer a practical question but also an ethical one (Beyers, 2016: 7).

Finally, commodification greatly impacts access to education. “As a developing nation with large poor communities, commodification denies many students access to higher education and opportunities to improve their lives, an issue of social injustice” (Hadebe, 2017: 2). With the rising cost of living and a focus on economic gain, education is becoming a luxury commodity only available to those who can afford it. Within a church environment, du Preez, Hendriks & Carl (2014: 2) highlight how this is hindering church growth as only a few of gifted potential leaders are receiving an education. For those potential leaders that can’t afford the financial premiums, access is not granted.

3.2.3 Accreditation

With the fall of apartheid and the move from a Christian state to a secular state, theological institutions found a new system of accreditation was imposed. This has led to national challenges for institutions to become accredited. Formed in 1965 the Joint Board for the Diploma in Theology was the official accrediting body for many ministerial formation programs (see Duncan, 2018a: 4). However, since 2005 the Joint Board has not been recognised by the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA). Starting in 1997 new legislation came into being. The National Qualification Framework afforded a level to each qualification assess only by SAQA. In this new environment many seminaries, previously covered through the Joint Board, had to apply for accreditation independently (see Richardson, 2007: 145). This was a costly process which many institutions could not afford (cf. CUC, 2018)²². Naidoo (2015: 169) regards this change in accreditation as the first domino in the eventual closure of many institutions. Yet, it is not only internally that accreditation has created challenges for ministerial formation. On the other side of the equation and compounding the problem, international competition has also been introduced. Naidoo (2017: 1) states how South African students are often drawn more to international institutions, completing their degree via correspondence. While Kalu (2006: 236) claims that “others simply buy certificates from fake operators or groups of Americans travel through the

²² Richardson (2007: 145) states that a total of 19 seminaries had been accredited under the Joint Board and all, due to the change in legislation, now needed to apply for accreditation.

developing world ordaining bishops and granting degrees as a way of building a worldwide network”.

3.2.4 Loss of Ecumenism

The ending of apartheid also saw the decline of ecumenism within South Africa. Ecumenism, certainly, did not disappear completely but a commitment to it did subside. The simple example of the SACC (South African Council of Churches) serves to prove this point. A formidable organisation during the struggle, it is now a minor group which has lost its prophetic voice (see Göranson, 2011: 473–493; cf. Pillay, 2017b; Womack & Pillay, 2019). Reflecting on the situation, De Gruchy and De Gruchy (2005: 223) comment how it is bitterly ironic that a time of forced segregation saw a strong ecumenical movement, while a time of constitutional equality has seen its demise. In contemporary society it appears to be “proximity to power, money, status, and the ruling parties”, not working together to overcome social evils which form the main focus of churches (Makgoba, 2015: 502). Pillay has also highlighted how this proximity to power, the government, has further detriment to the ecumenical movement (Pillay, 2017b: 3–4). As the state of poverty is so vast, partnership with the government to secure influence and wealth is often attractive. The SACC, when its financial status was declining, adopted this approach and a voice of “critical solidarity” with the state. However, it was more solidarity than critical which resulted in compromises in the council's mandate (see Vellem, 2013: 180–182). It is no wonder that ecumenism in South Africa has been described as being in a “state of crisis” (Maluleke, 2005). The post-modern world seems to be characterised by rampant individualism. The emergence of the challenge of commodification further leads to theological education being a private endeavour for one’s own success. Denominationalism is leading to private universities which focus on preserving their own church identity, which is degrading to the wider theological discussions (Amanze, 2013: 227–228). While it is important for denominations to maintain their own identity, denominationalism goes beyond this creating a negative environment for theological development and education (De Gruchy, 1995: 16–17). Ministerial formation is a multifaceted endeavour and candidates can benefit greatly from learning in an ecumenical environment. Working in an ecumenical environment allows learners to be exposed to views other than their own. Further, with the increased cost of learning it is not viable for denominations to try and go it alone (CUC, 2018). Ecumenism can help spread the cost of education between

various denominations. Ultimately the loss of church unity is contrary to the gospel²³ and, as such, needs to be overcome.

Since the fall of apartheid “everything” has changed. Theological institutions are no longer operating in the same environment, for some they are even no longer accredited. Further, the immersion into post-modern society has radically changed the way theological education can be and is conducted. Technology has brought rapid changes to which educational institutions are still trying to adapt and embrace in the most beneficial way. Then education itself has become more and more a commodity changing its very focus and essence. Some of the developments in this new South Africa have brought negative influences, yet others have been positive. Whether positive or negative one thing is for sure, the context in which theological education is conducted has drastically changed since 1994.

3.3 *Nothing* has changed

In 2015 and 2016 South Africa witnessed the #FeesMustFall and other student protest movements²⁴. The main catalyst for the protest movements was the proposed increase in tuition fees. Yet while the catalyst, it cannot be contributed as the sole cause. Commenting at the time Prof Jane Duncan (in *The Daily Vox*, 2017) believed that it was about “demanding that education be delivered as a public good, or as a commons, and not as a commodity. In other words, the profit motive must be removed from education delivery.” While Katlego Dismelo (2015), a PhD candidate at the University of the Witwatersrand at the time, saw the protests to cover more than just one issue.

It is, firstly about access to equal and quality education. It is about teasing out the ever-so confusing intricacies of class relations in post-apartheid South Africa. It is about eradicating the painful exclusion and daily micro-aggressions which go hand-in-hand with institutional racism within these spaces. And it is also about laying bare the failures of the heterosexual, patriarchal, neoliberal capitalist values which have become so characteristic of the country’s universities

²³ John 17:20-21

²⁴ #ScienceMustFall and #AfrikaansMustFall are two other key topics which received a lot of media attention at the time

The protest thus incorporated mass dissatisfaction with the current approach to education in South Africa, social unrest and discontent with life in post-apartheid South Africa, the perceived continuation of racial discrimination, and colonialism. For many students, there was lament that their parents would have to teach them how to cope with tear gas in a free and democratic South Africa. What the protests movements will be classed as is up for debate²⁵, yet what they do demonstrate is the lack of change in democratic South Africa. The #FeesMustFall protest was the last straw with an educational institution that refused to change and adapt to contemporary South Africa (cf. Amanze, 2009: 124; Le Grange, 2016: 10). What these protests serve to highlight is the lack of change within contemporary South Africa society. While in one sense *everything* had changed, in another very real sense *nothing* had changed. Below issues pertinent to theological education, which have seemingly not changed since democracy, will be discussed.

3.3.1 Gender

Gender, and particular discrimination against women, remain a pressing issue. Within South Africa, women are still more likely to live in poverty. In 2015, 51.2% of female-headed households were in poverty (The World Bank, 2018: 13). While statistically many young girls cannot attend school as they are expected to help at home (Statistics SA, 2014: 19)²⁶. Then, within theological education, there still only remains a small proportion of female candidates. Theological education in Southern Africa is shamefully behind in the empowerment of women and drafting their incorporation in the church and academics (Amanze, 2013: 232). “Theological education is out of reach for the majority of African women” (Phiri, 2009: 11). While institutions may accept the training of women, society still places expectations upon females which prevent them from studying. Further South African society for women is often a dangerous environment. 2018 saw protest movements against gender-based violence, while 2017 saw the hashtag #MenAreTrash trending on Twitter. For those who can study they often end up receiving different qualifications to their male counterparts or different allocations in churches (Phiri, 2009: 111). Acceptance in a theological course does not mark the end of the segregation; even while studying or when seeking employment gender comes

²⁵ Le Grange (2016) describes them as a class struggle and a rediscovery of identity.

²⁶ Of reasons given why individuals aged between 7 to 18 were not in school 22.2 females, compared to 0.9 males stated “Family Commitments”. Lack of finances was the key reasons given but there was a much lower gender discrepancy in this regard (see Statistics SA, 2014:19).

to play a decisive role. As such, the oppression of women is still continued within theological education. Phiri (2009: 112) claims that “there are more theological institutions in Africa that have no women on their staff than those that recruit women”. Speaking from the context of her church Plaatjies-Van Huffel points out how changes have been implemented. In 2005 the denomination established that at least 25% female and 25% youth representation should occur on governing bodies. Yet, Plaatjies-Van Huffel (2019: 19) concludes:

The surface structures have been shifted at the General Synods but the dominant discourses that imprison women have remained the same. Essentially, nothing has changed. No major paradigm shifts with regard to gendered objects came to pass. Gender injustices remain a serious expression of structural injustice of our time.

Landman (see 2019: 11–13) also shares a similar view but is determined to not let this discrimination define her ministry. Undeniably and quite rightly, there has been some change towards gender in South African society and Ministerial formation, but the dominant narrative is still one of discrimination and abuse

3.3.2 Decolonisation

The decolonisation/contextualisation/Africanisation discussion has a vast array of literature written on it (see Maluleke, 2006; Amanze, 2009; Naidoo, 2010; Hendriks, 2012; Monhla, 2014; Le Grange, 2016; Hadebe, 2017). As the purpose of this section is to highlight challenges within the South African context an in-depth exploration of the topic will not be conducted. Rather the point here is to flesh out the key areas of debate to help guide the later historical analysis. Decolonisation/contextualisation/Africanisation all represent different disciplines. They have been grouped here though as their focus is on the lack of change within educational models since 1994 and the need to develop an educational system relevant to the needs of the local context. The plea for theological education to equip in the local context is a long-standing one. In *Theological impotence and the universality of the church*, Mbiti (1976) provided a poignant anecdote which depicted the irrelevance of models of theological education in Africa and pleaded for this to change. In 2006 Maluleke (see 2006: 61–62) again popularised this anecdote and pleaded for relevant theological education within the South African context. The main criticism has been that theological education is not changing. Despite a global shift in Christianity, from the northern to the southern hemisphere,

educational forms and thought processes have not matched this shift (Wahl, 2013: 267). The effects of this have been vast and a few key issues are listed below.

First, theological teaching and education are in a fragile state. While faith may be booming the maturity and nature of that faith is a cause for concern. Poetically phrased, the church is a mile wide but only an inch deep (see Balcomb, 2011). Or as Gatwa (2010: 322) phrases it: “Christianity in the South is a giant standing on clay legs”. This refers to the basic fact that while there has been great growth, ministerial formation has not developed in unison with this. As such, the legs of the giant need to be strengthened and theological knowledge deepened. Balcomb (2011: 33) sees the key need in this regard as the “translation” of the gospel into African society.

In relation to the first point is the fact that even those receiving theological education feel it does not equip them for ministry. This is a global issue but is especially key in Africa. “Most theological colleges in Africa are faithfully teaching the knowledge that was generated in the West because we are dependent on Western textbooks for so many of the courses we teach” (Houston, 2013: 109). This dependence on the “West” and inability to break its hold is leading to the perpetuation of an education that has no relevance in the immediate context. This leads to work being done to perpetuate the western system even though it may have no bearing or relevance today. “The African graduate has learnt well to ignore the questions that are being asked ‘on the ground’, to explain them away and to occupy himself with his own fabricated ones” (Maluleke, 2006: 67).

In line with not equipping it is also seen that current forms are not relevant. Ministerial candidates do not learn to work in the local context, nor do they even study it. The “colonial” model of education is entrenched in the secular, enlightenment world view which promotes the importance of rationality at the expense of spirituality (Balcomb, 2012: 8–9). Yet this is not the reality of the African world view. Further issues of relevance are found with the curriculum design. “The dominant curriculum continues to be a source of alienation” (Naidoo, 2016: 2). “It is still possible to attain a diploma or a basic degree in theology within (South) Africa and to do so without ever having read any work by an African” (Maluleke, 2006: 66). Due to this lack of relevance, much of the education is done in the abstract, consequently,

students lack practical experience (Amanze, 2013: 229). In short, theological education is critiqued for not meeting the contextual reality of those studying.

3.3.3 A religious Society

A final aspect of South African society that has not changed since apartheid is its strong spiritual and Christian presence. It is estimated that 85% of the population claim to be Christian (Statistics SA, 2014: 32). In a recent study on the spiritual lives of students Nell (2016: 6) found that 98.9% of the sample group were religious to some degree.

As Western Christianity struggled to survive secularisation from damaging ideologies of different revolutions, the churches in the South demonstrated extraordinary vitality demographically and spiritually, with people of all ages and classes attending church activities and Sunday services. (Gatwa, 2010: 321)

This is important for two main reasons. First, it demonstrates the need for ministerial formation. With such a high adherence to Christianity, there is a need to continually train/form ministers. Second, the approach of training needs to take account of the spiritual reality.

Theology in Africa – whether in or out of the academy, is done assuming not the absence but the presence of God, there is no interest in the social sciences - either as a means of explanation of religious phenomena (as these are essentially religious in nature - that is they have transcendent causality) or as a means of measuring relevance, and there is no tradition of secular humanism when it comes to the notion of human rights and flourishing. This has profound implications for the way that theology is being done in most parts of Africa (Balcomb, 2012: 10)

This vibrancy of faith should form a strong reason for academic theology to sit up and pay attention to the local context if it wants to assure its long-term success.

From this section, it has been seen that, in some regards, very little has changed in South Africa since 1994. South African society is still gripped by inequality and plagued with poverty. The forms of education being taught still perpetuate the old colonial system and lack relevance to the local congregation. Yet faith and spirituality have remained a strong part of

South African society and provide hope for the future of theological education within South Africa.

Thus far this chapter has delimited the period of focus by defining contemporary history and provided an overview of this context focusing on matters pertinent to ministerial formation. It was put forward that South African society is a complex blend of change and continuity. With the fall of apartheid and the rise of the 4th industrial revolution dramatic changes have taken place in the daily reality of every South African. Yet, at the same time, challenges of poverty, inequality and Africanisation/ decolonisation still characterise South African society. This then creates a challenging context within which ministerial formation takes place. The need to prioritise the African context should feature highly in formation. So too should awareness of unequal access to education and measures put in place to make sure all able candidates, not only the financially able, can have access to ministerial formation. With this in mind, the chapter now turns to assess the University of Pretoria and its function within contemporary society. As the University of Pretoria forms the geographical delimitation for this research it is necessary to provide an exposition of the institution.

3.4 University of Pretoria

The University of Pretoria is caught between the change and continuation of this new epoch. As the focus institution of this study, it is necessary to look at the changes, challenges and characteristics in general of the university. The UP too has changed greatly since 1994. In 2000 two former faculties merged to create one faculty of theology open to all. Kruger (2016: 4) sees this as the university attempting to move in tandem with post-94 South Africa. The two faculties, section A for the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa (NHKA²⁷) and section B for the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), sought to overcome a history of division and exclusivity in 2000. Since the arrival of the DRC in 1938 to the UP, two separate wings (section A and section B) of the faculty came into existence. While founded by multiple denominations in 1917 (see Duncan, 2008: 58–59)²⁸ the faculty of theology had succumbed to Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid ideology, becoming a training ground for the NHKA and DRC alone (see Kruger, 2016: 4; De Beer & Van Niekerk, 2017: 218). Even among the partners the two sections

²⁷ The abbreviation NHKA is taken from the Afrikaans Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika

²⁸ Members from the Presbyterian Church in South Africa were influential in the founding of the faculty although the denomination would never train any clergy there and eventually withdraw their presence altogether only rectifying the situation in 2002 (Duncan, 2008: 63)

functioned almost independently of each other. In 2000 the two wings became one and the faculty was unified opening the door for further ecumenical relations. In 2002 the newly formed UPCSA became official partners, followed by the URCSA in 2012 (Kruger, 2016: 4)²⁹. As such, the year 2000 marked a key moment in the history of the faculty hence its use as the starting point for this research. Without the unification process both UPCSA and URCSA would have been unable to join the faculty of theology at UP. 2017, the endpoint of this research also marks another important date; the centenary of the faculty. With the 100 year celebrations the faculty reintroduced gates to the front of the building and fixed them in a permanently open position (Faculty of Theology, 2017: 74). This architecture is to serve as a reminder of the slogan “Gateway to...”. The gates are not to be closed again but the faculty will strive to remain open to all. This physical reminder thus serves to highlight the approach of the faculty and its commitment to inclusivity and dialogue with others.

Yet despite these positive steps towards inclusivity, the future of theology is uncertain and one thing for sure is that 2017 marked the *Gateway to uncertainty*. Generally, theological faculties in South Africa are experiencing a decline in numbers and increased hostility from a secular university system. “Theological education in South Africa is in a crisis of being forced to transform or being closed because of the higher education policies, which pushes an agenda for secular state and inclusive society” (Mashabela, 2017: 6)

The environment in which faculties of theology have to act is becoming increasingly hostile. Already a number of universities have shut down their theological faculties while others have been condensed from a faculty to form a department within the social sciences (Mouton, 2008: 432). Further, uncertainty is brought by a lack of church and personal finances, creating a situation where training at an academic institution is no longer affordable (Naidoo, 2013: 4). As such, while there may be an increase in the uptake of Christianity, this is not proportional with theological education, in fact, there would seem to be more of an inverse relationship (Kombo, 2013: 105).

²⁹ Kruger also states that in 2004 the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa joined the faculty as official partners but no record of this can be found by the author and at the time of writing the four official partners are the Netherdutch Reformed Church, Dutch Reformed Church, Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa

Working in a multi-religious society is a factor of post-'94 South Africa which Christian theological faculties are going to have to come to terms with. The fact that South Africa may still remain predominantly Christian does not form a sufficient ground for public universities to offer only Christian theology. As public universities are intended to serve the public good in the broadest sense the nature of theological education, opposed to that offered at private universities, will have to be different (De Beer & Van Niekerk, 2017: 215). In post-modern South Africa it is becoming clear that if theological education wishes to remain at a public university then it has to be inclusive (multi-religious) in nature (Kruger, 2016: 9; Buitendag, J. & Simut, 2017: 10). If this will be from a perspective of faith, or a perspective of neutrality is still an ongoing debate (see van de Beek, 2012: 85–87). Yet in the view of Kruger, neutrality seems the most likely option:

The developing dominant sentiment regarding theology at state institutions of higher learning seemed to blend with a measure of increasing neutralism, shading into indifference, and containing elements of antireligious sentiment inspired by ideological commitments, materialistic scientism and modern consumerism, the quantification and commercialisation of research being symptoms of these.

Neutralism and indifference ease the commodification process. As mentioned above, having a product devoid of context increases the potential market it can be sold to. As such, the rise of the commodification of education is seen to be a symptom of the turn towards neutrality. It is the marketability of a product, not its potential benefit which is becoming the chief criterion at public universities. As the previous chapter highlighted, it is important for ministerial formation to be performed from a faith perspective. Unfortunately, the University of Pretoria seems to be following the trend of mass marketing and commodification. Buitendag, J. & Simut (2017: 30), commenting from the perspective of the UP, suggest that universities will have to become:

entrepreneurial because they will have to constantly seek new ways of interaction with the industry and the government so that their work is not only properly rewarded financially, but also transposed meaningfully into the wider web of social existence for the active and unceasing promotion of the common good.

This approach emphasises financial gain and mass (global) acceptance. Elsewhere Buitendag (2016: 5), describing the Pretoria model, writes: “It accepts the challenge to compete internationally and adheres to the demands of the world ranking systems with the core criteria of ‘publish or perish’”. Here it is clear that the Faculty of theology is aligning itself to mass acceptance and focusing on global (some would say western³⁰) rankings opposed to the local situation. What this will mean for the local context and ministerial formation is unclear and will form a key part of this research. However, Buitendag (2016: 9) writes, “it is also clear in my mind that academic excellence is not negotiable and that churches would have to add a certain amount of denominational flavour to the theological inquiry offered at the Faculty”. What this denominational flavour amounts to is unclear. It is clear that churches must take responsibility for the training of the candidates, but what degree of responsibility will they have to take in a secular university (Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 4)? If the University of Pretoria is to follow the line of neutrality and mass acceptance, the responsibility on the church for contextualisation and faith development will be greatly increased. As such, the need for a public university to adapt to a post-Christian South Africa will have serious effects on ministerial formation conducted at such institutions.

Another uncertainty facing the university, in relation to commodification, is that of access. The #FeesMustFall protests were sparked by the increasingly unaffordable cost of higher education. While a short-term fees freeze was imposed the long-term effects starting to play out see little signs of change. On-campus security has been increased. Among students it is joked that it is easier to get into Fort Knox than the UP. Further student societies, especially any of a religious nature, are slowly but surely being moved off-campus. So, while the Faculty of theology may have its gates wide open, the university’s gates are firmly shut to any outsiders. While the university continues to tighten security, fees continue to rise and the issues of decolonisation and social equality which were also swept up in the student protest movement have not been adequately addressed.

Focusing on the University of Pretoria, Duncan (2016: 7) refers to the Africanisation process as a veneer³¹. It is a quick cover to give the appearance of change but underneath real change

³⁰ Duncan (2016, p9) also critiques a focus on world rankings arguing that “World rankings detract from a focus on self-improvement, as they focus on the competitiveness of the business rather than the academic model”

³¹ “UP retains the traditional Western reality of a theology faculty with a veneer of Africanisation” (Duncan, 2016, p7).

is not taking place. As Mogashoa and Makofane (2017: 6) write “the faculty does not expose students sufficiently to the realities and theological riches of the African continent”. Rather it is still rooted in a western tradition not truly adapted to the reality of South Africa. As de Beer & Van Niekerk (2017: 221) remark:

Transforming curricula would need to ask much deeper and more foundational questions of both the content, structure and methodology of the current curricula than simply making cosmetic changes.

The UP, like many other academic institutions in South Africa, is struggling to emerge from its colonial past into a post-apartheid future. Still the systems of western education are perpetuated within its lecture halls and while attempts to change have started, true change is still lacking. With the fall of apartheid, the student demographics started to change and Afrikaans as a language of instruction has fallen away. Yet the content of lectures remains greatly unchanged and the focus of research is predominantly on world rankings, not local needs. As such, just with South African society at large, with the fall of apartheid *everything* changed and yet at the same time *nothing* changed.

3.5 Effects on Ministerial Formation

This is the complex reality in which contemporary ministerial formation takes place. It is this dual context of hope and desperation which frames the historical context for this research. It is a society in which the style and pace of life are rapidly changing, yet it is a society which is still suffering from the same old social evils of old. As such, before closing this chapter, it is important to clearly extract how this context is viewed to affect the theory of ministerial formation. These effects shall be presented under three main headings: *Ecumenism*, *Church University Relationship* and *Africanisation*.

3.5.1 Ecumenism

As mentioned above, the ecumenical movement in South Africa is in a crisis. In an age where technology can bring us closer together than ever before, it is ironic that divisions and individualism are running rife (see Smit, 2003b: 305–308). Yet, ecumenism is important in both practical and theological terms. With regard to the practical, churches working together can help spread the cost of education.

No single African denominational church had the financial or human resources strong enough to build a confessionally exclusive “centre of excellence” in theological education – the only realistic way forward was through ecumenical co-operation. (Saayman, 2013: 133)

Working together can be a way to assure quality in training while maintaining affordability. FedSem in South Africa used to fulfil this function, yet tragically in 1993, as the result of various circumstances (see Duncan, 2004), it closed. Yet at the recent Church Unity Conference it was recognised how wonderful this institution was, and, although its resurrection was no longer possible, the need for such an ecumenical institution was strongly felt (CUC, 2018). Not only did it meet practical requirements but it also fostered a spirit of unity and mutual learning. This brings us to the theological benefits. Working in an ecumenical environment helps to expose ministers to a more rounded view of the Christian faith. It creates a critical environment where the assumptions of one’s faith can be challenged by fellow brothers and sisters in Christ for mutual up-building. However, both the UPCSA and URCSA are struggling to unify their own denominations, never mind interdenominational relationships.

Since its creation in 1999, the UPCSA has struggled to truly unite. In a statement submitted in 2001 there was a call for true unity:

We would like union between the RPCSA [Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa] and PCSA [Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa] to be a fulfilling relationship of love for which we praise Christ; and not a loveless marriage which we will endure for the rest of our lives because we fear a public scandal of separation (in Duncan, 2005: 248).

The statement highlights the early issues after the official unification. While unified in name the denomination was struggling to unify in practice. In his 2017 doctoral thesis, Makofane (2017) highlighted that the divisions still had not been overcome and the two former denominations need to truly commit to uniting the church if the process is to succeed. In specific terms of formation at UP, it has been highlighted how UP remained a training ground almost exclusively for black UPCSA students with white candidates training elsewhere (Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 3). As such, the issues of racial segregation and church unity

run deep into the ministerial formation process. Thus, any assessment of their contemporary history must take this into account

Within the URCSA comments on the shortcomings of the unification process have been less common but are still present (see Kritzinger, 2010: 217–218). Yet the largest challenge remains the unification talks with the DRC. While the two denominations are continually in conversation with each other (Meiring, 2015: 1) the prospect of unity still seems far away. Again, issues of division run deep and need to be analysed in an assessment of ministerial formation. Racism and disunity still form part of South African society. “Racism, as a social construct, will not disappear of its own accord; it has to be combated by a well-developed and well-directed anti-racist programme” (Kgatla & Saayman, 2013: 6). Part of this combat should be seen in the approach to ministerial formation.

Further, with an awareness of the inequality which characterises South Africa (see The World Bank, 2018: 42–60), the re-emergence of an ecumenical spirit is vital in helping bridge the inequality. The focus will not be on the individual but on the collective. Some scholars writing in this regard have called for the need for Ubuntu. Meiring (2015: 2–3) describes Ubuntu as a concept incorporating identity, vitality, widening of community, solidarity and humanity, and as a concept with a strong affinity to Christian teaching. Using this term, they highlight the need to work together as a community, to support each other and not seek individual power and wealth.

When looking at Ubuntu as affirming personhood or humanness and respect for all human dignity, we begin to realise the value of embodying a spirituality of inclusion which reaches out to people who are different and the necessity of consciously thinking them into our lives as part of our worldview. (Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 8)

It is further argued that this African concept should be central in the Africanisation of theological education as it is a corrective to the individualisation of western thought (Haws, 2009: 482). In this way, inequality would be addressed, along with commodification and Africanisation, by moving the focus from the individual to the collective. With such a focus, the needs of those who cannot financially afford education will become more apparent and

efforts to include these individuals more sustained. Fostering an ecumenical spirit is thus a central challenge which Ministerial Formation should focus on.

The loss of ecumenism highlights the challenge in ministerial formation for reconciliation, equality and even, to some degree, Africanisation and commodification. In the South African context, ministerial formation needs to be aware of the divisions that run deep in society and aid ministers to cope with these.

3.5.2 Church University Relationship

As shown in the previous chapter, the relationship between church and university is crucial in the ministerial formation process. It is this relationship, when functioning well, which allows ministerial formation to achieve its holistic approach and give a well-rounded education. However, as should have become clear from the analysis of the UP above, church university relationships in South Africa are in a tenuous place. There is a growing distance between the two institutions both theologically and socially (cf. Naidoo, 2016: 4–5). By theological distance, the increasing neutrality of the university compared to the necessity of faith conviction of the church comes to mind (cf. Balcomb, 2015: 5). Socially, this refers to the issues of access, the church being open to all, especially the “destitute, the poor and the wronged” (Belhar Confession, 1986: 4.2)³², while the university becomes more and more closed off to and alienated from the outside world.

However, despite these challenges, it is essential that a dialogue between the church and the university remains if ministerial formation wishes to be fruitful. In this research, four key aspects will be assessed in this relationship. First, that of responsibility and agency. Who is responsible for what in the formation process? Voices from both the UPCSA and URCSA realise that a holistic approach must be sought as genuine ministerial formation cannot be completed by the church or university alone (Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 4). The diversities of skills needed to become a minister cannot be offered by the university alone (Kritzinger, 2010: 219). Yet the two institutions cannot function in isolation from each other; it was the involvement of Church partners that made the founding of a Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria possible (Merwe, 2008: 47). The responsibility of the church and

³² The phrasing here has been taken verbatim from the English translation of the Belhar confession which is a foundational document in the URCSA.

university thus need to overlap. They cannot operate as if they are marooned in their own spheres but need to interact with each other (cf. Chitando, 2010: 204). Universities need to take responsibility for personal formation and not only knowledge acquisition (Naidoo, 2011: 119). The church also needs to play a role in knowledge acquisition and not just expect a completed “product” to arrive back from the university.

A second focus area will be that of communication. If there is to be a successful overlap in responsibilities then communication is vital. Churches need to clearly communicate their expectations to the university and vice-versa. Through the training process, the issue of the lack of communication is not so noticeable. It is expected that formation will take its completion once students are in fulltime ministry (Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 5). Yet this is not always the case and the disconnect between training institute and church environment can lead to ineffective ministers (Houston, 2013: 110)

Without effective communication the needs and visions of both institutions cannot be effectively communicated and, as such, programmes cannot be tailored to those needs. Ministerial formation is not completed automatically, and in fact, candidates suffer due to ineffective training. The breakdown further comes when complaints are kept in house and not openly communicated. This allows an ineffective system to be perpetuated and only gossiped about. Effective and open communication between the denominations and the faculty of theology at the University of Pretoria needs to be assessed when analysing the contemporary history.

In relation to communication and responsibility is the need for a curriculum design that fulfils the intended vision for ministerial formation. “If the curriculum is haphazardly done, the people produced by it are also haphazard and their work is haphazard” (Kagama, 2008: 232; Hendriks, 2014: 71). The curriculum needs to be designed with purpose through a strong dialogue between partners and shared responsibility of commitments if ministerial formation is to be effective (Naidoo, 2015: 176). Naidoo (see 2015: 177–179) raises hesitations that current approaches are too “academic” and fragmented with an inadequate connection between church and academic “subjects”. As such, the process of curriculum formation, as well as an assessment of the current curriculum, will have to form part of the historical analysis.

Finally, the methods and their intended outcomes also need to form a focus. How ministerial formation is conducted and what churches hope to get out of it needs to be made clear. There is an underlying assumption that formation takes place in the dialogue between church and academy (Kritzinger, 2010: 222). Yet how is this practice achieved? For many, the current outcome is far from perfect and current methods are not adequate.

Students experience fragmentation and wrestle with combining the academic and vocational perspectives. The teaching and learning process depends mostly on teachers' lectures in the classroom, consisting of a heavy workload, followed by assessment and examination that relies on memorisation, all fostering individualism and competition for grades. (Naidoo, 2013: 10)

Currently, practices seem to foster competition and individualism but what sort of ministers is this method producing? Ministerial formation from the start needs to focus on the integration of the academic and the practical and to prepare individuals to take responsibility for their own learning (Kritzinger, 2010: 221). As such, it will be key to see what methods both the UPCS and URCSA incorporate into the formation process and what the outcomes of these were.

3.5.3 Africanisation

As discussed above, the topic of Africanisation is broad. As a concept, it lacks clarity, yet in terms of ministerial formation it relates to the need to take the African world view seriously in forms of education (Naidoo, 2016: 2). Ministerial formation needs to take seriously the contextual reality of the congregation, to not do so could be disastrous. "Traditional theology, which dominated the colonial period and immediately after independence is not adequate to address the various social, religious, social, economic and political problems and challenges prevalent in the African continent" (Amanze, 2009: 120). Considering training at the UP, it could be argued that the curriculum delivered is still stuck in Eurocentric ways (cf. Tshaka, 2015: 2). Pertinent to this is the topic of spirituality.

In order to overcome the legacy of exclusion and division from the past, we need a spirituality that is rooted in grace, inclusively African, reconciling, creation-affirming, anti-racist, and excentric (or missional). (Kritzinger, 2010: 229)

As already discussed, spirituality forms a central part of African reality. Candidates for ministry need to be trained in relation to this reality. A secular education could alienate the learner from their faith, their context and their people (Balcomb, 2015: 11). In approaching theological education, it is often emphasised how a spirit of *ubuntu* is needed (Meiring, 2015: 3; Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 8). Graduates also need to be taught how to handle ancestral worship and demonic possession. Whether one believes in these or not is irrelevant; these are phenomenon of South African society and, as such, graduates need to know how to function effectively in this society.

Language is central to reality; in fact, language is often formative to reality and even the way we think (see Boroditsky, 2017). If candidates for ministry are taught in an alien language, with no conscious effort to translate back into one's mother tongue, then their education may always remain alien. "Theology has to consider language with the utmost seriousness. A theology done in one's second or third language cannot be a contextual theology" (Kritzinger, 2010: 220). Firstly, the language of Descartes, "I think therefore I am", the perpetuation of an individualist view, needs to be overcome with the language of inclusivity and community "I am because we are" taking its place (Le Grange, 2016: 9). Secondly, African languages in their own right need to be adopted as appropriate vehicles for transferring theological thought. Bilingual theological competence needs to be fostered (Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 7).

For Maluleke (see 2006: 72–74), Africanisation involves a conscious choice; it is about liberation; it must go further than cosmetics; it must provide an honest assessment of the situation; and finally not attempt to return to an idealised view of the past. Africanisation is about taking the African situation seriously and critically and is vital for ministerial formation. Thus, in the historical analysis, this research will look to see how the topic of Africanisation has been addressed with a specific focus on African spirituality and language.

3.6 Theory of Ministerial formation for South Africa

South African reality presents a challenging context for ministerial formation. The crucial link between church and university is in a complex position. The university appears to be stuck in its colonial past and focused on a post-modern future of commercialisation and mass production. This has led to a continuation of a world view and knowledge construct alien to everyday reality. While on the other side of the equation is the growth of a Christian population disproportion to the uptake of theological education (Kombo, 2013: 105). Further,

the challenges of post-modernism and the rise of technology have had knock-on effects on the ecumenical movement in South Africa. What is clear from this contextual analysis is that ministerial formation needs to train strong leaders for the future (see Wahl, 2013: 267; Naidoo, 2015: 166; Kaunda, 2016b: 933; Mahali, 2017: 236) The church in South Africa finds itself still working out the prospects of a new area of Christianity in South Africa. Dangers and opportunities are present and it will take strong and competent leadership to navigate these waters. As seen from the previous chapter, the training of church leadership is central to the process of ministerial formation. Bringing in the summary of ministerial formation presented in the last chapter, this task is to develop leaders capable of leading God’s people. The task involves a balancing between the individual, the academic environment and the church environment. To provide a visual example, ministerial formation should look like an equilateral triangle. Each side of the triangle should be in proportion. At the base of the triangle is the individual, they are connected to both the church and the academy and have a duty performed in both. The individual must take responsibility for the formation process in order to give the academy and church a ground to build on. Then there is the academy and the church, both playing their role in the formation process. Overemphasis on one of these aspects will lead to an imbalance in the formation process. While a disconnect between the academy and local church will look more like an incomplete square which could collapse at any point.

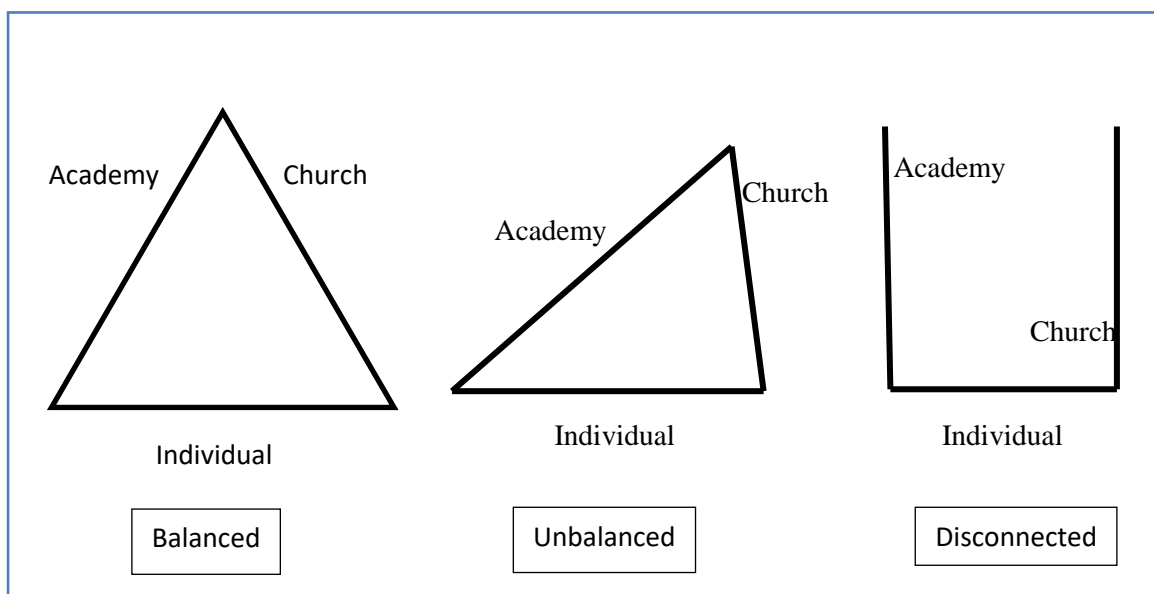


Figure 1: Triangle of ministerial formation

The analogy of apprenticeship was used in the last chapter to demonstrate the necessity of each side of the formational triangle and the need for them to be in contact. Within South Africa, the ministerial formation process is strained by the challenges of Africanisation/contextualisation, the church academy relationship as well as struggles in the ecumenical movement. Yet the spiritual nature of the continent and the rise of technology can offer potential benefits. As such, ministerial formation needs to work to overcome disconnect and alienation from context and draw on the spiritually rich environment of South Africa and incorporate technological advancements for the benefit of the formation process.

3.7 Chapter summary

This chapter started out with an analysis of the concept of contemporary history. From this, the potential worth of contemporary history was asserted and the boundaries for this research were defined. South Africa post-1994 was then described in two stages as a paradoxical society. It was first seen as a society in which *everything* had changed. The rapid changes brought about by globalisation and the entrance into the global market brought new ways of doing theology and new foci. The need to cautiously embrace theology was seen while the challenges of commodification and the loss of ecumenism were also seen. From here the other side of the equations was analysed. In some sense it was argued that *nothing* had changed in South Africa. Inequality was still rife and educational models continued to be entrenched in western ideologies. The University of Pretoria was seen to be caught up in this struggle which was creating certain challenges which partner churches would need to become aware of. Finally, this chapter outlined some of the key areas of the South African context which would require a specific focus during the historical analysis. In line with the proposed methodology, this has helped transpose the theoretic approach to ministerial formation into a more contextually aware approach. With this framework in place the presentation and analysis of the historical situation can now begin.

Chapter 4

A History of the ministerial formation in the UPCSA: 2000-2017

Key dates

1999 – Union

2001 – Agreement with UP signed

2002 – Agreement with Stellenbosch signed

2004 – Purchase of Sedibeng house

2007 – Evidence of the need for reconciliation between S Duncan and Ramulondi emerges

2007 – Three Trustees resign from Sedibeng trust leaving it unable to function

2007 – Rev Ramulondi resigns as ministry secretary

2007 – E Germiquet new ministry secretary

2008 – Tswana Presbytery undertakes Chaplaincy role in Ministry Committee

2009 – Agreement with UP adjusted and reviewed (now open-ended)

2009 – S Duncan Resigns as Sedibeng house manager

2010 – Justo Mwale Theological College becomes Justo Mwale Theological University College

2010 – Buitendag becomes dean at UP

2011 – Allegations of the Ministry Committee being undermined emerge and a committee of investigation established

2012 (May) – E Germiquet second term in office starts

2012 - Tswana Presbytery withdraws its involvement with the Ministry Committee

2016 (December) – E Germiquet retires

2016 – Justo Mwale Theological University College becomes Justo Mwale University

2017 – P Baxter new ministry secretary

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will investigate the history of ministerial formation in the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa since its formation in 1999. This chapter shall approach the historic development of ministerial formation in chronological order, revealing information in the same chronology as the minutes of the various executive committees and general assemblies

were written. Ministerial formation at Pretoria was overseen on a national level and, as such, it is within these documents that reports on the state of ministerial formation, the challenges it faced and the developments it took are revealed. This chapter shall also weave in information gained from interviews. In line with the methodology employed in this research, archival evidence forms the dominant source which is further enhanced by the interviews conducted. These interviews all took place between October 2018 and October 2019, yet the information shall be placed where it fits in terms of the events the respondent referred to. This document analysis coupled with interviews will allow this chapter to put forward a representation of the state of ministerial formation within the UPCSA over this period. Its institutional focus shall be on the University of Pretoria, but due to the national approach of the UPCSA, various happenings of the ministry committee outside of Pretoria need to be reported to give the full picture. From this chapter it will be possible to see the main strengths and challenges facing ministerial formation within the UPCSA and to put together the history that will form the basis of comparison in chapter six.

Since the arrival of Presbyterianism in South Africa unification had always been on the agenda. From as early as 1891 talks of unity can be discerned (Duncan, 2018b: 49). It was from these talks, and a draft constitution published in 1895, that the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa would be formed in 1897 (Duncan, 2018b: 49–50). However, in this formation, three presbyteries decided not to join³³(Duncan, 2018b: 50). From these three presbyteries, after many years of discussion, the Bantu Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (from 1979 Reformed Presbyterian Church, RPCSA) would be formed in 1923 (see Duncan, 2018b: 53–56). The PCSA and BPCSA, despite early possibilities of unity, had very different backgrounds (Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 1). As such, throughout the early 20th-century unification talks between the two denominations failed to make any progress. According to Duncan (2017) racism (:6) and distrust (:14) were the main stumbling blocks. During the 1960s, 70s and 80s unity talks practically came to a halt and ecumenical relations reached an all-time low (Duncan, n.d.: 7). But with the end of apartheid and rise of democracy and racial equality, unification became a possibility once more. In 1995 discussions between the PCSA and RPCSA opened up again. In 1996 the principle of unity was agreed upon. In 1998 both denominations voted in favour of unity (Duncan, n.d.: 8). Then on 26th September 1999

³³ The Presbyteries of Kafraria, Transkei and Adelaide

at Port Elizabeth, centuries of talks on unity finally reached its fulfilment with the establishment of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.

While ministerial formation and theological education amidst the previous two denominations are important, the focus of this research is on the UPCSA at Pretoria. As such, the historic focus will start in 1999. What needs to be understood, though, is that despite coming from very similar ecclesial traditions, the PCSA and RPCSA were very different churches with different approaches to ministerial formation. The PCSA was historically a white urban church (Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 1)³⁴ and prior to the merger had opted to form partnerships with various theological training institutions. The RPCSA was a majority black church and prior to unity trained its candidates at the University of Fort Hare. With the merger these two different approaches would have to find a harmony to take ministerial formation forward.

4.2. 1999 PCSA General Assembly, Port Elizabeth - The future of Ministerial Formation

1999 is a key year in the history of Presbyterianism in South Africa. In this year, the centuries of unity talk finally yielded results. The former Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and Reformed Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa united and merged to form the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. With the unity, two separate approaches to ministerial formation had to become one. The former PCSA and RPCSA had trained before at Fed-sem. Now the two denominations had to go further than partial cohabiting to developing a unified approach to ministerial formation. As such 1999 forms a natural starting point for an assessment of Ministerial Formation of the UPCSA at the University of Pretoria.

At the general assembly of the PCSA, held at Dower College of Education Port Elizabeth, 23-25 September 1999, the focus was on the union of the two churches. Consequently, no key decisions were taken regarding ministerial formation and the perceived wisdom was to wait until the official unification to continue conversations over ministerial formation. Up to this point the PCSA had held a series of conferences assessing the future of ministerial formation in a democratic South Africa. It was well understood that the "means of providing a theological education and practical training for our ministers' needs must be under radical

³⁴ The PCSA was historically a settles church, hence a historically white church. However, immediately prior to the union the demographic of the church was much more diverse.

revision at this stage"(PCSA, 1999: 217–218)³⁵. January 1998 saw the four-quads conference (later renamed trim tab) and June 1998 saw the Rudder conference. Both followed the heightened awareness of the need to reform approaches to ministerial formation. Yet this need did not necessitate a rush: "this Committee believes ministerial training for the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa must be developed urgently but that we should not rush it"(PCSA, 1999: 218). As such, the Propeller Conference planned for May 1999 was postponed, giving time for the unity to come into effect before the discussion continued. Hence going into the union, a healthy discussion on the nature of ministerial formation and its need to change was evident.

At this stage, however, the University of Pretoria was not being considered as a partner institution. Rather discussions favoured continuing current links. As such, Fort Hare was proposed by the RPCSA as the primary institution of training (which the PCSA agreed to in principle³⁶), with the University of Natal in second and Theological Education by Extension College (TEEC) and University of South Africa (UNISA) as options for correspondence (PCSA, 1999: 220–222). The University of Fort Hare had a long-standing relationship with the RPCSA with the ministerial students being well known on campus and by the congregations of the Amathole Presbytery. One respondent, who started their formation at Fort Hare, describes how this established connection allowed academic studying to be entwined with student and congregational life³⁷. As such, academic learning could be combined with local service for a more holistic formation.

4.3. 1999 UPCSA General Assembly, Port Elizabeth – Ministerial Formation in a new denomination

The first meeting of the UPCSA General Assembly contains relatively little on ministerial formation. Having only just formed there was little content for the new ministry committee to report on. Yet, what starts to become clear is that the desired approach to ministerial formation differs between the two former denominations. The former PCSA preferred an

³⁵ Four reasons are given for this, change in education policy in RSA and the need for church institutions to become accredited and follow outcome-based learning; economic transformation means theological institutions are receiving less funding, phasing out programmes and inevitably fees will have to rise; issues internal to the PCSA mainly around affording training and discerning the right kind of training; issues brought about with the union to the RPCSA

³⁶ Minutes reveal hesitation over the long-term survival of the University of Fort Hare but no objections to the institution as a training ground are recorded (220-221).

³⁷ 003 – Page 3

academic programme followed by post-academic training (UPCSA, 1999: 32). The commitment to this approach of having academic and then practical training is also seen in the minutes of the PCSA General Assembly where strong objections to the integration of academic and practical are raised (PCSA, 1999: 222–223)³⁸. On the other side, the former RPCSA proposed one ecumenical training centre with appointed tutors to develop a Reformed Presbyterian ethos (UPCSA, 1999: 32). Here the academic and practical would run concurrently and all UPCSA candidates for the ministry would receive the same training. As such, it starts to become clear that forging a way forward for the newly formed denomination was going to be a hard task. Both denominations were aware of the need to reform approaches, yet, both held different visions pulling the boat of ministerial formation in two directions. It was thus proposed that a conference be held in early 2000 to overcome these differences and formulate a proposal for ministerial training (UPCSA, 1999: 26). There was an awareness of the disagreement and the need to address this. Like a boat in the middle of a lake with two rowers aiming for different shores, substantial progress would not be made if a direction could not be agreed on a direction for ministerial formation. As the following history will show, this disagreement could not be sufficiently solved and lack of progression in one direction had deep implications for the history of ministerial formation. One point of agreement, however, was that Fort Hare and Natal are again backed as the proposed training institutions with Reformed Presbyterian tutors also appointed to cover denominational aspects of training (UPCSA, 1999: 66).

4.4. 2000 UPCSA General Assembly, Gordons Bay – Plotting a way forward

The report from 2000 reveals that the first year of unity had presented a vast and complex challenge to the ministerial formation task team. As could be expected, the unification created a “mammoth task” to integrate the former ways and establish an approach moving forward (UPCSA, 2000: 227). However, the Propeller Conference would hopefully bring about clarity of vision and direction.

From the 26th to 29th June 2000 the conference gave valuable space to assess approaches to ministerial formation and to try and unify approaches. The Propeller Conference aimed to “develop comprehensive policy, vision and mission pertinent to the training of our ministers” (UPCSA, 2000: 228). Cognisance was given to Africanisation; contextuality; multi-racialism;

³⁸ Objections focus on the practicality and raise concerns that integration will disrupt family life (222-223)

ecumenicity; unity and diversity; integration of academic rigour; practical experience and spiritual formation; and economics, community and enablement (UPCSA, 2000: 228). In terms of theoretical and theological reflection, the conferences showed a denomination committed to revising its approach to ministerial formation with an awareness of the current context and the need to develop a holistic approach. Covering questions such as “what type of ministry are we training people for?” “Where is best to obtain this training?” and “how would ecumenical links be enhanced by joint training?” (see UPCSA, 2000: 229) the UPCSA in its early days was showing a healthy commitment to ministerial formation and, in theory, laying solid groundwork.

From the Propeller Conference it was decided that key values for ministerial formation included strong academic competence in the reformed tradition ; a vibrant spirituality; development of skills for ministry; contextualization of content and process of training; acceptance of diversity within the UPCSA; and exposure of students to the world (not training in a protected environment) (UPCSA, 2000: 229). Candidates for the ministry were to be formed in a variety of areas with a balance being struck between academic, spiritual and personal formation. This training was not to be a sheltered academic endeavour, but a formative experience preparing candidates for the totality of ministry. From this conference, the theoretical foundation was laid and the denomination could start to forge its approach to ministerial formation. In 2000 the options included an attachment to an ecumenical university, development of a UPCSA specific course at university, a centralised committee with training at different universities or the establishment of a seminary (see UPCSA, 2000: 230). Yet, once more, it was the University of Fort Hare which prevailed as the preferred institution, despite the possibility of other options being suggested. However, the decision to commit to one training institution could not be reached and this proposal was altered to remove the focus on selecting a single institution.

The year 2000 also marked a key turning point in the selection of candidates. From 2001 the ordination process was to be unified. The RPCSA and PCSA would no longer run their own formation programmes and from then on a unified ordination process would be the norm (UPCSA, 2000: 231). This selection process was also detailed and can be summarised as follows: first, the individual applies locally, the local presbytery then interviews the individual to discern the call. If a call is discerned the individual goes for education as prescribed by the

committee, upon completion of education the individual is placed with a congregation, ordained on arrival but also works a one-year probation under the care of a supervisor (UPCSA, 2000: 230–231).

As such, the year 2000 saw the emergence of both a theory around ministerial formation and its structured approach. The Propeller Conference really gave the basis for the theory, highlighting the need for inclusivity, a combination of academic, personal and spiritual formation and training rooted and geared towards the African context. The structure provided was to allow this theory to become reality. Starting at the local level an individual would be identified as having a potential call, they would then attend the Fellowship of Vocation (FOV) programme at a presbytery level to help discern this call further. This then would be the beginning of the personal and spiritual formation. From the FOV the individual then goes forward to a selection/ discernment conference. If the call is confirmed then the academic training can start. At this time the personal and spiritual should not fall away but work with the academic formation. After academic training came the probation year in which academic skills were put into application under supervision and to iron out any issues. After successful completion of probation, a candidate is then ordained.

However, challenges still persisted both within the climate of South Africa and the UPCSA. Major challenges faced included, being a divided denomination; working in a divided society; corruption; young population; limited resources; mainline church in rapid decline; widespread poverty and unemployment (see UPCSA, 2000: 229–230). From the interviews conducted for this research one of the earliest ministers to be trained at Pretoria commented on how racial division still strongly characterised the “united” church. In his response, he commented on how he had to attend another denomination for training as his own denomination was not happy to allow a black minister to preach³⁹. This policy almost resulted in the respondent joining the Anglican Church of Southern Africa as a ministerial candidate:

In Tshwane presbytery we were the first black students from the Church who came in 2002 as undergraduate and supposed to be exposed to the ministerial formation in the university and the presbytery. However, I only preached for the first time in a white congregation in Scotland in December 2002 on a trip which

³⁹ Response from interview 003, Page 3

was organized by Prof GA Duncan. We were told that it was still a discussion in our congregations on how to place us and involve us in historical white congregations. At Tshwane historical white congregations compose the same number with black congregations and the nearby congregations to the university were all English congregations. As the result personal I was involved in an Anglican Congregation St. Wilfrid's under then the leadership of Rev. Fr. Mark Spyker who played a vital role in preparing myself on how to interact within the white congregations. There I was involved in the same way that I was at UFH [University of Fort Hare] and Prof GA Duncan was also supportive on my ministerial exposure, it was never been a threat that I may probably leave the Presbyterians to the Anglicans.⁴⁰

As such, while the theoretical conversation around ministerial formation was heading in a positive direction, the lived experience was much more negative. The wounds of apartheid were still affecting the church as it struggled to let the theoretical become a unified reality.

4.5 2001 UPCSA General Assembly – Fort Hare out UP in

2001 is really marked by the decision to make the University of Pretoria, the University of Stellenbosch and Justo Mwale theological college, in Zambia, the main institutions for academic instruction. Despite years of being the outright favourite, Fort Hare along with the University of Natal were not selected as the recognised institutions in the ministerial formation process. The report to the general assembly describes how these institutions were not chosen “because of the sentimental attachment both of the former denominations had to them” (UPCSA, 2001: 257). Rather than continue with the old institutions, for the sake of unity, new institutions that did not have a historical relationship were selected⁴¹.

This was done on the basis that it was considered vital to promote the union and this could be done by training our candidates in one institution which did not reflect any favour or bias towards one of the former denominations (UPCSA, 2001: 257).

⁴⁰ Interview 003, page 3 *sic*

⁴¹ The PCSA was involved in the formation of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria from 1917, yet they had left in 1930 meaning any sentimental attachment was very far removed by 2001. Further they had never sent any students there despite this relationship (see Duncan, 2008)

The pain of loss for both denominations was argued to be a unifying phenomenon for the new denomination. While there was a strong sentiment in this notion, one does have to question the underlying logic and if there was perhaps more to this situation than the minutes revealed. Instead of continuing with a known and trusted institution, new institutions were sought. Years of promoting Fort Hare show there was clearly no issues with this institution's approach to ministerial formation and respondents clearly identify it as a positive environment⁴², yet it was suddenly dropped as an option. As such, perhaps a more accurate interpretation of the situation would be that rather than being able to reach agreement on which institute to train with, a stalemate between the two former denominations forced the selection of a new institution. In other words, the UPCSA was struggling to unite and the decision to join UP and Stellenbosch came out of a compromise instead of a clear vision for Ministerial Formation within the UPCSA. The lack of true unity is strongly reported in the early days of the UPCSA (Duncan, 2005: 248–252; see Mshumpela, 2014; Makofane, 2017) and, as such, it would not be a surprise if the struggle to unite also impacted Ministerial formation and the selection of training institutions.

Yet regardless of the motivation behind its selection, from 2001 onwards the University of Pretoria was to be among one of the official training institutions for the UPCSA. At this point, certain voices within the denomination were still calling for a single training institution for all UPCSA candidates for the ministry. However, the motion to select one institution lost and instead both Stellenbosch and UP were given a five-year probation period.

Notice of Amendment A6

The Rev RJ Botsis moved the amendment of which he had given notice:

'2(a) The assembly approves Justo Mwale Theological College as a residential theological centre for the UPCSA in Zambia.

(b) The Assembly postpones for 5 years the approval of a residential theological centre for the UPCSA in RSA.

(c) The Assembly agrees for this trial period to use the Universities of Stellenbosch and Pretoria as training institutions for the UPCSA in RSA'

This was seconded.

⁴² Interview 003 – Page 3

The Rev B Gaborone moved that the question be now put.

This was seconded and AGREED

On being put to the vote, the amendment was AGREED

On being put as the substantive motion, it was CARRIED.

(UPCSA, 2001: 307)

In the ministry report motivation for the selection of UP is given. It highlighted how the student is free to choose between English and Afrikaans as a language of instruction. Comments were also made on affirmative action in relation to the Desmond Tutu chair in leadership and development, a joint venture between the faculty of theology and the faculty of economics (UPCSA, 2001: 258–259). As such it is portrayed as a diverse institution looking to continue to diversify. With regards to the curriculum it was commented on how:

- Full participation by partner church is encouraged
- Courses are modularised in order to accommodate a wider range of training needs and inputs
- Modules can be added as new needs arise
- The Ecumenical Advisory Board of the Faculty which consists of representatives from partner Churches advises on curriculum development

(UPCSA, 2001: 257)

As such, the UPCSA, through its partnership with the UP, was able to advise and give input on curriculum development. While the final form of the curriculum rested with the UP, partner churches were given a voice to provide input and raise any issues, should they arise. Flexibility was also given, in that churches were welcome to add any extra courses they wished to provide onto the curriculum. The exact modules offered at UP were not detailed, but a list of the possible Degrees available was provided. Undergraduate modules were: the Diploma in Theology, BA Theology and Bachelors in theology. Postgraduate courses were: the Diploma in Theology, BA Hons in Theology, Master of Theology, Masters of Divinity, MA Theology, Master Philosophy, PhD and DD (UPCSA, 2001: 258). The UP was also reported to provide development of 'life skills'. This referred to training in computer literacy, the possibility of adding non-theological modules to their curriculum and commitment towards the

development of practical ministry skills (UPCSA, 2001: 258). Comments on life skills offered may, however, have been overemphasised. From the interviews conducted, it was often commented on how the UP lacked in providing practical experience⁴³.

This year thus marked the start of the UPCSA's relationship with UP among other training institutions. The report from 2001 also highlighted difficulties in mentoring and supervising probationers. While support during studying was provided, once placed in a congregation, support for students was minimal (UPCSA, 2001: 261–262). Yet the issue of key importance for this year is the selection of UP and the events surrounding its selection. It was not chosen as it was the best outright candidate but the best compromise between the two former denominations.

4.6 2002 General Assembly, Lynnwood, Pretoria – between change and continuation

Both Academics as well as the Administrative staff at the University of Pretoria have warmly received the [Ministry] Committee's programme and have created a safe spiritual and theological haven for our new students at that institution (UPCSA, 2002: 143).

As the above quote shows, early relationships with the UP seemed to be going well. On the 7th of December 2001 The UPCSA and The UP signed a memorandum of agreement to enter a five-year partnership. The 2002 report to general assembly portrays the relationship with the University of Pretoria in a positive light. Describing the warm welcome and positive atmosphere of the institution, it would appear that the UPCSA's ministry committee was content with its institutional partner. In this year Rev Dr Graham Duncan, of the UPCSA, was also appointed as a lecturer at the Faculty of theology, while Mrs Sandra Duncan, also a UPCSA member, was appointed as the faculty liaison administrator between the ministry committee and the faculty (UPCSA, 2002: 152). In this way, the denomination was able to create a strong link with the university. This link allowed a platform on which both the academic and church formation could be developed in unison with each other. Thus, the compromised choice to partner with UP over the Universities of Fort Hare or Natal appeared to have a positive

⁴³ Interviews 014, page 4; 010, page 4;005, page 3; 006, page 2;

outcome. It presented a clean slate on which to forge a new future and an environment in which church and academic formation could be combined in an organic manner.

As the UPCSА Ministry Committee worked on a national front, the report also included wider issues within Ministerial Formation. Of key importance is the continued disagreement over the nature of Ministerial formation and the challenges of the local context. In a changing denomination and society, certain voices raised hesitation over the changes in the licensing process (UPCSА, 2002: 143–144). This concern is met with rhetoric on the good of change.

[T]he Church as an organised human community of witness can be an *ecclesia semper reformanda* which is open to change, as long as these changes help the Church to fulfil its fundamental task of witnessing to the truth of the gospel of Christ in this specific historical, cultural and social circumstance in which it exists... There comes a time in the life of a denomination when there need to be new wineskins to contain the wine. The UPCSА is new and it needs renewed ways of operating (UPCSА, 2002: 144).

Within the UPCSА there was a significant group of ministers that wanted to move on and develop the formation programme. This challenge again serves to highlight that the UPCSА was struggling to discern a direction and stick to it. In this regards a proposed course for ministerial formation, under the title ‘passage to ordained ministry’, was put forward, this was to take place in three parts; (1) fellowship of vocation, (2) academic training, (3) practical work experience. Under academic training, the following was presented as the 4-year plan:

Year 1:

- Reformed Tradition
- Stewardship
- Speech and communication
- Early childhood, children and youth ministry
- Spirituality: Spirituality of Jesus, Private devotion, conduct of worship, the daily office, prayer, the Christian year.

Year 2:

- Denominational history

- Enabling ministry
- Evangelism
- Other religious traditions in Africa: African Initiated Churches (e.g. ZCCO, African traditional religion, Hinduism, Islam, Mormons, Scientology etc.
- Spirituality; meditation, contemplative prayer, ministry of intercession, Christian life-style, time, money, possessions (i.e. Poverty, chastity, obedience), food, sex
- The minister as an agent of God's reconciling work in the world (healing and social justice), family person, community member

Year 3

- Church administration; parish management, records, church finances, bookkeeping, church associations, committees and courts of the church, computer skills
- Handling change: development and crisis change; rites of passage, loss and bereavement, conflict management, problem solving
- Spirituality; spirituality in Church tradition, spirituality in ritual
- Meaning and significance of sacraments
- Christian attitudes to illness, suffering and death; directed preparation for ordained ministry

Year 4:

- *Practical work experience*
- Healing ministry; self, ministerial families, sick, elderly, forgiveness
- Conduct of worship; study of Manual of Law and Procedure
- Worship and sermon preparation; understanding conduct of sacraments, special services: memorial, Harvest, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost
- Liturgical year: lectionary
- Ordinances: marriages, funerals
- Pastoral visiting
- Ecumenism in Southern Africa: SACC, CUC (UPCSA, 2002: 146–147)

This proposal was later passed by the General Assembly (UPCSA, 2002: 454). However, moving forward the adoption of this programme appears to have been minimal. While a programme of the denomination, no mention of its implantation is later given. Comment is given on the 'passage to ordained ministry' in 2003 (UPCSA, 2003: 316), 2004 (UPCSA, 2004: 237) which highlights growing difficulties in the process and, 2005 (UPCSA, 2005: 106) after which it no longer appears in the minutes and over which time no conclusive decisions were made.

Another key challenge was that of support for ministerial candidates on a denominational level. In a context of decline and stagnation, the UPCSA was trying to assess the most appropriate direction for ministerial formation in that time. Yet when ministers reached a congregation to undergo probation they found very little support, often receiving inadequate training for the ministry (see UPCSA, 2002: 151–152). A further challenge in Pretoria at this time, as the interviews have uncovered, was that historically 'white' congregations were reluctant to take and train black ministers⁴⁴. As such, one of the key challenges emerging with the ministerial formation process related to the church's commitment to the process. It is not the academic institution, but the local church which was providing the greatest obstacle to the ministerial formation process.

4.7. 2003 General Assembly, St George's, East London – Finance: a major challenge

The 2003 report of the Ministry committee to the General Assembly again highlights the establishment of UP as a training centre. Specifically mentioned is how Rev Masango and Rev Duncan are running daily devotions and a weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper for UPCSA and EPCSA (Evangelical Presbyterian Church of South Africa) students (UPCSA, 2003: 319). This provided a nurturing atmosphere for the all-round development of the ministerial candidates. One respondent fondly recounted how daily morning prayers and involvement in local congregations at the weekend helped them to reflect on their education in a practical situation⁴⁵. In other words, a healthy link between theory and practise rooted in personal development was starting to be established.

However, the wider scene still faced major challenges. As was agreed in the 2002 general assembly, no new candidates for ministerial formation were accepted in 2003 (UPCSA, 2002:

⁴⁴ Interview 003, Page 3

⁴⁵ Interview 002, Page 1

454). In 2003 it was also proposed that a maximum of five candidates be accepted each year (UPCSA, 2003: 316). Both measures were to try and cut the costs of ministerial formation and to manage the process of an ever-shrinking budget. In this regard it was also proposed that students must contribute at least 40% towards the cost of their training⁴⁶ (UPCSA, 2003: 321). Once again, the theological and institutional side of ministerial formation was progressing well, yet more practical and logistical matters were hampering the process. The year 2003 specifically drew out the financial challenges of ministerial formation and its negative impact on the process, seen through the one-year suspension and proposed reduction, of student intake.

4.8. 2004 – General Assembly, Bryanston - Purchase of Sedibeng

Perhaps ironically considering the financial challenges raised in 2003, the key event of 2004 was the purchase of Sedibeng house. Enabled by the donation of foreign money from the Isabel Lusk Trust in Scotland, which was secured through the efforts of Sandra Duncan, the house was seen as a vital investment in the formation process. The property could accommodate 20 students and 3 staff as well as 8 vehicles (UPCSA, 2004: 242). The property gave the UPCSA a physical base close to the University of Pretoria⁴⁷ where students could live in a communal environment integrating and learning from one-another. The name, Sedibeng, meaning *at the well or fountain*, inspired by John 4:7-30, was given in vision of the house being a place where differences are overcome and the Other is welcomed (UPCSA, 2004: 242–243). With the purchase of the property, Pretoria was establishing itself as a prime location for ministerial formation being able to offer a holistic programme of personal and academic formation. Other institutions still received mention in the report but do not demonstrate the same developments in infrastructure and support as Pretoria (see UPCSA, 2004: 239).

On the wider scene, the report also highlights how significant gains had been made since 1999. The ministry committee consolidated its role in the formation process and established its authority, which was to oversee all ministerial candidates throughout the UPCSA. It required that it must be notified of any candidate not training at an officially recognised

⁴⁶ This motion was later revised to be a 20% contribution from local presbyteries and a 20% contribution from the student themselves (UPCSA, 2003:512-513).

⁴⁷ The property is located at which is a 3-4 km walk to the University of Pretoria

institution (UPCSA, 2004: 237). In this way, standardisation and quality control were beginning to be introduced in the formation process.

4.9. 2005 Executive Commission, Kempton Park

The Uniting Presbyterian Black Leadership Forum (UPBLF) gave the first mention of ministerial formation in the papers from 2005. In a short statement the UPBLF gave a critique of the current mechanism in place for entry into ministry (UPCSA, 2005: 46):

It is the UPBLF's belief that mechanisms in place for the entry into the Ministry of our denomination need re-visitation. In so saying we are not apportioning blame but we are saying things change with time in order to accommodate the changes that come with it. We are more than willing *to engage the Ministry committee in this regard*. [emphasis in original]

Unfortunately, full details of the issue are not provided. Yet, reading between the lines, it highlights that integration and racial equality are still issues deeply affecting the UPCSA at large and ministerial formation within the denomination.

Coming to the ministry committee's report, the issue of racial integration again becomes apparent. In the current probation system there is a critique that individuals are placed along racial lines. As such a new system is proposed which will actively aim to give cross-cultural experience (UPCSA, 2005: 109–110). However, the effectiveness of this proposal was called into question. How much of a benefit would the new system have when ministers will eventually be ordained into a congregation fitting their own cultural context?

The Ministry Committee questions the wisdom of this step at present when, after probation, it would revert to the status quo where ministers continue to be called under the present call system or appointed by presbyteries. This calls in question the value of a brief cross-cultural exposure although it may produce a greater willingness to consider cross-cultural appointments or calls. At present, Pretoria students are placed cross-culturally for weekly church attachments and vacation placements, but there is no evidence that this will lead to a greater willingness to call a minister across racial lines (UPCSA, 2005: 110).

Rather than seeing the potential benefits of serving in a setting other than their own, the ministry committee saw the proposal as a potential disruption to the formation process. As

some cross-cultural exposure was taking place on a weekly basis, the need for the probation year to occur outside of one's natural context was not seen to be necessary, with the value of such an idea being questioned. Potential gains of broadening the world view of probationers and helping ministers to understand each other were not considered. Rather the focus was on keeping a probationer in the context they would serve. Thus, as probationers would only serve a year in that community it was seen almost as a waste of time to spend this year in a cross-cultural setting. The time was viewed to be much better spent getting to know the contextual reality of the community they would serve. Thus, while the issue of cross-cultural exposure was raised, an effective solution to the problem was not found. Rather the ministry committee showed a somewhat strong objection to increasing the cross-cultural exposure of ministerial candidates.

Another issue for which the ministry committee was seeking an effective solution in 2005 was that of congregational involvement.

[T]raining of the ministry is one of the complex programmes in the denomination. The committee is responsible for training ministers who should live up to the challenges societies face. This is not easy and cannot be achieved without strong participation of Presbyteries and congregations in training for the ministry (UPCSA, 2005: 107).

Realising the complexity and size of the task of ministerial formation, the ministry committee was pleading with local presbyteries and congregations to come on board and support the formation process. The main challenge experienced was that local congregations were not effectively screening or supporting candidates (UPCSA, 2005: 107). This perspective was also highlighted from the interviews in that individuals felt that churches were not putting enough effort into the FOV process⁴⁸. Another felt that the church expected too much of the university expecting them to cover the church's duties also⁴⁹. This was thus resulting in inappropriate candidates being put forward hampering the work of the committee. While in academic training, the local church is reminded of their continuing duty towards the individual candidate (UPCSA, 2005: 107–108). In this way, it was becoming apparent that support for

⁴⁸ Interview 003, Page 4

⁴⁹ Interview 001, Page 3

the ministerial formation process within local congregations was lacking. There is awareness that candidates need to be formed in multiple areas, yet the local congregation was struggling to fulfil its role in this regard. The assumption seems to be that the ministry committee is in charge of formation and as such local congregations need not concern themselves with the process; candidates could be sent off and just come back magically formed as a minister. This presents a challenging context in which ministry candidates are often left without spiritual support from their sending congregation.

With regards to the University of Pretoria, 2005 shows a continuation of the student support offered by Duncan and Masango. In addition to this Sedibeng house had begun to function giving an accelerated sense of community among students (UPCSA, 2005: 109). On top of this, the UPCSA was in discussions with the UP to revise the academic curriculum to better suit the denomination's needs (UPCSA, 2005: 109). As such, the scene in Pretoria seems to be going from strength to strength. A good relationship with the university is present, developing a strong academic programme. The purchase of local accommodation has provided a platform for personal development and engagement with the students as well as fostering a sense of community.

4.10. 2006 General Assembly, David Livingstone, Victoria Falls, Zambia – assessment of road travelled and challenges faced

2006 marked the year of the Rev Ramulondi's resignation as ministry secretary. Serving in this capacity from 2001 to December 2006, Ramulondi had helped establish the ministry committee in its challenging early days. With his resignation changes within the ministry committee were bound to come, but this would have to wait until the following year. 2006 marked Rev Ramulondi's last year in office and a year spent trying to deal with many of the same old issues.

Again, the issue of church support and cross-cultural exposure was raised. In regards to this, Rev Ramulondi had provided training to 11 presbyteries to try and better the situation (UPCSA, 2006: 257). Yet a critique was still presented towards local presbyteries reminding them of their responsibility in the process and highlighting the severity of the situation.

It has been a matter of ongoing concern that there is little or no uniformity in how FOVs are constituted or run from one Presbytery to another – some Presbyteries do not have a FOV at all! (UPCSA, 2006: 257).

With regards to cross cultural placement, it was settled that probationers would be placed at the presbytery level (as opposed to congregational level) to allow movement around the presbytery and exposure to multiple scenarios. A further consolation on approaches to cross cultural ministry was also to take place in the following 12 months. However, both these proposals came with a forewarning:

We would once again like to sound a warning to those individuals and groups who pin their hopes on the cross-cultural placement of probationers to solve the problems of racial integration in the Church. Cross-cultural probation may be an important part of the solution, but it is only one piece of the puzzle. *We therefore stress that the suggestions which follow concerning the placement of probationers are experimental at best and do not constitute a final solution to the problems of cross cultural ministry in the Church.* (UPCSA, 2006: 257) [emphasis in original].

Slightly shifting their stance since 2005, the ministry committee shows a stronger awareness of the need for cross-cultural exposure. However, using the probation year as a way to address this is still viewed critically. The committee even emphasised its reservations around the ability of such an approach to solving cross-cultural challenges within the UPCSA.

The report also detailed how the ministry committee was to care for the individual (oversee the selection and personal/ faith development) as well as theoretical (guiding academic formation) (UPCSA, 2006: 254). Yet the issue was raised that administrative duties were taking too much time stifling policy development.

Unfortunately, the current shape of the Ministry Committee does not adequately meet the needs of these divergent spheres of work. The agenda of our meetings tend to be dominated by issues of administration and care for candidates for the ministry. This prevents the Committee from devoting sufficient time to matters of policy formation and evaluation and the mission and vision of Ministry in the UPCSA. (UPCSA, 2006: 258).

As such, once again, it was the practical, not the theological, which was having the most detrimental effect on the formation process.

In Pretoria, negotiations began with the UP to establish an M Div. course (although nothing seems to have come of this⁵⁰) to allow for greater integration between academic and practical learning (UPCSA, 2006: 258). While plans for Sedibeng were also developing:

Now that the Sedibeng House of Studies is up and running as a residence for our students at Pretoria, it is possible for us to move on to the next phase of developing the House of Studies as a resource for the further development of ministry in the Church. This will be one of the areas of focus for the Ministry Committee in the period ahead (UPCSA, 2006: 258).

The vision was to move the house from merely accommodating learners, to a home for study and personal development. It was envisioned that the venue could be used for further training. "Virtually no consideration has been given to lifelong learning in the ordained ministry apart from the provisions of bursaries to ministers" (UPCSA, 2006: 258). Thus, the acquisition of Sedibeng seemed to offer a platform on which to rectify this situation.

All in all, 2006 presented a stable situation in Pretoria with new ideas and plans in the pipeline. But on the wider scene showed challenges within the ministry committee and with local congregations supporting the formation process.

4.11. 2007 Executive Commission, Orlando – E Germiquet appointed

At the 2006 General Assembly, the Rev M Ramulondi announced his resignation (UPCSA, 2006: 484). This meant that the executive commission of 2007 was tasked with appointing a new ministry secretary. The vote fell unanimously in favour of the Rev E Germiquet who was appointed for a five year period renewable for another five years thereafter (UPCSA, 2007: 47). Yet the new ministry secretary was not walking into an easy situation. The 2007 ministry report reveals conflict among the committee and those working closely with it. This becomes apparent in two ways. Firstly, the mass resignation of trustees of the Sedibeng Trust; "Three of the five trustees Mr John Vieira, Mr Tom Coulter and Rev Vuyani Vellem have recently simultaneously resigned" (URCSA, 2007: 105). With the purchase of Sedibeng house and the donation towards it, a trust was set up independently of the ministry committee to oversee Sedibeng house (UPCSA, 2005: 109). The board of trustees consisted of five members (the

⁵⁰ The 2007 report again gives mention of the M Div programme at UP but raises hesitation over the increased study time it will result in. As such the 2008 general assembly is to discuss the matter (UPCSA, 2007: 106).

minimum requirement). In 2007 however three of these five members resigned⁵¹ (UPCSA, 2007: 88). This resulted in the Sedibeng trust not been able to function until new trustees were elected. Yet, more importantly, it signifies friction within the trust; three members do not just simultaneously resign by chance. The only two members left on the board were Rev M Ramulondi and Mrs E Stopforth (UPCSA, 2007: 106). In the second, separate, situation, for which details are not provided, there had been a “falling out” between two groups (UPCSA, 2007: 111). In this situation the Rev M Ramulondi (as representative of the ministry committee), as well as Rev Prof G Duncan and Mrs S Duncan (as concerned individuals), are the two parties most hurt and in need of reconciliation (UPCSA, 2007: 111). All in all the ministry committee was described as "systematically dysfunctional" and there was a need to clarify channels of command (UPCSA, 2007: 110):

4.1 The most serious flaw that seems to have arisen, and this was referred to on numerous occasions, was that the whole system of the Ministry Committee was ‘systemically dysfunctional’.

4.2 Systemically dysfunctional can in the main be taken to mean that it is unclear as to who the Secretary is finally responsible to and who has the final say over the Secretary. It would appear as if there is a triangular configuration with the Secretary being torn between the Committee (or read the convener), the General Secretary and the Church Office Committee.

In other words, the committee did not have a clear grasp on who was responsible for what and who should be reporting to whom? Communication skills were lacking which had a detrimental effect. Going forward there was a need for clarity over the function and authority of the ministry secretary in relation to the General Secretary and channels of power, especially in relation to Sedibeng house. From the Duncan’s *partner letter*⁵² (discussed more below) it becomes apparent that a management committee was set up at Sedibeng which appears to be answerable to the General Secretary to help manage this situation.

⁵¹ Vieira (Finance Officer), Coulter (Clerk of General Assembly), Vellem (General Secretary) are the three members who resigned

⁵² Partner Letter 2009: 2. This letter describes how two years ago (from the date of writing in 2009, so in 2007) a management committee was set up to assist in the work at Sedibeng

In relation to the University of Pretoria, the M Div. programme again receives comment but a final decision is to be carried over into 2008.

The possible two-year probationary period linked to a M. Div. degree (Pretoria University) as reported in the 2006 General Assembly papers has much merit. Issues related to it include; an extended probationary period; financial implications in terms of congregational grants; financial implications for university fees as well as the content of the courses and practical assignments that would form the curriculum for such a degree (UPCSA, 2007: 105).

The choice was between improving the link between theory and practice against the increased time and cost of training and a final decision could not be reached in 2007. Another factor that is of interest to note is the lack of mention of the formation programme run by Revs Duncan and Masango. This had been a regular occurrence in which the theological students had a mentoring of sorts to help them link theory and practise. The lack of mention of this in 2007 would seem to suggest that the programme had been quietly scrapped or suspended.

4.12. 2008 General Assembly, Eston – Silence on UP, focus nationally

The main event of importance from the 2008 Ministry report to the General Assembly is the reference to a workshop held at Stellenbosch University on the future of theological education in South Africa. From this workshop, it was concluded that:

... a gathering of all churches be called to look together at the future needs of the ministry and at how theological formation can assist in this, by changing or introducing academic courses (UPCSA, 2008: 85).

As with the Rudder Conference of 2000, this workshop has again highlighted the need for ministerial formation to adapt and change to modern-day South Africa. However, the concern seven years later is that very little seems to have changed despite this continued awareness.

With regard to continuing problems, the 2008 report again highlights how many presbyteries are not adequately executing the fellowship of vocation programme which puts forward candidates for ordination. "Ministers sessions and presbyteries do not wish their candidates to be disappointed and as a consequence send favourable reports irrespective of the candidates' suitability", while other presbyteries are not even executing the programme at all

(UPCSA, 2008: 293). Thus, taking the Stellenbosch workshop into consideration, the continued situation is one in which theory and understanding of ministerial formation are trying to advance and come to terms with a post-apartheid South Africa. Yet the actual workings of the formation process were struggling to adapt and getting caught up in logistical and administrative issues.

One change introduced in 2008 is that ordained ministers could no longer be directly appointed by a congregation. All appointments must be done by a request made to the relevant presbytery (UPCSA, 2008: 82). In this way, the appointment process became more open and equalised and a hierarchy between appointed and called ministers was overcome.

With regard to the University of Pretoria, the 2008 report gives no mention of the institution. Sedibeng house does receive comments though. The Sedibeng trust was now operational although running at a significant yearly loss. In response to this, accommodation fees are raised from R500 to R800 per month with 23 rooms available (UPCSA, 2008: 295). With regard to student support, the programme ran by Duncan and Masango appears to have stopped with no explanation given. In its place the presbytery of Tshwane has undertaken the Chaplaincy responsibility for students staying at the house:

The Ministry Committee requested the Presbytery of Tshwane to undertake the Chaplaincy responsibilities for Sedibeng House. After a fairly long and in-depth reflection, a team of Chaplains consisting of Elders and Ministers was appointed. The Presbytery elected Mrs Berenice Venter as the Convener of this team. It is an innovative decision and early indications of its effectiveness are encouraging (UPCSA, 2008: 83).

One would have assumed that Duncan and Masango would have also featured in this team. Yet there is no mention of their names suggesting that their services were no longer required by the ministry committee. Interesting to note is that talk of developing Sedibeng into more of a seminary environment seems to have come to nothing since its mention in the 2006 report.

4.13. 2009 Executive Commission, Môregloed, Tshwane – UP contract and Sedibeng

The two key events, revealed in the 2009 report, are the resignation of Mrs S Duncan at Sedibeng house and the renewal of the contract with the UP.

With regards to the resignation of Mrs S Duncan as house manager at Sedibeng, this passed without much comment in the ministry committee's report to the executive commission.

In December 2008 the Manageress, Mrs Sandra Duncan gave notice of her intention to resign. On the 1st of May 2009, Mrs Berenice Venter officially took over the responsibilities of House Manageress. Changes and areas of improvement are continually being addressed.

We thank Mrs Duncan for the time she spent managing the house and wish her well in her new job. We are grateful that Mrs Venter made herself available for the post and likewise wish her all of the best. (UPCSA, 2009: 165)

As the above quote shows, a few words of thanks are given for her service and a passing remark is made on changes and improvements been continually made, then the matter is left at that. However, to have such a long-serving member resign leads one to question if there is more occurring in the Ministry Committee than the annual report reveals. In a letter from the Duncans, sent via an online public forum to partners in Scotland, Mrs S Duncan resignation is described as being the result of cognitive differences between herself and the Ministry Committee⁵³.

When the committee was set up all the members were white and this was her first conflict with them as she felt that since Sedibeng housed black students then there should be at least half of the committee black? They didn't agree and as time went on it became clear that they really did not know a great deal about African culture and how black people live. (Open letter)

With the resignation of Ramulondi a new committee was set up to support S Duncan as house manager. However, this committee was all white, despite having all black residents at Sedibeng. S Duncan had felt that the committee should be more racially diverse, whereas the ministry committee saw no need for change and so kept it the same. In practice, this led to years of conflict brought about through differing cultural views and understanding. An example given through the interviews was that those from rural areas did not wash at Sedibeng as they did not know how to work a shower, not due to a lack of personal hygiene

⁵³ This letter and its publication online were later to see the Duncans accused and convicted of undermining the work of the Ministry Committee.

as some had assumed⁵⁴. As such, while not reported in the minutes there is good evidence to suggest that S Duncan's resignation was the result of a ministry committee that was not culturally aware, or at least not willing to listen to perspectives other than their own. The open letter is later rejected as biased by the UPCSA as "it contains several errors of fact and only the Duncans' version of the Sedibeng situation" (UPCSA, 2012: 370). Yet the ministry committee does not furnish an alternative account of events. As such, this situation leads to the conclusion that while the Duncans may have exaggerated the situation, there is truth in their claims which should not be overlooked. This history thus reveals a ministry committee trying to brush its failings and conflicts under the carpet. Yet when the open letter surfaces again in the 2012 undermining fiasco (discussed below) it was not possible to hide the conflicts. Hinted at now, and becoming clear in 2012, conflict was surrounding the ministerial formation programme which was ultimately hampering its development at this point in the UPCSA's history.

The report again highlights the misunderstanding and lack of engagement from Presbyteries in the ministerial formation process. However, the situation appeared to be deteriorating and not adequately dealt with. From this misunderstanding anger was emerging when candidates were rejected.

A recurring issue is the perception that the Selection criteria or methods of the Ministry Committee are unfair and unable to be understood. The result is people not understanding why their applications are turned down is that they conclude erroneously, that there is either something "wrong" with them or something "wrong" with the UPCSA selection process. (UPCSA, 2009: 164).

This highlighted that clear communication between the Ministry Committee and Presbyteries was lacking and as a result, tensions were on the rise.

Then, with regards to the UP, while 2006 was the official year in which the contract with the UP was to be renewed, negotiations were postponed until 2009 to allow for communication with other partner churches. In this way, all partner churches could enter negotiations with the UP at the same time.

⁵⁴ Interview 005, page 3

The other two Partner Churches at the Faculty of Theology are the DRC and the NHKA. As both their partnerships are about to lapse, the opportunity has been seized for all 3 churches to re-negotiate fresh partnerships along parallel lines. These negotiations have raised a number of sensitive issues that will need ongoing attention. (UPCSA, 2009: 165).

What these sensitive issues are is not explained. However, it is described how this move allowed for a standardisation amongst partner churches and for the churches to be given more authority with regard to discipline and the appointment of denomination affiliated lecturers. In a motion later raised Rev Germiquet highlights some of the key changes this new arrangement will bring. Looking at these key changes will help give an understanding of what the sensitive issues may have been.

The main change to the contract is that it is now open-ended. As such, issues that would usually be assessed at the end of a contract period now require continual assessment and planning. Firstly, the UPCSA is bound “to pay 30% of the salary fixed by the University to any one or more Lecturers/Professors appointed by the University in terms of the contract” (UPCSA, 2009: 239). That is, any lecturer appointed through a post reserved for church partners. Secondly, the number of posts reserved for partners may vary according to the number of affiliated students enrolled at the university. As such, any new or further appointments made at the university carried a financial obligation. With regards to discipline of church appointed staff at the university, this was to be negotiated with between the UPCSA and the UP. However, at the time, “The UPCSA has not clarified the body with which the University would negotiate” (UPCSA, 2009: 239). It was also moved that the UPCSA clarify the process through which it reviewed staff appointment to the university and build in a process of review. The following summary was provided:

1. Instituting a process for the formulation and signing of the Partnership Agreement.
2. Designing a process for the appointment of further subsidized academic appointments.
3. Drawing up of conditions of employment and tenure of office.

4. Initiating a formal Review (appraisal) Management System for: i) subsidized academic staff. ii) seconded academic staff (UPCSA, 2009: 239).

The main change the agreement brought, then, was in terms of the need for an assessment body to oversee the appointment and manage issues of discipline and remuneration continually. The fact that the number of church lecturers appointed is now to be linked to the number of affiliated students, may hint that staff representation was an issue. Further sensitive issues could have been that of discipline as well as pay. However, with the renewal of the contract dealing mainly with administrative issues, it is clear to see that the UPCSA was satisfied with their partnership and happy to carry on using the UP as an academic training ground.

On the surface 2009 was a fairly normal year for the ministry committee, yet under the surface, there are hints that all is not well. This is especially clear to see in the resignation of Mrs S Duncan. In fact, Mrs S Duncan's resignation can be seen as one of the first key indicators in highlighting the ministry committee's lack of cultural understanding which became such an explosive issue in the following years.

4.14. 2010 General Assembly, Vereeniging – UP promises greater student intermingling

2010 saw the signing of the new agreement with the University of Pretoria and the path set to continue a working relationship between the church and University. The unfamiliarity of the university environment is seen to be beneficial in preparing potential ministers to work in cross-cultural environments (UPCSA, 2010: 208). Interesting to note is that the Ministry committee in 2010 was much more willing to embrace cross-cultural exposure and training.

It is thereby hoped that our future ministers will be open to receiving a call anywhere in the UPCSA and not visualise themselves as only able to minister in “their own culture.” Achieving these aims has not always been easy or without controversy (UPCSA, 2010: 208).

This year also saw the appointment of Prof Johan Buitendag as the new dean of UP theology faculty. In a visit to the UPCSA, Prof Buitendag highlighted how greater intermingling between students of various denominations and cultures can be expected under his leadership (UPCSA, 2010: 208–209). The fact that this is among the first comments the dean makes to the UPCSA

highlights that issues of intermingling and cultural diversity are still presenting a challenge. As was highlighted earlier, the UPCSA itself was struggling to embrace its cultural diversity. Buitendag's comments thus serve to highlight that cross-cultural exposure is still a challenge but something which the UPCSA is keen to address. However, despite these claims, it was not until 2019 that 'English' and Afrikaans students would be working together in the same lecture hall⁵⁵.

On the wider scale of institutional relationships, 2010 saw great progression in the Zambian training college. Justo Mwale Theological College (JMTC) managed to increase its accreditation and changed its name to Justo Mwale Theological University College (JMTUC). While in relationship to Stellenbosch a request for funds was made in order to establish a similar housing structure to Sedibeng house in Pretoria. This request was not granted and one wonders why Stellenbosch (one of the less attending training centres⁵⁶) was prioritised over other affiliated institutions such as JMTUC.

Unfortunately, 2010 again reveals challenges in Presbyteries supporting/ co-operating with the ministerial formation process. Some presbyteries are praised for their good work in the discernment process. Yet other Presbyteries are critiqued for doing a rushed job and not giving the process the full commitment, such an important process deserves.

Some of the reports guide the Selection Conference members by their raising of issues that are full of insight and wisdom concerning candidates. Other Presbytery reports are so brief that they are not only unhelpful but appear to have been done in a rush (UPCSA, 2010: 208).

Another negative issue was that in-house fighting resulted in some churches no longer been classed as fit to receive probationers.

Unfortunately, some congregations are experiencing such inner tensions and divisions over the Associations issue that they can no longer be considered as a

⁵⁵ The *Afrikaans Must Fall*, not an initiative of the University of Pretoria, was the ultimate cause that saw the ending of separate lectures for English and Afrikaans students. Consequently 'English speaking' and Afrikaans students now sit side by side in the same lecture hall. However, this should be seen as the start of change, not the end. The challenge still remains to develop a bilingual competency in theological students.

⁵⁶ The year's student numbers continually show Stellenbosch to have fewer students than other institutions, while JMTUC often has the most students.

suitable place for Probationers to be introduced to the responsibilities of Ministry of Word and Sacrament (UPCSA, 2010: 211).

Thus, again it is the practical, the everyday running of the formation programme, not the theological or overarching theory which is hampering the formation process. Issues of church support and organising of probation are the main challenges raised in 2010.

4.15. 2011 Executive Commission, Port Elizabeth – the undermining of the Ministry Committee

2011 presented a mixed year from the Ministry Committee. The opening of the report highlights the need to diversify ministerial training and to improve training on all levels. As such the committee is tasked to “develop programmes for the on-going training of ministers, both in service and post ordination” (UPCSA, 2011: 118). Up until this point further ministerial training had mainly consisted of grants given to ministers to study at academic institutions. The reports from previous years detail those that have undertaken further training and at which institution. For the majority of years the only institutions listed are academic universities, of which the University of Pretoria is a strong favourite (see UPCSA, 2007: 107, 2008: 85, 2009: 166–167, 2010: 211). As such, the Ministry committee highlighted that a more detailed programme of ministerial training needs to be developed. Church specific and non-academic training needs to be included and this training cannot be left to the initiative of the minister. This is the first hint that the comments on developing Sedibeng into being more than just accommodation (see UPCSA, 2006: 258) may actually become more than comments. In other words, the UPCSA in 2011 was looking to expand and diversify its ministerial training.

In the same report, it was detailed that in the presbytery of Mthata following a full-time ministerial formation programme was not realistic.

Mthata Presbytery exercises its Ministry amongst the poorest of the poor masses of rural communities. Given the said situation of abject poverty, therefore, the overwhelming majority of its congregations cannot sustain full-time ministry (UPCSA, 2011: 223).

Due to the socio-economic context of the Presbytery, most members seeking ordination have no option but to do so on a part-time basis. The irony, in relationship to comments on diversifying ministerial formation, is that the ministry committee appears to be quite

unbending in its approach, being insistent that ministerial formation needs to be undertaken full time. “The Committee has put the need for us to resign from our current places of employment, as a precondition for our applications to be considered thereby” (UPCSA, 2011: 223). These comments were brought about through multiple cases with the Mthatha presbytery and Ministry Committee in which candidates were expelled or denied entrance to the formation programme. As such, tensions between Mthatha and the Ministry Committee were high, so much so that the committee decided to launch an investigation on certain individuals who were “undermining” and publicly negatively criticizing the work of the committee (UPCSA, 2011: 184). While 2011 does not give the details of the “undermining”, the 2012 report sheds more light on the situation revealing an approach to ministerial formation which is far from diverse and adaptive.

4.16. 2012 General Assembly, Stellenbosch – undermining of ministry committee

For the ministry committee, 2012 was an eventful year; it is in this year that the allegations of undermining really come to light and the extent of problems within the ministry committee uncovered. The report from this year also highlights a decrease in clergy numbers, Tshwane Presbytery’s withdrawal from chaplaincy of students and the renewal of Rev E Germiquet’s contract as ministry secretary.

The bulk of the report is concerned with the enquiry into the allegations that certain individuals have been publicly undermining the work of the ministry committee. The report specifically details that the Presbytery of Mthatha, Rev ME Mtyhobile, Rev Prof GA Duncan and Mrs S Duncan, and Rev SD Gwala have been accused of undermining the work of the ministry committee (UPCSA, 2012: 249). The investigations took place over four meetings in an attempt to discern if the allegations were true and what consequences should result. What follows is a synopsis of these four meetings. Investigating these meetings helps to uncover some of the complexities at play in the ministry committee and within the ministerial formation programme.

The first meeting took place on the 14th of September 2011 in Parktown, covering the necessary judicial documents and hearing the case for the ministry committee (UPCSA, 2012: 294). The second meeting took place from the 1st – 2nd December 2011 in Mthatha. The meeting occupied itself mainly with the decision of the Ministry Committee to remove Mr K Walaza from the ministerial formation programme as he could not take up full-time probation

and had failed to do so since 2008 (see UPCSA, 2011: 225). In this instance, the hearing ruled in favour of the ministry committee's decision (UPCSA, 2012: 249–250). The third meeting took place from the 15th – 16th February 2012, again in Mthatha. The focus this time was around a Mr Victor Letuka who had not been invited to selection conference due to an administrative error on his application form. Again the special commission ruled in favour of the decision and asked that the manual be updated to reflect current practice (UPCSA, 2012: 250). By the end of the third meeting the special commission had reached a decision regarding the actions of the Mthatha presbytery. It was concluded that:

1. The Commission finds that the Presbytery of Mthatha, one of the 19 Presbyteries of the UPCSA, has not undermined the work of the Ministry Committee;
2. The Commission finds evidence that individuals within the Presbytery may have contributed, intentionally or unintentionally, to the breakdown of the relationship between the Ministry Committee and the Presbytery and the Commission finds evidence that the Ministry committee itself has contributed to this situation. This has caused the virtual breakdown of the Ministry Committee's work within the bounds of this Presbytery.
3. The Commission finds that the Ministry Committee and the Presbytery of Mthatha have not exhausted all possible pastoral interventions intended to bring about reconciliation in this area and finds that the judicial means chosen have not proved helpful (UPCSA, 2012: 251)

The Mthatha presbytery had not undermined the work of the Ministry Committee. Rather a few individuals within the presbytery and a breakdown in communication with the ministry committee had contributed to "the virtual breakdown of the ministry committee's work within the bounds of this Presbytery". In other words, communication between the two groups had failed, leading to misunderstanding on both sides. The special committee added further that the ministry committee is just as responsible for the break in communication and that the judicial, opposed to pastoral, approach to the situation has only exacerbated the matter. Rather than attempting to hear the Mthata presbytery and come to an understanding, the ministry committee accused it of undermining its work (which, as the

special commission discerned, was not the case) and dragging it through a judicial procedure. This aggressive approach to a situation which was classed predominantly as a lack of understanding reveals that the ministry committee was employing a domineering and unbending approach to its duties.

Having concluded the allegations with Mthatha, the fourth meeting focused on the remaining allegations. In all instance, those accused had written critiques on the work of the ministry committee which had been published to varying degrees of privacy. Rev SD Gwala had written privately to the ministry committee about his concerns over their function and gossip he had heard in the congregation. While the gossip reported is classed as undermining, Rev Gwala himself is seen to have pursued the right course of action in writing to the committee privately and is not guilty of the charge of undermining (UPCSA, 2012: 370). But yet again a judicial approach is applied to an individual who privately contacted the ministry committee to voice concerns. Rather than dealing with criticism the ministry committee chose to “deal” with the criticisers. Rev Z Mtyhobile, who sent a circular email regarding occurrences in the committee, is also acquitted of any allegations. Although it is seen as regrettable that his email included the Church of Scotland (UPCSA, 2012: 370). Finally, Rev Prof G Duncan and Mrs S Duncan are convicted of undermining the ministry committee through a public letter which was posted online (UPCSA, 2012: 370). This ‘offensive’ letter was a yearly update that was published on a forum for interested Church of Scotland members. This letter details S Duncan’s resignation (discussed above) and her challenges with the ministry committee with specific reference to its racial demographics⁵⁷. It also contains remarks of disappointment that the Durban presbyteries combined *covenant and licensing service* had no white attendees. The letter also contained updates on personal matters including employment, family and friends.

In all instances, those who were critical of the ministry committee were accused of undermining its function. Yet only in the last instance was this criticism actually concluded to be undermining. However, even in this instance of undermining, the letter was more of an open update from one individual’s perspective, which highlights challenges with race within the denomination, rather than a sustained critique or outright attack on the ministry

⁵⁷ These comments expressed the view that as the committee assigned was all white and lack a broad understanding of Africa culture, a limited perspective was being represented. This limitation was reported to be creating tension especially as those staying at Sedibeng were from black, not white, cultures.

committee. This reaction to criticism from the committee could be seen as a point of concern. The report concluded that no evidence could be found to show the ministry committee was not doing its duty, which no doubt was correct (UPCSA, 2012: 270–271). However, in developing best practices for ministerial formation criticism needs to be dealt with constructively in order for the process to develop and improve. If criticism is just met with judicial action a space for critical comments is suppressed. With this suppression, it became hard for open and honest conversations and reflections on the struggles of ministerial formation to occur. The report itself highlights this when it concluded that poor communication, use of confrontational language and untested assumptions lead to the development of this situation in the first place (UPCSA, 2012: 270–271). A further worry comes in that only one party was classed to be ‘undermining’ the work of the Ministry Committee. Other parties, if not undermining, could have been engaged with constructively to help improve ministerial formation. Yet this was not the case, all criticism, even if potentially constructive criticism was seen as an attempt to undermine their work by the ministry committee. In other words, the committee appears to have been afraid of criticism to an extent that they were not even willing to engage with constructive criticism. As such, this event highlighted both challenges in the function of the ministry committee and unity in the denomination at large. While the undermining fiasco was brought about by a breakdown in communication, the report also highlighted that the long-term cause on the matter related to the differing views around a theology of ministerial formation:

The Special Commission observes that the subject of “Models of Ministry for the UPCSA” lies at the core of the conflict between the Ministry Committee and others. The permissibility of “part-time ministry” is the main issue in disagreement. The Commission urges the General Assembly to facilitate a wide-scale conversation on this subject within the denomination in the near future (UPCSA, 2012: 371).

The 2012 report thus reveals a ministry committee struggling to communicate and deal with criticism effectively, and a denomination strongly divided around what should be classed as the appropriate means of ministerial formation. By 2012 the ministry committee of the UPCSA had been functioning for over ten years. In this time, one would have expected such issues as the time and nature of study to have been resolved. However, as the fiasco shows,

foundational aspects of a theology of ministerial formation were unresolved, with the denomination still divided over what direction to take.

Besides the undermining fiasco, issues between the Presbytery of Tshwane and the ministry committee also showed a lack of clear vision and communication. In 2008 the Presbytery undertook a chaplaincy/pastoral responsibility for ministerial candidates. Yet in 2012, due to a lack of clear communication⁵⁸, the presbytery withdrew leaving the ministry committee to oversee the pastoral care of students (UPCSA, 2012: 368).

Another challenge faced by the UPCSA in 2012 is the declining number of ordained ministers. Between 2007 and 2011, 47 of 74 accepted candidates had been ordained. Yet in the same period, it was approximated that 55 ministers have retired. This led to a decline of 9 ministers over the period. Yet once secondment was taken into account the decline in ministers active in local congregations was closer to 25 (UPCSA, 2012: 244). Ministers for the church are not coming forward, which leaves those in service even more strained.

2012 frames the ministry committee in a rather negative light. While challenges from previous years were uncovered, the 2012 report also revealed both logistical and theological challenges. For the most part, the main areas of tension had come in regard to logistical/pragmatic issues. It was the committee's inability to communicate, to adjust and to handle criticism which had fuelled the fiasco. Yet it was not only the way in which the committee executed its duties which created the stumbling block. Theological issues, especially if part-time formation was the correct avenue, had been the underlying long-term cause of the fiasco. Perhaps better communication would have avoided such heated conflict, but even had this been the case, disagreement around the theology of formation would have still abounded. As such, E Germiquet in entering his second term faced a great need to improve communication and organisation within the committee. Yet, there was also a need to develop a more robust and clear theology of ministerial formation. It could be asked if Germiquet's reappointment was the right course of action in light of the occurrences of this year. The report of 2012 would seem to contain a slight basis. Despite the undermining fiasco

⁵⁸ The report specifically details confusion over disciplinary jurisdiction as the chief reason for the presbytery's withdrawal: "The Ministry Committee was notified of the decision taken by the Tshwane Presbytery to 'withdraw from all involvement with Theology students of the UPCSA until General Assembly deals with the Overture regarding the disciplinary jurisdiction over students.'" (UPCSA, 2012: 368).

it presents the ministry committee as functioning in a stable and unchanged manner⁵⁹. Yet the issues and failings of the ministry committee were greater than that of one individual and it would be inappropriate and a jump in logic to place all the blame on one individual, especially as issues with Presbyteries existed before Germiquet's appointment.

4.17. 2013 – Executive Commission, Beaconsfield

Following the occurrences of 2012, 2013 was a relatively quiet year for the ministry committee. Still the matter of undermining continued to find its way into the report. The matter between the Duncans and the committee remains unresolved with both parties in a deadlock. Rev Prof G Duncan was unwilling to write a letter of apology, while the ministry committee was unwilling to let the matter go and sought further judicial action (UPCSA, 2013: 205). The minutes also highlight issues of sexism in the formation process. After the decision not to overturn the ruling which meant Mrs Kennedy could not start her probation, Rev Ruth Armstrong noted her disdain and highlights how this is not the first time female ministerial candidates are receiving different treatment to their male counterparts (UPCSA, 2013: 235–236). The lack of comment on sexism in previous reports further highlights the issue of sexism. It is unlikely that this was not an issue, as the statement from Rev Armstrong demonstrates. Rather, the lack of comment shows an oblivious attitude toward the problem and highlights the extent of the issue. The nature of ministerial formation and the climate in which ministers serve is changing and the ministry committee is failing to adjust as Rev Armstrong's closing comments show:

However, this is no longer an issue of male and female ministers, the issue is that ministry as a whole is changing and the Ministry Committee needs to be mindful of the fact that the “old” model of ministry – male ministers whose wives and children dutifully follow them wherever the Lord may call – has long since passed away! (UPCSA, 2013: 236)

The real test for the ministry committee in following years would be how it adjusted to the change in climate at large. As well as how issues of sexism surrounding the ordination of women would be dealt with.

⁵⁹ The opening of the 2012 report describes how the committee has been relatively unchanged since 2006 which has allowed stability in operations (UPCSA, 2012: 243). Yet from the following report it is doubtful that the situation could truly be classed as stable.

4.18. 2014 General Assembly, Polokwane – in a bad way

Again 2014 deals with the undermining of the ministry committee and yet again a conclusion cannot be reached. Rather the decision is to accept the special commissions and to move on with the matter leaving it unresolved (UPCSA, 2014: 68). Another theme that is becoming commonplace in the reports is the lack of involvement/commitment to the fellowship of vocation process. Again it is highlighted how “some fellowships of vocation barely function at all” (UPCSA, 2014: 177). The continuation of this theme may also be a reflection on the Ministry Committee and its communication skills. Yet over the years, the committee has invested much time into trying to improve the FOV programme so a lack of church ownership/responsibility in the formation process can be classed as the prime factor in the struggle. In an attempt to have churches more invested in the process it is proposed that each candidate sent for discernment must contribute R2000 (UPCSA, 2014: 378). This will help cover the cost of the discernment conference and also help churches to think twice before sending candidates. However this proposal is not accepted (see UPCSA, 2014: 455). For many congregations paying R2000 to send a candidate would be unaffordable. As such this measure would limit access to the ministry to those who could afford it; hence its rejection. However, its suggestion in the first place is again a further sign of how detached from the reality of some congregations the ministry committee was.

In relation to the University of Pretoria no significant comment is given with the following comment being provided:

Pretoria Faculty of Theology remains the UPCSA’s primary teaching institution. There are currently 4 official students doing their basic academic formation, while 9 ministers are pursuing their Post Ordination studies at Pretoria (UPCSA, 2014: 177).

The number of students studying at the institution remained constant and no issues seem to be presented. It is also revealed how Prof G Duncan will be retiring and Prof J Pillay will take his place as the church associated lecturer at the UP (UPCSA, 2014: 181). The only other issue closely attached to Pretoria is at Sedibeng house. In this year it was decided that the house will only be open to UPCSA and EPCSA theological students; any spare beds will be provided at a competitive rate for visiting clergy. The hope was that this would foster a better atmosphere at the house enhancing spiritual and personal development. Interestingly no

comment was given on how this narrower focus can lead to Sedibeng offering more formalised church-based instruction for candidates. In this regard, there seems to have been very little development of the plans put forward in 2006 and the broadening of training put forward in 2011. With regard to institutions on a wider basis, it was asked that all Presbyterians considering ordination only undertake studies at recognised institutions (UPCSA, 2014: 178). In this way, the quality of training can be safeguarded through the oversight of the ministry committee.

4.19. 2015 Executive Commission, Matatiele - Finances and further training

Financial matters were the main challenge of 2015. Continually rising costs coupled with budget cuts (the committee's budget was almost halved in 2015) were placing the committee in a difficult situation. As such, it was again proposed that those sent to the discernment conference should pay R2000 to help cover costs (UPCSA, 2015: 294). Although, again, this proposal is turned down (UPCSA, 2015: 342). Other proposals to reduce funds included: students having to pay a minimum of 20% of their housing and accommodation fees; the committee using video conferencing in preference to face to face meetings; the reduction and possible elimination of Post Ordination Training Study grants; and reduction in the number of candidates selected and Post Academic Training (UPCSA, 2015: 151). As such, it is clear to see that the financial situation within the ministry committee is far from desirable. However, these financial difficulties may have had a productive impact. With the decline in finances, the old way of approaching ministerial formation could not continue and new avenues had to be pursued. In this regard "new" forms of ministry were to be investigated:

The Ministry Committee has begun to look at other possible forms of ministry as well as investigating whether the Selection of candidates should also include in its criteria people who indicate a specific ministry, (e.g. Rural ministry, inner-city street ministry' self-supporting ministry, sustainability ministry etc.) (UPCSA, 2015: 151).

Another avenue to be pursued was the move away from study grants towards more broad-based teaching. As mentioned above, study grants were usually given for training at academic institutions. In 2011 it was realised that the denomination needed to adopt a broader approach and move away from only funding academic studies. Yet no action had been taken until 2015. In this year a detailed proposal came forward for a new approach to Post

Ordination Training and Studies (POST) (see UPCSA, 2015: 296–298). It was proposed that ministers be encouraged to gain three study points each year which could be gained in various ways. These ways included, writing of academic papers, attending conferences and writing of book reviews among other options (UPCSA, 2015: 298). The proposers decided that this would be a volunteer programme, not enforced, as they believe ministers would take their own initiative to enter the programme (UPCSA, 2015: 294). If this voluntary approach was correct would be worked out in time. From the interviews, it became apparent that congregations did not support further training of their ministers (mainly due to the financial implication). They further highlighted how some ministers were complacent in their role and, as such, saw no value in further training⁶⁰. As such, if ministers didn't have to undertake further training, it was doubtful that they would make the effort to do so. But as for 2015, the Executive Committee requested that the proposal be refined and presented again at the general assembly the following year.

The 2015 executive commission also reveals further evidence of sexist practices within the selection process. “Specific attitudes and actions of individuals, Sessions and Committees which have made it difficult for women to respond to God’s call as elders and ministers in the UPCSA.” (UPCSA, 2015: 42): Presbytery’s Ministry Committees and questions asked at discernment are two of the key examples given (see UPCSA, 2015: 42). In this way, it is clear to see that the theology of ministerial formation has not been fully developed to incorporate female ordinands or elders. As such 2015 reveals the usual logistical problems but also raises issues more tightly linked to theory and theology of ministerial formation. The proposed implementation of broad-based training is a good step in the right direction, although a step that is taking too long to make. While the exposure from 2013 and 2015 of different attitudes towards female and male leaders as well as the struggles to adapt to the current context shows a ministry committee in trouble. Despite discussions around formation, practices had not been implemented. This lack of progression is bound to impact the effectiveness of the formation programme as well as the long-term vitality of the denomination.

⁶⁰ Interview 002, Page 2

4.20. 2016 General Assembly, East London

After completing two terms as ministry secretary⁶¹, 2016 marked the retirement of E Germiquet and the election of a new ministry secretary. He was given a written testimony highlighting his academic background and thanking his years of service (UPCSA, 2016: 37–38). In his place, P Baxter was promoted as the new ministries secretary. She had served 10 years' leading the Ministry Committee in Arizona USA and had a Doctorate in spirituality and three master's degrees in education and theology (UPCSA, 2016: 55).

In regards to institutions, UP and Sedibeng house receive positive comments this year. At UP polity classes were taking place on a weekly basis to give students church specific instruction to help with denominational training and personal faith development.

Every Tuesday, a Polity class is held at the UP Faculty for UPCSA students. The class is attended by our students at UP together with 3 TEEC students as well as 2 UNISA students and a minister who is waiting for admission into the UPCSA. The Polity classes are based on our "Confession of Faith" (Manual Chapter 2) and discussions relating to the ministry, personal faith and behaviour are beneficial and should bear fruit for years to come (UPCSA, 2016: 217–218).

While Sedibeng house had been opened up to students studying via correspondence. In this way, these students could also attend and benefit from the polity classes being held at UP and have greater integration with other ministers in training (UPCSA, 2016: 218). On the broader scale, Justo Mwale Theological University College has reached accreditation status as a full university now becoming Justo Mwale University (UPCSA, 2016: 218).

However, there was a lack of satisfaction amongst the UPCSA over the recognised training institutions. In this regard, it was proposed that the South African Theological Seminary (SATS) be recognised as a training institution as the current institutions are too "liberal". While a clear definition of liberal is not provided, the main concern with current institutions is that they challenged foundational doctrines of the UPCSA.

⁶¹ Germiquet retired four months short of completing 10 years of service.

[W]hen it comes to theological education, we have selected, and restricted recognition to educational institutions which do not uphold some of the key doctrines on which the Presbyterian Church was founded (UPCSA, 2016: 414a)

This motion is not supported and in fact comes up against strong opposition on several grounds, including opposition to expanding the number of institutions, and that formation should not move away from a critical approach (see UPCSA, 2016: 414f). While it needs to be emphasised that this is a critique from a minority group, the rise of the critique in the first place showed disunity in the denomination over the training approach and dissatisfaction with current methods. From the respondents it became clear that some did not view the university as an adequate training ground. One commented on how it was a “day centre” and not a total formation.⁶² While another felt that the university did not provide as good a training as the Christian college they previously attended⁶³. As a result, the ministry committee is tasked to review the current institutions and to report back in 2017 (UPCSA, 2016: 7Supp).

Separate to the motion of institutions, the ministry committee reports on the need to diversify and reassess the intended outcomes of ministerial formation (UPCSA, 2016: 221). This involves looking at the current approach to assess if it is producing ministers capable of functioning in the current reality. With the shift in landscape “the desired outcome for selection and training needs to be reviewed” (UPCSA, 2016: 302). Part of this need can be seen to stem out of the historical lack of clarity around the desired outcomes of ministerial formation. While the 2002 report promoted as key concepts, evening detailing a 4-year plan (see page 94-95 above) these never truly became part of the UPCSA’s ministerial formation culture. In addition to this, the focus of training needed reevaluation. Building on the need for “new” forms of ministry highlighted in 2015, the UPCSA is again building on this idea in 2016. As the history has shown, there were major issues with both the function and theology of ministerial formation at this point in time. This move to develop “new” forms of ministry shows an awareness of these issues as well as the development of a commitment to do something about them. Reflecting on Ephesians 4:11-12 the 2016 report put forward that formation should also include prophets and evangelists and not purely focused on discerning

⁶² Interview 005, Page 3

⁶³ Interview 006 – Page 1

those called to ordained minister (UPCSA, 2016: 221). Further, it was also suggested that part-time and/or bi-vocational training be established as a legitimate option. “Part-time, tent-making or bi-vocational ministry should no longer be viewed as a concession or an exception” (UPCSA, 2016: 302). Up until this point, it was classed more as an exception to the rule and not a legitimate form of training. In line with this, it was also idealised to extend the probation period to two years although in reality this is not financially viable⁶⁴. This proposal shows a reinvigoration of theological reflection on ministerial formation similar to that seen at the unification of the PCSA and RPCSA. While encouraging for the future of ministerial formation, it is also worrying that similar topics and ideas were raised in 2000. In this way it is becoming evident that while a solid theory of ministerial formation is present its execution and development has been lacking.

Finally, relationships between the ministry committee and local congregations still appear to be poor. This is in relation to both candidates sent for discernment as well as candidates on probation. The ministry committee each year reports of issues with the selection process and candidates not understanding it. As such, a name change to call discernment is proposed to highlight that it is not a yes or no to ministry but a process to help discern God’s call (UPCSA, 2016: 217). This change is also to function in line with the anticipated diversifying of ministerial training mentioned above. While those on probation report being treated as ministry support to lighten the load, as opposed to a trainee in need of development and time invested into them (see UPCSA, 2016: 221–222). As such bringing the wider denomination on board with the vision of the Ministry Committee is a continuing challenge.

4.21. 2017 Executive Commission, Harare – A year of transition

A year of transition is how the ministry report describes 2017. With Rev Dr P Baxter settling into the role, the year was taken to assess the functioning of the committee and to get to know student needs better before making any changes. Obviously wanting to show the new ministry secretary in a positive light, the ministry report gave a lot more detail on the Post Academic Training programme, even including positive feedback from participants (UPCSA, 2017: 117–118). Dr Baxter also availed herself for a chat with the students and showed a generally more hands-on approach and willingness to get to know her students (UPCSA, 2017:

⁶⁴ In 2006 it was also proposed to extend the years of studies but then again financial restraints were the main reasons not to go ahead with the plan (UPCSA, 2006: 106).

118). In this regard, devotionals were (re)introduced⁶⁵ on Tuesdays and Thursday mornings at Sedibeng house and feedback was given on the need of providing more concrete formation from the church (UPCSA, 2017: 117). Further, a new Chaplain of Sedibeng house was appointed and attachments to local churches were officially organised for students (UPCSA, 2017: 116–117). Up until now, the denominational and personal formation had only taken the form of one polity class a week. As such, these changes show a much greater awareness for theological training to be rooted in the personal, ecclesial and academic environment. Further, it showed a renewed commitment to root theoretical principles in practical action, something which has been lacking up to this point. With regards to the polity classes, Rev Dr Baxter had approached Rev Prof Pillay to develop an accredited church-based course for students (UPCSA, 2017: 119). Compared to previous years, 2017 shows a renewed vigour in Pretoria and a commitment to use the assets that are available in that context, such as Presbyterian staff employed at the University, as well as Sedibeng house and its various facilities.

With regard to institutional affiliation, in light of a lack of nominations from presbyteries, it was decided to organise a conference for 2018 to specifically deal with the situation. The plan was to:

include representation from each Presbytery, as well as the educators and theologians to articulate what the UPCSA wants in the ministerial training and whether the present and any new proposed institutions are providing what is needed (UPCSA, 2017: 115).

This conference appeared to be very similar to the Propeller Conference held 18 years earlier, showing again a lack of progression but also a renewed interest in the formation process. As a result of this plan, no decision was made regarding affiliated intuitions. This, however, did not stop the motion of SATS being proposed, again, as an official institution and, again, the motion losing (see UPCSA, 2017: 379).

On a separate note, and brought about by the “undermining” fiasco, a report came forward highlighting the perpetuation of racial inequality in the UPCSA. Highlighted in 2002 with the placement and training of ministers and hinted at in 2005 through the report from the Uniting

⁶⁵ Prior to 2007 devotionals were a regular part of the formation process at Sedibeng house

Presbyterian Black Leadership Forum, the UPCSA seems to have been unable to deal with the issue of racism adequately.

most of the efforts that have been adopted in the UPCSA in the last few years seem to be tarnished by their propensity to re-colonize rather than decolonize the denomination in her pursuit for justice and reconciliation (UPCSA, 2017: 298)

It was viewed that the ministry committee's decisions surrounding the deferral of members from Mthatha (which was revealed in the undermining fiasco) were governed by a naiveté over the lived context of the applicant. This naiveté had then been executed with the assumption that the context overlapped showing a lack of genuine understanding of the diversity in the denomination (see UPCSA, 2017: 298–299). As such, racism, or a lack of cultural understanding can be added to the causes which led to the undermining fiasco. Thus, moving forward, the UPCSA is in serious need of adequate discussion around unrecognised racism within the denomination and a need for healing across racial lines. If ministerial formation was to be effective at developing to serve across the UPCSA these issues needed to be addressed.

4.23. 2018 General Assembly, Benoni – going forward

The reports from the ministry committee in 2018 were much more extensive than usual. This year showed several clear markers in the committee's attempt to move forward. These include a theological workshop, the Rudder committee and the evaluation of current institutions. In all three the ministry committee was looking to gain a better grasp of who it was and the challenges it faced.

The report opens with the remark that:

The Committee can report that it has been a good year. Our students have on the whole done well in their studies, probationers have integrated into congregations, and new calls have been discerned to bring new life to our congregations (UPCSA, 2018: 249).

That the committee classed what should have been considered regular functions as good, highlights the state of dysfunctionality it has been in. Yet, through the report, the good is clear to see. The committee has been continuing to investigate the different forms of ministry, especially around Ephesians 4:12. This had resulted in a shift away from focusing primarily on

training ‘pastors’, to an awareness of the wider need for training. Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds and Teachers are highlighted as gifts that need to be recognised and supported (UPCSA, 2018: 249). On top of this, support of bi-vocational ministries was also being explored. In this regard, there were five bi-vocational probationers for 2018. These were ministers who would work part-time at a church and part-time in another industry. For those seeking a bi-vocation, their involvement was expected to be in industries with a close affinity to church ministry: “academics, social workers, caregivers in children’s homes, retirement villages, hospitals, etc.” (UPCSA, 2018: 250). It was stressed how bi-vocational and the expansion of ministries should be seen as two separate groups; bi-vocational related to part-time ministry, while the expansion saw the broadening focus of recognised ministries. Overall the Ministry Committee sought “A wider recognition of gifting and forms of ministry calls for understanding at all levels (congregations, sessions, and presbyteries)” (UPCSA, 2018: 250).

Amidst the development of theory surrounding formation, was the development of congregation and student responsibilities during the formation process. In this regard, it was detailed how church ministers were to report yearly on students under their care. Students also had to produce a yearly report and on top of this were given further obligations. These obligations included attendance of worship and involvement in a local congregation. With regards to congregational involvement, this was expected to grow steadily with the years of study. Starting in first year with reading of the gospel and by their fourth year, being involved in Sunday schools, parish meetings and occasionally preaching (UPCSA, 2018: 251–252). In this way, the ministry committee was starting to formalise personal formation and implementing guidelines to assess the process. These guidelines would also act as a way of assessing and fostering formation outside of the academic arena.

Contained in the ministry committees’ report, as Appendix A, is a report highlighting the theology of moving from maintenance to mission. This report was presented to the rudder committee (see below) and gives an overview of challenges within the wider church. Its presence in the ministry committees’ report is interesting to note as its content does not directly relate to formation. Rather it was a much more foundational document, which looks at the nature of the church and current challenges being faced:

The group agreed to follow a structured theological approach to its discussions, addressing the following questions, with the first three handled as small group discussions and the fourth in plenary thereafter:

- Agency/Insertion: Who are we as the UPCSA and how are we positioned/inserted in our context?
- Contextual Analysis: What is our context and what are the underlying factors shaping that context?
- Theological Reflection: What does God say about this and what does our Reformed tradition say?
- Pastoral Planning: What should we be doing as the UPCSA? (UPCSA, 2018: 259)

This workshop was in January 2018 and was facilitated by Prof Klippiess Kritzinger. Prof Kritzinger was a key member of the URCSA ministry committee and features strongly in the following chapter. While a very detailed report, its main relevance to ministerial formation is its demonstration of a back to basics approach. The content of the report focused strongly on challenges faced and understanding the environment the church was functioning in. These are foundational questions and showed the ministry committee was attempting afresh to understand the context in which it was operating.

Moving to the supplementary report, details of the rudder conference are given. This conference was strongly inspired by the Propeller Conference: “Video footage from the Propeller Conference held in June 2000 was shown to delegates” (UPCSA, 2018: 492). As such, the impression is given that the Ministry Committee was trying to recapture the enthusiasm and urgency for change that was present in the early union years; that same change which had been so elusive and hard to achieve since the Propeller Conference. From the rudder conference 10 criteria were produced to guide ministerial formation:

1. An Ecumenical Approach.
2. Reformed Spirituality.
3. African/Black Worldview,
4. Contextualization.
5. Curriculum.
6. UPCSA Board Participation.
7. UPCSA Academic Representation.
8. Ministerial Formation,
9. Diversity /Staffing and
10. Appropriate Facilities for Training Ministers in the UPCSA (UPCSA, 2018: 493).

These principles were to function as guiding principles for the selection of institutions and the approach of the ministry committee to ministerial formation. With the developments of these points falling at the end of the period of study, it will not be possible to see who in the UPCSAs has implemented these. Yet it is still important to give some attention to individual points in order to understand the development of logic within the ministry committee. Points one to three are rather straight forward. Yet the inclusion of point three shows a new awareness in the ministry committee to take African/black world views seriously. “The speakers asked for the denomination to understand the need to move away from Western theology alone, and to understand and articulate who they are as Africans” (UPCSA, 2018: 493). Contextualisation includes the need to take the African reality seriously but also expands to include other contexts. For examples, “urban and rural ministry, poverty and sustainability, pastoral and counselling practices, as well as liberation, womanist, feminist, and eco-theological contributions” (UPCSA, 2018: 493) are contexts which need to be taken into consideration. With regard to the curriculum, the UPCSAs were seeking to implement a broad-based approach. Ministerial formation was to broaden from just biblical and theological classes to include relevant skills-related courses. The report then provides an extensive list of potential courses that could be considered ranging from computer literacy to human developmental psychology; from conflict resolution to awareness of socio-economic and political inequalities. Yet, while the curriculum is strongly course-based, which infers a dependency on course providers for formation. The UPCSAs also highlight the need for church responsibility.

Students at distance learning institutions should have quarterly in-house training sessions at a House of Studies or Seminary to be developed in each Presbytery. Training should include up-skilling courses for Ministers. The New General Assembly Office may be used as a Ministerial Training Centre and offer short courses, winter/summer schools (UPCSA, 2018: 493).

Although the majority of the curriculum is to operate around externally provided courses, the need for in house training and development is not overlooked. Church involvement is also needed in points 6 and 7 with the UPCSAs emphasising the need to keep a watchful eye on partner institutions and to have UPCSAs lecturers placed at partner institutions. Point eight is the most extensive of all the points and contains 15 sub-points detailing the formation

process. A key remark made here was made regarding the ownership and nature of ministerial formation:

The Rudder Conference noted that academic performance alone is not sufficient to train ministers in the UPCSA. Ministerial Formation needs to be the responsibility of Presbyteries and the Ministry Committee in partnership with the institutions of training taking into account our transnational contexts. Students need to be formed in the daily practice of reading the Bible, praying, living out ethical lives, and making a difference in society. If students focus only on critical methods, there is the possibility of floundering in their faith (UPCSA, 2018: 494).

This remark is then broken down into the 15 key points of ministerial formation. This starts with the need for a pre-study programme to brief newly selected candidates. Students were to attend formation classes and academic classes concurrently. There was also a need to clarify the roles of presbyteries and ministry committee in the care of students. Students were also to be attached to congregations other than those they were already familiar with. The need to develop a seminary or house of studies in each presbytery was also highlighted. This development was seen as key to the nurturing of a vibrant reformed theology. The points also called for the problem of patriarchy to be addressed and the ministry committee was called upon to develop guidelines for the formation process. These comments show clearly a need for the denomination to take responsibility for the formation of students and not to be dependent on the university to do so. They also start to give a hard answer to some of the more long-term issues within the denomination. A clear resolution is given to the placement of probationers and the necessity of exposure to multiple contexts. It is also clearly identified how issues of sexism need to be addressed. The ministry committee is also called to develop guidelines around ministerial formation to clarify roles and responsibilities of those involved. In this way, there was an attempt to remove some of the common stumbling blocks and to develop clearer communication amidst ministerial formation. Yet, despite these clear gains, the report lacks a concise approach. Spread over so many points, the report presents a mammoth task in actually implementing these changes and lacks a clear vision to help guide that implementation long term. The remaining two points, 9 and 10, are quite self-explanatory. "These 10 criteria are expected to lead to a dynamic and growing Reformed and reforming Church with the saints equipped to make a dynamic spiritual impact in society"

(UPCSA, 2018: 495). Yet, with so many points, and with so many sub-points these 10 criteria do not present a clear way forward. They present a clear understanding of what ministerial formation should be, but not so much a clear path on how the UPCSA will get there.

The final major issue dealt with in the 2018 report was the selection of academic institutions. Guided by the criteria of the rudder conference the six pre-existing institutions, along with the South Africa Theological Seminary (SATS) were analysed. The table below provides a helping representation of the findings.

Table 1a: analysis of partner institutions

		Justo Mwale University	UTC	TEEC	UNISA	Pretoria	Stellenbosch University	SATS
1	Ecumenical Approach	√	√	√	√	√	√	x
2	Reformed Spirituality	√	√	√	√	√	√	x Insufficient to maintain Reformed identity
3	African/ Black World View	√	√	√	√	√	√	x
4	Contextualization	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
5	Curriculum	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
6	UPCSA Board Participation	√	√	√	√	√	√	x
7	UPCSA Academic Representation	√	√	√	√	√	√	xNo structure presently available

Table 1b

								for UPCSA input into curriculum
8	Ministerial Formation	√	√	√	x	√	√	xNo Reformed traditioning
9	Diversity/Staffing	√	√	√	√	√	√	x Evangelical diversity but broad understanding of different traditions not available
10	Facilities	√ <i>Student accommodation needs improvement</i>	√ <i>Library needs improvement</i>	√ <i>Old facilities</i>	√	√	√	√

From table 1a and 1b, it is clear to see at a glance that the pre-existing institutions passed in all categories while SATS only passed two of the seven. It is also clear to see that the 10 categories correspond to the 10 categories established as the criteria for academic training for ministry. As this research is concerned with the University of Pretoria it shall only focus on the findings from UP and SATS.

Pretoria was strongly praised for its long history and academic excellence throughout the report. With regards to its ecumenical approach, this was praised for having over 35 denominations represented in its student body as well as for its intentions to engage more in inter-faith dialogue. Being a historical training ground for reformed churches, no real question came over its reformed spirituality. Interesting to note is the brief nature of the UPCSAs findings on Africa/black world views. In scholarly circles voices have been critical of Pretoria (see Duncan, 2016). Yet the UPCSAs was happy that “Re-curricularization is taking place with increased transformative awareness of Africanization and identifying black writers and scholars” (UPCSA, 2018: 503).

With regards to contextualisation, the faculty was seen to be “in an evolutionary mode”. In other words, it was adapting to the post-modern context and provided students with exposure to multiple contexts. Very similar remarks were made with regards to the curriculum. This remained biblically centred with a strong academic nature and also included “a growing number of black/ African/womanist and feminist voices” (UPCSA, 2018: 503).

With regards to the UPCSAs participation, it was commented that:

The partner churches have space to develop formation programs to enrich the personal devotional practices and Reformed identity of the student. Partner churches are involved at the levels of brainstorming, planning, and implementation (UPCSA, 2018: 503–504).

From the perspective of the denomination, this showed great satisfaction with the relationship and that they felt a valued and heard partner that was well represented within the faculty. In regard to ministerial formation the following was stated: “The University provides a space for weekly formation classes. Two worship times are held for students at Sedibeng House of Studies” (UPCSA, 2018: 504). Considering the length provided to ministerial formation when outlining the criteria, this is an incredibly short comment.

The diversity of the staff was also viewed to be acceptable, especially as the demographic could only shift as lecturing positions became available.

Black staff members presently stand at 29%. The Departments are generally appointing a diverse staff as the posts become available, which includes an improve quota of women in the Faculty, which is currently 17% (UPCSA, 2018: 504).

The report on UP thus showed the denomination to be satisfied with the partnership and academic principles of the university. When compared to SATS it is UP's diversity in theology (not so much in staffing) which stands out clearly as one of its most positive factors. SATS is continually critiqued for offering a limited perspective and not being willing to allow partnership with other denominations:

SATS leadership states that the strength of their board of Directors has been that their Board members are concerned only about what is in the best interests of the Seminary. This assumes that bringing other churches onto the Board would not be in the best interests of the Seminary (UPCSA, 2018: 506).

And further

the Rudder Conference expressed a desire for institutions that will provide a broad understanding of the diverse range of theologies found in the different Presbyterian church contexts and exposure to diverse hermeneutical understandings of scripture, including black, feminist, womanist and eco-theology, as well as an in-depth focus on Reformed theory and praxis. This is not evident in the curriculum at SATS. While the UPCSA seeks a broad, inclusive approach, with a range of theologies (including evangelical theology), SATS focuses on a particular evangelical stance (UPCSA, 2018: 507).

As such, the seminary is dismissed as an option. SATS is seen to be too rigid in its approach, not allowing the denomination space to provide its own input. As highlighted under ministerial formation, in the ten principles, formation is to be a joint responsibility between church and academic institution. As SATS is vested in its own interest and does not allow much space for a partnership it is dismissed as a viable option. This decision to dismiss SATS passes

by consensus with non-objections recorded (UPCSA, 2018: 560). This decision thus lays to rest the multiple requests to include it as an institution and allowed the UPCSA to focus their efforts on the partnerships they currently have.

The rest of the 2018 report deals with the selection of students, 12 of which were accepted for 2019. Overall this report shows a committee establishing its theoretical base of operation. The theological workshop and rudder committee dealt almost exclusively with theoretical matters. This theory is essential to establish in order to gain a clear vision of what practice should be. However, the challenge still remains in implementing the theory; from moving from theory to practice. The history of the ministry committee has shown they are capable of establishing good theory, yet what has been historically lacking is the successful implementation of such. This then will be the key challenge of the ministry committee in the years to come.

4.24. Key findings

In line with the research methodology, the history of the UPCSA also has to be placed within the theoretical framework outlined in chapters 2 and 3. As this research is following a comparative histories approach, this will allow for points of comparison to be constructed and drawn from in the comparison chapter (chapter 6). However, as this history was constructed organically, letting the documents and interviews speak for themselves, some points raised in chapters 2 and 3 did not feature strongly in the history. Key points which the historic analysis did not uncover were: the use of technology, the impact of commodification, accreditation and the religious state of society.

The lack of adoption of technology is a cause for concern. Working over a national setting, effective adoption of technology could help unify all candidates on an online platform. If in house training was to be provided digitally then the ministry committee could easily reach all candidates across the country in an instant. However, the main limitation with the uptake of technology is access. As the history of the denomination shows, there is a large diversity in economic circumstance in the UPCSA. So, while some members could easily access technology, a large proportion would be excluded. The impact of commodification again saw little to no mention. Financial challenges were an issue for the denomination but this was not linked to the commodification of education. With regards to accreditation issues, the UPCSA partnered with the University of Stellenbosch and Pretoria inside South Africa. As such, the

issue of accreditation was navigated by joining long-standing academic institutions. The religious nature of society also received little reference. However, at the end of the period of study the maintenance to mission report, appendix a of the 2018 ministry committee's report, included a reflection on the nature of the church and its need to adapt. While focused on the missional needs and strategy of the denomination, the necessity of the report highlights a shift in the religious culture and a need to actively engage in mission.

The importance of ecumenism and an ecumenical approach to ministerial formation was highlighted through the selection of public universities. In favour of institutions like the UP was the exposure to multiple expressions of the Christian faith that candidates would gain. Continually the UPCSA backed the selection of the UP through this logic.

Through the historical analysis, it became apparent that gender was an area which needed to be addressed and indeed had begun to be addressed. While the historic overview reveals a lack of gender equality (a negative aspect) the fact that minutes openly deal with this topic is positive. The UPCSA is entering a stage where female candidates feel empowered enough to voice their discomfort. It was also in a stage where this discomfort was afforded a space at the highest level of church organisation. What remained for the denomination was to address the situation. The first step to addressing the situation has been taken, now the rest needs to follow.

The UPCSA ministry committee gave little to no comment with regards to decolonisation/Africanisation. The clearest reflection on the topic came in 2018 with the report on partner intuitions. This showed the UPCSA to be happy with the contextualisation underway at partner institutions, including the UP. In fact, the denomination was satisfied by the diversity of teaching staff and academic content offered at Pretoria. However, internal strife within the denomination prior to 2018 showed a lack of contextual awareness and the necessity of Africanisation. Specifically, the 2012 undermining fiasco, as highlighted by the UPBLF in 2016, was fuelled by a lack of contextual awareness and break in communication. As such, the UPCSA needs to come to terms with the great diversity within its denomination and learn to develop a formation programme which fosters awareness for this diversity.

With regards to the church university relationship, the UPCSA showed itself throughout the history to be satisfied with its partnership with the UP. While some critique of partner

institutions emerged towards the end of the period of investigation, this was only a minority group. In general, the UPCSA embraced its relationship with the UP and relied heavily on it for the academic training of ministerial candidates. To this end, the denomination announced that ministerial formation was a joint responsibility between the church and the university.

One final striking aspect of the history, not covered in the theoretical framework, is the lack of consistency and stability within the ministry committee. Since the union in 1999 the ministry committee of the UPCSA has seen multiple conflicts, as well as multiple shifts in theological perspectives. The gains of the rudder committee were somewhat forgotten and only in 2018 were they re-embraced. While the mentoring of students continually swapped hands with new guardians being introduced but never seems to develop into a well-structured programme. In fact, the lack of unity within the denomination can be counted as one of the chief stumbling blocks for the ministerial formation programme. With no clear vision, a programme would be developed but not fine-tuned. Hence in 2018 the UPCSA had to go back to the theory of 2002, rather than building on more recent events.

4.25. Conclusion

Looking forward the ministry committee has a large task ahead of it. There is a need to address racial as well as gender issues, further the continual logistical challenges and lack of congregational support needs to be addressed and then to, top this all off, the denomination needs to actually make up its mind over what it wants from the formation process and to unify around that vision. The final report in the historical analysis, from 2018, shows a renewed vigour towards ministerial formation. Yet, the challenge remains in the implementation of the theory.

From the historical overview, a few key issues start to emerge which will be dealt with in the comparative section of this research. These issues included: the general approach to ministerial formation, debates over part-time or full-time studies, challenges with the administration of the programme, the use of Sedibeng house, support from local churches, financial constraints, student numbers and the treatment of students. From this chapter the broad history of ministerial formation has been given. Like any history this is filled with positives and negatives. While it is easy to let the negative issues dominate the history (for example the continual in house fighting) what has been accomplished should also be remembered. The PCSA and RPCSA's union was not an easy task and to have developed a

predominantly functional ministerial committee and formation programme is a success in itself. The ministry committee has also managed to build on student support and engagement outside of the lecture hall and is currently in the process of further developing this involvement with the implementation of yearly student reports.

This research will now turn to an investigation of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. As already mentioned the URCSA came into existence in 1994, only a few years prior to the UPCSA. The development of the URCSA was also from two former denominations (DRMC and DRCA) with distinct differences. Their involvement at UP also started around the same time, with the ministry committee of the Northern and Southern Transvaal starting official operations in Pretoria in 2003. As such, these key similarities will be vital in the comparison section; how did both denominations, with very similar starts, address the challenge of ministerial formation? Yet, in line with the methodology, the following chapter will investigate the URCSA as a singular whole entity valued in its own right.

Chapter 5

The history of the ministerial formation within the URCSA: 2000-2017

Key dates

2003 – Northern Theological Seminary (NTS) opens

2003 – UNISA was chosen as official partner for undergraduate studies and UP chosen as official partner for post-graduate studies.

2005 – Theology of Ministerial Formation set out in the 2005 General Synod

2006 – Plans to purchase a property in Pretoria emerge

2007 – Appointment of T S Nthakhe as NTS administrator

2009 – Core Ministry for Proclamation and Word comes into function

2009 – UP letter and reply – the challenges of a partnership

2010 – NTS partners with KZN for ministerial formation

2011 – Joint Curatorium changes its name to, Ministerial Formation Task team

2011 – Ms M P Morobi appointed as new NTS administrator

2011 – Rev T Lephakga appointed as a part-time lecturer at NTS

2011 – URCSA partners with the UP as an official training institution for undergraduate studies

2014 – Student numbers at NTS reviewed

2014 – Publication of a manual for ministerial formation

2015 – Rev MS Maponya and ZE Mokgoebo appointed to lead the Continuing Ministerial Development programme

2018 – Extension works at NTS completed

5.1 Introduction

Coming to the fifth chapter, this research shall now focus on a history of ministerial formation within the URCSA. The previous chapter provided the history of ministerial formation for the UPCSA. This chapter shall work in a very similar fashion to the previous chapter. Progressing chronologically through the available archival evidence, the story of ministerial formation within the URCSA since 2000 will be plotted. Then, before concluding the chapter, time will be spent on drawing out the key findings brought forth from plotting the history of ministerial

formation. In line with the method of comparative histories, this chapter treats the URCSA as an individual case study, valid in its own right. Just as the UPCS was examined without drawing in comparison from sources outside of the denomination, so too must the URCSA. In this way, the history of each denomination is allowed to come forth organically. The aim is to investigate the denomination in its own right and to work to prevent the history of the UPCS influencing the narrative. The comparison will be drawn out in the sixth chapter, but, for now, the URCSA will be investigated as a complete legitimate entity in itself.

In April 1999 operations at Turfloop theological seminary were suspended. This seminary, located near Polokwane, had a long history. Opening in 1960 as Stofberg Teologiese Gedenkskool Turfloop, it had been the predominant training centre for clergy in the Northern and Southern Transvaal synods of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa⁶⁶. With the creation of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, Turfloop closed its doors in 1993 but reopened them in 1995 as Turfloop Theological Seminary to become an official URCSA training centre. As such most of those serving in the URCSA today were trained at Turfloop and this seminary carries with it a great nostalgia (Kritzinger, 2018). However financial and disciplinary challenges forced the suspension of activities at Turfloop in April 1999. Between 1999 and 2002 a “diaspora” period emerged. In this time some students remained at Turfloop while others gravitated towards the city of Pretoria (URCSA, 2005: 300–301). Yet, in March 2002⁶⁷ the closing of the theological faculty at the University of the North symbolised the end of operations at Turfloop for good and the need to relocate (Kritzinger, Maponya & Mokoena, 2019: 10). In September 2002 the Joint Curatorium of the Northern and Southern Synods agreed on the move to Pretoria with the vision of creating a new seminary there (Kritzinger, 2018). In 2003 the Northern Theological Seminary came into function and was seeking to establish itself as a legitimate successor moving forward from Turfloop historic shadow. It dubbed itself as striving to deliver an “African-and-Reformed” ethos and to provide students with a well-rounded formation to set them up well for life in ministry (URCSA, 2005: 301). In these first years of operation, students were accommodated at The Foundation, a youth

⁶⁶ It should also be remembered that this training was funded and controlled by the Dutch Reformed Church, the parent church of the DRCM and DRCA

⁶⁷ NTS may have come into being in 2002 if the University of the North had closed a month earlier. However, closing in March meant that the registration deadline at other institutions had past and URCSA would have to wait until the following year to begin any new operations.

hostel in the inner-city of Pretoria. In-house training was run by volunteer ministers and took place in classrooms hired from PEN, an inner-city missions organisation run by the DRC (URCSA, 2005: 301). Operations at NTS were overseen by the seminary management committee (SMC) which reported to the Joint Curatorium of the Northern and Southern Transvaal synods. As the history of ministerial formation for the URCSA in relationship to the University of Pretoria really starts in 2003 with the official opening of the Northern Theological Seminary, the historic survey shall start the year prior.

5.2. 2002 - Curatorium Report to 2002 Synodical Commissions

The key issue of 2002 was the debate regarding entering a partnership with the University of Pretoria (UP) or the University of South Africa (UNISA) as the academic institution for a new training centre in the North. Comparison of courses offered took place and there was much overlap between the institutions. However, there was hesitation over UP, especially the concern that students might be treated as “second class citizens” (URCSA, 2002: 2). Most candidates coming for ministerial formation did not have matric exemption. In terms of courses available, UP offered a diploma course while UNISA offered a bridging course. The fear regarding UP was that the diploma students would not be as highly valued as degree students. Yet, with UNISA, the bridging course would entail an extra year of study; although this, in turn, would offer the chance to learn certain skills such as in-depth biblical knowledge and improve proficiency in English (URCSA, 2002: 1). The training length was to be six years (seven if the UNISA bridging course was chosen). For the first three years of study UNISA and UP offered very similar course. Yet for the last two the UP Master of Divinity (M.Div.) course was more attractive. The specialised research offered by UNISA at that time was not seen to suit the broader needs of ministerial formation. However, the UP had one more controversial issue. At the time the vast majority of UP lecturers were white males presenting a “limited perspective” (URCSA, 2002: 3). URCSA was hesitant that the theological education taught at the UP would be irrelevant to their ministers working within the African context. This is not so much in relation to the modules offered at each respective institution but in relation to who offered the module and how it was presented: “since the vast majority of the UP lecturers are white and male, thus representing a limited perspective”. This is further reiterated with:

[T]hey [the University of Pretoria] only have lecturers from the NGK, Hervormde Kerk and the Uniting Presbyterian Church, with whom they have agreements. At the moment only one of their 20 lecturers is black and only one is a woman (URCSA 2002:4).

For URCSA the limited perspective referred to the teaching staff at the UP. Compared to the 14 denominations represented at UNISA (URCSA, 2002:3), three denominations were very “limited”. Even when commenting directly on the curriculum it was the issue of staffing which was again the stumbling block. UP offered a ‘tradition’ theological curriculum comprising of: “Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, Dogmatics, Christian Ethics, Practical Theology, Science of Religion and Missiology” (URCSA, 2002:5), which lecturers were striving to make relevant to the African context. UNISA followed a revised curriculum broken into four strands: Scripture Studies, Theologies in Context, Congregational Ministry, and Community Ministry. These strands incorporated the traditional disciplines but also allowed space for courses such as The Bible and Africa, Christianity and a changing South Africa, Preaching in a context of poverty, Christian action for reconciliation and Christianity in Africa. This was seen to be more relevant to the needs of the URCSA. Yet the final decision pointed out this relevance in terms of teaching staff:

The African pole of the African-and-Reformed focus that we need to develop is more strongly emphasised at UNISA. This is clearly due to the fact that they already have 30% black staff (16 out of 55 lecturers in the Faculty) as opposed to the 5% (1 out of 20 lecturers) at UP (URCSA 2002: 5).

Ultimately the key deciding factors came down to the time of study, treatment of students, quality of education, demographics of the teaching staff and acceptance of the Belhar Confession (URCSA, 2002: 2–3). The real challenge, however, seemed to be between the support offered from UP vs. the extra requirements of mentoring students at UNISA, coupled with the cultural climate of UP vs. the proven diversity of UNISA. To go with UNISA for the first stage of study would put much more strain on the then proposed Northern Seminary. Yet, to go with UP there were fears over the potentially “limited perspective” of theology taught (URCSA, 2002: 3–4). Ultimately the report decided that:

The church should take responsibility for the formation of its ministers. It cannot ever entrust that completely to a university, so it is imperative that the Seminary be reopened and play an active role in the lives of the students (URCSA, 2002: 5)⁶⁸.

As such, regardless of the institution chosen, a Seminary would be essential for maintaining church involvement in the formation process. This then seems to have been a deciding factor in the choice of institution. The report eventually concluded that UNISA would be the institution of choice for the first 3/4 years (dependant on whether or not the candidate was required to do the bridging course). Then, for the last three years, students would go to UP hopefully to study the BA Hons and then M.Div. course. Yet this was dependant on UP reducing the Greek and Hebrew requirement for the URCSA students. If negotiations regarding the M.Div. course were not successful, the UP was still the institution of choice for the second half of training (URCSA, 2002: 6). The sections marked in bold in the table below show the route URCSA proposed to take

Table 2: possible course options for URCSA (2002:2)

	access	year 1	year 2	year 3	year 4	year 5	year 6
Unisa	access course	B.Th. [with Greek I and Hebrew I]			Hons B.Th. (comprehensive)	-	
UP	-	BA (Theology) or Diploma in Theology [with Greek I and Hebrew I]			BA Hons (Theology)	M.Div. (including a practical church year)	
	-	B.Th. [with Greek II and Hebrew II]				M.Div. (including a practical church year)	

Another key factor in favour of the choice of UNISA was cost. UNISA was almost half the price of UP. The three-year course at UNISA was reported to cost R14,700 while the three year BA at UP was R21,700 (URCSA, 2002: 6). As such the cost, coupled with hesitation over UP and reservations around their genuine commitment to offer African based and African directed theology swayed the decision towards UNISA. As UNISA did not offer practical training in the

⁶⁸As Kritzinger, Maponya and Mokoena (2019) point out A university or the historic leader of formation, the DRC, would not have control over the formation process. This responsibility would fall to the denomination who was taking strong ownership of the formation process.

post-graduate stage, there was no competition offered to UP and they became the default option for the latter half of studies.

Consequently, 2002 marked the beginning of URCSA relationship with UP and UNISA as institutions of training. It is interesting to note that unification talks between URCSA and the DRC began at this time. While not the focus of this research, the faculty merger at UP in 2001 and the unification talks amongst the Dutch Reformed family adds great complexity and depth to the choice of institution. On the one hand, for URCSA to join UP would have been a sign of unity. In the view of the DRC, this would have been the obvious choice as Pretoria represented “the normal theological education” (Kritzinger, Maponya & Mokoena, 2019). Yet for URCSA there is an apparent lack of trust and hesitation to enter an agreement with UP and the DRC. A hesitation brought on by years of mission history and subservience. For URCSA they did not see what was

“normal” about theological formation at UP for a URCSA student, since the Faculty of Theology had only one black staff member, not a single URCSA lecturer, and a significant number of lecturers of the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHKA), which at the time still had an Article in their “Kerkwet” stating that it was a church for white people only (Kritzinger, Maponya & Mokoena, 2019).

So, despite the potential damage to the unification talks, URCSA chose the approach to training which they felt best suited their needs and approach at that time. Also, it is significant that the churches had a clear understanding of their need to be involved in the ministerial formation process and their commitment to establishing a seminary to support candidates while studying despite the extra financial and logistical strains this placed on its ministers.

5.3. 2004 - Report of Curatorium to the Synodical Commissions of URCSA Southern and Northern Transvaal, For The Period 26 September 2003 Until 30 June 2004

Opening the report details were given of how the Curatorium is a joint Curatorium of equal membership between the Northern and Southern synods. The content of these reports thus deals exclusively with the approach to ministerial formation in these two synods. At the general synod, the larger picture is given, but, as the focus of this research is on ministerial formation at the UP, the reports from the Curatorium of the northern and southern synod present the most relevant and pertinent information.

In 2004 it is clear that the Curatorium was unclear of its function. At this moment only the Curatorium of the general synod was covered by URCSA legislation. As such, the unique situation of the joint regional Curatorium and the founding of the Northern Theological Seminary (NTS), created a unique situation. Yet, in response to this challenge, the Curatorium had a proactive approach drawing up a set of rules to govern their actions and asked that these be accepted (URCSA, 2004: 2). Also of a proactive nature was the creation of 16 short to medium term goals (URCSA, 2004: 3). Included in these were: developing criteria for the selection of students, establishing a code of conduct for students, laying down criteria for readmission to study, to develop a programme and guidelines for practical work for the students during their studies, expanding the NTS library, appointing an administrator and director/principal of NTS, strengthen the financial support of NTS, and to develop course of ministerial formation for ongoing empowerment of ministers and to enhance the effectiveness of their ministry. One respondent commented how in 2003 the NTS was unsure of student needs and what they should learn⁶⁹. Yet, while this may have been true, what can also be discerned from this year is an awareness of the problem and a commitment to overcome it. This year thus represented a Curatorium with a proactive approach which had discerned clear and manageable guidelines to be implemented over the following years.

The report also dealt with the intake of new students as well as the re-admission of current students. In 2004, 8 full-time and 11 part-time (19 in total) new students were admitted which brought the total number of students studying through NTS to 57 (URCSA, 2004: 4). At this stage, besides the courses of study offered at the academic institution, NTS also offered multiple in-house courses available to both full and part-time students. In 2004 the following were listed as the courses offered:

A series of lectures on Reformed liturgy and Biblical exegesis (JNJ Kritzinger); a series by Rev PM Mfati based on the book by John Hesselink (On being Reformed); a series of lectures on Karl Barth as Reformed theologian and the hermeneutical circle (Prof TA Mofokeng). (URCSA, 2004: 6).

As can be seen from the titles of the courses, they focused on Reformed topics. In other words, they aimed to educate students on the denominations reformed identity, providing

⁶⁹ Interview 004, page 2

formation specific to the nature of the URCSA. One challenge with part-time students was the arrangement of the contact sessions and working this around the students' work schedule. This often meant contact sessions took place during school holidays.

The curriculum proposed in 2002 had been accepted and now the Curatorium were looking at how to implement the practical side of the training which was to run concurrently with the last two years of academic study. It was proposed that students should receive exposure to a broad range of ministries, from funerals to youth work, preaching to administration. The practical work of full-time students was done for 9 months and part-time students 18 months both under the supervision of an URCSA minister. From the Curatorium, the Seminary Management Committee (SMC) would take responsibility for organising and placing students. Further, the students were to be paid for their work and a contract detailing expectations was to be drawn up at the start of the process. The students should be rotated every three months between rural, urban and ecumenical congregations and at the end of each period were required to submit a report to the SMC (URCSA, 2004: 7). From this it is clear that from the start of NTS the Curatorium was looking to implement a broad-based approach to ministerial formation and to implement criteria to make sure personal development and exposure to ministry took place in a constructive manner. On top of this it also became evident that the URCSA on a wider basis was looking to develop ministerial formation on a national basis. In this regard the construction of an outcome-based portfolio was proposed in order to better understand what is required of the formation process in the 21st century.

It is also important to note that the Curatorium was still looking at becoming an official partner with the University of Pretoria. Despite the hesitation to join them for the undergraduate stage of formation, the Curatorium was still researching the possibility of a partnership (URCSA, 2004: 10). In this regard, they had acquired a copy of the agreement signed by the UPCS and DRC. Also, important to note is the financial situation of the Curatorium. Despite great support, fundraising efforts had still fallen short and rising costs were posing a great challenge (URCSA, 2004: 11). All in all, this report introduces a well-functioning and thoughtful Curatorium which is working hard to provide a well-rounded approach to ministerial formation and to put in place the practical guidelines to make sure this happens.

5.4. 2005 - Fourth General Synod of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. 26 September – 02 October 2005 Pietermaritzburg

Presentations to the General Synod with regard to Ministerial formation were vast. It became clear that URCSA was in the process of discerning a new direction for ministerial formation. Despite gains made in 1997 with the establishment of a new curriculum as well as the basis and purpose of training (see ACTA 1997: 718f), this was not seen to be enough. 2005 thus had two conferences (Stellenbosch and Mamelodi), with a third planned, in order to further improve the process and to develop an outcome-based approach (URCSA, 2005: 65). The main impetus for this progression was vagueness in the current approach and a perceived change in the South African landscape which warranted a new training model (URCSA, 2005: 247). Debates around the new programme started as early as 2001 with the proposal that a new programme should equip students with a good overview of theological subjects, strong research methodology and that the programme contained room for both basic and advanced studies (2001: 193). The 2005 Agenda thus put across seven key points on the nature of ministerial formation. These were seven guiding principles that would help give clarity to the function of ministerial formation in the URCSA. First It was proposed that ministerial formation be the term for the processes in order “to give expression to the comprehensive process that it entails” (URCSA, 2005: 251). Second, it was identified that ministerial formation was the responsibility of the church:

2.3.1 The URCSA establishes formation centres in partnership with institutions of higher education, where theological students are equipped within the context of a worshipping, learning and serving community.

2.3.2 The URCSA takes responsibility for the holistic development of theological students through mentorship.

2.3.3 The URCSA has the responsibility to contribute financially towards the formation of its ministers.

The formation centres, such as NTS, were to have the primary responsibility of the process even though these centres were to be partnered with institutions of higher learning. Moving on, it was emphasised how formation was a *comprehensive* process. Being comprehensive meant the process was: (1) *encompassing*, covering candidates from selection all the way to ongoing formation; (2) *inclusive*, recognising its part in the church as a whole; (3) *holistic*

focusing on the whole person and life of the candidates; and (4) a *lifelong* process not finishing at graduation/ordination (URCSA, 2005: 251–252). The fourth point was that ministerial formation needed to embrace diversity.

The ministerial formation of the URCSA, as a Southern African church, is rooted in a uniting ethos that embraces a diversity of languages and cultures and strives to overcome inequalities in terms of generation, ‘race’, class and gender. It strives for a dynamic unity that deals creatively with differentiation (URCSA, 2005: 252).

Aware of the cultural diversity present in South Africa, the URCSA takes a conscious decision to be aware of this diversity. A homogenous programme was not proposed, but rather a programme that would aim to “creatively” deal with diversity. This shows awareness of the contextual reality of South Africa in which formation will take place and the necessity of embracing diversity. In continuation with the need for diversity, the fifth point calls for a “Reformed African Identity” in ministerial formation. The ministerial formation programme is to give ministerial candidates exposure to the reformed history of the denomination, as well as the African setting of the denomination. In this way, ministerial formation was to combine both western history and African reality. The sixth point is for the formation to be ecumenical and reformed. “The ministerial formation process fosters ecumenical openness in a global context while developing a dynamic Reformed identity” (URCSA, 2005: 252). The seventh and final point is labelled “Justice and Reconciliation”. In this regard, ministerial formation was to have a specific focus on justice and reconciliation in the teaching process. The aim of this was to develop ministers that would then be able to assist the church, the environment and south Africa society at large in establishing justice and reconciliation (URCSA, 2005: 252–253).

Expanding more on the proposed approach to ministerial formation, URCSA presented how they aimed to implement an outcome-based approach to ministerial formation. In Unison with the 7 principles of ministerial formation, a clear outcome of that formation as also stipulated. The 2005 agenda thus put forward a detailed description of values, skills and knowledge candidates would be expected to know. This list would be central in helping know what the purpose and aim of ministerial formation in the denomination was to be.

To develop a ministerial formation programme for the URCSA it is helpful to spell out the competencies required of a person before s/he may be licensed for the ordained ministry in this way (URCSA, 2005: 254).

These skill sets of values/ attitudes, skills and knowledge not only provided a clear outcome of what ministerial formation needed to achieve, the combination of these skills set, if successfully taught, was also seen to allow ministers to adapt and learn in each situation (opposed to having pre-fabricated solutions) (URCSA, 2005: 254). In other words, the ministerial formation programme did not seek to form candidates into a pre-fabricated box, but provided candidates with the correct skills sets to adapt and grow in each context in which they found themselves; candidates who could “think on their feet” (URCSA, 2005: 255). The formation was not to be a machine that churned out mass-produced ministers. Formation was to be a process that developed individuals to serve in the context they found themselves serving. It will be helpful to draw out some of the key values, skills and knowledge which formed this outcome-based approach in order to understand how the URCSA intended to go about creating such adaptable ministers. These values were not seen as a tick box for candidates but as a way of measuring the objectives of ministerial formation programmes and developing a relevant formation programme.

The dimensions of values, skills and knowledge can never be separated, since they are always intimately related and interconnected. In fact, the real secret of good ministerial formation lies precisely in integrating these “sets” of competencies in the best possible way. It was also agreed that the purpose of the “profile” exercise was not to “put people into boxes” in a modernist way but rather to “map out” the wide range of competencies required of this high calling to serve and build the church of Jesus Christ (URCSA, 2005: 254).

With regard to values, the following six were listed: genuine faith, a sense of calling, self-respect, character traits, reflexivity and respect for others. The likes of genuine faith, a sense of calling, self-respect and respect for others are rather straight forward concepts that need no further explanation. Character traits and reflexivity do warrant further explanation. Reflexivity refers to “[i]ntrospection; a healthy self-knowledge and awareness of his/her limitations”. Someone with reflexivity would be someone who is self-aware and capable of

reflecting on their actions in a healthy manner. With regard to character traits a much greater list is given. Not really a value in itself, character-traits appears to have been used as a heading for other values which are of importance but did not warrant a point of their own. In this regard, the following were listed under character traits:

Endurance; patience; tolerance; punctuality; willingness to learn and grow; confidentiality; openness; emotional balance and integration; good reputation; sober habits; a just and fair disposition; inquisitiveness; wisdom; ability to say 'yes' and 'no'; a sense of humour; creativity; not greedy to enrich him/herself; innovative; adaptable; peace-making; transparency and accountability; firm, principled and consistent personality; not abuse her/his position of power (URCSA, 2005: 256).

With regard to the *knowledge* outcome, the following 11 areas are listed: basic theological orientation, hermeneutics, systematic theology, theological ethics, church history, practical theology, missiology and ecumenism, church polity, other disciplines, global context, general knowledge (URCSA, 2005: 257–259). The category of 'other disciplines' was used to show the importance of students undertaking electives while studying. Some of the potential elective listed where: history, political sciences, development studies, psychology and economics. This list of values provides a clear window into how the URCSA aimed to train ministers to align with the seven principles listed above to develop holistic ministers who would enrich the context they found themselves in. The knowledge requirements do not only refer to aspects of a theological degree, although that is strongly present. Rather, the requirements reach beyond mere theology and into other disciplines which can enrich the formation process helping individuals to better serve in the context they find themselves.

Finally, under *skills*, the following were listed: communication, interpretation, spirituality, management/leadership, pastoral caregiving and involvement in society (URCSA, 2005: 256–260). Both management/leadership and involvement in society contained sub-points. Under management the report spelt out how this referred to both leadership in a spiritual and personal capacity as well as financial management (URCSA, 2005: 259–260). One had to be skilled in both inter-personal management and financial management. With regard to involvement in society three points of *approach*, *ecumenism* and *community* were listed. The

approach revealed that involvement needed to be researched and well thought through. Ecumenism and community then provided two key areas in which the involvement should take place. As with knowledge, the skills outcomes also show a commitment to creating well-rounded individuals capable of operating in various circumstances; not only an ecclesial setting.

In order for the outcome-based education and seven principles to be effectively transferred to students, a curriculum was established. The implementation of this curriculum was the responsibility of the local Curatorium. The local Curatorium could thus develop the curriculum in relation to the peculiarities of the local academic institution's (URCSA, 2005: 261). The process was to take a least five years (depending on if a student had matric exemption or not) and result in candidates gaining a masters in divinity or equivalent. The proposed process was much the same as the curriculum detailed in the 2002 report. To build onto this, though, the 2005 report also detailed certain compulsory modules, namely: at least one year of Greek and of Hebrew, at least one indigenous language other than the student's mother tongue, Systematic Theology and Theological Ethics, Old and New Testament, Ecclesiology (Church History and Church Polity), Practical Theology, and Missiology. Practical exposure to the ministry was also to be undertaken in unison with academic training.

From the first year of study, all students are expected to be involved in various forms of ministry in congregations of the URCSA who have been orientated in the programme, at a level of responsibility in keeping with their level of studies. This experience of ministry, under the supervision of a URCSA minister as a mentor, should include exposure to a variety of urban and rural ministry contexts, ecumenical service agencies or NGOs, and congregations of other language or cultural groups (URCSA, 2005: 262).

This exposure was to be organised by the regional Curatorium and to consist of at least 100 hours of exposure. In this way, theory learned in the classroom was to be immediately put into practice in a lived situation and vice-versa. That which was experienced could be talked about and reflected on in the classroom. In this way it was expected that the outcome-based education along with the 7 principles could be effectively nurtured and achieved.

The 2005 report also dealt briefly with the ‘Tent-making ministry’ in the URCSA. Opinions were divided on the legitimacy of such an approach. However, the report in light of the financial reality of South Africa, proposed that formation could not ignore that this was the only viable option for many.

Some participants regarded it not as an “emergency” measure that we need to phase out again, but as an essential feature in our context of unemployment and poverty. Others saw it as devaluing the church and the ordained ministry. This is a crucial issue, for two reasons: a) we should not create unrealistic expectations of full-time employment among students if this is not viable in (most of) our congregations; b) if most ministers in future will be tent-making ministers, then their curriculum should prepare them for that situation by helping them find alternative employment that takes them as little away from the community as possible (URCSA, 2005: 255).

So, while there was theological disagreement around ‘tent-making’, the denomination accepted the reality of South Africa and the necessity to accept tent-making ministry, at least until further research on its effects within the denomination could be carried out.

Briefly reflecting on this theology of ministerial formation put forward, one can see how organised and clear the URCSA was with regards to what ministerial formation was about and what it aimed to achieve. The 2005 report practically provides a step by step manual on the various aspects of ministerial formation. Further, the simplicity to which the formation process was presented is also striking. Each point is put in simple bullet form and no long, convoluted sentences are used to describe any aspects. Rather, anyone reading the report can gain a clear understanding of what ministerial formation intends to include and what it aims to achieve. This clarity, even spelling out aspects of responsibility, would aid in the implementation of this theology into the everyday life of the URCSA.

As mentioned above NTS was founded out of the financial challenges and closure of Turfloop and the closure of the theological faculty of the University of the North. In 2005 the challenge was to establish NTS as a legitimate successor of Turfloop and not a new initiative. Being in continuation with Turfloop would mean NTS had recognition from the General Synod and could act as the “official ‘northern’ venue for formation” (URCSA, 2005: 300–301). The

founding circumstances of NTS were less than ideal. With the Seminary's physical basis being dependant on external providers and struggling to be seen as legitimate, the Curatorium showed a determined and proactive spirit in which to get things working. This situation was further helped by the wider discussions in the denomination around ministerial formation. Perhaps as an impetus for the wider discussions around ministerial formation, the Northern Theological Seminary's loose beginnings could have been advantageous in implementing the outcomes of the wider discussions. While not wanting to come across as a new initiative, the change of location would have offered a chance to assess education models and any chances to be made going forward.

The 2005 report again details the curriculum to be followed by students enrolled through NTS (see, URCSA, 2005: 302–305). It also details an international scholarship available for students to study for their masters' degrees in Theological University, Kampen (ThUK), Holland (URCSA, 2005: 306). It also shows 71 students to be affiliated in some regard to NTS house and that since 2001, 21 students had been licensed (URCSA, 2005: 307–310). All in all, these are very positive signs that URCSA was taking the ministerial formation process seriously and making active steps to implement a theologically rigorous approach to formation that was practically achievable. Certain logistical issues were faced, but judging from the number of students enrolled and ordained, this seems to have not impacted operations negatively. In fact, after its bumpy start NTS was now classed to be functioning normally, although the financial situation was still a cause for concern (URCSA, 2005: 458).

With regard to the wider structure of URCSA ministry, formation fell under the Proclamation and Worship task team (URCSA, 2005: 345). This task team was one of three core ministries which oversaw the functioning of the denomination. These core ministries were then supported by five support ministries: Gen Synod Com, Moderamen/Moderature; Ecumenical relations; judicial matter; financial admin; communications publications and archives (URCSA, 2005: 347–348). The following figure provides a graphical overview of the organisation of the various ministries

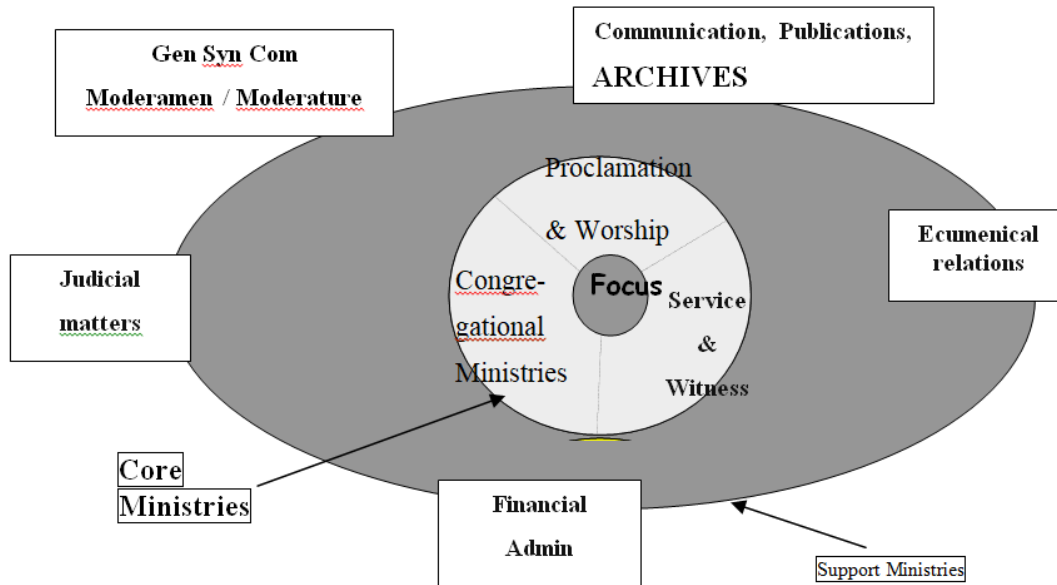


Figure 2: Integration of Ministries model. (URCSA, 2005:340)

5.5. 2006 - Report of Curatorium to the 4th meeting of the Synod of Northern Transvaal, held at Nylstroom, 25-29 September 2006

The opening of the 2006 report describes how URCSA was now operating under the mandate and terms of reference accepted at the 2005 general synod (URCSA, 2006: 2). As such, the issue of clear function and responsibility raised in 2004 appears to have been dealt with relatively quickly and effectively. In this regard, it is highlighted how “The SMC has co-opted more URCSA members onto the sub-commissions to involve more members in the seminary and to ensure that the work is done more effectively” (URCSA, 2006: 3). Rather than consolidating power in a few leaders, more ministers are being brought in to help spread the workload.

Coming to focus more on NTS, the number of students enrolled was remaining steady. 2005 saw 17 new intakes (3 full-time); while 2006 saw 18 new intakes (2 full-time). Although in the words of the committee this is a low intake (URCSA, 2006: 4). From this and previous years it was becoming evident that the majority of those enrolling do so on a part-time basis due mainly to being in full-time occupation and/or being married (URCSA, 2006: 4). Despite a good intake, the seminary is still struggling financially. Rising costs, coupled with a low income had created a challenging situation. In response, a decision was taken to cap the intake of full-

time students to 25 (URCSA, 2006: 4)⁷⁰. The report then goes on to detail approaches to student admissions and readmission for study. It is important to note that the general synod imposed a ruling that a student can only receive subsidy once for a particular module. However, due to the financial situation, the Seminary Management Committee of the NTS was unable to provide any subsidies. With regard to the financial situation a proposal came at the end of the report that the Curatorium should investigate the possibility of purchasing a property in the vicinity of UP and UNISA.

The total amount paid to The Foundation for the rental of 25 students is 25 X R930,00 = R23 250,00 per month or R279 000,00 per year. The SMC has proposed that this money could more fruitfully be used to purchase a property for the Seminary by paying off a bond, instead of merely paying it as rental into someone else's pocket. (URCSA, 2006: 17).

Not only would the purchase of the property provide a more concrete basis for operations in Pretoria to take place, but most importantly it would ease the financial strain on the denomination. Whereas the payment of rent would continue indefinitely, a bond would eventually be paid off. As such, in theory, finances allocated to rent could eventually be re-allocated to other aspects of ministerial formation. As such, the purchase of a property was seen to have a positive financial impact on the ministerial formation process. Moving on, the report again reiterated the new outcome-based approach to ministerial formation and the partnership with UNISA and UP. However, there was a strong suggestion that UP should be the sole training institution for the sake of training and unity. Despite the carefully thought out decision taken in 2002, it appears that not all members of URCSA were happy with this decision. Four key points are put forward in the consideration of moving completely to UP. Firstly, and in UPs favour, students would not need matric exemption and so could start studying straight away, saving one year of study. Second in consideration is the theological approach and teaching provided at UP. This was a wider discussion. Key issues though are the acceptance (or lack of) the Belhar Confession, the lack of diversity at UP (still only having one female and one black full-time lecture at this point). While in UP's favour was the potential influence and involvement it could allow in the teaching process. This was attractive in light

⁷⁰ For the rest of the period of focus the number of full-time students would never reach 25. If this is a result of the cap or just a sign of a decline in those able to undertake full time ministerial formation is hard to say.

of NTS only partially achieving its aim to become an active seminary (URCSA, 2006: 8–9). The third factor was cost; UNISA was still cheaper and if UP were to become the only partner, students would need assistance in covering tuition fees. The final factor was that, in 2006, English and Afrikaans lectures were offered separately from each other and so student interaction (one advantage of joining UP) was, in reality, minimal (URCSA, 2006: 9). Consequently the decision was taken to engage in further talks with UP and the DRC to see if the negatives associated with the institution could be navigated and a favourable agreement reached (URCSA, 2006: 9).

Synod mandates the Curatorium to negotiate with the DRC Curatorium and the UP Faculty of Theology regarding enrolment of all new undergraduate students at UP, provided a satisfactory agreement can be signed that addresses the obstacles around the Belhar Confession, the language(s) of instruction, the representativity of the lecturing staff, and tuition costs.

What can be seen at work here is a desire to progress the unification talks with the DRC coupled with a lack of trust and practicality associated with UP. Quite wisely, URCSA is keen to progress with talks but does not want to jeopardise the training of her own students.

Coming from the General Synod was the decision to mandate 100 hours of practical ministry experience for students. In this regard, the NTS and Curatorium had begun to look at how to implement this experience and develop a system through which to manage it. 2006 also saw the revival of a tradition once held at Turfloop. This year saw three theological conferences held, one in January at the opening of the seminary, one on Ascension Day (May) and the third in August in association with Kampen Theological University (ThUK) and UNISA. All the conferences gave NTS students the chance to interact with each other and other academics to help broaden their own formation and knowledge (URCSA, 2006: 14).

Another issue the 2006 report brings to light was that they often face legal action against students who had been dismissed. Students, feeling that they had been unfairly treated, had attorneys contact the Curatorium demanding to be reinstated and often ordained with no further study. In 2006 four letters had been received, none of which, at this point had gone to court (URCSA, 2006: 15–17). The presence of these letters showed that despite a robust

approach to ministerial formation challenges in communication with and commitment from students were being faced.

5.6. 2007 Report Of Curatorium To The Meeting Of The Synodical Commission Of The Northern Synod, Held At Mamelodi, 25-27 September 2007

February 2007, saw the seminary management committee come together for a strategic managing meeting. This meeting reflected on the year gone by, looked to the year ahead and what goals to implement, and constructed a timeline to manage the work (URCSA, 2007: 2). This appears to have been a new initiative to try and help the productivity and effectiveness of the committee and is reported in a positive light. 2007 also saw the appointment of an administrator. While a proposed plan for two years prior, the positive financial situation of 2007 allowed the appointment to go ahead (URCSA, 2007: 3). What this means is that up until this point the SMC and NTS as a whole had been acting without a dedicated administrator. In other words, those seconded to NTS had been managing the load themselves. The appointment of an administrator was also among the short-term goals set in 2004. Practical work experience for student's had also been arranged (although facing difficulties as explained below). So, in this regard, NTS had already managed to complete a few of the 16 short and medium-term goals referred to above in 2004 report. Specifically, that of the appointment of an administrator and organising work experience for students.

In regards to academic progress, no major issues were reported. Progress is detailed and students seemed to be coping well with the programme. However, with regard to moving to become an official partner with UP, setbacks had been incurred, as reported at the time. This event clearly struck a nerve with the URCSA and warrants quoting in length:

The relationship with the NGK curatorium and the UP Faculty of Theology did not improve much this year. As a matter of fact, one could say that the relationship has gone backwards, mainly due to the misunderstanding that developed around the post in Religious Studies and Missiology advertised in the Faculty late in 2006. Members of the URCSA curatorium were told verbally that the post was open to the whole NGK family, but the applications of URCSA members who applied for the post were not considered, since they were not NGK members. After a meeting between our curatorium executive and the curatorium executive of the NGK on 19 March 2007 to ask for an explanation, the NGK curatorium wrote a letter on 20

March to put their reasons in writing. At our curatorium meeting of 21 March 2007, a letter was drafted to the management of UP, calling on them not to proceed with the appointment, but that had no effect. UP later replied to the letter, explaining why they couldn't reverse the process at that stage, and calling on the NGK and URCSA to resolve their mutual problems and to make a joint approach to UP regarding theological education (URCSA, 2007: 8).

At this stage no solution had been reached and negotiations were underway but the relationship between the URCSA, UP and DRC had clearly been strained. The incident, caused by a misunderstanding, has clearly caused a disturbance within the URCSA evident by the extent of the report on the matter and the course of action taken. There is a clear view that the URCSA felt their member was an eligible candidate who should have been considered for the post. Yet the appointment went ahead regardless, with the UP relinquishing responsibility for the matter. The long-term impact of this event will be seen in the following history. At the time, this incident does appear to have caused an upset within the URCSA affecting their attitude towards the UP.

As mentioned in previous years, at NTS, three contact sessions a year were taking place. These sessions provided in house training as well as academic support for those training at UNISA and took place during the three theological conferences (URCSA, 2007: 4–5). These conferences were the 'Seminary opening and Theological Day', 'Ascension Day conference' and 'Annual conference together with Kampen and Unisa' (see, URCSA, 2007: 9–10). In combining the conference, both the contact sessions and the conference could mutually benefit from each other and the logistical planning could be halved. This continuation shows emerging stability in operations within NTS.

The report also showed how the seminary was struggling to implement the 100 hours of practical experience. This experience was required each year and formed part of the formation process. Yet having students attempt to complete the hours during holiday time was proving hard to track. One respondent also highlighted how during holidays the local minister was often away or busy so the student would not receive any real support or guidance⁷¹. As such, the vision moving forward was to get students involved on a Sunday to

⁷¹ Interview 004, page 2

Sunday basis (URCSA, 2007: 5). In this way, the training could be better managed and there was also the added advantage of receiving theoretical knowledge and practice experience concurrently. In order to achieve this the report made the following recommendations:

4.7.1 The Synodical Commission thanks the congregations in and around Tshwane who are providing mentorship (and paying honoraria) to full-time theological students.

4.7.2 Synodical Commission calls on other congregations around Tshwane to get involved in this process of becoming partners with NTS in the ministerial formation of full-time students.

4.7.3 Synodical Commission calls on church councils and ministers who have part-time theological students in their midst to mentor them constructively, allowing them to be progressively exposed to all the dimensions of ministry during their years of study, and reporting annually to the curatorium (on the prescribed report form) about their 100 hours ministry experience. (URCSA, 2007: 5)

Yet, while a plan for practical experience was proposed, the 2007 report reveals that spiritual formation was proving to be a stumbling block. Part of this issue was caused by a lack of church support.

A Curatorium cannot “produce” good ministers in a seminary in 5 years. Good Christian leaders are born and nurtured in the bosom of worshipping and serving congregations, following the (good and bad) examples of the ministers they hear on pulpits and see in communities from childhood (URCSA, 2007: 5).

The Curatorium was viewed to be in charge of formation and, as such, the wider church did not see the need to concern itself with the process. For the local congregations, the formation “village” was a separate community of which local congregations played no role. Yet the report is highlighting the error in this way of thought. The church has an equal role to play. They cannot send bad candidates and expect them to become ministers, they cannot set a bad example and expect a good minister and they cannot expect a minister to develop if they are not invested (URCSA, 2007: 5–6).

With regard to the financial situation of NTS in 2007, most of the support came from foreign donations. This created a dependency which both parties were keen to remove. Foreign donations were also hard to budget for due to the fluctuation in the exchange rate. As such, it was proposed that Turfloop Seminary Governing Body should gradually increase its financial support of NTS to reduce dependency on foreign funds (URCSA, 2007: 11). Since its conception NTS had been struggling financially. This appears to have been the biggest limiting factor. The committee is well organised with a strong grasp on its vision, yet financial constraints have restricted operations.

5.7. 2008 – Uniting Reformed Church In Southern Africa Minutes of the Fifth General Synod. Hammanskraal, 29 September – 05 October 2008

The 2008 Agenda does not contain a report from the joint Curatorium of the Northern and Southern synods. The report from the Cape Curatorium, however, is present. While not the focus of this research, it will be beneficial to briefly mention some of the key areas covered in the report. The most prominent issues are that of finance, both in the main report and in the addendum provided, finances continually come up as a limiting factor. Addendum 3 on the Joint Discussion of the Curatorium and The Faculty on Theological Education continually highlights the challenges finances are having. The financial challenges are not just in terms of affording academic studies, but also in terms of congregations being able to finance a minister (see, URCSA, 2008: 289–290). The second main focus was the current approach to ministerial formation and whether this was in line with the URCSA’s desired outcome-based approach described in 2005. Namely to equip students with the necessary values, skills and knowledge, through providing “a Reformed theology done in ecumenical mode, addressing African contextual needs and based on the ongoing interaction between context analysis, theological reflection and practical ministry” (URCSA, 2005: 254). A proposed schedule revision of the theological programme is put forward (URCSA, 2008: 273). The Curatorium also answered questions on how it is implementing an ‘African’ and ‘reformed’ approach to ministerial formation (URCSA, 2008: 274).

The only real mention of NTS and ministerial formation in Pretoria comes from the report delivered by the Northern Synod. Here it is described how theological student numbers at NTS are steadily increasing (URCSA, 2008: 324). However, the 2009 report does shed light on

events of 2008. What can be gained from this report though is a clearer understanding of the widespread financial difficulties within the denomination.

5.8. 2009 - Report of Core Ministry for Proclamation and Worship to the meeting of the Synodical Commission of the Northern Synod, October 2009

2009 saw the attempted implementation of a change in structure. Ministerial formation, while remaining in a Joint Curatorium between the Northern and Southern synods, was brought under the overarching responsibility of a regional synod's core ministry for proclamation and worship (CMPW). This change was to bring the approach in line with the structure detailed in the 2005 Agenda. However, in 2009 the implementation of the ministerial formation task team (part of the CMPW) had not been successful. Due to the previous joint Curatorium, the Northern synod was having difficulties implementing the new Ministerial formation task team (MFTT). As such, while the workings of the MFTT were organised the Joint Curatorium continued to function. The report presented in 2009 came from the joint Curatorium and covered the period from September 2007 to July 2009 (URCSA, 2009: 1–3). The closing of the 2009 report also proposed that a joint meeting between the Northern and Southern synods take place to plot the way forward for ministerial formation. Both have agreed to the new structuring of ministries, yet both feel the joint Curatorium should continue, however, the possibility of doing both effectively did not seem plausible (URCSA, 2009: 15).

The report as usual detailed those who have been elected as part of the Curatorium and the various bodies within it, such as the admissions committee and the seminary management committee. It is interesting to note that while a healthy change of personnel occurs, there are a consistent few who remain. Individuals such as Prof JNJ Kritzinger and Rev ZE Mokgoebo regularly appear (URCSA, 2009: 3). "In terms of the Rules of the Curatorium, the SMC [Seminary Management Committee] should retire some of its members every four years, and appoint new members" (URCSA, 2009: 5). This mixture of change and consistency could have been one of the contributing factors to the growth of NTS. New members are brought in to give fresh insight and ideas, while a consistent core remains in order to give stability.

In 2008 nine more students were admitted, while 2009 saw an intake of 15 (URCSA, 2009: 7). This brought the total number of students associated with NTS to 82 (URCSA, 2009: 21). However, despite this overall growth, in terms of full-time students, numbers declined and it

was estimated that by 2011 there would be only 6 full-time students unless action was taken. As such the Seminary Management Committee decided to embark on a drive to recruit more full-time students (URCSA, 2009: 11).

In regard to practical and spiritual formation, the report continued to detail the required 100 hours of ministry experience and the challenges around spiritual formation.

Each student is expected to do 100 hours of practical ministry each year, under the supervision of a URCSA minister. This is not easy to organize (for both full-time and part-time students) since it implies close cooperation with a large number of URCSA “mentor” ministers in four regional synods (URCSA, 2009: 9).

In regard to practical experience, NTS had constructed a letter to students explaining the process. This letter explained how it was the responsibility of students to manage their 100 hours. In this regard, report forms are provided which should be submitted in person (not posted). These report forms also contained guiding questions to help students reflect actively on their time and not merely clock up hours and forget about them (URCSA, 2009: 22–23). In this way NTS management is taking care of both logistical and theological matters. They have implemented clear guidelines detailed in the letter for the process, as well as providing questions in the process to aid in personal development. With regard to spiritual formation, NTS again reminds the denomination that it takes a village to raise a child (URCSA, 2009: 9). Through this comment, they are again highlighting the lack of church involvement in the ministerial formation process. In this regard it was recommended that the “Synodical Commission calls on all ministers and church councils to take responsibility for the NTS students” (URCSA, 2009: 10). From respondents it also became evident that spiritual/personal formation was one of the main areas of weakness for NTS. Reflecting on their studies one student was grateful for the academic/ theoretical knowledge they had gained but regretted the lack of personal formation that had taken place⁷². The university had provided knowledge yet personal formation had been lacking and was a main area in which they now faced challenges in their ministry.

⁷² Interview 004, page3

Institutional affiliation, specifically partnering with UP continued to be a topic of discussion. On 25 February 2009, the Curatorium sent a letter to the University of Pretoria which highlighted a few key issues but, and most importantly, asked to be accommodated as a partner church. The hurt caused in 2006/2007 seems to have not been too severe and NTS was still looking to fulfil the Synods mandate of partnering with UP. This letter opened by quoting another letter sent by Prof E.D. du Plessis in March 2008 which highlights how the UP is in a transitional phase and is willing to consider the hesitations raised by the URCSA on the renewal of partnership negotiations (URCSA, 2009: 24). In the 2009 letter to the UP URCSA thus reiterated their reservations, presenting these in four subsections, while also making the desire to partner clear. The four reservations are: The Language Policy and the fact that UP offers separate English and Afrikaans lectures making actual student interaction minimal. Secondly, the demographic (“representivity”) of lecturing staff posed a major issue. Perhaps inspired by the appointment controversy in 2007, the letter highlights that the significant majority of lecturers are white. In regards to this demographic, the URCSA believed it to imply

that there will never be a significant transformation in the composition of the lecturers in the Faculty, even though the composition of the Faculty’s student body is steadily becoming more representative of the broader South African population (URCSA, 2009: 25)

Third, is the issue with the curriculum. This issue was perhaps prompted by URCSA’s hesitation over the acceptance of Belhar but spanned much wider than the confession. In regards to the curriculum there were reservations regarding whether or not it was genuine transforming and if it affirmed African theological insights. In short, URCSA questioned “whether the current theology curriculum at UP respects the cultural and theological worlds inhabited by black students equally with those of white students” (URCSA, 2009: 26). The final issue was that of cost. Studying at UP was significantly more expensive. With students coming from poor backgrounds the affordability of UP was a key issue.

The letter thus closes with a detailed proposal in which the URCSA would bring its students to study at UP from their first year if they can address the four hesitations detailed above. In regards to language, classes were to no longer be rigidly separated. In regards to the curriculum, UP moves away from a “Northern” (western) focus and developed a

contextualised curriculum taking multiple realities seriously. In regards to lecturer demography, the UP was to set aside three posts for URCSA ministers. In regards to cost, no proposal was made (URCSA, 2009: 27–28). This letter is important in two main regards. Firstly, it highlights URCSA’s commitment to unification talks with the DRC and to study at Pretoria. Secondly, it reveals a lot about the perceived nature of the UP in 2009. Here it is shown to have a theological faculty struggling with diversity, divided quite strongly along racial lines and led by white academics from Afrikaans churches. Even in regards to its theology taught, it is critiqued for lacking contextual relevance and being caught up with the theologies of the northern hemisphere.

Finally, the report again details the three theological conferences as well as the NTS finances. In regards to financial support from congregations, the intended targets had not been reached. Still it was the dependency on foreign donors as well as Turfloop which was keeping NTS in a financially viable situation (URCSA, 2009: 14–15). Thus 2009 again revealed that financial matters were the main limiting factor. In regards to function NTS was steadily growing and progressing. While full-time student numbers were low plans had already been made to address the situation. Thus, the report again shows a proactive approach to ministerial formation working well to couple administrative and theological issues.

5.9. 2010 - Report of the Northern Curatorium to the meetings of the Northern and Southern URCSA Synods, September 2010 (Report Period: October 2006 - June 2010)

Following the usual format, the report details the mandate by which the NTS functions and then provided the names of those who form the various subcommittees. This year the executive committee consists of Prof JNJ Kritzinger (chairperson, and Academic sub-committee), Mr ML Molepo (secretary), Prof RC Bodibe (Pastoral sub-committee), Rev MW Tšiu (Marketing sub-committee), Ms MM Molefe (Finance sub-committee) and Rev MS Makgale (Student Affairs sub-committee) (URCSA, 2010: 3). Prof JNJ Kritzinger is thus a familiar face on the committee and 2010 shows further evidence of his continued involvement.

In regards to student intake, 2010 saw 16 more students become affiliated with NTS, two of whom were full-time students (URCSA, 2010: 5–6). This brought the total number of students affiliated with NTS to a total of 91 (URCSA, 2010: 18). Yet of these 91 only 18 were female

(URCSA, 2010: 18). Another figure that seems quite low in comparison to the total number of students is those licensed. Between November 2007 and June 2010, 14 students were licensed. While since 2003, 38 NTS students have been licensed in total (URCSA, 2010: 9). With a yearly intake of around 15 students, one would expect around 15 students to be licensed each year. However, over three year's only 14 students were licensed. This averaged to 4/5 students a year, approximately one-third of the yearly intake. In other words, this means that two-thirds of students were not completing their training and remained within NTS for some reason. From the interviews conducted it became apparent that those studying part-time often took much longer to complete their degrees⁷³. As such individuals could stay in the system much longer than 5 years as they had no external structure to push them to complete their studies.

In regards to practical and spiritual formation, NTS again reveals challenges with church support. Some churches are thanked for the way in which they have accommodated NTS students and given them practical experience. However, there was still a call to more churches to get involved in the process (URCSA, 2010: 8). The same point is again reiterated with regards to spiritual formation. If churches want good ministers they need to send good candidates and support these candidates (URCSA, 2010: 8).

This year also saw NTS become an option for candidates in the KwaZulu Natal (KZN) synod to train through. These would be part-time students at UNISA (studying via distance learning) which would receive quarterly contact sessions (URCSA, 2010: 10). However, this extra intake of students (16 were expected for 2011) put a great strain on NTS. In this regard, it can be seen that NTS was a strong formation centre due to the willingness of KZN to partner with them. It was further evident that they had awareness for logistical/administrative issues that need to be managed.

With regards to academic institutions, the letter sent to the UP in 2009 appears to have been effective. In 2010 the URCSA had entered into negotiations and was in the final stages of constructing an agreement with UP to become official partners (URCSA, 2010: 11). While the wording still needed to be agreed the plan was to present the agreement to synod to discuss later in the year. The three conferences of the year took place as usual and continued to

⁷³ Interview 010, page 3

provide a ground for ministerial students to engage with each other and academics to help further their theological development.

With regards to the finances of NTS the situation still looked challenging. Contributions from URCSA congregations and ministers were still under the budgeted target. However, despite this, the budgeted income from donations still increased to 210,000.00 (URCSA, 2010: 13). While aware of the challenges the financial situation meant for long term success (URCSA, 2010: 14), the NTS still proposed an unrealistic budget in regards to what could be raised. The 2010 report also mentioned the challenge of drafting the joint Curatorium (now renamed to Ministerial Formation Task Team) into the new structure adopted by the Northern and Southern synod but at this point no solution had been reached.

5.10. 2011 - Report of Joint Ministerial Formation Task Team of the Northern and Southern URCSA Synods (Report Period: October 2010 - July 2011)

The 2011 report starts in much the same way as all the previous reports. However, interesting to note is that Prof Rev JNJ Kritzinger is not put forward as a delegate from the Northern Synod. Kritzinger is still present in the Seminary Management Committee but this change of synodical delegates hints either at an attempt by Kritzinger or by the Northern Synod, to start withdrawing his involvement in the committee (see URCSA, 2011: 1–4). On a more logistical note, the joint Curatorium had officially changed its name to the Ministerial Formation Task Team (MFTT), although its function was much the same as before. Figure three provides a helpful aid to see the setup of the Task Team.

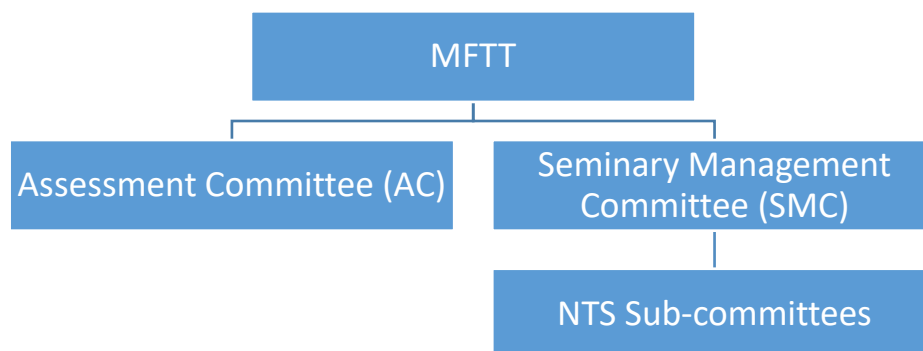


Figure 3: MFTT Structure

With regards to new students between November 2010 and February 2011, a combined total of 15 new students were admitted (URCSA, 2011: 4–5). This brought the total number of

students associated with NTS to 101 (URCSA, 2011: 20). 2011 also saw the licensing of 12 students (URCSA, 2011: 7); a more healthy number in relation to the yearly intake. A further continuation was the comments on the challenges around practical and spiritual formation and the usual call on the church to become more involved and supportive of the formation process:

If church councils and presbyteries recommend members who have serious personality or behavioural problems to the MFTT for ministerial formation then they make the task of the MFTT very difficult. Likewise, when ministers and church council members see problems in the attitudes or actions of theological students and then respond to such behaviour by criticizing the seminary, instead of pastorally addressing that student (and informing the seminary of it), then they are part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

Recommendation

Synod/Synodical Commission calls on all ministers and church councils to take responsibility for the NTS students (part-time and full-time), in whatever context or capacity they encounter them, and by becoming partners with the NTS in the ministerial formation process in our synodical regions (URCSA, 2011: 6–7).

With the continual presence of these comments, it seems that a lack of church participation has become the norm and something which the MFTT was not actively trying to resolve. Rather they seem to be content to follow and report on the same approach each year.

In relation to the co-operation started with the KZN synod, the MFTT and NTS had been able to complete two contact sessions with these students. Reflecting on this development it was highlighted how this was a good opportunity to serve more URCSA students through NTS, but that it did also place increased strains on the budget of the MFTT and NTS (URCSA, 2011: 9). In this regard, a draft agreement between the two groups was constructed. In the agreement, the obligations towards students from KZN were details (with expectations being the same as those that applied to students from the Northern and Southern Synod). An agreement was also made from respective Synods to pay their own travel costs, while the receiving synod would be expected to provide accommodation and food (see URCSA, 2011: 21). In this way, a potentially tense situation was navigated by proposing a joint agreement which clearly

stipulated responsibilities and expectations. Further, the agreement also managed to put in place means in which to manage financial costs by sharing them through the two groups.

In regards to NTS staff, a new administrator of NTS was appointed in August 2010. The outgoing administrator, Rev TJ Nthakhe, had moved into full-time ministry and so was no longer able to fulfil the administrator's duties. The administration post was filled by Ms MP Morobi. 2011 also reveals the appointment of Rev Tshepo Lephakga as a part-time lecturer at NTS. The part-time lecturer was to teach computer literacy (a requirement of the foreign donor financing the position) as well as to tutor those staying at NTS and develop in house course (URCSA, 2011: 9).

The final agreement between URCSA and the UP was signed on 8th of June 2011 after receiving approval the year before from both northern and southern synods. This new arrangement, however, opened up both opportunities and challenges for the MFTT. Firstly, in light of a rise in applications UP had raised its admissions standards meaning URCSA students without matric exemption could no longer get entrance (URCSA, 2011: 11). Then the financial costs of training and the reality that most NTS students could not afford the full cost posed a significant challenge (URCSA, 2011: 12). Finally, one post had been opened up for an URCSA lecturer at UP. This posed an opportunity for the denomination to be involved in the transformation of the faculty. It also posed a challenge in that 30% of the lecturer's salary was to be paid by the denomination. In the agreement it was explicitly highlighted how the faculty of theology at UP's core task was "the scientific practice of Theology" (URCSA, 2011: 24). In other words, outside of the scientific practice of theology was the responsibility of the church. This understanding seems to also be present within the URCSA, as one respondent highlighted how in their opinion the university's responsibility is academics, while the seminary has a responsibility for spiritual development⁷⁴. Reflecting on this agreement and the challenges highlighted reveals that relatively few of the URCSA requests were actually met. Worries about finances, the request of three lecture posts, both raised in the 2009 letter to UP seem to have no solution in 2011 despite the signing of the agreement.

In this year, it was moved that an amended curriculum for mature URCSA members come into effect. This formation path was to be exclusively for those over the age of 40. Those wishing

⁷⁴ Interview 007, page 1

to be accepted to the amended curriculum required a Bachelor's degree and to have had a good track record of leadership within the URCSA. It was seen that through their life experience more mature members of the church had acquired the necessary knowledge and skills that ministerial formation programmes were to install. Further, as most mature candidates were in some form of employment or playing a leading role in the household, the regular formation programme was somewhat inaccessible to them. As such, the amended curriculum offered a way to incorporate capable leaders into the formation programme. This programme continued to run from 2011 onwards and again demonstrates the adaptiveness and flexibility of the MFTT.

The report concluded in much the same manner as usual. The three conferences took place as usual with the opening day conference being held in Mamelodi to try and increase attendance. Financial matters also continued to be a source of concern. Congregations were not reaching the expected donation income, yet despite this, the budget is increased again; this time to 260,000 (a 50,000 Rand increase on the previous year). However, one key point to note is the purchase of a property in Sunnyside, Pretoria. This property is located between UNISA and the UP campuses, in walking distance from both and was to provide a permanent basis for NTS students. Multiple factors contributed to the purchasing of the property, but one of the main reasons was the decline in full-time students. This decreased number (12 in 2011) meant a property that could house all students was now plausible (URCSA, 2011: 15). The purchase of property had been proposed in 2006, but it was only 5 years later and with a decline in full-time students that a purchase became plausible.

5.11. 2012 – Sixth General Synod of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. 1 – 7 October 2012 Okahandja

With the general synod of 2012, another opportunity is given to see the broader picture of ministerial formation within the URCSA. The report from the Ministerial Formation Task Team of the general synod is especially key in this regard. Interesting to note is that Prof. JNJ Kritzinger is put forward as the representative from the joint MFTT from the Northern and Southern synods. In this report the issue of church support is raised, specifically in relation to the need for church ministers to be mentors to ministerial formation students. “[A] mentor should journey with a student in order to monitor the development of her/his knowledge, ministry skills, spiritual growth and character formation” (URCSA, 2012: 307). These mentors

were to be appointed by the regional MFTT and had to write a yearly feedback report about the students under their care. The impetus for the mentorship programme was to provide a more rounded formation experience which would help URCSA to fulfil the three pillars of ministerial formation it had set.

Also contained in the report to the General Synod MFTT was a specific request from the Northern Synod for ministerial formation students to be allowed to do a specialised masters (M.Th. degree) in their 5th year, opposed to the M.Div. course (URCSA, 2012: 308). One respondent highlighted how students wanted more than a Masters in Theology. The formation process had inspired them to strive for being more than just ministers and now they sought doctorates too⁷⁵. It was a requirement of the licensing process that students undertook the M.Div. course. This course gave a more broad-based training. To undertake an M.Th. course would result in focusing on a specific area. The M.Th. was then seen to be more academic and less church based. It was good for pursuing an academic career but not so relevant for ministerial formation. In this regard, the General Synod MFTT allowed the Northern Synods request on condition. A student could only do the M.Th. if they had a good academic record and acceptance to a course. They also had to have shown satisfactory progress in all other areas of ministerial formation; specifically that the candidate was showing satisfactory spiritual and practical development (URCSA, 2012: 309). The fact that the Northern synod put forward this request shows that students among NTS were keen to pursue more academic training.

A further matter in relation to NTS was the management of part-time students. With the ever-growing intake of students to NTS, now drawing from Northern, Southern and KZN synod's, a way to manage these part-time students had to be formalised. In this regard, it was proposed that part-time students needed to be integrated into their local church community and that that community would take responsibility for the discipline of students. Practical and spiritual formation was the responsibility of the local MFTT (URCSA, 2012: 310). By default, when dealing with students from other synods, this left academic training and support to be the duty of NTS, all other matters of formation were to be organised locally.

⁷⁵ Interview 004, page 2

The general synod MFTT also included a report on the need for spiritual formation. Emphasising that spiritual formation used to be the task to the individual and church, this task had now developed and institutions of training also had a role to play. In this regard, the university was viewed to “presents more challenges in implementing a spiritual formational mandate” (URCSA, 2012: 346). The diversity of the university and the requirements of an academic syllabus place demands which could be contrary (or at least not complimentary) to the spiritual formation process. In this regard students were encouraged to enrol with the seminary for the spiritual formation while simultaneously receiving academic formation from the university (URCSA, 2012: 346). This view came across in the research with respondents classing the university as the academic setting and the seminary as the spiritual setting⁷⁶.

Coming to the Report from the Northern MFTT to the general synod, it takes much the same format as the reports to regional synods, although repeating some information found in earlier regional reports due to the larger audience present at general synod. In 2012 the total number of students associated with NTS was 97. The 2012 report also provides a breakdown of this number. Of the 97, only 19 were residential, and only 21 were women. The students also came from six synods, including the Northern, Southern and KZN synods (URCSA, 2012: 362). This information shows us that NTS, in terms of numbers functioned more like a distance learning centre, serving most of the students remotely. In this regard, the three contact sessions arranged each year for non-residential students fulfilled a great need. These statistics further show a discrepancy between male and female candidates, with female formation students being the anomaly, not a norm.

In regards to academic institutions, the agreement with UP is again reported. In response to the fact that most ministerial students no longer reach the entry requirements of the UP, the Northern MFTT has implemented a year bridging course through Theological Education by Extension College (TEE College). While not officially recognised as a training institution the NTS academic committee took it upon themselves to assess the quality of theological nature of the course. Finding it was of a good standard they then implemented this solution to the problem (URCSA, 2012: 363). While a positive reflection on the URCSA and their proactive approach, it also reflects a lack of a relationship with UP.

⁷⁶ Interviews 004, page 1 and 008, page 1

UP has raised its entrance qualifications, to limit its student numbers in the light of a huge flood of applications. The MFTT adopted the interim strategy of letting such applicants enrol at the Theological Education by Extension College (TEE College), which is a distance teaching institution operating from Johannesburg, for the Higher Certificate in Theology as a one year bridging course. After passing the HCT they will qualify for full exemption from the Matriculation Board and be accepted into full-time studies at UP (URCSA, 2012: 363).

Rather than working out a solution together, NTS had approached a completely new institution. This then showed a lack of influence in UP, something which the denomination had earlier hoped to regain. It further shows that operations and programmes at the university were controlled in-house. A partner church could bring in its own programmes to add to the teaching programme but could not influence the course in itself. These views were particularly expressed by one respondent who stated:

What is the point of being a partner church when you do not have a say in what should be taught at the university? The university should be transparent to its stakeholders and seek their inputs⁷⁷.

Thus, while the university oversaw the academic and the seminary spiritual training, there seems to have been little overlap or correlation between the two institutions. In regards to the financial challenge presented by the UP, no real solution had been reached. The only proposed programme was that URCSA congregations “adopt” a student to help subsidise the tuition costs (URCSA, 2012: 363).

In response to the confusion over the function of the joint MFTT the following organogram was provided:

⁷⁷ Interview 008, page 3

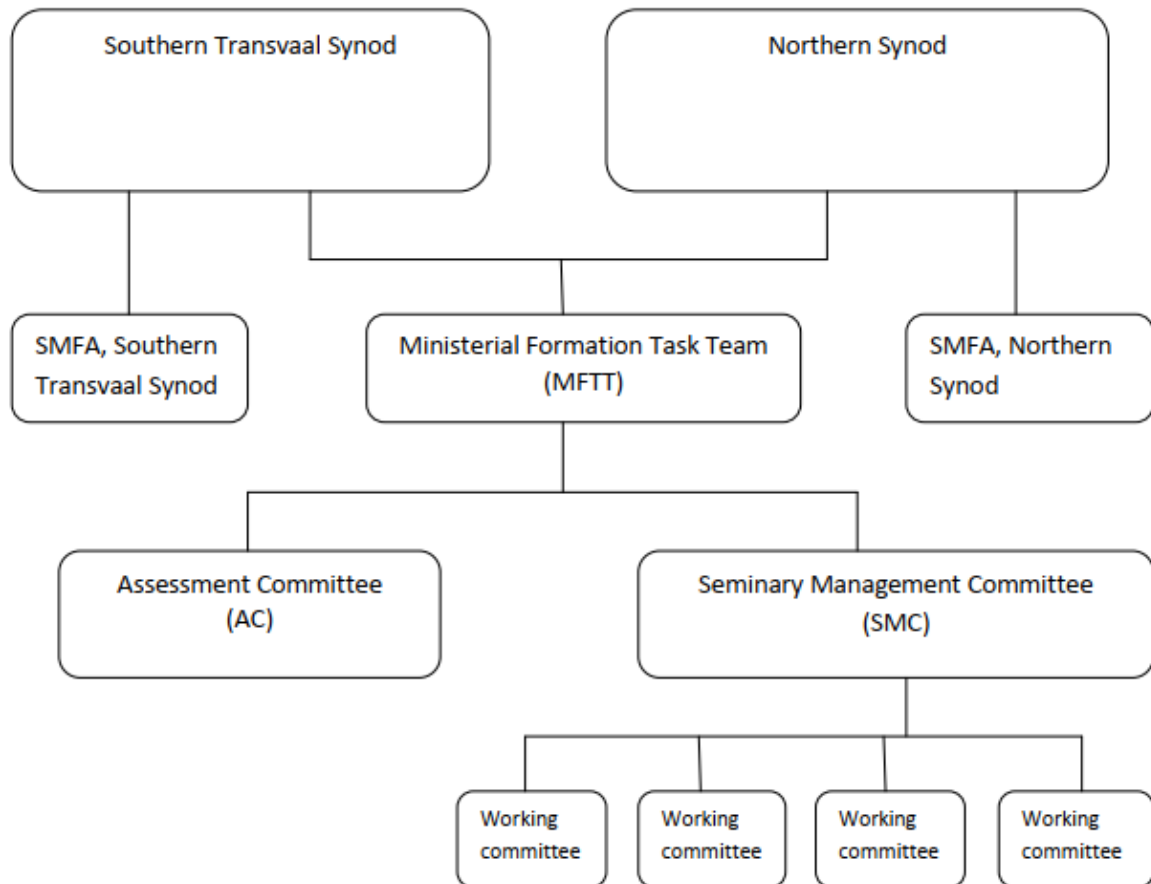


Figure 4: organogram of the MFTT

From the diagram one is left wondering where NTS fits in. In this instance, NTS would be seen to be synonymous with the MFTT. The remainder of the report concluded in much the same way covering the theological conferences, financial matters and the purchase of a property in Sunnyside

5.12. 2014 - Report of Proclamation and Worship, Core Ministry of the Northern Synod sitting at Rustenburg on the 01-05 October 2014

The 2014 report covered work done by the MFTT and NTS since 2010. As such, matters covered in the general synod were again covered with new matters also arising. After presenting the members of each body within the MFTT, the report describes how the Task Team has been struggling to meet legally in terms of URCSA rulings. The main challenge was that all voting members were not present, specifically members of the ministry. In response to the challenge, it was proposed that ministry representatives fulfil an advisory, not voting, capacity (URCSA, 2014a: 2). In their response to this situation, the MFTT was continuing to show its proactive resolve towards problems. What was also presented was the continued

distance between the church and MFTT and the lack of willing involvement from the church's side.

For the academic year of 2014, the total number of students affiliated with NTS had reached 116 (URCSA, 2014a: 100–102). However, the NTS was to undergo a review of these students and those who had not registered for next year, or participated actively in the programme would be removed and the sending church informed (URCSA, 2014a: 7). As suspected earlier, due to the discrepancies between intake and licensing, there was a group of students getting stuck in the system which inflated numbers but did not reflect a true representation of active ministerial formation students. In light of the agreement with the UP, the number of students at the institution had been increasing. In 2014 there were 10 undergraduate and 4 post-graduate students registered at UP. All new, full-time students, with matric exemption, were also expected to enrol at the UP (URCSA, 2014a: 8). However, as previous reports have already highlighted, this was a strong minority of NTS students. Most students for the ministry did not have matric exemption and most studied part-time. Thus, one has to question the worth of the agreement with the UP. Apart from the appointment of an URCSA lecturer (Rev MS Makulubele) the denomination seems to have gained little from what was already in effect through the unofficial partnership. Even the gain of the lecturing post carried with it a financial burden.

As usual, the yearly conferences took place, although now only the open day and joint conference with Pthu took place (URCSA, 2014a: 9). With regards to the NTS's focus on continued training, the 2014 report showed developments in this regard. A Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) programme had been set in place. The CMD covered academic refresher courses and offered care for other clergy. The development of this process was being done with help from the lead of the DRC ministerial development programme, Dr André Bartlett (URCSA, 2014a: 10).

With the purchase of property in Sunnyside to form a permanent basis for NTS, the legal status of the seminary had come into question. Not holding an independent constitution, legally the NTS was a subsection of the Northern and Southern synods. This meant that bank accounts could not be held by the NTS but were controlled by the synods. It also meant that NTS could not apply for accreditation as a private higher education institution. Thus, in order

to gain financial freedom, to register as a supplier of higher education and to develop to be more than just a subsection of the two synods, the NTS was looking for permission to develop a constitution and to become its own legal entity (URCSA, 2014a: 10). In its usual proactive nature, a draft constitution had already been prepared to be presented to the regional synods for approval (see, URCSA, 2014a: 103–111). However, by the end period of study (2017) the NTS was still struggling to be granted permission to become its own legal entity. Despite the constitution showing support for the church at large,

Some URCSA members fear that a constitution will enable (or encourage) the seminary to become detached from the URCSA or take decisions that are not in the interest of the church (URCSA, 2018: 20).

As usual, the report then proceeded to financial matters. The details of these were presented mainly in the appendix. Looking through the appendix 2013 closed with a deficit of R 129,184.60. Again, the income from congregations was less than what was budgeted for. Short fallings in fundraising, increased costs and fluctuating exchange rates were also put forward as reasons for the deficit (see, URCSA, 2014a: 114–116). As such, the financial security of the NTS continued to be the main challenge it faced. In regards to programme development, ministerial formation and administrative issues the Seminary seemed to be functioning OK, yet financial challenges continued to be the main limiting factor.

5.12.1 Publication of MFTT manual

As mentioned in the 2014 report (2014: 6), this year saw the publication of a Manual for Ministerial formation. The manual's publication was to help provide clergy with a ready resource to give in-depth knowledge of Ministerial formation and to answer questions around the formation process (URCSA, 2014a: 6). The Manual thus contains an overview of the formation process and warrants investigation. In the preface, the choice of 'ministerial formation' as a term is described. Drawing on the logic presented at the 2005 report, the process "is called 'ministerial formation' to express the holistic and inclusive nature of the formation process" (URCSA, 2014b: 2). It was a term that helped emphasise the dynamic nature of training for the ministry. Moving to the first section, the theological basis for ministerial formation was provided. Here the local church was seen as the starting point;

The starting point of the URCSA's understanding of ministry is in the local congregation. Each congregation shall "establish and maintain the essential 'services' of worship, instruction, care, witnessing and service (CO Art. 5) and set aside specific members in "offices" to take responsibility for these services (CO Art. 6). The teaching elder or minister of the Word is one of these "offices." The formation of ministers of the Word (teaching elders) is therefore an integral part of the URCSA's equipping of all its members for their work of ministry, to build up the Body of Christ (URCSA, 2014b: 4).

The Ministerial Formation Task team (MFTT) is then appointed as guardian of training and formation (URCSA, 2014b: 4–5). Of significant to note, is that while the MFTT is responsible for training, the basis for ministerial formation was with the church which holds a key responsibility in the process. This point was explicitly stated later in the document: "The formation of ministers for the URCSA is primarily the responsibility of the church" (URCSA, 2014b: 11).

Being produced at the denominational level, the document covers ministerial formation throughout the URCSA. Regional MFTT's are accountable to the MFTT of the general synod and assigned six key tasks. First Admission, which covers application process to the ministerial formation programme and logistical matters attached to that (Such as disseminating the requirements for entrance into the programme). The second responsibility, Formation, has three main sub-categories. First that of personal/ spiritual formation:

the process of growth in personal and spiritual maturity among students by creating a community within the seminary/theological school that will foster relationships of trust, honesty, collegiality, friendship and respect for diversity (URCSA, 2014b: 6).

Second, is the process of academic formation, making sure that students receive the necessary competencies in theological education, usually through a partnership with an institution of higher learning. The third area of formation is that of ministry skills.

The Regional Ministerial Formation Task Team sees to it that students acquire enough practical experience in leading worship, preaching, teaching, pastoral care

and counselling, evangelism and diaconal service in the course of their studies. Attention is also given to acquiring skills of financial and time management, chairing meetings and writing minutes.

Remembering the diagram in chapter three (figure 1), it can be seen here how the URCSA ministerial formation is actively trying to balance academic, ecclesial and personal formation.

Moving on to the third responsibility, Supervision refers mainly to overseeing the behaviour of students and their doctrine and making sure this is in line with the standards of the URCSA. Fourth, that of assessment is the process through which the formation of candidates is measured.

A Regional Ministerial Formation Task Team appoints an Assessment Committee whose task it is to do quality assurance at regular intervals in the ministerial formation process, by assessing the growth of the students in terms of the OBE profile (URCSA, 2014b: 7).

Not only does the regional MFTT have to assess candidates, but for those that successfully complete, they also get the joy of licensing these candidates. This is the fifth responsibility and covers the collecting of the necessary documents for licencing, all the way to the conduct of the service itself. The sixth and final responsibility is that of ongoing formation.

A Regional MF Task Team encourages life-long learning among the URCSA ministers in its region through establishing a process of continuing ministerial development (CMD) [post-academic training] (URCSA, 2014b: 8).

These are all tasks that deal with the daily reality of ministerial formation. There is no mention of policy development or theological reflection as these happen on a national level. The function of a regional task team is thus to deal with the lived reality of formation. This starts with admitting students to the formation process and ends only when that individual leaves the ministry (not when they are licensed/ ordained⁷⁸).

⁷⁸ Licensing/ ordination is seen as a step in ministerial formation and not its completion. In this regard URCSA was attempting to implement a Continued Ministerial Development programme to provide continued education for ministers after ordination

In regards to the theological underpinning of formation, URCSA as a whole wished to pursue a theology which affirmed both the reformed and African traditions. This African Reformed theology means the denomination seeks “strengthens both the roots and the wings of the URCSA as it reorients itself in the fast-changing context of Southern Africa, within a globalizing world” (URCSA, 2014b: 9). Another theological underpinning is the confession of Belhar. Belhar “is at the heart of the ministerial formation process, since it nurtures a ministerial lifestyle characterised by hope, unity, reconciliation, justice and obedience” (URCSA, 2014b: 9). The confession is also fundamental to the denomination as a whole and it is no surprise that it takes such a central role.

In the second addendum, the manual goes on to explain the meaning of comprehensive training in more depth. In this regard, it presents the seven key principles for the ministerial formation process outlined above in the 2005 report. These seven were Ministerial formation, responsibility, a comprehensive process, embracing diversity, reformed-African identity, ecumenical and reformed, and justice and reconciliation. The concept of comprehensive includes four key areas. Firstly, to be encompassing; this refers to the inclusion of administrative matters as well as overseeing academic, spiritual and practical formation. Second, inclusive refers to the acknowledgement that formation is inclusive as a wider part of the whole church. By holistic it is meant that the whole person and life of the candidate go through formation; it is not merely an exercise in thought. Finally Life-long refers to that fact that this comprehensive process does not have an end, it is a continual development of spiritual insight, spiritual depth and ministerial competence (URCSA, 2014b: 12). The inclusion of these seven principles in the manual serves to reinforce their centrality and importance in ministerial formation since their conception in 2005.

The third addendum details a profile for a minister of the word. This document gives a list of characteristics which the candidate should portray in order to enable them to successfully undertake formation. Characteristics include their personal values; their own knowledge as well as skills (URCSA, 2014b: 13–16). These are the same characteristics which were provided with the outcome-based education presented in 2005. The list provided is extensive and can serve to help the local church assess the appropriateness of individual candidates. The fourth addendum then details the formation process explaining the curriculum and approach to the on-going formation (URCSA, 2014b: 17–18). The curriculum remains much the same as when

presented in 2005, except for the alteration to ministerial experience. It is now advised that students undertake 2 hours weekly rather than trying to complete 100 hours in bulk sessions. The fifth addendum details key decisions from previous synods relating to ministerial formation. Addendum six consists of regulations regarding the status of a minister of the Word, and seven, rules for licensing candidates who did not complete the formal programme, deal with the legality around licensing.

Addendum 8 is an inclusion of the ministry crisis report presented at the 2008 synod. The crisis, in terms of the report, is that many URCSA congregations are unable to afford a minister along with the fact that many of those licensed experience a long waiting period before receiving a call (2008:504/ 14:29). Churches were without ministers, yet they were unable to afford ministers so those qualifying for the ministry experienced a long wait. In order to address the challenge, it is proposed that broad-based training be implemented in order to develop all church members, this training was to target churches without a minister especially (2008:504/ 14:29). If followed, the minister would now have to be someone not only capable of leading but also qualified to train others and the ability to empower trainees to action (2008:505: 14:30). The approach presented seems to imply that ministers would not be sent to a church, but to an area. In that area the minister would then train others who could be present at each church. In unison with this the URCSA also planned to assess “struggling congregations”. This assessment was to be in partnership with an academic institution to allow in-depth knowledge of the situation to be produced. From the results of the research struggling congregations would be called to address their situation or, failing to do so, merged with another congregation (2008:505, 14:30).

Exploring financial difficulties, the report also highlighted the financial discrepancies between urban and rural congregations. In this regard the URCSA was called to function as one body, sharing its financial resources among its congregations. In this regard, a common fund for ministers was proposed to which each congregation would contribute (2008:506: 14:31).

In regards to training, a broad programme was to be implemented. The programme was focused at congregational level but had systems in place to identify potentially gifted leaders and to channel those leaders into the ministerial formation process (2008:506: 14:31). With the more broad-based approach, concessions were also made for “mature” members of the

congregation (see 2008: 506-508, 14:31-33). In closing the report highlights the importance that regardless of the training undertaken candidates for leadership must demonstrate competency in personal values, academic insight and practical skills (2005: 508, 14:33).

The remainder of the manual deals with administrative issues, it provides the application form for students (addendum 9), the code of conduct for ministry students (addendum 10), a copy of the licensing oath (addendum 11), a draft ministry covenant (addendum 12), as well as deed of admission, official register of ministers of the word, and contact details (addendum 13, 14, 15 respectively). In this way, the formation manual provides a vast amount of information on all aspects of the formation process. The initial section provides the basic details while all the addenda provide any extra detail which could pertain to more specific matters. From a historical perspective, the manual confirms the importance of decisions taken in 2005 and how these have shaped the ministerial formation programme since.

5.13. 2015 - Report of the Ministerial Formation Task Team (MFTT)

As per usual, the 2015 report starts by providing the names of those who constitute the various sub-committees. While a full list of seconded members is not provided, the usual names still appear with the committee; Prof JNJ Kritzinger, Rev ZE Mokgoebo, Rev MS Maponya and Rev BB Senokoane are present as usual (URCSA, 2015: 1). With regard to students, 2015 saw the intake of 14 students (although comments in the report hint that this may not be a complete list (see URCSA, 2015: 7). The total number of students was now at 113 (URCSA, 2015: 9–11), which was down three compared to 2014. However, the 2015 report only details the licensing of one student. As such the decrease in numbers cannot be linked to the ordination of ministers. Rather, other factors were at play; among these could have been the new policy of “good standing”. 2015 saw the introduction of new disciplinary requirements for students. In order to re-register, and to ensure higher standards of discipline, a student had to be in “good standing” (URCSA, 2015: 2).

These criteria embody the three fields in the OBE [outcome based education] profile adopted by the GS in 2005: Growth in: a) academic insight, b) ministry skills, c) spirituality and maturity” (URCSA, 2015: 8).

This included matters such as satisfactory exams results, payment of annual fees, submission of a report detailing the 100 hours ministry exposure, and attending an interview with the Assessment Committee (URCSA, 2015: 8).

At the time of writing, the NTS had held five contact sessions, three in Pretoria and two in KZN (URCSA, 2015: 3). No further comment is given in the report regarding the success of these sessions. However, from the outside, it is easy to discern the NTS commitment to upholding these contact sessions. Holding a total of five in the year means that during term time a contact session occurs, on average, a least every other month. With regard to student's affairs, 2015 saw the appointment of a scholarship officer at NTS. Prop L Mangoedi was appointed to liaise with different institutions in an attempt to try and secure more funding for NTS students (URCSA, 2015: 3). This demonstrates a new approach to the financial challenges faced by NTS. Rather than continuing the practise of calling for more donations, the appointment of a scholarship officer shows a more proactive approach.

In relation to academic matters 2015 details the members of a board of lecturers. These 13 lecturers, attached to the denomination but working at various higher educational institutes, were appointed by the MFTT (URCSA, 2015: 4). No specific reasoning is given but the clear assumption would be that the board was to provide advice on academic matters regarding ministerial formation. The report provides no comments on relationships with the UP, leaving one to assume that the official partnership is operational. The report does, however, provide information on international partners. The Protestant Theological University in Groningen, the Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan, USA, and Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids, USA are all listed as institutions at which NTS students may be eligible for a bursary to undertake master's studies (M.Th. or Th.M.) (URCSA, 2015: 4). The continuing ministerial development programme also continues to receive comments. Rev MS Maponya and Rev ZE Mokgoebo were appointed to pioneer this process in the Northern and Southern Synods respectively (URCSA, 2015: 4). The plan still remained for them to liaise with Dr André Bartlett (of the DRC) to provide guidance on the construction, execution and management of the course (URCSA, 2015: 4–5).

The report then closes with financial matters. For a change, the 2014 financial year ended with a surplus of 175,780.25 (URCSA, 2015: 15). However, the main reason for this sudden

increase was due to foreign donations for the year of 2013 and 2014 both being received in 2014. 2014 also saw a successful gala dinner which was considerably more lucrative than usual. As such, while this put the NTS in a good financial situation going into 2015, the long-term sustainability of the situation was doubtful. Donations from congregations were still below budget and a large increase in tuition fees at the UP presented a challenging situation (URCSA, 2015: 15–16). Yet the financial success of 2014 showed that the situation may not be as severe as previous reports suggested.

5.14. 2016 - Seventh General Synod of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, 03 – 09 October 2016 Benoni, South Africa.

With the seventh general synod of the URCSA in 2016 came another chance to look at the broader approach to ministerial formation within the denomination. This year's conference was given the subtitle of 'Celebrating 30 years of the Belhar Confession: Unity, Reconciliation and Justice in obedience to Christ'.

Key to note in the minutes of the synods is the focus on access to education. 2015 and 2016 saw nationwide protest over study fees which are reflected in the minutes. As such the proposal was to formulate a statement which would contain the following points:

- "Believe Tertiary Education is not a privilege, but a right enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa;
- Condemn all forms of violence;
- Also condemning the violence of poverty towards the poor students of South Africa;
- Continue to fundraise for students as funds are available;
- Affirm the issue of equity when addressing the struggle of students pertaining to student fees;
- Support that parents who are in the position to contribute proportionally to the paying of fees, do so;
- Support fully that free education was made available to all financially needy students as well as the lost-middle" ((URCSA, 2016: 102).

From this, it becomes evident that URCSA is aware of the context in which ministerial formation at institutions of higher education was taking place. It is also clear that the URCSA

has a clear understanding and theological bearing of what ministerial formation (and wider academic education) should be which was helping to guide them to action during this time.

5.15. 2017 - Report of Ministerial Formation Task Team (MFTT) to the Synodical Commissions of the Northern and Southern Synods, August 2017

Covering the period July 2015 to July 2017, this report helps fill in more of the details not found in the report to general synod. Yet again both Prof JNJ Kritzinger and Rev ZE Mokgoebo names were present, along with Rev PM Maruping, Rev MS Maponya and Dr BB Senokoane (URCSA, 2017: 1–2). This consistency in leadership which the NTS and joint MFTT managed to maintain surely had a positive effect on the planning and executing of Ministerial Formation in the denomination.

After detailing those that consisted of the various sub-bodies of NTS, the report summarised the changes implemented from the 2016 Synod. This covered the adoption of a new licensing oath and Formulary; as well as the changes in financial support for formation centres (now being the sole responsibility of local Synods). The report moved to cover financial support of NTS. The lack of committed and substantial support has been a common theme of these reports.

The reports also include a strategic plan to be implemented between 2016-2020. Brought about by the change in financial responsibility, now being a synodical matter not just a seminary matter, new modus of operation was sought. This included the proposed appointment of a principal of NTS along with the expansion of the premises. Interestingly, the ‘strategic plan’ contains more practical, as opposed to theological, issues.

2017 saw the admission of 6 new students and the total number of students listed as 85 (URCSA, 2017: 22). This is a greatly reduced number and that fact that the report details the list as a ‘working list’ gives reason to believe that this is not an accurate number. Especially as only 14 candidates were licensed during 2016 and 2017 (URCSA, 2017: 5); the decrease from 113 in 2015 to 85 in 2017 is more likely an administrative error. Besides this, 2017 saw the total number of students licensed through NTS reach 75. This results in an average of 5.4 students being licensed each year since its formation (the average yearly intake was 14.6 per year).

The report details the continuation of regular contact session for distance students and those in KZN. No details are given which leads to the assumption that the programme is running smoothly. Although the financial report details the reduction of contact sessions in order to reduce costs (URCSA, 2017: 24). While beneficial, due to financial constraints the number of courses offered per year was not sustainable. In regards to further training, 2017 saw the start of the continued ministerial development programme ran by NTS. Yet apart from the appointment of programme leaders, Rev MS Maponya (Northern Synod) and Rev ZE Mokgoebo (Southern Synod), no action had yet been taken (URCSA, 2017: 6).

With regards to fundraising two gala dinners (one in 2015 and the other 2017) were reported to have been a financial success and a networking success in allowing NTS to build relationships with the wider URCSA community. In regards to the actual financial situation, 2015 ended with a surplus of R59,885.64 (URCSA, 2017: 24) while 2016 a deficit of R23,091.00 (URCSA, 2017: 25). While not strong, the last three financial statements show the NTS in a more positive light. In the words of the financial report, the deficit of R23, 091 for 2016 is not a cause for serious concern; “It was caused by our failure to organise a gala dinner and to raise funds effectively from congregations. Measures have been put in place to remedy these weaknesses in 2017” (URCSA, 2017: 25). Raising funds from congregations was a continual problem faced, so it is interesting to note that the 2017 report specifically mentions that measure had been put in place to deal with the issue.

The effectiveness of this fundraising will be seen in the following section. For 2017, however, the situation seems to be stable. Financial limitations were causing the main challenges to the function of NTS. No mention of the UP or the relationship there is mentioned which leaves the assumption that nothing of importance (good or bad) had taken place.

5.16. 2018 - Report of Core Ministry for Proclamation and Worship of the Northern Synod to the Northern Synod sitting held on the 30-September-05 October 2018 At Middleburg

As per usual, the 2018 report opens with the list of those forming the various sub-committees and as per usual Prof JNJ Kritzinger chaired the seminary management committee. Rev ZE Mokgoebo was still present although in a reduced capacity, only appearing on the Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) committee (URCSA, 2018: 3–4). The opening of the report then continues to deal with changes brought in by the 2016 General Synod. In terms of the

composition of the NTS, this had to be re-arranged. Each Synod was to put forward six voting members and two NTS students would be elected forming a voting body of 14 members. All the chairpersons of NTS sub-committees would then form an advisory capacity (URCSA, 2018: 5). The new financial responsibilities were also being worked out. In this regard it was proposed to implement a ten-year plan in which the Northern and Southern Synods acquired full financial responsibility for NTS (URCSA, 2018: 6).

With regard to students, since the 2017 report, a further 4 candidates had been licenced, bringing the total since 2003 to 79 (URCSA, 2018: 8). The re-admission of students was still dependant on them being in 'good standing' which was introduced in 2015. As such, for 2017, the total number of students associated with NTS was 103. This gives even further evidence to suggest the numbers of 2016 were incomplete.

Contact sessions for distances students were still taking place. Two were held in KZN a year and Three in Pretoria. Rev L Mangoedi was still working as the scholarship officer. In this regard, a new bursary scheme by the Dutch Reformed Church had been launched which was open to all the historical daughter churches. Also, in line with the five-year plan, Rev MS Maponya had been appointed as NTS principal (URCSA, 2018: 10). With this appointment, extension work at NTS took place. The building work created more office space (specifically for the new principal) and also allowed for the extension of the library (URCSA, 2018: 12). All these events show a steady functioning of NTS hinting at a ministerial formation programme that is always trying to progress itself; this is especially evident in the appointment of an NTS principal, Rev MS Maponya. These developments also helped fulfil the remaining short and medium-term goals there were set in 2004.

In relationship to partner institutions, a list of foreign intuitions was again provided. These institutions offer potential bursaries for URCSA candidates to undertake master's studies abroad. However, in regard to South African partner institutions there is no comment. In fact, for the past few years all comments on the UP and UNISA had ceased. Now the denomination has entered the relationship there is no critical reflection on its worth or presentation on how the partnership is functioning. This silence is most likely due to there being nothing that warrants reporting. However, from interviews conducted, it is clear that some members of URCSA do not view the partnership in a positive light. Apart from the lack of church

involvement in the ‘relationship’ mentioned above, critique over the content and demographic came forward. One respondent even classed the theology taught as “irrelevant theology” due to the fact that “lecturers are not demographically balanced according to race, gender, and denomination”⁷⁹. Another respondent mentioned how students even complained that their supervisors did not understand them or the context they came from which results in misunderstanding of what their work is trying to say⁸⁰. A comment was also given how this was a growing problem due to that fact that the demographics of theology students at Pretoria was shifting to be predominantly black⁸¹. As such, while no official comment is given, the interviews conducted show a sense of alienation and irrelevance within the faculty. Considering transformation was one of the URCSA key criteria for a partnership to take place these responses carry even more significance. If the lack of transformation lies with the UP or with the URCSA is hard to say. Yet what can be seen is that the two were functioning as separate entities completely. Student complaints are not being met by UP and URCSA is also failing to report the same complaints.

With regard to the financial situation, 2018 again raises hesitations over church commitment. In regard to the annual fundraising events, these are seeing a decline in attendance and a failure of congregations to contribute to the NTS (URCSA, 2018: 11). In terms of the 2017 finances, the year ended with a surplus of R272,540.19 (URCSA, 2018: 31). This net result was due to expenditure being greatly under budget. In terms of income this was actually lower than budgeted by R305,335.83 (URCSA, 2018: 30). In this regard, despite ending the year with a surplus, the financial situation of the NTS was still not quite stable. The local churches were still struggling to financially support NTS and rising administration and registration fees were a source of concern (URCSA, 2018: 31–32). Yet, that being said, over the last five years the NTS had managed to close three of the financial years with a surplus.

5.17. Key findings

Drawing from the framework established in chapters 2 and 3, what findings can be established from the above history? As the reader will recall, eight general areas of importance within the South African context were highlighted. Namely: the use of technology, the impact of

⁷⁹ Interview 008, page 3

⁸⁰ Interview 004, page 3

⁸¹ Interview 004, page 3

commodification, the issues of accreditation, ecumenism, gender, decolonisation, the religious state of society and the church university relationship. These theoretical chapters also established the importance of a well-rounded theological education balanced between the church, university and individual.

From the history above it is clear to see that not all these areas have been covered. The use of technology, the impact of commodification, the religious nature of society and accreditation receive no direct mention. The lack of discussion on technology is a cause for concern. Technology has boomed and offers many unique solutions to challenges faced in ministerial formation, especially when conducted via distance learning. Video conferencing can offer a way to engage regularly with candidates at minimal cost. While online education systems can provide a 'digital classroom' through which students can access material, collaborate and submit assignments. However, one key reason for the lack of technology could be the lack of access. The members of the URCSA come from a predominantly poor background where access to technology and its benefits are limited. As such, the URCSA has remained focused on methods which do not exclude financially poorer members of their congregation. This then brings us appropriately to the issue of commodification. While not receiving direct comment, its impact can be seen. First in the lack of uptake in technology, but mainly in the consistent financial challenges the denomination faced. One of the main challenges in joining UP, and one of the main challenges that persist, was its cost. The rapidly rising cost of education, fuelled by a commodified society, resulted in most candidates having great difficulty in accessing and affording tuition fees. The impact of commodification was also seen in the decolonisation debate and hesitations about Pretoria not offering a broad enough perspective. Accreditation also received little comment, yet this can be attributed to the fact that both UNISA and UP were accredited institutions and, as such, the denomination was not faced with issues of accreditation.

With regard to ecumenism, the whole debate and commitment to joining the UP were ecumenically fuelled. Desiring to bring URCSA students into contact with other candidates from within the Reformed family made UP continually an attractive option. However, the balancing of church needs with ecumenical desires was a consistent issue. Despite wanting to develop ecumenical relationships, the URCSA continually felt threatened of being dominated and a 2nd class citizen in the relationship. Even outside of the sphere of ministerial formation,

ecumenical discussions between the denominations have been strained (c.f Meiring, 2015). Yet, from a theoretical standpoint, ecumenism is seen as an important factor in ministerial formation in order to expose candidates to a variety of theologies and liturgical approaches.

Gender issues have received minimal comment or engagement. Within the wider denomination, the URCSA demonstrates a strong awareness for equality amongst race, gender and age. Yet at a grassroots level, the lived reality is still that of a male-dominated church. This is clearest to see when looking at the numerical breakdown of gender in formation candidates. In 2010, 18, of a total of 91 students, were female, in 2012, 21 of 97 were female. Yet despite this distinct bias in the numbers, the ministry committee had given little comment to address the situation. As such, a key challenge for the MFTT going forward is to assess reasons behind the discrepancies in numbers and if any actions can be taken to address the situation.

The issue of decolonisation/ Africanisation presented itself most clearly in the denomination's desire to offer an African and Reformed theology which was contextually aware. This commitment comes across strongly at the start of the period of study. When assessing partner institutions, UNISA with more diverse teaching staff, trumped UP and its limited perspective. While both institutions were recorded to offer good academic curriculums with relevant modules, who presented those modules was a major stumbling block for the UP. For the URCSA, the UP in 2002 did not offer a sufficiently contextualised theological education as it did not have a sufficiently diverse teaching staff. Throughout the partnership talks with the UP, the issue of contextualisation/ Africanisation was a key discussion point.

Finally, is the need for the church/university relationship to be well established to provide for better a ministerial formation. From the beginning, it is clear to see that, in terms of theology surrounding ministerial formation, the URCSA strives to achieve a balance between all spheres. The church is primarily responsible for the formation of candidates as this is where they shall primarily serve. As such, while incorporating academic institutions in the training process, the URCSA did not let this led to a neglect of the church's responsibility in the formation process. The presence of in- house training and the desire to provide experience and knowledge outside of the lecturer hall continually showed through. Yet there were also challenges in this relationship. The denomination often found it hard to fit in and manage

practical experience (although dedicated efforts were made to address this). Then, there were also voices from within the denomination that were critical of the relationship with the university, feeling the URCSA did not have enough say in curriculum design. Thus, while striving to implement a well-rounded formation process; challenges were faced in this regard.

One of the most striking observations this historical study discovered was the growth in student numbers associated with the NTS. Forming in 2002, within 10 years the NTS had grown to have over 100 candidates associated with it. This can be credited to a good functioning formation team, as well as a flexible approach to accommodate candidates for the ministry. However, one challenge with such high numbers was that some students appeared to be lost in the system. When comparing intake to ordination, it became apparent that only a quarter of students seemed to successfully pass through the formation programme.

5.18. Conclusion

In concluding this section, it can be said that the history of the URCSA has shown a denomination committed to implementing a strong theology of ministerial formation. Throughout, the MFTT (and earlier as the Curatorium) had a pro-active approach towards the formation programme. Establishing a clear theory and theology of ministerial formation in 2005, this was consistently implemented and used as a guide in curriculum design. Challenges were faced in the relationship with partner institutions, within the church and from a financial perspective, yet these did not derail the formation programme. In fact, the relationship with both UNISA and UP, while critical, showed a strong commitment from the denominations side to offer a holistic formation process. Challenges with regards to church support and financial affairs did limit what could plausibly be implemented and did see the reduction of contact sessions due to cost. However, these reductions never destabilised the formation programme. In fact, throughout the period of study, a unified and clearly focused ministry committee can be seen. This consistency of leadership and understanding of vision can be classed as one of the key factors leading to the success of the URCSA ministerial formation programme. These findings will be brought into discussion later in this research. However, for now, this research shall proceed to the next chapter to draw a comparison between the ministerial formation practices within the URCSA and the UPCS.

Chapter 6

A comparison of ministerial formation between the UPCSA and URCSA between 2000 and 2017

6.1. Introduction

Coming to the comparison chapter, this research aims to draw key findings from each denominations history and to lay out general principles for ministerial formation. So far, this research has presented a guiding theory of ministerial formation and uncovered the history of each denomination's approach to ministerial formation. At the end of each denomination's history, the theory was then used to draw out key findings. So, at this stage the research has demonstrated the need for a balanced approach to ministerial formation; that it should involve the denomination, training institution and individual. This formation is also to be balanced between academic knowledge, spiritual development and emotional maturity. Further, the history of each denomination has uncovered their approach to ministerial formation, and some of the challenges that have been present, from 2000 to 2017. Key findings and defining aspects of each denominations history of ministerial formation have also been established. Now this research can work to bring the two histories into comparison.

In line with a comparative methodology, bringing the two histories into comparison will allow principles concerning ministerial formation to be established. The principles will be established in relation to both ideographic and nomothetic insight as outlined in chapter one of this study. That is, to give both in case, rich meaning, relevant to each denomination's history, as well as general principles for ministerial formation relevant to the development of the field at large. Through comparing the two denominations over both points of similarity/agreement and points of contrast/difference a better understanding of the denominations' history of ministerial formation, and the consequences of their actions will be established. This rich meaning drawn from the cases can then be used to construct general rules. Following the ideographic insight, this chapter will close by establishing nomothetic insight relevant to ministerial formation at large. Offering both ideographic and nomothetic insight is thus in line with the comparative histories methodology which this research is following (Lange, 2014a: 2).

In order to construct the comparison, points of comparison need to be identified. These points can either be constructed around agreement or disagreement (Schutt, 2012: 403). According to Schutt (2012: 403), within comparative research, John Stewart Mill's developed two approaches to the comparison. The first approach is the method of agreement. Here when agreement is achieved between the object of analysis it is then understood that this is a causal impact for the experienced shared outcome. The second approach constructed by Mill is the method of disagreement. Opposite to the method of agreement, here points of contrast are investigated. When disagreement between the object of analysis is observed it is then understood that this is a causal impact for the experienced opposing outcomes. This method thus works from the same epistemological perspective which is being employed in the research. Namely that causal relationship can be inferred and that a causal determinant will have a high probability of having the same impact in varying circumstances.

The points of comparison have been established through chapters 2 and 3, as well as emerging naturally through the construction of the history of both denominations. It must be remembered that the opening chapters of this research developed the theoretical framework through which to analyse and interpret the history. These chapters established that ministerial formation "is essentially the equipping of men and women for appropriate leadership and ministry within churches and associate institutions" (Naidoo, 2012a: 1). Further, it highlighted that "Formation takes place in three distinct but overlapping settings, that is, in formal education, in congregational life and in situations of social engagement" (Naidoo, 2015: 167). In other words, ministerial formation requires it to be holistic in nature and contextual in focus. At the end of chapter three, formation was shown to take place in the balanced interplay between individual, church and university (academic training ground). Chapters 4 and 5 concluded by analysing how each denomination's history of ministerial formation aligned to the theory presented in earlier chapters. We concluded Chapters 4 and 5 by referring to the contextual peculiarities established in chapter 3. These aspects were seen to be of critical importance in discussion around ministerial formation in the South Africa context. Knowing how the denominations individually responded to each of the set tasks, it is now possible to bring them into conversation to ascertain the effect of each response. As mentioned in the previous chapters, not all areas highlighted in chapter 3 came forward in the history of the denominations. Thus, rather than forcing a comparison on categories with

only minimal information, the comparison will come forward from those which arose from the histories.

The use of technology has been dropped as it did not feature in the histories. The reality of only 19.4% of South Africans owns a computer (Statistics SA, 2014: 56) means that despite potential benefits, the use of technology cannot be adopted on a broad basis in ministerial formation. Further, research on how to enhance access to technology so that its benefits can be experienced by more people needs to be conducted. The impact of commodification will be mentioned under the wider topic of financial challenges. Accreditation, in terms of this research, became a non-issue as both denominations work through the UP which is responsible for its own accreditation and not a concern of the denomination. Ecumenism has also been dropped as it received little comment in this history. This may be brought on by the fact that training at the UP is ecumenical in nature and so requires no further discussion within ministerial formations. However, given the crisis nature of ecumenism in South Africa (Conradie, 2015: 524; see Pillay, 2015: 647), the lack of sustained reflection is worrying and a potential area for further investigation. Both gender and decolonisation will be focused on independently as they came forward as key areas of comparison. The religious state of South African society did form an issue within the denominations. However this was in relation to the decline of the mainline church (see UPCSA, 2018: 258–266). As such, information brought forward did not relate to ministerial formation and so falls outside of the focus of this study. Finally, the church university relationship did form a key area of debate and will thus be focused on. The table below highlights the main areas of comparison to be discussed and whether agreement or disagreement between the denominations was present. The outcome of this comparison shall be to see how points of difference have led to differences in the history of ministerial formation and from that to guide churches on how to address this ministerial formation programme. Then, consideration for general rules in the formation process will be distilled and put forward. These rules will be of use to all parties concerned in undertaking ministerial formation in relationship with a public university.

Table 3: Similarities and differences

Category	UPCSA	URCSA
Curriculum	Church and University	Church and University
Clear Theory of MF	No	Yes
Housing	Yes	Yes
Financial challenges	Yes	Yes
Gender issues	Yes	Yes
Race Issues	Yes	No
Decolonisation	No	Yes
Majority full time	Yes	No
Student numbers	Little change	Increased
Proactive nature	No	Yes
Continued education	No	No
Congregational support	Partial	Partial
Structural organisation	National	Regional
Attitude towards UP	Positive	Hesitant/critical

6.2.1 Curriculum

With regards to the curriculum of ministerial formation, both denominations established very similar approaches. For both denominations, academic training was to be coupled with exposure to the ministry. In other words, formation was to work in the interplay between the church and the academy. This approach compares positively with the concept of the pastor-theologian presented in chapter two (see Hiestand, 2008; Hiestand & Wilson, 2015).

Looking at the URCSA, the NTS offered academic training coupled with practical exposure to the ministry. Academic training was left to officially recognised intuitions of higher learning; specifically, UNISA and the UP. With regards to the curriculum offered both partner institutions, after an initial critique to make sure they aligned to the intended aims of

ministerial formation not much comment was given. Even during this critique, the main issue (especially in the case of the UP) was in relation to the demographics of the teaching staff, not the curriculum itself. What the university thought was not seen as a major issue. Being externally accredited meant partner intuitions offered a high standard of education and aligned to SAQA's standards for higher theological education (URCSA, 2002:3). In this regards the URCSA was satisfied with what was taught. The issue came with who taught it. Having a limited demographic was seen to mean that the curriculum would be presented through a limited lens. In addition to academic partner institutions, URCSA also offered multiple in-house courses available to both full and part-time students. One challenge with part-time students was the arrangement of the contact sessions and working this around the students' work schedule (URCSA 2004).

In developing the programme of ministerial formation, it was proposed that students should receive exposure to a broad range of ministries, from funerals to youth work, preaching to administration. The practical work of full-time students was done for 9 months and part-time students 18 months both under the supervision of an URCSA minister. The students were to be rotated every three months between rural, urban and ecumenical congregations and at the end of each period were required to submit a report to the Seminary Management Committee (SMC) (URCSA, 2004: 7). Having students complete the 100 hours of practical experience outside of term time proved challenging. As such, in 2007 the idea was implemented to get students involved on a Sunday to Sunday basis (URCSA, 2007: 5). In 2011 in-house courses were developed with the appointment of Rev Tshepo Lephakga as a part-time lecturer at NTS. The part-time lecturer was to teach computer literacy (a requirement of the foreign donor financing the position) as well as to tutor those staying at NTS and develop an in-house course (URCSA, 2011: 9).

As such, besides the academic training offered by partner institutions and practical exposure to the ministry, the URCSA offered in house training. In other words, the denomination did not neglect its role in the formation process, but clearly took responsibility for the matter.

A holistic formation praxis that addresses all three areas of the URCSA's ministry profile – identified as values/attitudes, knowledge, and skills in the official

solutions (URCSA 2005a:298–303) – cannot be delivered by a university alone (Kritzinger, 2010: 219).

Thus, the denomination took a key role in the development and implementation of the curriculum offered to formation candidates.

Within the UPCSA the approach was also to have students studying at UP while attached to a local congregation for practical exposure. Throughout, the UPCSA showed itself to be happy with the curriculum offered at the UP and raised no issues with modules taught. When initially partnering, it was highlighted how the denomination could have its' say on the curriculum. From the apparent lack of debate around the curriculum, it can be assumed that this was a role the UPCSA partook in and accepted. The denomination also attempted to offer in house training although from 2006 there was limited evidence of the implementation of such training. In later years (2016) polity classes were established at UP to give students church-specific instruction to help with denominational training and personal faith development (UPCSA, 2016: 217–218). 2017 also saw the (re)introduction⁸² of devotionals on Tuesdays and Thursday mornings at Sedibeng house in response to feedback on the need to provide more concrete formation from the church (UPCSA, 2017: 117). In 2018 a more detailed outline of congregational involvement was developed. With regards to congregational involvement, this was expected to grow steadily with the years of study. Starting in the first year with reading of the gospel, too, by their fourth year, being involved in Sunday schools, parish meetings and occasionally preaching (UPCSA, 2018: 251–252). However, the adoption of the curriculum only occurred in the last five years of the period of investigation. With each change in ministry secretary, the role of the church in the formation process also slightly shifted. In 2000, following the union, Duncan and Masango offered church-specific formation through weekly contact sessions. While under Germiquet the Tshwane presbytery took the pastoral responsibility for the formation of students. Yet very little in-house training seems to have taken place. This becomes apparent with the appointment of Baxter in 2016 and the call for students to have more in-house formation training.

⁸² Prior to 2007 devotionals were a regular part of the formation process at the Faculty of Theology and at Sedibeng house

So, while at the end of the period of study the basic curriculum was very similar, the URCSA showed a stronger and earlier adoption of in-house training. Within the UPCSA this was developed in later years in response to student needs. The fact that students from the UPCSA requested this training also shows the impact a dual approach has on candidates. Evidently feeling as though their training was ‘missing something’, the introduction of church specific training was seen to be the answer to this. Only academic knowledge was not enough. For students to feel they were been adequately prepared, they requested in house training which brings with it spiritual and personal development (UPCSA, 2017: 117). Compared to the URCSA, the early adoption and commitment to a church university partnership once again reveal’s URCSA’s proactive nature in the development of their formation programme.

The use of a similar programme by both denominations would hint at it being a very effective means of formation. Comments from the interviews also highly praised the link between church and university and that the formation process should be a joint effort⁸³. “The underlying logic is that formation for ministry takes place best in the back-and-forth journey between classroom and street, between theology lecturer s and pastoral encounters” (Kritzinger, 2010: 222). It can thus be established that a curriculum needs to focus on both church and academic knowledge and skills development. A balance between church and academy allows for ministerial formation to cover the complexities required of it. Further partnering with an academic institution avoids issues of accreditation. As such, when ministerial formation follows a curriculum balanced between church and university training, this approach not only incorporates the dynamic training needed in the formation process but also helps navigate logistical and financial challenges associated with institutional accreditation. This means that denominations can produce versatile ministers while avoiding financial and logistical challenges associated with accreditation.

6.2.2. A clear theory of ministerial formation

As shown in chapter two, having a clear theology/theory undergirding ministerial formation is essential for its assessment and implementation. To have a clear theology of ministerial formation means that each denomination is clear on the practical basis for ministerial formation and that these values and principles guide the formation process. Both the UPCSA

⁸³ Interviews 008 Page 1, 010 Page 1, 011 Page 1, 012 Page 1 presented this perspective.

and URCSA can be seen to have a theology surrounding ministerial formation, yet the degree to which it is reported and promoted in the minutes does vary between the two.

First, the theory of ministerial formation as presented through the URCSA minutes needs to be summarised. From as early as 2002 it was clear that the ministerial formation process was the responsibility of the church. As the quote on page 142 showed, a church must take responsibility for the formation programme and not entrust it completely to a university.

The commitment to this approach is clear to see in the analysis of the URCSA's curriculum presented above. This commitment is undergirded by a theological understanding presented in 2002 and sequentially developed from that point onwards. Throughout the 2002 report, in fact, a clear understanding of the ministerial formation process is presented. This document, concerned with the choice of academic institutions for the training of ministers, shows that URCSA was strongly committed to guiding their actions through a theological/ theoretical understanding.

It was in 2005, at the general synod, that URCSA's understanding of ministerial formation was distilled into clear guiding principles.

The main impetus for assessment of the ministerial training in 2005 was vagueness in the current approach and a perceived change in the South African landscape which warranted a new training model (URCSA, 2005: 247). So, in light of this problem, the URCSA put forward a comprehensive understanding summarised in four main points. First, ministerial formation encompassed selection all the way to ongoing formation; second, it was inclusive, recognising its part in the church as a whole; third, it was holistic focusing on the whole person and life of the candidates; finally, it was a lifelong process not finishing at graduation/ordination (URCSA, 2005: 251–252). These points were then broken down into three main areas of formation, (1) values, (2) knowledge and (3) skills. Some examples of values to be required were: genuine faith, a sense of calling, self-respect, reflexivity and respect for others. Under knowledge, basic theological orientation, hermeneutical skills, theological ethics, systematic theology and church history were among some of the areas to be studied. Skills included: communication, interpretation, leadership and pastoral care (URCSA, 2005: 256–260). Remembering chapter 2 and the need for ministerial formation to be more than just academic training, URCSA's undergirding theology of ministerial formation aligns strongly to this. This presentation of

ministerial formation at the 2005 general synod then acted to help guide other decisions and process made later. This is clearest to see in 2014, with the publication of the Manual for Ministerial Formation

Drawing on the logic presented at the 2005 report, the Manual for Ministerial Formation presented the tasks as “holistic” and “inclusive” in nature emphasising the dynamic nature of training for the ministry (URCSA, 2014b: 3). Moving to the first section of the manual, the theoretical basis for ministerial formation was provided. Here the local church was seen as the starting point; it is the local church which is responsible for seeing that every office is filled with an appropriate member (URCSA, 2014b: 4). The Ministerial Formation Task team (MFTT) is then appointed as guardian of training and formation (URCSA, 2014b: 4–5). The key themes of the *holistic nature of formation* and the *church as primarily responsible for formation* distilled in 2005 can be seen to be carried through almost 10 years later.

The 2014 manual also provided clarity around URCSA’s desire to present an African Reformed theology. African Reformed theology meant the denomination sought to be rooted in the African reality, while also stretching its wings out into the wider world (URCSA, 2014b: 9). In this way, URCSA’s commitment to contextualisation becomes apparent. From this brief overview, it is clear to see that URCSA understood ministerial formation to be a holistic process, which was primarily the responsibility of the church and which needed to be aware of the contextual reality in which it operated.

Coming to the UPCS, again a theory surrounding the ministerial formation process can be discerned through their minutes. Right from the start of the UPCS’s existence, the denomination understood the need to develop a clear theory surrounding ministerial formation. Days before the union the PCSA stated how the “means of providing a theological education and practical training for our ministers’ needs must be under radical revision at this stage” (PCSA, 1999: 217–218). However, this same assembly also showed objections to the integration of academic teaching and practical exposure (PCSA, 1999: 222–223)⁸⁴. The two were to run in a linear fashion, one after another, not concurrently. This then came into conflict with the former RPCSA who proposed one ecumenical training centre with appointed tutors to develop a Reformed Presbyterian ethos (UPCSA, 1999: 32); in other words, an

⁸⁴ Objections focus on the practicality and raise concerns that integration will disrupt family life (222-223)

approach which saw teaching and practical exposure run concurrently. Disagreement became a key defining feature of the UPCSA's theory surrounding ministerial formation. While the need to develop a clear theory was well understood, agreeing on that theory would prove to be challenging.

Yet in 2000 the commitment to establishing a clear theory of ministerial formation in the UPCSA was strong. The Propeller Conference aimed to "develop comprehensive policy, vision and mission pertinent to the training of our ministers" (UPCSA, 2000: 228). Key values for ministerial formation included strong academic competence in the reformed tradition; a vibrant spirituality; development of skills for ministry; contextualization of content and process of training; acceptance of diversity within the UPCSA; and exposure of students to the world (not training in a protected environment) (UPCSA, 2000: 229). This then presents a theoretical understanding similar to the URCSA. Ministerial formation was to be holistic, aimed at developing the whole individual and being more than academic training. The necessity of lifelong learning and contextualisation also became clear. Yet, despite this clear theology, the UPCSA struggled to adopt it and promote it clearly as a guide for the ministerial formation process. Thus, while a decade later the URCSA was referring back to decisions made in 2005, over a decade later the UPCSA needed a clear theology of ministerial formation. This need for a clear undergirding theory becomes clear in 2016 and 2018 when the UPCSA attempted to develop such a theory.

In 2016 the ministry committee reports on the need to diversify and reassess the intended outcomes of ministerial formation (UPCSA, 2016: 221). Reflection on Ephesians 4:11-12 it was seen that formation should also include prophets and evangelists and not purely focused on discerning those called to ordained minister (UPCSA, 2016: 221). "Part-time, tent-making or bi-vocational ministry should no longer be viewed as a concession or an exception" (UPCSA, 2016: 302). Until this point, the UPCSA had only accepted full-time candidates for the ministry. The 2016 report thus shows ministerial formation to apply to ministry in the broadest sense and not only concerned with the formation of ordained ministers. This broad approach to ministerial formation should not come as a surprise given the fact that chapter 2 clearly presented theology as a task for all believers (Moltmann, 2002: 94). What is important to note here, however, is the sustained focus on developing and clearly outlining the theoretical approach the UPCSA wants to follow. The denomination did not reiterate a previous theory

but practically started afresh. The approach clearly demonstrates the lack of a clear undergirding approach to ministerial formation prior to this point. For why would the denomination need to start afresh if an adequate theory was already in place?

The influence of the 2016 proposal carries on into 2018, with the focus around Ephesians 4:11-12 remaining a key guiding verse. Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds and Teachers are highlighted as gifts that need to be recognised and supported (UPCSA, 2018: 249). In 2018, the ministry committee sought “A wider recognition of gifting and forms of ministry calls for understanding at all levels (congregations, sessions, and presbyteries)” (UPCSA, 2018: 250).

In 2018, the Rudder Conference also developed key guiding principles for a theology around ministerial formation. In this regard, 10 criteria were produced to guide ministerial formation (this list can be found on page 128 above). These 10 points became the 10 clear guiding principles for the formation programme and its further development.

The Rudder Conference thus put forward key achievable points which could be used to guide the conversation around ministerial formation. The conference also highlighted the need for a holistic approach to the process

The Rudder Conference noted that academic performance alone is not sufficient to train ministers in the UPCSA. Ministerial Formation needs to be the responsibility of Presbyteries and the Ministry Committee in partnership with the institutions of training considering the transnational contexts. Students need to be formed in the daily practice of reading the Bible, praying, living out ethical lives, and making a difference in society. If students focus only on critical methods, there is the possibility of floundering in their faith (UPCSA, 2018: 494).

The Rudder conference was a key step in developing a clear theory around ministerial formation. One point to highlight is that it clearly states formation to be the “responsibility of Presbyteries and the Ministry Committee in partnership with the institutions of training”. This presents a dual responsibility towards formation. While URCSA sees formation to be the prime responsibility of the church, the UPCSA see the church to be among one of the key institutions responsible for formation. When looking at the denominations’ relationship with the University of Pretoria this difference becomes clear. The UPCSA, throughout their

minutes, did not raise issue with the type of theology taught at the UP or their potential influence as a partner church. However, with regards to the URCSA, the minutes did raise issue with the type of theology taught at UP. Specifically, this critique was that the theology presented came from a limited perspective due to a lack of diversity amongst the teaching staff. Also, when partnering with the UP, the URCSA saw potential influence of the curriculum as an advantage (cf. URCSA, 2009: 25). For the URCSA being the sole institution responsible for the ministerial formation programme was a strong statement. Coming from a history of being 'second', being primarily responsible was a statement that they would not be controlled by the university or by their parent church, the Dutch Reformed Church (see Kritzinger, Maponya & Mokoena, 2019: 8–11). As such, being equal partners resulted in the UPCSA being much more content to accept the academic programme provided. While the URCSA, taking prime responsibility, was much more anxious to put their mark on the UP's academic curriculum and how that was presented.

As such, while both the URCSA and UPCSA present a clear theological understanding of ministerial formation there are vital differences in the implementation of this theology. To summarise, the URCSA saw the need for a clear theology early on, this need then resulted in the development of clear principles in 2005. These principles saw ministerial formation as the responsibility of the church, a lifelong process, holistic in nature and looking at the development of the whole individual. From 2005 these principles became guidelines for the operation of the MFTT which was clear to see in 2014. The publication of a manual for ministerial formation in 2014 also helped re-emphasise the same theory and develop it where necessary. As a result, the URCSA has been able to continually develop a programme of ministerial formation. Having a clear theoretical undergirding prevented change in the approach and allowed the denomination to fine-tune the approach they had chosen.

In contrast, the UPCSA also saw a need for a clear theory of ministerial formation early on. This need also resulted in a conference aimed at developing key ideas and principles. However, these ideas were not absorbed into the identity of the ministerial formation process and were somewhat forgotten. The culture of the ministry committee was defined more by the ministry secretary than by undergirding theological/theoretical principles. Thus, for the period of study, the UPCSA operated mainly without a clear theory of ministerial formation. However, in 2016, shortly after the appointment of Pat Baxter, a renewed understanding of

the need for a clear theory surrounding ministerial formation emerged. This renewal led to the rudder conference of 2018. Thus, the UPCSA has since adopted a clear theory of ministerial formation yet it is too recent for this research to discern its adoption amidst the denomination or its impact. What is important, however, is that this theory is much broader than that presented by URCSA. Not only does it cover a wider array of callings, but it is also presented over 10 key points as opposed to URCSA's 4.

One of the successes of URCSA's theory of ministerial formation was its simplicity in presentation, which aided its implication, coupled with its rigorous nature which helped it cover the reality of the lived experience. A further benefit to the theory was the general consensus it received from the denomination. Debate in the UPCSA ultimately led to no clear theology surrounding ministerial formation. The effects of this absent theology in the UPCSA can be seen throughout the comparison. Yet one of the clearest examples comes through the failure to adopt assets under their control, specifically that of housing.

6.2.3. Housing

Housing is an important point to note following on from ministerial formation. It is through comparing the use of housing that the implementation of the theory of formation becomes clear.

Within the URCSA the desire to purchase local housing becomes apparent from 2006. Taking into account the cost paid at the youth hostel, purchasing property became a feasible option; instead of paying rent, the Curatorium could be paying off a bond (URCSA, 2006: 17). However, financial challenges and student numbers made the purchase unfeasible. Yet, despite this, the URCSA hired classroom to provide contact sessions for their students and subsidised accommodation at a youth hostel for their students. "When the NTS had a financial crisis in 2005 and had to choose between subsidising its students' tuition fees or their accommodation, they opted for the latter" (Kritzinger, 2010: 220). This choice was influential in developing the direction of NTS. Choosing to house students together allowed the development of the family feeling which so many students referred to. For the URCSA, even in 2005, it was apparent that for their approach to ministerial formation housing students in community was vital.

In 2011, with the decline in full-time resident students to 12, URCSA could now afford a property which was capable of accommodating all 12 individuals. This property, named NTS house, was located between UNISA Sunnyside and the UP Hatfield campuses, in walking distance from both. This house was to provide a permanent basis for NTS students and grounds for their personal and spiritual development (URCSA, 2011: 15). Once purchased, NTS house formed a basis out of which the MFTT could operate. The house was used as a venue to mentor students and a place to provide in house training. The library inside the house also helped students gain access to academic material relevant to their studies. In 2018, in light of the usage of the house, renovations were completed to expand the library and provide an office/ meeting room for the NTS principle.

The fact that URCSA saw ministerial formation as the responsibility of the denomination becomes apparent in the usage of NTS house. The premise does not just provide a central place to house students but is a vital basis in the formation process. Its function explicitly fits into the wider aim of developing an African Reformed Praxis (the motto of NTS house). It is used as a base to make sure students received the African Reformed theology which URCSA strives to deliver. This was achieved through the in-house training session which focused around being African and Reformed. Further, this ethos was developed through the camaraderie of the students as they debated with each other and came to understand what it meant to be an African and Reformed student. In this way the house emerged as a location for students to develop bilingual competency in theology. What was taught in English in the lecturer hall, was then discussed at the seminary in the learner's mother tongue. This was an intentional practise of the formation programme to help candidates develop bilingual competency in theology. As the interviews from the URCSA uncovered, candidates continually found the sense of community and fellowship at NTS house beneficial in their own development⁸⁵.

With regards to the UPCS, a property was purchased in 2004 with easy access to the UP. Enabled by the donation of foreign money from the Isabel Lusk Trust in Scotland, which was secured through the efforts of Sandra Duncan, the house was seen as a vital investment in the formation process. The property could accommodate 20 students and 3 staff as well as 8

⁸⁵ The response was given from interviews 004 Page 2, 008 Page 2 and 010 Page 2

vehicles (UPCSA, 2004: 242). The name Sedibeng house (meaning fountain or well) was given to the property to symbolise it being a place where “the Other” is welcome and differences come together. This was inspired by John 4:7-30 when Jesus spoke to the woman at the well (UPCSA, 2004: 242–243). From 2004 Sedibeng house went under many stages of transformation. In its early years it was used by Duncan and Masango as a basis for the weekly polity classes. It was also open, initially, to all students attached to the UPCSA or EPCS (not only ministerial formation students). However, the weekly contact sessions by Duncan and Masango ceased and Sedibeng seemed to function merely a place to house students. In 2008, Sedibeng house was rearranged to accommodate 23 students to try and address financial shortfalls. Then in 2014 the decision was taken that the house would only be open to ministerial formation candidates and the extra rooms would be available to visiting clergy. It was hoped that this change in residence at Sedibeng would enhance the spiritual and personal development of the ministry candidates staying there.

In the use of Sedibeng house, early adoption of the property for formation classes is seen, yet this usage fell away. The house then became a means of increasing income for the denomination. Then in 2014 its use again changed to house only ministerial formation candidates in the hope that this would improve personal and spiritual formation, although no active plan for achieving this is presented.

When comparing the two denominations URCSA acquires a property much later but incorporates it more thoroughly into the formation process. Thus, at the end of the period of study, the URCSA has just completed extensions at NTS house and students are commenting that their experience at the house was one of their high points of the formation process. On the other hand, the UPCS, while acquiring a property very early on in the period of study, seemed to do relatively little with it. As suggested at the beginning, the lack of a clear theology around ministerial formation resulted in an unclear understanding of how the property should be utilised, hence the multiple changes in function.

As the history of the NTS demonstrated, when a house is adopted with a clear undergirding theological principle it is beneficial to the personal formation of students. With the implementation of in-house training and the development of camaraderie between students, the URCSA managed to forge a space of conversation which allowed students to express their

own viewpoint and develop personally through this conversation. Interviews with both present and former residence of NTS house frequently commented on the impact this had on them. Yet resident of Sedibeng house did not report a similar experience. As such, a residential house, when used effectively, can be seen as an essential part of the formation process. As explained in the theory of ministerial formation, personal development is key in the process (see Naidoo, 2013: 8). A residential house, when managed correctly, is an effective means to provide a space for personal formation.

6.2.4. Financial Challenges

Moving away from theological challenges to more logistical challenges is the matter of finances. Throughout the period of study both the URCSA and UPCSA repeatedly mention concerns/challenges surrounding the finances of ministerial formation.

As early as 2004 the URCSA reports that, despite great support, fundraising efforts had still fallen short and rising costs were posing a great challenge (URCSA, 2004: 11). Then in 2007, with the appointment of an administrator to oversee the ministerial formation process it became apparent how this necessity had been financially unachievable for the previous two years (URCSA, 2007: 3). 2007 also revealed that the main source of funding for URCSA was foreign donations, which the denomination wanted to move away from (URCSA, 2007: 11). Yet despite the desire to be financially independent, 2009 shows that finances were still shaky and it was the dependency on foreign donors, as well as Turfloop, which was keeping NTS in a financially viable situation (URCSA, 2009: 14–15). One source of concern was that while aware of the challenges the financial situation meant for long term success (URCSA, 2010: 14), the NTS still proposed an unrealistic budget. For several consecutive years, the URCSA increased its budget despite ending the year prior with a deficit. Financial challenges were present all the way until the end of the period of study. In 2015, donations from congregations were still below budget and a large increase in tuition fees at the UP presented a challenging situation (URCSA, 2015: 15–16). While in 2017 the financial report details the reduction of contact sessions in order to reduce costs (URCSA, 2017: 24). Continually financial challenges/limitations had a strong impact on the formation programme offered. The creation of NTS itself came out of, among other reasons, the financial short comings of Turfloop. It was a continual challenge to offer the programme the NTS wanted and at the same time to end the year without financial deficit.

With regards to the UPCSA, various financial challenges are present throughout the period of investigation. In 2000, limited resources; the mainline church in rapid decline; widespread poverty and unemployment were listed among major challenges which are facing the denomination (see UPCSA, 2000: 229–230). Then in 2003, in an effort to curb spending, no new candidates for ministerial formation were accepted (UPCSA, 2002: 454). In 2003 it was also proposed that a maximum of five candidates be accepted each year (UPCSA, 2003: 316). Both measures were to try and cut the costs of ministerial formation and to manage the process on an ever-shrinking budget. Here it is clear to see the strong impact which financial constraints had on ministerial formation. In 2003, the intake of new candidates literally stopped in an attempt to curb the deficit. The impact this move had on student numbers is then seen for the following years as well (discussed below). By 2014 more measures were being proposed. In an attempt to have churches more invested in the process of formation and to address financial challenges it was proposed that each candidate sent for discernment must contribute R2000 (UPCSA, 2014: 378). This was to help cover the cost of the discernment conference and also help churches to think twice before sending candidates. While the proposal was not accepted (see UPCSA, 2014: 455) the measure shows just how serious financial challenges were. In fact, the proposal was again put forward in 2015 (UPCSA, 2015: 294); it was again rejected (UPCSA, 2015: 342). If the UPCSA had been to implement this approach, it would have limited access to formation to those with the economic means to enter the programme. This is one of the main reasons for its rejection. In this instance having an equally accessible programme won over financial gain. Yet, the financial challenges were so great that the lure to implement this exclusive approach remained.

From the two denominations history, financial constraints come forward as a key challenge. Within the UPCSA the impact on candidates for formation is most evident. Measures to impose financial costs for discernment would cut off poorer presbyteries from sending candidates (hence its rejection at Executive Commission). But this was a reality of both the UPCSA and URCSA. Financial constraints placed the largest limiting factor on what both ministerial formation programmes could achieve. As such, this highlights the necessity of cost-effective programmes, as well as having a denomination which is financially invested in formation. Both the UPCSA and URCSA were willing to risk running at a deficit in order to provide the level of ministerial formation which they thought were adequate. However, this

deficit had to be balanced to ensure the long-term survival of both programmes. As such, there needs to be a balance between the theological vision for ministerial formation and the financial reality. As was seen with the attempt to implement an R2000 'fee', in the UPCSA, this would have jeopardised the ministerial formation programme. In this way, the theoretical undergird could not be compromised. To have adapted to accommodate the financial challenge would have had a negative impact on the formation process. Yet, at the same time, financial limitations cannot be ignored. To continually run at a deficit will result in the closure of the programme. As such, the challenge with financial matters is in finding the balance between implementing an effective ministerial formation programme and an affordable ministerial formation programme.

6.2.5. Gender Issues

Gender-based discrimination is one of the key challenges facing ministerial formation and the church at large. As assessed in chapter three, discrimination along gender lines is still a major challenge within the South African context. In looking at the history of the URCSA and UPCSA it becomes evident that both denominations are struggling to deal with the issue.

While not receiving outright comment by the MFTT, it is clear to see that URCSA has a strong gender bias towards male candidates. In terms of their leadership structure, there has been a strong effort to promote female and youth involvement, yet this does not appear to be trickling down to the grassroots level. In 2010 there were a total of 91 individuals associated with NTS. However, of these 91 only 18 were female (URCSA, 2010: 18). In terms of percentages, fewer than 20% of those undergoing ministerial formation were female. Then again in 2012 a very similar statistic is found. Of the 97, only 21 were women (URCSA, 2012: 362). In this way, it is clear to see that URCSA was struggling to attract and engage with female ministerial formation candidates. Despite this clear gender bias, the committee report does not directly comment on the situation. Commenting on the wider situation within the URCSA, Plaatjies-van Huffel (2019) has highlighted how gender discrimination is still an issue within the URCSA. In 2005 the policy on gender equality was instated, meaning that governing bodies of the church should have at least 25% youth and 25% female representation. This has served to balance the church structures, but under neither there is little change. "The surface structures have been shifted at the General Synods but the dominant discourses that imprison women have remained the same" (Plaatjies-Van Huffel, 2019: 19). The fact that the ministry

committee gives little to no comment on the issue gives the impression of a general complacency with the state of affairs giving further weight to the comments from Plaatjies-van Huffel.

With regards to the UPCSA, gender imbalance also emerged as a challenge. Unfortunately, the UPCSA reports did not detail the gender breakdown of students. However, 2013 and 2015 reveal two incidents of women among the denomination who felt the selection process was discriminatory towards women. Rev Ruth Armstrong, during the 2013 Executive Commission, noted her disdain at the unfair treatment of a female candidate and highlighted how this was not the first time female candidates were receiving different treatment compared with their male counterparts (UPCSA, 2013: 235–236; see page 118 above).

Then again, in 2015, the treatment of women at selection was highlighted as being discriminatory. “Specific attitudes and actions of individuals, Sessions and Committees which have made it difficult for women to respond to God’s call as elders and ministers in the UPCSA.” (UPCSA, 2015: 42). Thus, the UPCSA has clear signs that it is struggling to accommodate female ministerial formation candidates.

Compared with the URCSA the challenges around gender issues come forward in a much more obvious and confrontational manner. Yet, the lack of clear conflict within URCSA is not evidence that the denomination has overcome gender-based issues; quite the opposite in fact. The lack of comment and discussion shows complacency with the status quo. While the UPCSA is willing to give the issue an open space to be discussed, within URCSA’s MFTT the discussions are yet to truly begin. It may be felt that the resolutions of 2005 dealt with the issues, but as Plaatjies-van Huffel (see 2019: 1–20) highlights, the grassroots situation is still in need of change.

6.2.6. Racial Issues

Unlike gender issues, there is little evidence of racial issues within URCSA’s MFTT. This is not to say that issues do not exist (Kritzinger, 2010: 217), but rather that any issues present have not been of such a severe nature that they warranted reporting⁸⁶.

⁸⁶ One key reason for the lack of significant racial conflict within the URCSA is that only the Northern and Southern Synods were investigated. The demographic of these two synods is rather similar hence minimal

However, within the UPCSA, especially just following the union, racial issues were seen to negatively impact the ministerial formation process. Towards the end of the period of study, ideological difference became the main conflicting factor and the trap of racializing all conflict must be avoided. Yet, with that said, racial challenges cannot be swept aside. As early as 2000, major challenges that faced the UPCSA included, being a divided denomination and working in a divided society (see UPCSA, 2000: 229–230). This division was most clearly noted in one response from the interviews. This respondent described how the ‘white’ congregations in Pretoria were reluctant to offer a black minister the opportunity to preach or to give him exposure to the ministry. This, as discussed in chapter 5, almost resulted in the black candidate joining another denomination.

Then in 2005, a short statement from the Uniting Presbyterians Black Leadership Forum gave a critique of the current mechanism in place for entry into ministry (UPCSA, 2005: 46). This quote, provided in full on page 99, highlighted the need to re-visit how candidates entered the formation programme, hinting that power dynamics asserted in the current programme were favourable towards certain candidates.

Finally, while not reported in the minutes there is good evidence to suggest that S Duncan’s resignation in 2009 was the results of a ministry committee that was not culturally aware or at least not willing to listen to perspectives other than their own (2009). In other words, racial issues lead to Mrs S Duncan’s resignation.

The lack of trust across racial barriers in the UPCSA has had a detrimental impact on the ministerial formation process. Rather than bring cultural differences together in fruitful discussion, a hesitation and scepticism towards “the Other” have been present. This view has also been presented by Mogashoa and Makofane (2017: 3):

... the integration of training for black and white candidates of ministry in the UPCSA is still a challenge to this day and this can be attributed to separate centres for ministerial formation before the unification which created vested cultural and racial interests that have proven difficult to undo.

racial conflict. If the Cape synod was incorporated into the study, a synod with a different demographic, then racial issues may have been more of a prominent issue.

This has contributed to the confrontational nature present throughout the history on the UPCSA⁸⁷. Yet race has clearly been a contributing factor. This has also impacted on the UPCSA's approach to ministerial formation. Not considering the diversity in the denomination, a programme was followed which was unattainable in some contexts. This is specifically the case with the undermining allegations involving the Presbytery of Mthatha (UPCSA, 2011: 223). This blinkered perspective becomes even clearer when the issues of decolonisation of higher education are considered. In 2018 the UPCSA reported it was content with the contextualisation taking place at the UP. Interviews conducted for this research found students critiquing the lack of a contextual approach at the institution⁸⁸. As such, there is a clear divide between the experience of the students and the official views expressed by the ministry committee. However, towards the end of the period of study theoretical and theological, not racial, difference had become the main form of conflict. Thus, while slow, and with the challenge of race far from solved, change can be seen to be taking place.

6.2.7. Decolonisation

Within the URCSA, the decolonisation debate has been strongly present throughout. When initially looking to join the UP as an official partner it was felt that the university offered a "limited perspective" (URCSA, 2002: 3). In other words, it was too 'colonial' and needed to change before the URCSA would officially join the university. Then in 2016 following the #FeesMustFall and other student protests, the denomination moved to formulate a statement which showed their support for peaceful change to the current systems. The proposal, quoted on page 181, provided 7 points showing solidarity with the student protest. These points condemned all forms of violence, including systemic violence and called for an awareness and support of students who struggled financially.

Yet within the UPCSA such comments on decolonisation are not forthcoming. When the current official partner institutions were investigated in 2018, offering an African/black world view was among the criteria. Yet, it is interesting to note the brief nature of the UPCSA's

⁸⁷ Race has not been the only contributing factor. In fact, towards the end of the period of study, ideological differences were the main factor. As such conflict in the UPCSA cannot be equated with racial issues. The denomination is making a concerted effort to deal with racial differences in a constructive way. However, as this research works from a historical perspective, the early challenges of race need to be included to provide a true picture.

⁸⁸ From interviews associated with the UPCSA 002, page 1 and 3; and 003, page 6 gave this view. When respondents from the URCSA are also included 004, page 3; 008, page 3; 010, page 4 and 011, page 3 can be added to the list.

findings on Africa/black world views in relation to the UP. In scholarly circles voices have been critical of Pretoria (see Duncan, 2016; De Beer & Van Niekerk, 2017; cf. van Wyk, 2017). Yet the UPCSA was happy that “Re-curricularization was taking place with increased transformative awareness of Africanisation and identifying black writers and scholars” (UPCSA, 2018: 503). Besides this, little to no comment emerges from the ministry committee regarding the need for curriculum transformation or decolonisation. However, from the interviews conducted, the UP was highlighted to be offering a western/ colonial perspective.

[The] Problem with theology at University [of Pretoria] is that they still want people to learn a western theology, and then when you go to the parish you battle. Its’ a one size fits all is a problem⁸⁹.

Reaffirmation of this point was can be seen from other respondents,

The theology that University of Pretoria is teaching it’s a Western theology and yet we are in Africa. The continent of Africa is very rich in theology but the faculty don’t teach the African theology⁹⁰.

And in much stronger language,

UP still an apartheid institution, cannot run from this fact. Some of the decolonization programs have not taken place at all. The theology we are taught is still a theology that struggles to address the issues of race in SA, the challenge of injustice of the past, the struggle of poverty and those things.⁹¹

This view has also been presented by other research:

...African theology is not taught as one of the mainstream modules at UP but is rather treated as a sub-discipline in traditional disciplines such as Systematic Theology. ...prescribed books and lecturer s largely focus on theological ideas and methods generated from Europe and North America. As a result, the faculty does

⁸⁹ Interview 002, page 1

⁹⁰ Interview 011, page 3

⁹¹ Interview 010, page 4, also see interview 003, page 6

not expose students sufficiently to the realities and theological riches of the African continent (Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 6).

As stated in chapter three, decolonisation and the need to adapt to local context should be a major factor of ministerial formation at present. While the UPCSA's adopted African/Black Worldview, and contextualization as key points to focus on (UPCSA, 2018: 493), prior to 2018 these issues had not been adequately raised. Then, even in 2018, the treatment of the issue is somewhat superficial. Thus, moving forward, it is hopeful that the UPCSA will start to address issues of race and decolonisation. But for the period of study, this emerges as one of the key short fallings of the UPCSA's ministry committee.

6.2.8. Majority full time

With regard to whether the ministerial formation programme should be full-time or part-time, up until 2016 the URCSA and UPCSA implemented very different approaches. In the URCSA a much more dynamic approach to the time of study was implemented. Students could choose to study full time or part-time, via distance learning or via contact learning and through whichever means students undertook, NTS undertook to support them. As the history of the denomination showed, this inclusive approach led to a large number of part-time, distance learning students enrolling through NTS. From 2006 it was already becoming evident that the majority of those enrolling did so on a part-time basis, due mainly to being in full-time occupations and/or being married (URCSA, 2006: 4) In terms of full-time students, numbers declined and in 2009 it was estimated that by 2011 there would be only 6 full-time students unless action was taken (URCSA, 2009: 11). The NTS drive for full-time students was partly successful and in 2011 there was in fact 10 full-time student's (see URCSA, 2011: 19–20)⁹². Yet in 2012, dealing with part-time students was becoming the norm for NTS. Now drawing from Northern, Southern and KZN Synod's, a way of managing part-time students was formalised. In this regard, it was proposed that part-time students needed to be integrated into their local church community and that that community would take responsibility for the discipline of students. Practical and spiritual formation was then the responsibility of the local MFTT (URCSA, 2012: 310). In the year 2012, of the 97 enrolled

⁹² The 2011 list of students states if students are Male or Female (M/F) Residential or Non-Residential (R/NR) and from which synod they come from. The number of full-time students has been calculated on the assumption that all residential students are full-time, while all non-residential students are part-time.

students, only 19 were residential students. The rest worked through distance learning and were located over six different synods (URCSA, 2012: 362). This willingness to work with part-time students and to adapt NTS to suit the logistical/ personal restraints of their students may be one of the key reasons for the high number of ministerial formation candidates associated with the denomination. Besides this, the attitude towards part-time/ full-time study shows awareness for the contextual reality of ministerial candidates. Candidates have bills to pay and families to support and by allowing them to remain in their local context they are able to take up ministerial formation.

The challenge with this approach was that the NTS had less control over their candidates for the ministry and could not keep a watchful eye on their activities. This lack of control and observation could be detrimental to the quality of ministerial candidates, although the effectiveness of formation via distance learning opposed to contact sessions is debated (Naidoo, 2012b: 7). Yet, what is clear is that access to the programme (quantity of students) takes preference over the potential quality of training.

With regard to the UPCS, potential quality took preference over the quantity of students. For ministerial formation candidates in the UPCS full-time probation was the only option up until 2016. The denomination preferred to implement a training model over which they could keep a watchful eye. Potential candidates could take up part-time studies at specifically recognised institutions. But thereafter probation had to be taken up full time. Studying via distance learning was allowed, so it was only in the probation year that the full-time approach started to pose challenges. Yet, as already highlighted, those from the presbytery of Mthatha found it near impossible to follow a full-time ministerial formation programme (UPCS, 2011: 223). Yet for the UPCS, being unable to take up full-time probation was a non-negotiable. In one instance a candidate for the ministry, K Walaza, was removed from the ministerial formation programme as he could not take up full-time probation and had failed to do so for over three years (see UPCS, 2011: 225). In this regard, it was the quality of the probation year and being fully submerged in an ecclesial environment which took preference over the potential quantity of students. While this approach to formation was harder to implement, the quality of the programme took preference. However, in 2010 the UPCS was experiencing a ministerial crisis and, as such, reforms to the selection process had to be implemented. This can be seen as a long-term cause for the change in approach to formation rolled out in 2016.

The necessity of ministers started to take preference over a potential drop in the quality of their training. The effect of a full-time vs. flexi-time approach is clearest to see when comparing student numbers between the two denominations.

In summary this section, it is clear to see that the contextual challenges of present-day South Africa mean that in order to enrol potential candidates, there has to be flexibility in the formation programme. Many families only have one source of income and so for that individual to give up work to take up full-time probation is just not plausible.

6.2.9. Student numbers

With regard to student numbers, there is a great difference between the URCSA and UPCSA. From its initial opening, student numbers at NTS steadily rose. In 2008 it was reported how theological student numbers at NTS were steadily increasing (URCSA, 2008: 324). This number continued to rise and broke the 100 mark in 2011. Since 2011, the rise in numbers has started to plateau. The total number of students associated with the NTS has held steady between 101 and 116. One worry with the student numbers is that their sharp increase was due to a lack of students graduating. Between November 2007 and June 2010, 14 students were licensed. While since 2003, 38 NTS students had been licensed in total (URCSA, 2010: 9). Yet, comparative to the yearly intake, this equated to around only one-third of students being licensed. As such, students entered but did not leave the formation programme pushing numbers up. However, with the plateauing of numbers this is hopefully a sign that intake and licensing numbers are starting to balance. It was also highlighted from the interviews how having a flexible approach to ministerial formation did allow increased numbers, but also increased the length of study.

Those with the amended or corresponded often fail or take a limited amount of modules so it slows down the production of ministers. Some take much longer than 5 years.⁹³

This increase in study time means that the completion of studies is staggered and that many students stay in the formation stage for much longer than they perhaps should. While the

⁹³ Interview 010, page 3

flexibility helps increase numbers, it also increases the challenge of keeping a watchful eye on candidates to make sure they are continually progressing on their formation journey.

With regard to the UPCSA, the total number of students comes from across multiple institutions. Having one national ministry committee means the numbers of students across the denomination are presented together. Even with this wider sample group, student numbers are still much lower than NTS. The policy of accepting only full-time probation prior to 2016 has clearly reduced the number of potential candidates able to take up formation studies. Another effect on student numbers was the decision in 2003 to not accept any new students in order to reduce costs (UPCSA, 2002: 454). Perhaps coincidentally, the UPCSA saw a decline in students from 2003 to 2007. Only in 2008 did numbers start to rise again. Then in 2012 it was realised that the UPCSA was in a ministerial shortfall crisis. Between 2007 and 2011, 47 of 74 accepted candidates had been ordained. Yet in the same period it was approximated that 55 ministers had retired. This led to a decline of 9 ministers over the period. Yet once secondment was taken into account the decline in ministers active in local congregations was closer to 25 (UPCSA, 2012: 244). In short, the UPCSA was not training enough ministers to serve existing congregations. This then can be classed as an early causation for the change in approach to ministerial formation in 2016.

In comparison then, URCSA shows a great number of students attached to just one formation centre. However, there is reason to expect that some of these students are getting lost in the system inflating numbers. By comparison, the UPCSA numbers across the whole denomination are significantly lower. This resulted in a ministerial crisis and measure adopted in 2016 to try and address this. The below table provides a year on year comparison for total student numbers associated with the NTS and UPCSA. Where there are gaps no accurate data for that year could be found.

Table 4: Student numbers, 2003-2010

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
UPCSA	37	28	22	15	12	17	18	18
NTS (URCSA)		57		75	77		82	91

Table 5: Student numbers, 2011-2018

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
UPCSA	25	30		32	24	20	23	28
NTS (URCSA)	101			116	113		85*	103

*NTS (URCSA) Numbers presented in 2017 expect to be incomplete.

This table clearly demonstrates the difference between the two denominations and the apparent effect of only accepting full-time candidates for ministry. This shows that in order to generate higher numbers of ministerial formation candidates, the formation programme needs to be flexible. The reality of the South African context is that those who are able to undertake full-time residential studies and a full-time probation year are very few. The majority of students will study via distance learning and need to complete probation years part-time. As such, while a full-time approach allows more control over the ministerial formation programme, if a denomination wants to keep numbers up, flexibility (and with that a loss of direct control) needs to be introduced. While it is harder to keep a watchful eye on correspondent students, denominations need to look at ways to establish this. The social and economic reality means that in order to maintain numbers, denominations need to start to investigate ways to assist formation candidates via distance learning. This is no longer a debate over which setting is more appropriate for ministerial formation, but rather a necessity. If denominations want to maintain number they need to realise that distance learning and part-time probation is the only plausible option for most candidates.

6.2.10. Proactive nature

Amidst the URCSA MFTT, one of the key traits which stood out was their proactive nature. More than once the MFTT had identified a problem and already constructed a solution. Rather than waiting for the general assembly to provide comments, and react to that, the MFTT was proactive in bringing a solution along with the problem. This can be seen in 2004 when there was confusion over the function of the Joint Curatorium; the Curatorium had a proactive approach drawing up a set of rules to govern their actions and asked that these be accepted (URCSA, 2004: 2). Another example is found in 2012 when UP raised its entrance requirements meaning most candidates were not eligible to register. In response to the fact that most ministerial students no longer reach the entry requirements of the UP, the MFTT

implemented a year bridging course through Theological Education by Extension College (TEEC). While not officially recognised as a training institution, the NTS academic committee took it upon themselves to assess the quality of the theological nature of the course. Finding it was of a good standard they then implemented this solution to the problem (URCSA, 2012: 363).

This proactive nature becomes even clearer when compared with UPCSА. While not necessarily reactive in approach, the below quote shows the common response among the UPCSА to challenges faced.

From the UPCSА's participation in the 'future of theological education in South African' workshop held at Stellenbosch in 2008. As the quote on page 105 shows, this workshop concluded that a further gathering of all churches first be called to further discuss the needs of ministry and how formation programmes can align to these.

Rather than establishing principles or rules to govern the way forward, another meeting was called. The 2008 discussion on theological education at Stellenbosch created a moment that was lost as the ministry committee did not proactively engage with the results. Rather the committee waited for a gathering of all the churches to discuss what course of action to take.

In this way, URCSА's proactive nature has allowed the formation programme to keep momentum. When problems arose, they were usually dealt with quickly, especially when compared to the approach within the UPCSА. It is this approach which has helped to keep momentum in the ministerial formation programme. Being proactive can be classed as a secondary issue when compared to a clear theory which undergirds the formation training. Only when coupled with a clear approach is a proactive approach beneficial. Yet, when a clear approach is in place, the execution of such is greatly helped by a proactive attitude.

6.2.11. Continuing education

One major challenge that both denominations have struggled to deal with is that of continuing education or ministerial development. In both denominations, ministerial formation is outlined to be a lifelong process (Ford, 2007: 13). In fact, that theology is a lifelong process was established in the second chapter. It is as such, after ordination training and personal development should continue. That fact that continuation has not been the case, despite strong theological convictions, poses a challenge to the live reality of theology.

In this regard both ministerial formation teams sought to implement programmes of continued education. In the URCSA this was to be the Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) programme. In 2014 it was proposed that the CMD would cover academic refresher courses and offer care for clergy. The development of this process was being done with help from Dr André Bartlett, the leader of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) ministerial development programme (URCSA, 2014a: 10). In 2015 it was reported that Rev MS Maponya and Rev ZE Mokgoebo were appointed to pioneer this process in the Northern and Southern Synods respectively (URCSA, 2015: 4). The plan still remained for them to liaise with Dr André Bartlett (of the DRC) to provide guidance on the construction, execution and management of the course (URCSA, 2015: 4–5). But in 2017 it was reported that apart from the appointment of programme leaders (Rev MS Maponya (Northern Synod) and Rev ZE Mokgoebo (Southern Synod)), no action had yet been taken (URCSA, 2017: 6). From the interviews conducted with URCSA members, it came forward how the denomination was struggling to get the programme off the ground. They had attempted to run a clergy training day but the turnout was very small⁹⁴.

Within the UPCSAs attempts to develop the praxis of continuing education came into effect slightly earlier. In 2006 it was remarked that "[v]irtually no consideration has been given to lifelong learning in the ordained ministry apart from the provisions of bursaries to ministers" (UPCSA, 2006: 258). However, in 2011 concert attempts were made to rectify this situation. In this year the committee was tasked to "develop programmes for the on-going training of ministers, both in service and post ordination" (UPCSA, 2011: 118). It would then take until 2015 for the Post Ordination Training and Studies (POST) to be developed (see UPCSAs, 2015: 296–298). POST functioned by encouraging ministers to gain three study points each year in order to demonstrate furthered learning. Points could be gained in various ways which included, writing of academic papers, attending conferences and writing of book reviews, among other options (UPCSA, 2015: 298). The proposers decided that this would be a volunteer programme, not enforced, as they believed ministers would take their own initiative to enter the programme (UPCSA, 2015: 294). Yet, while the UPCSAs had been able to develop a programme of further development, support from clergy was lacking. As one interviewee said, "some ministers were complacent in their role and, as such, would see no

⁹⁴ Interview 004, page 3

value in further training”⁹⁵. However, signs of change within the UPCSA were present. From the interviews, a candidate expecting to complete her training by 2022, commented how formation is a lifelong process: “as ministerial students, we are taught that even when we are ordained ministers, ministerial formation and training still does not end – we are also encouraged to continue studying” (014, 2019:1). In this way, there is a slight sign of change, the dominant narrative is one in which continuing education is struggling to be established.

The fact both the URCSA and UPCSA struggled to get a programme of continuing training/development going is a source of concern. In their theology of ministerial formation, both highlight the necessity of on-going learning; yet neither have had success in this regard. In fact, in both denominations, it was only towards the end of the period of investigation that attempts were made to implement a formalised approach to continued education. The URCSA was struggling to develop and implement a clear programme and also suffering from limited support from clergy. While the UPCSA had developed and implemented a clear programme but was also having little support from its clergy. In fact, from the interviews, it was clear that some members were under the impression that there was no formalised approach to continuing education in their denomination⁹⁶. The lack of clerical support in a programme of continued education is a source of concern. From the interviews it was reported how older ministers saw no need for further training⁹⁷. Another perspective put forwards was the inter-church politics could often lead to a lack of support⁹⁸. While theoretically the denominations promoted continuing formation, in reality there was little buy-in from clergy. Unfortunately, the reasons surrounding this lack of support does not form part of the research focus. The focus was to uncover the history of ministerial formation in each respective denomination. The history clearly shows struggles in implementing continuing education yet the reasons for this challenge was not uncovered and would require more specific investigation. From the perspective gathered from this research however, it can be stated that complacency among clergy and a lack of understanding of the need for continuing training were among the main reasons gathered.

⁹⁵ Interview 002, Page 2

⁹⁶ Interviews 006, page 12; 012, page 3

⁹⁷ Interview 004, page 2

⁹⁸ Interview 010, page 3

6.2.12. Congregational support

Another challenge which both the URCSA and UPCSAs faced was a lack of congregational support. Both denominations in their theology of ministerial formation, to some extent, identified the local church as being responsible for ministerial formation. This responsibility, not only in terms of financial contribution, included effective selection and promotion of potential candidates and support of the candidate while training. It was the church's responsibility to make sure those gifted in ministry were found, sent to ministerial formation and supported financially, spiritually and emotionally while undergoing their training.

Within the URCSA a lack of church support became apparent as early as 2007. As the quote from the Northern synod on page 158 demonstrated, the NTS was having to remind churches of the need for good examples and to deter bad practises which candidates may be tempted to mimic.

Here it is clear to see hints that local churches are setting bad examples to ministerial candidates and that the church, in her "bosom" has a vital nurturing role of the candidates. Then later in 2009, NTS again reminds the denomination that it takes a village to raise a child (URCSA, 2009: 9). On top of this, the following proposal was put forward: "Synodical Commission calls on all ministers and church councils to take responsibility for the NTS students" (URCSA, 2009: 10). From this, it is clear to see that NTS and the MFTT were challenged by the lack of church support.

Within the UPCSAs the lack of church support is evident from 2005 onwards. Reporting on the process of formation, the ministry committee highlighted how the complex task of formation required strong participation from all parties involved – the ministry committee, sending churches and individuals themselves – and was not solely the responsibility of the ministry committee (see page 100 for the full quote).

In a further comment, it was revealed that the main challenge experienced was that local congregations were not effectively screening or supporting candidates (UPCSA, 2005: 107). Structures were in place for the selection of candidates, but individual congregations were not exercising their assigned responsibilities. Then in 2011, challenges with local congregations were again raised. In this regard, in-house fighting had resulted in some churches no longer been classed as fit to receive probationers (UPCSA, 2010: 211). Then again

in 2014, local churches were highlighted once more as causing issues with the formation programme. Before coming to Pretoria for training, candidates were to undergo Fellowship of Vocation to help them discern their calling. However at that time “some Fellowships of Vocation barely function at all” (UPCSA, 2014: 177). This was thus resulting in inappropriate candidates being sent forward to training.

As such, it is clear to see that one of the main challenges facing both the URCSA and UPCSA was support from within their own denominations. Both highlighted how churches seemed to be of the understanding that once candidates were sent to formation centres they were no longer their responsibility. However, this is not the case, the role of the church remains even when the candidate is not physically present there. A further challenge also came forward in the selection of candidates. Churches were not effectively screening those put forward for formation. On more than one occasion in the UPCSA, inappropriate candidates were sent to the selection conference, wasting both the time and resources of the Ministry Committee. The challenge in responding to this issue, however, is that churches are not centralised. Each church sending a candidate needs to be aware of its responsibility. Yet to reach and educate each church is not an easy task.

6.2.13. Administration / Structural organisation

One key difference between the URCSA and UPCSA is its administration / structural organisation. The ministry committee for the UPCSA functions on a national level. As such, Pretoria is one among five official centres for training, whereas the URCSA MFTT functions on a regional and national level. The Northern and Southern synods had a joint MFTT which oversaw operations in Pretoria. Prior to the development of the MFTT, it functioned as a Joint Curatorium of equal membership between the Northern and Southern synods (URCSA 2004). While the change to MFTT changed the reporting structures of the committee, the daily operations of the Joint Curatorium and MFTT were much the same. The national MFTT, through the power of regional synods, directed all formation programmes. Regional MFTT’s were accountable to the MFTT of the General Synod as well as the regional general synod and assigned six key tasks: Admission, Formation, Supervision, Assessment, Licensing and ongoing formation (see URCSA, 2014b: 6–8). In short, the regional MFTT was responsible for the more practical and everyday matters of ministerial formation. More theoretical/ theory-based matters were the responsibility of the MFTT of the general synod (the national body). This

regional focus can be seen through the short and medium-term goals which the Joint Curatorium set in 2004. These goals included: developing criteria for the selection of students, establishing a code of conduct for students, laying down criteria for readmission to study, to develop a programme and guidelines for practical work for the students during their studies, expanding the NTS library, appointing an administrator and director/principal of NTS, strengthen the financial support of NTS, and to develop course of ministerial formation for ongoing empowerment of ministers and to enhance the effectiveness of their ministry (URCSA, 2004: 3).

With regard to the UPCS, the ministry committee had a much broader function which was to care for the individual (overseeing the selection and personal/ faith development) as well as theoretical (guiding academic formation) (UPCSA, 2006: 254). The problem with this approach, as raised in 2006, was that administrative duties were taking too much time stifling policy development (UPCSA, 2006: 258). The national committee had to deal with all issues. Having one committee to oversee the denomination is a more financially viable approach, yet it does create logistical challenges. These challenges were evident through the history of the UPCS, especially in 2007, when the committee was described as “systemically dysfunctional” (UPCSA, 2007: 110) and in 2012 through the undermining fiasco.

From the historical picture painted in the previous chapters, it would seem that splitting the organisation over a regional and national level is strongly advantageous. The daily running is left to those who are involved in daily reality. While the general rules and theory of formation are discussed on a national level with representatives from each local centre. In this way, theory is informed by reality but its development is also detached enough from administrative duties that time can be spent on its development. Within the UPCS the idea to have one singular centre of learning has been an aim. In this instance one centre would only require one governing body. However, the reality since the union has been that of multiple centres. Thus, as the history of the URCSA shows, when multiple centres are in operation, a split between regional and national committees is beneficial.

6.2.14. Attitude towards UP

When looking at the denomination’s attitude/approach towards UP two very different pictures emerge. Within URCSA there was a much more complex relationship marked with an

attitude of distrust/hesitancy. This attitude is seen within the minutes of the URCSA and from interviews conducted with students. While within the UPCSA the attitude is much more accepting and embracing, although the interviews did reveal comments on the strongly 'western' nature of the institution.

URCSA and NTS relationship with the UP started as early as 2002. In this year the NTS was assessing which institutions to partner with for training of students. While Pretoria was a strong potential there were worries that students would be treated as "second class citizens" (URCSA, 2002: 2) Lecturers were also critiqued for holding a "limited perspective" (URCSA, 2002: 3). As such, it was clear to see that URCSA had hesitations over UP and reservations around their genuine commitment to offer African based and African directed theology. As such, URCSA joined with UNISA for the first half of studies and then came to UP for the second half.

Yet this was not the end. In 2004, despite the hesitation to join the UP for the undergraduate stage of formation, the Curatorium was still researching the possibility of a partnership (URCSA, 2004: 10). Then 2005 saw the continuation of the debate. In UP's favour were the potential influence and involvement it could allow the URCSA in the teaching process. This was attractive in light of NTS only partially archiving its aim to become an active seminary (URCSA, 2006: 8–9). Hesitations over diversity remained but it was decided to enter into negotiations with the UP and the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) to see if the negatives associated with the institution could be navigated and a favourable agreement reached (URCSA, 2006: 9).

In 2007 hesitations still remained over becoming an official partner with UP and sending students for undergraduate and postgraduate studies. The relationship was also further strained through the appointment issue (URCSA, 2007: 8). This was the instance in which a job, apparently open to all the Reformed family, was offered to a DRC member with no consideration for applicants from other sister churches. Yet despite this, negotiations continued.

In 2009, in response to a letter from the UP, URCSA replied reiterating their reservations, presenting these in four subsections, while also making the desire to partner clear. The four reservations were: The Language Policy and the fact that UP offers separate English and

Afrikaans lecturer s making actual student interaction minimal. Secondly, the demographic (“representivity”) of lecturing staff posed a major issue. Perhaps inspired by the appointment controversy in 2007, the letter highlights that the significant majority of lecturer s were white. Third the issue with the curriculum and “whether the current theology curriculum at UP respects the cultural and theological worlds inhabited by black students equally with those of white students”. The fourth issue was that of cost. Studying at UP was significantly more expensive. With students coming from poor backgrounds the affordability of UP was a key issue (URCSA, 2009: 26). As such, URCSA had reservations over the cultural diversity of UP and what that resulted in terms of academic instruction.

However, by 2011 URCSA had entered an official agreement with the UP. In the agreement, it was explicitly highlighted how the faculty of theology at UP’s core task was “the scientific practice of Theology” (URCSA, 2011: 24). In other words, outside of the scientific practice of theology was the responsibility of the church. This was not in contradiction with URCSA’s own theology of ministerial formation and, as such, posed no problem. What is interesting to note, however, is the lack of comment around the four issues earlier posed. No clear solutions were reported and in regards to the financial challenge it was clear to see that no solution had been found. URCSA continually gives the impression that it is a denomination deeply aware of the importance of contextualisation, even spelling these issues out to the UP. Yet, without any clear change, in 2011 a partnership is drawn up. To create a partnership the pros had to outweigh the cons. As such, it would seem that the critique of UP, its lack of contextualisation and its cost, by 2011 was no longer a major stumbling block. In fact the academic excellence and the potential ecumenical healing it could offer appears to have become a major attraction (cf. URCSA, 2006: 8–9; Kritzinger, Maponya & Mokoena, 2019: 10)

Following 2011, reports on UP become slim. Since entering the official partnership, the critique of the institution had fallen away. This could show that URCSA was satisfied with the relationship and its function. However, from the interviews conducted, dissatisfaction with the relationship became apparent. One respondent, quoted in full on page 171, expressed the view that partner churches did not have influence on curriculum design.

As such, URCSA’s history with UP is one of initial hesitancy and critique which later becomes one of complacency. Before 2011 comments are often raised around the lack of

contextualisation at the institution. After 2011 these comments stop, but hints of dissatisfaction are still present below the surface.

With regard to the UPCSAs, their move to the UP was rather sudden. Immediately following the union, the University of Fort Hare and the University of Natal were the proposed training institutions (UPCSA, 1999: 66). However, in 2001 The University of Fort Hare and the University of Natal were both dropped “because of the sentimental attachment both of the former denominations had to them” (UPCSA, 2001: 257). Simultaneously with the dropping of the two institutions, was the adoption of the UP as a partner institution on a five-year trial basis.

In the ministry report, motivation for the selection of UP is given. It highlighted how the student is free to choose between English and Afrikaans as a language of instruction. Comments were also made on affirmative action in relation to the Desmond Tutu chair in leadership and development, a joint venture between the faculty of theology and the faculty of economics (UPCSA, 2001: 258–259). Unlike the strong criticism and analysis of the UP present in the URCSA in 2002, the UPCSAs had no hesitations to partner with the UP. Following the choice of 2001, the 2002 report shows the relationship in a positive light, commenting on the warm welcome given by the UP.

As the above quote on page 94 demonstrated, early relationships with the UP seemed to be going well and throughout the history of UPCSAs, this remained the norm.

In 2005 it was revealed how the UPCSAs were in discussions with the UP to revise the academic curriculum to better suit the needs of the denomination (UPCSA, 2005: 109). 2009 saw the renewal of the partnership with UP with some changes to the agreement. The following were listed as some of the main changes with the contract: (1) the contract was now an open-ended agreement, (2) lecturing posts were to be allocated proportionally according to number of students enrolled, (3) Staff discipline was to be negotiated with UPCSAs, (5) the UPCSAs were to make regular reviews of the appointments it made (see UPCSAs, 2009: 238–239).

Following the renewal of the partnership, the 2010 report again highlights the benefits of the relationship. The unfamiliarity of the university environment is seen to be beneficial in preparing potential ministers to work in a cross-cultural platform (UPCSAs, 2010: 208). 2010

also saw the appointment of Prof Johan Buitendag as the new dean of UP theology. In a visit to the UPCSA, Prof Buitendag highlighted how greater intermingling between students of various denominations and cultures can be expected under his leadership (UPCSA, 2010: 208–209). As such, the impression was given that the UPCSA was content with the relationship and that there was dialogue between the UPCSA and the UP.

However, in 2016 with the proposal that the South African Theological Seminary (SATS) becomes a partner institution, critique is raised on the current partners. Quoted in full on page 123, the view was expressed that the current selection of partner institutions was restricted, even not upholding some of the UPCSA's doctrine.

Yet, this was a minority voice within the UPCSA. The motion of SATS being proposed as a training institution lost in two consecutive years. Then in 2018, following an investigation into partner institutions, it was completely dismissed.

In that same investigation, the UP passes the requirements of the UPCSA with flying colours. Interesting to note is the brief nature of the UPCSA's findings on Africa/black world views. Despite URCSA's earlier criticism in this regard, the UPCSA was happy that "Re-curricularisation is taking place with increased transformative awareness of Africanisation and identifying black writers and scholars" (UPCSA, 2018: 503). Commenting on the curriculum the UPCSA was happy that this was biblically centred with a strong academic nature and also included "a growing number of black/ African/womanist and feminist voices" (UPCSA, 2018: 503). With regards to the function of the relationship the view was expressed that space was provided for personal formation and the development of a reformed identity (see page 132).

The diversity of the staff was also viewed to be acceptable, especially as the demographics could only shift as lecturing positions became available. As the quote on page 133 demonstrated, the demographic of 29% black staff and 17% female staff were presented as signs of improvement.

In this regard, the UPCSA continually shows the relationship in a positive light. Even in 2002 when the URCSA decided against the partnership due to a lack of contextualisation, the UPCSA had no issue with this. Even from the interview no outright criticism of UP came

forward. As was seen through the interviews, the UP was occasionally referred to as not the most effective or contextual training centre, but never was it classed as an inappropriate centre⁹⁹.

In comparison, the URCSA was much more deterred by an apparent lack of contextualisation and racial and gender diversity. This comparison is thus much more revealing of the denominations than of the UP. Both regard the UP as a well establish institute delivering academic excellence. However, the URCSA has a much greater sensitivity to issues of contextualisation and diversity, hence their earlier critique of the UP. Whereas the UPCSA was primarily concerned with the academic excellence of the university. That may sound a divisive conclusion, yet given the fact interviews conducted for this research¹⁰⁰, coupled with output from recent academic work (Duncan, 2016; Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017) has found that UP is failing to truly contextualise its academic curriculum, this is the most logical conclusion to be reached. While the faculty of theology at UP is continuing to address the issue of contextualisation, it remains that, for the period of study of this research, one of UP's key short fallings was the contextualisation of its curriculum. What also needs to be taken into consideration is the URCSA's historical relationship with the DRC. Being founded as a daughter church resulted in a history of being told how to operate. As such, at its establishment in 1994, and growing independence, the church worked to establish control over its own operations. Kritzinger (Kritzinger, 2010; Kritzinger, Maponya & Mokoena, 2019: 8–9) points out how this history needs to be considered when assessing ministerial formation within the denomination as it had deep and far-reaching effects. As such, the attitude towards the UP is also conditioned by a history of control and the desire to be captains of their own destiny.

Yet, what is important to gather for this research is that despite criticism, UP was still chosen as a partner institution. For both the UPCSA and URCSA the academic excellence of the institution was a strong draw card. Also working in an ecumenical environment which exposed students to multiple faith realities was a strong positive. Being able to sit in a lecture hall and talk with fellow students from various backgrounds was a strong advantage. As such, it was seen that the pros of partnering with the UP far outweighed the cons. The UP was not

⁹⁹ Interviews 002, page 1; 003, page 6 and 006, page 3

¹⁰⁰ Interviews 002, page 1, 3; 003, page 6; 004, page 3; 008, page 3; 010, page 4; 011, page 3

chosen to do the churches job for them but to provide academic instruction. In this approach, the downfalls of the UP almost didn't matter too much as the denomination could navigate these with its own in-house training. While in house training was not always effective (as discussed above), in theory this did detract from the weight of the negative of partnering with the UP.

6.3. Nomothetic

From the above analysis, meaningful data has been gathered. From this, a clearer understanding of both denominations' approaches to ministerial formation has been gathered. This picture has helped distil some of the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, within the denominations' history. This research now comes to the nomothetic section. Here the meaningful rich data will be distilled into general rules for ministerial formation. The first stage of this distilling process will be to establish if a general principle can be learnt from each section. Following this, the second stage of distillation will be to develop the general rules.

6.3.1. Curriculum

With regards to the curriculum implemented for ministerial formation, both the UPCSA and URCSA took very similar approaches. Looking at this through the law of agreement, it is possible to establish that developing a curriculum which incorporates academic study with church formation is an effective means of training ministers. If the denomination is willing and able to take ownership of church formation and the academy to provide academic formation, then, as this research has shown, this can be an effective means. This will be distilled further bellow. For now, it is important to note that this curriculum is done in unison with an academic institution. The church does not simply hand the responsibility of the curriculum to a public university but incorporates the programme offered at a public university with its own in-house formation.

6.3.2. Theory of Ministerial Formation

With regards to a theory of formation, while both denominations established a theology, its implementation was very different. Using the law of difference, this serves to highlight that the implementation of a theory of ministerial formation is a vital factor. With regards to the formation programme, having a clear and well-understood theory helps guide operations. "If the curriculum is haphazardly done, the people produced by it are also haphazard and their

work is haphazard” (Kagema, 2008: 232) Having a theory but not in a clear form, leads to a lack of direction and clarity in operations. As such, even if an effective approach to the curriculum is used, if there is no theoretical undergirding to guide it, its implementation will be haphazard. This again will be distilled further below.

6.3.3. Housing

The investigation of housing was used to further demonstrate the impact of having a clear and achievable theory which undergirded ministerial formation. As such, any principles that may proceed from it relate to a theology of ministerial formation. Housing can be of great benefit but only if there is a clear function and aim assigned to it. This function and aim should stem from a theory of ministerial formation (discussed above), as well as from what is logistically achievable (to be discussed under administration). When these two elements are present, housing is an essential means through which to provide personal formation. Using a house of residence effectively leads to stimulating conversation and the creation of an atmosphere which has a positive impact on the personal formation of candidates.

6.3.4. Financial

With regards to financial matters, it was seen through both denominations how a lack of financial means for the formation programmes was among one of the main limiting factors. Being able to afford to staff ministry committees, subsidise student fees and afford daily running costs proved difficult for both denominations. When considering the levels of unemployment and poverty in South Africa, this finding, unfortunately, comes as no surprise. Churches, non-profit organisations that rely on donations from their members to function, will naturally reflect the financial status of their members. The state of poverty and unemployment in South Africa means, inevitably, that financial challenges will have a strong impact on ministerial formation. This is not just a problem for the UPCSA and the URCSA: “Formal theological education in South Africa has come under severe pressure as a consequence of increased costs of residential training in relation to the financial capacity of churches” (Naidoo, 2013: 4). As such, financially viable solutions for ministerial formation need to be sought. However, the prioritisation of the financial reality also needs to be balanced with an effective approach to formation. As Richardson (2007: 148–149) points out, distance learning may be a cheaper option but is it a more effective option? Comparing a bicycle and a car, Richardson shows how both are better than walking but the car, while more

expensive than the bike, has much greater versatility. As such, cost cannot be the only factor taken into consideration. Training also needs to be appropriate. In some circumstances a bicycle may well be better than a car and vice versa, but cost cannot be the sole factor in determining this. As the URCSA showed, while the UP was a more expensive option, it was believed to be among one of the most suitable institutions to partner with. Each denomination needs to be aware of financial challenges and how they will balance this with their theory of ministerial formation. In general, partnering with universities has become a viable option for many denominations, although hesitations over a potential drop in quality have been raised (Naidoo, 2013: 4). The exact details of this balance, however, will be denomination specific. Dependant on what the financial reality of the denomination is and their intended theology of ministerial formation will determine the balance of finances and theory/theology. As such, a more specific rule (a nomothetic principle), beyond the need to balance these two factors, cannot be established.

6.3.5. Gender

Gender issues were present in both denominations, although to varying degrees. This research, in agreement with other authors (Phiri, 2009; Amanze, 2013; Plaatjies-Van Huffel, 2019), has found that ministerial formation is still skewed along gender lines. Within the UPCSA direct critiques of the sexist nature of ministerial formation were present. While in the URCSA direct critique was lacking but student numbers revealed discrepancies in gender. As such, it can be established that sexism is still a problem within ministerial formation. This, unfortunately, is not a new finding. Many feminist voices have been exposing these inequalities within theological circles (Phiri, 2009: 11; Amanze, 2013: 232; see Plaatjies-Van Huffel, 2019). As such, to avoid repetition of existing research, this phenomenon will not be distilled further below. What can be said, though, is that denominations need to take notice of the situation and actively work to address gender imbalance and discrimination within ministerial formation programmes. “[T]heological education in Africa must train women and men to fight against the oppression of women” (Mashabela, 2017: 4) Through the research, especially in the effort of the UPCSA, it became clear that gender issues were starting to receive attention. Yet this is only the start and there is still a long way to go before a situation of equality is the norm. The UPCSA and URCSA are not alone in this struggle, Trisk and Pato

(2008: 62), working from an Anglican perspective, have also commented on the challenges of empowering students:

while one might wish to empower students to take responsibility for transformation of their communities, many are fearful of ‘rocking the boat’, lest this should result in them losing their job and thus their source of income.

This comment further highlights the extent of inequality, while highlighting some of the challenges faced in improving the situation. While students may be empowered and taught to empower others, they still operate in a patriarchal society. They also operate in a society with a high rate of unemployment. As such, Trisk and Pato (2008: 62) highlight that the lived reality, and the fear of losing one’s job in challenging the status quo, outweighs teachings on empowerment and equality. The patriarchal roots of theology and ministerial formation have been deeply embedded in South African society. “Theological training was, therefore, modelled along male lines” (Amanze, 2009: 123).

The challenge of gender and inequality in ministerial formation is a symptom of the wider problem in South Africa society. Due to the extent of the problem, further dedicated research is needed in order to develop effective principles through which to bring about equality. It is not only a matter of empowering/ educating student but reaches deep down into the need to shift cultural norms and expectations.

6.3.6. Racial

Racial issues were predominantly present in the UPCS. While URCSA was not immune to these challenges (see Kritzing, 2010: 217–218), they did not result in the same degree of conflict as with the UPCS. However, it was predominantly the denomination’s own history which affected the nature of racial challenges. As such, the development of general rules in this regard cannot be established. In a very abstract sense, denominations need to be aware of racial tension. Yet, to provide more meaning than that, ideographic insight for each situation will need to be gathered. Racial issues are often complex and context dependent. Yet race is an important issue in ministerial formation which should not be overlooked.

Central to the issues of training are those of role and ministerial identity, for if people have not come to terms with who they are as individuals, then no amount of preparation and training will help (Naidoo, 2013: 8).

Race is central to one's identity. "A 'colour-blind' approach, which tries to deny the realities of history, is not helpful" (Kritzinger, 2010: 231). If formation programmes cannot embrace racial differences in a healthy manner, which helps the individual candidate come to terms with who they are and who others are, they will be seriously stumped. Further, formation programmes need to become critically aware of the racial power dynamics that have been bequeathed to them. Too often, approaches to formation have favoured a "white", "reformed" perspective (Naidoo, 2015: 183).

Focusing on the ministerial needs of the Reformed tradition and the believers who adhered to it, worked towards a very specific and exclusive focus that was neither cognizant of – nor sensitive to – the contextual needs of believers from other backgrounds (Brunsdon, 2019: 5).

If formation wishes to be effective, all racial perspectives need to be acknowledged as well as systemic racial power dynamics. It is not merely a matter of becoming multi-racial in appearance but developing an anti-racist formation programme. South Africa is a diverse nation, and as such, ministerial formation needs to be aware of and empowering towards, that diversity. Dedicated attention needs to be paid to developing an anti-racist formation programme which does not gloss over differences. This is a task that even the URCSA has to take seriously. Even with limited mention of racial conflict in their history, Tshaka (2015: 5) has shown how the denomination is not immune to the consumption of the dominant "white" narrative. This need is all the more important within the UPCSA which has already called from within for its ministerial formation to "bear the African stamp" (Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 6). To generate awareness of the need for an anti-racist and diverse formation is not to outcast the "white" perspective. Rather, the point is to highlight the need to bring forth the diverse perspectives found across South Africa and to expose uncritical power dynamics to help all candidates, regardless of race, to understand and accept their personal identity.

6.3.7. Decolonisation

Decolonisation, or rather, awareness of the need for contextualisation was strong within the URCSA. With regards to the UPCSAs, the history did not reveal a strong awareness. Within the UPCSAs, decolonisation was generally reported in relation to the UP and seen as an area of academic education which is currently undergoing a transformation. This became especially clear in the 2018 report into partner institutions. Within the URCSA and with the focus on developing an Africa and reformed theology, the decolonisation/contextualisation debate was more sustained. Through there was an awareness of the need to offer a contextual education which was seen through the hesitations raised in association with the UP. However, the impact of these two different approaches to decolonisation is hard to abstract and is even harder to put into a nomothetic statement. What should be made clear though, is that ministers are to serve in a certain context and their training should not alienate them from that context. As Mbiti and Maluleke (see Maluleke, 2006: 61–62) have shown in an ironic anecdote, the African graduate needs to be able to function in the African reality. If the formation process does not take cognisance of the reality a minister is to serve, then abstract and ineffective ministers will be produced. This was shown clearly in chapters 2 and 3. The history of the denominations, especially in the information gained from interviews, further serve to highlight this point. So, while the approach to decolonisation cannot be generalised, the fact that decolonisation of ministerial formation needs to occur can be put forward as a general principle. As Wahl (2013: 267) explains, the heartland of global Christianity has shifted from the Northern hemisphere to the Southern hemisphere during the past 50 years. This geographic shift needs to be matched with a cultural shift. Old thought patterns, while important are no longer the norm. As such, ministerial formation in South Africa needs to embrace this shift and allow African voices to form a major part of the formation process. “Africans need an education that engages their context and call colonisers to allow Africans to lead and shape their own African education” (Mashabela, 2017: 2).

Theological education in Africa is currently facing a number of challenges and those tasked to develop its curricula, programmes, institutions and methodologies are compelled to critically reflect on the relevance of the models used (Wahl, 2013: 268).

If ministerial formation seeks to be effective in Africa, it needs to take cognisance of the decolonisation debate. The agenda for ministerial formation needs to be set in Africa, not, as it so often has been, by the priorities and standards of the global North (Kritzinger, 2012: 242). This is a point which both denominations, as well as the UP, needs to take seriously. As the theory undergirding this research has shown, ministerial formation needs to be contextually rooted and relevant to have the optimum impact. While efforts have been made to contextualise ministerial formation, this is an ongoing process as we live in an ever-changing reality. It is the continual task of ministerial formation to understand the ever-changing context in which it operates and apply the timeless, unchanging gospel truths to that context (cf. Oden, 1990).

6.3.8. Part-time study the most accessible option

Then looking at the number of students, it was seen how part-time study seems to result in higher numbers of student enrolment. Statistically speaking, these findings cannot be established, and more research needs to be done in this regard. However, from this research, it is possible to hypothesise that allowing both full-time and part-time study results in greater numbers of students in ministerial formation programme. In the South African context, with such high unemployment and also vast geographical landscape, part-time study via distance learning enables learners to stay rooted in their home communities while studying. This means breadwinners are not forced to choose between providing for their family or joining a formation programme. It also means that those living far from training centres do not need to find the financial means to travel from home and afford to live somewhere else. As such, the development of part-time distance learning is an avenue of ministerial formation that needs to be pursued. “Access to theological education remains a challenge within the African context” (Wahl, 2013: 269). As such the development of ministerial formation which enables access to the greatest number of potential students should be a priority. There are unquestionably challenges studying part-time and via distance learning. The lack of immersion in a full-time formation programme, as well as the lack of possible mentors, are among some of the challenges. With regards to online education, while not geographically limited, it is questioned whether it can provide the same quality of training as residential training (Cloete, 2017: 3). But these are challenges which can be navigated. The financial state

of South Africa cannot be navigated so easily and as such, formation programmes need to adapt to this.

Full-time residential theological institutions are becoming too expensive to be sustainable. Only a very small part of the gifted potential leaders of the church are receiving training. This is hindering church growth (du Preez, Hendriks & Carl, 2014: 2).

Thus, while not statistically strong enough to establish as a law, it is clear to see that part-time study via distance learning holds great potential for ministerial formation, especially in terms of numerical success. In the words of Kritzinger (2010: 221):

Part-time (or full-time non-residential) ministry study for church members who are already established leaders in congregations is a necessity, even though it is not easy to keep good contact with part-time students and build community amongst them.

In this instance, it is the case that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages. As Oliver has pointed out “educators need to embrace this opportunity for change and development if higher education intends to keep its positive and lasting influence on society” (Oliver, 2016: 1). In this regards Oliver is advocating for more flexible, student-centred educational approaches which are enabled by developments in modern technology (Oliver, 2016: 5–6). Formation programmes in South Africa need to start to accept this reality and work on navigating the disadvantages in order to allow greater access to ministerial formation programmes. “[A]ccess to ministry training should not be limited to full-time ministers but should be expanded to include part-time ministers and church members” (Wahl, 2013: 270).

6.3.9. Proactive nature

Findings on the proactive nature showed, perhaps unsurprisingly, that a more proactive nature was beneficial to the function of the ministry committee. As a general rule, this can be grouped with the importance of logistical functionality which will also incorporate administrative function.

6.3.10. Continuing education is not easy to implement

With regards to continuing education, both denominations faced challenges in establishing their programmes. As such, this leads to the notion that establishing programmes of continuing education is not an easy task to implement. However, as continuing education is focused on ordained ministers, potential factors impacting the implementation of continuing training did not fall within the scope of this research. The workload of ordained clergy, the logistical plausibility of attendance and the perceived needs of clergy are all factors that would impact continuing education. However, these are all factors which fall outside of the scope of this research. As such, it can be stated that implementing continuing education is challenging, but factors which conditioned this state fell outside of the research focus. As such this is an area for further research. Professional education in most other sectors expects the development of professional capacities to occur over many years and not just when one's degree is granted (Naidoo, 2013: 8). This view was also expressed by the UPCSA and the URCSA. Both churches highlighted the importance of continuing education and that formation was a lifelong process. But in the lived reality of the churches, this was not achieved. As such, the challenge of continuing education in ministerial formation is an area in need of review and guidance. As an initial observation, the church will need to fully embrace a culture of continued education and present this education as a requirement from ministers. Both the UPCSA and the URCSA employed a voluntary approach which resulted in minimal attendance. Further, training programmes need to be well organised and show clear benefits to the clergy.

6.3.11. Congregational support

Congregational support, or rather the lack of support, was a challenge both the UPCSA and URCSA faced. Yet, as with continuing education, reasons for the lack of support fell outside of the scope of this research. As such, while understood as a shared factor, it is not possible to establish more general principles without fully understanding factors which impact on this situation. What can be established is that the ideal, the theory surrounding congregational support, has not become the real, the lived experience. In this regard, this points to the importance of administrative effectiveness and the development of theory which can align to the everyday reality.

6.3.12. Administration

With regards to the administration of both ministry committees, a very different approach was implemented. The UPCSA worked on a national committee, dealing with all regional centres through this one body. The URCSA worked on a regional level, having local ministerial formation task teams overseen by one national body. In this regard, the UPCSA often faced challenges of balancing administrative duties with theological reflection. The committee on occasion commented how they were too caught up with the daily running to focus on the development of theory. Within the URCSA this was not an issue as the daily running was the responsibility of local teams, with the development of theory being the responsibility of the central team. This difference in approach resulted in fewer issues within the URCSA relating to administrative matter and, as such, shall be distilled further into a general principle below.

6.3.13. Attitude towards UP

Across the two denominations, a very different approach toward the UP was discovered. The UPCSA has always been accepting of the institution, with the URCSA more critical of it. Yet, towards the end of the study period, both denominations partnered with the institution to provide the academic insight into their formation programme. As such, despite discrepancies in their view, having a strong academic institution as a partner in the formation programme was seen as beneficial, this will be distilled into a general rule below.

Having distilled each of the ideographic sections and ascertaining if a nomothetic insight can be gained, this research now closes the chapter by detailing the few general rules which this research has developed. These rules, drawn from the ideographic insight, are put forward to help guide the development of ministerial formation programmes for any interested denomination.

6.3.14. Clear and achievable theory of ministerial formation essential

One of the first general rules that can be established relates to the necessity of having a clear and achievable theory of ministerial formation. To be effective, a denomination needs to know what it believes ministerial formation should be. Commenting on the recent voicelessness of theology, Kritzingler (2012: 242) points out that:

To overcome voicelessness means to find your own voice. That requires identity strategies, in other words, processes and structures that help us to stand tall and confident, without being arrogant or superior.

Knowing why we do theology, and the way to do that theology allows one to operate with confidence without appearing superficial. This belief, or the 'why' behind doing ministerial formation, needs to be clearly articulated and measurable. No matter how grand a theology of ministerial formation is, if it is too abstract and theoretical it won't be possible to implement it. Also, if theology cannot be distilled in a simple statement then it is harder for the ministry committee to remember this vision and monitor their progress in relation to this theology. As Sinek (2009) has shown in the business world, corporations that lose track of their *why* fail to operate effectively. Whereas companies that know *why* they are doing *what* they do and can communicate that vision effectively, often achieve greater success.

The validity of this rule was demonstrated through the URCSA's ministerial formation programme. Once established in 2005, the theology behind ministerial formation - to offer an African reformed training in values, knowledge and skills - became a guiding force for further actions. The MFTT reports continually reiterate this theology surrounding ministerial formation. The pinnacle example of this was the manual for ministerial formation. First published in 2014, the manual was strongly dependant on the 2005 general synod and documents since which had been in cognisance with that theory. In this way, if a denomination wishes to implement an effective ministerial formation programme, this needs to be undergirded by a clear and achievable theory of ministerial formation. This clear theory acts as a guide for the programme. It also offers litmus test to discern whether actions have agreed with the theory.

6.3.15. Logistics matter, theory is not the main stumbling block

Another key principle that can be established from this history is the necessity of logistics. Most publications on ministerial formation have tended to focus around theory (see Kombo, 2013; Naidoo, 2013; Oliver, 2014; Chiroma, 2017). Nell (2014) has highlighted the importance of the inclusion of administration in ministerial formation but focused on the matter from a theological perspective. The work by Nell helps to highlight the need for administrative training for ministers. Quoting responses from various church members it is seen that administration is one of the main challenges they face (Nell, 2014: 2). Yet Nell's theological approach to the matter also kept the discussion in a theoretical realm. This theoretical approach has created beneficial ideas, which no doubt has been impactful in the ministerial formation process. However, as this research has ascertained, it is not the theoretical side of

formation which is the greatest challenge. Both denominations established a strong theory of ministerial formation. As the history shows, both denominations had an idea of what they wanted to achieve on a theoretical basis. Yet, it was the logistical, the practical, the everyday reality that presented the hardest challenges. Within the UPCSA the Propeller Conference did establish a clear theory of ministerial formation. Yet, disagreement within the denominations and logistical challenges within the ministry committee lead to this theory being side-lined. When inspected on a purely theoretical basis there was no issue with the UPCSA's theory of ministerial formation. Yet, as the history showed, they struggled to implement this theory consistently. The struggles for its implementation came in the form of financial challenges, inter-denomination disagreement and in-house fighting. While there was a strong vision for one ministerial formation centre, denominational disagreement led to the establishment of two. Yet the organisational structure of the ministry committee remained centralised which created challenges in communicating effectively around the denomination.

As a general rule then, denominations need to be equally aware of practicalities as they are of theory/ theology. The lived reality presents many limitations where theory, no matter how great it may sound on paper, just cannot be achieved.

6.3.16. One training centre, one committee, multiple centres multiple committees
Building on from the broad rule relating to logistics is a more specific rule relating to the number of committees. As the last section closed by demonstrating, operating out of one national centre proved logistically challenging for the UPCSA. In the case of the URCSA ministerial formation centre were divided regionally, with one overarching national body guiding the development of theory and practise. As a general rule, this serves to demonstrate the effectiveness of having centres associated with each region. Correlating the number of committees to the number of training centres allows each committee to deal effectively with the peculiarities of each geographical area. Working in unison with the local reality helps to maintain effective communication and a link between committee and students. Being in the local area also means the committee was already on the ground to deal with any issues that may arise. Working only from a national basis results in detachment from the local situation and increased response time in dealing with local issues. Further, it requires clear and effective communication, which is not easy to achieve. One national body is beneficial for keeping regional centres in check and developing theory. Yet one national body alone, in

situations where there are multiple training centres is not the most effective approach. Rather, denominations should seek to correlate the number of ministry committees with the number of regional centres.

6.3.17. University needs to be seen as a partner, not a solution

Is the university an appropriate ground for ministerial formation? The answer to this question really depends on what one's approach to ministerial formation is. What can be gathered from this research is that the university cannot be classed as unsuitable. "Ministerial formation includes the training of the whole person for ministry by means of a combination of instruction, experience gained and reflection" (Chiroma, 2017: 56). This is a task greater than just one institution. If a denomination is willing to work in unison with a public university then it can provide a very effective means of formation. The real question is whether a denomination is willing or even capable of providing the extra input that needs to accompany the academic education. As Buitendag (2016: 9) has pointed out, the university is primarily responsible for academic education and primarily seeks academic excellence. This too was stated in URCSA's agreement with the UP. While there is increasing pressure for a university to provide formation (see Naidoo, 2015: 177–179) this is not its primary state of being (polis). "The acquisition of knowledge is essential in ministerial formation, but the scope of education must go beyond a restrictive cognitive qualification to more integrated human development" (Naidoo, 2013: 2). Formation and personal development are primarily the responsibility of the church. As both the URCSA and UPCS have shown, a denomination must take responsibility for the formation process. Whether that is a shared responsibility or the primary responsibility is of secondary importance. What is important is that a denomination is active in the formation process and in its relationship with the chosen academic institution. A denomination needs to be aware of what is being taught in lectures, so as not to repeat the same information and also to aid in the application of that learnt in the academy. As Hiestand and Wilson (see 2015: 88–101) have shown, the relationship between church and academy is of vital importance if formation, and even further, church growth, are to be successful. As Kritzinger (2012: 249) concludes, "Theology cannot separate itself from worship; it cannot exist apart from it". The Church and the theologian are inescapably linked. When formation acts in awareness of this link, and in awareness of the importance of each, it produces well-rounded ministers with a strong voice in society. One of the challenges seen

to be facing ministerial formation, in general, is the fragmentation of the student; that academic knowledge is not combined with the vocational instruction (Naidoo, 2013: 10). Both the UPCSA and the URCSA thus show that this fragmentation can start to be overcome when the church plays an active role in the formation process, taking responsibility for rooting academic knowledge in the context of the church.

As such, as a general rule for formation, the public university can be an appropriate sphere for ministerial formation if a denomination is willing to put in the extra effort. The university needs to be seen as a partner, not as a solution (Hiestand, 2008: 361–362). Denominations cannot expect to send candidates to a university and receive back fully formed ministers. The historic overview highlighted how local congregations still have a responsibility for and duty towards ministerial candidates. This same principle is true for ministerial formation teams or committees. They have a responsibility towards the candidate even when they are training at a university. Making sure candidates have placement after academic training is not their only task. These committees also need to be involved with the candidates while they train at academic institutions. As Chiroma (2017: 66) has highlighted, “In order to enhance an effective ministerial formation for seminary students, the use of the relational nature of mentoring will be of great value”. It may not be necessary to go as far as developing a formalised mentorship programme, but what is clear is the necessity of involvement, of relationships.

Relevant pastoral leadership can be best produced by developing a closer partnership between the theological institution and the Church so that students can learn first-hand from churches how communities work (Naidoo, 2013: 11).

Denominations need to be involved in the life of the candidate aware of what they are learning in the academic sphere and aiding in grounding that knowledge in the ecclesial and personal sphere. Formation takes place in three distinct but overlapping settings, that is, in formal education, in congregational life and in situations of social engagement (Naidoo, 2015: 167). The triangle (figure 1) presented in the third chapter is helpful to depict this and has been included again here.

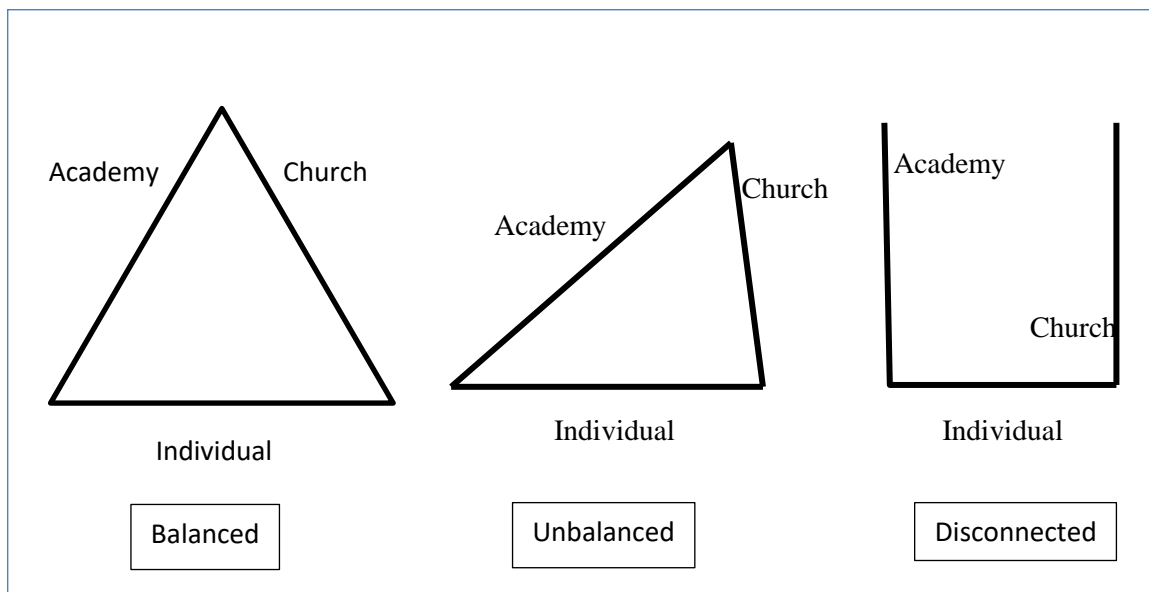


Figure 1

If denominations are seeking to partner with academic institutions they cannot expect that this will navigate any responsibility away from them. The denomination still has an essential role to play; making sure it is connected to both the individual candidate and the university. Not only does it need to be connected, but it also needs to play its side of the deal; namely, providing in house training, as well as guiding (mentoring) formation in candidates.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter has drawn out both ideographic and nomothetic insight from the historical research. In this way, it has answered the initial research questions of what each denominations approach to ministerial formation has been. Further, it has also answered what benefits and challenges certain approaches brought with them and how individuals have viewed the formation process. In the following chapter guidance will be given regarding future developments.

With regards to the UPCSA, insight was gained on the main challenges and success of the denomination. In terms of challenges, in house fighting and a lack of a clear theory of ministerial formation were seen to be the two major stumbling blocks of the formation programme. Further, the contextualisation of the formation programme and the development of a proactive nature were seen as two key areas for improvement. Going forward the denomination also needs to assess the administration of its ministry committee;

specifically, if it will continue to operate from a national level and how it can improve communication. It was seen how in 2018 major changes to the ministerial formation programme had been made and a clear theory developed. Another success was the implementation of continued education, although this programme was struggling to get started.

Within the URCSA it was seen how the ministerial formation programme had benefited from a clear theory of formation coupled with the proactive nature found at NTS. The Joint Curatorium and later the ministerial formation task team had a plan and stuck to it. This had helped them create a clear and well-functioning programme. However, challenges were present in the implementation of continuing education as well as in addressing gender imbalances. Both issues had struggled to make any real headway in the denomination. It was also seen how the relationship with the UP had been tentative and is an area that needs to be addressed going forward.

Coming to the nomothetic findings four general principles were established: First, the validity of a church university curriculum. It was seen how partnering with an academic institution was a very effective means of providing a dynamic programme of ministerial formation, it was highlighted that a church must take responsibility for its role in the programme. Then, the importance of correlating ministry committees with formation centre was established. To have a clear grasp of the formation process, denominations need a regional presence. National teams are effective for the development of theory. But for daily execution of the programme, locality was seen as important. Then, it was stressed how important effective administration was. Without effective management of the formation programme nothing would be achieved. This administration referred to the financial, structural and daily running of ministerial formation. Finally, it was stressed how a clear theory of ministerial formation needs to be present. A denomination needs to know *why* it is doing what it is doing. Once this is established *what* the denomination does in the formation programme will happen much more effectively.

Using the comparison of the two denominations' histories has thus been beneficial in establishing these principles. Both the denomination specific insight and the more general insight has benefited from the comparison. As such, this research can now proceed to the

conclusion and summarising what has been discussed over this research and the significance of such.

Chapter 7

Conclusion, what was revealed and why it matters

7.1. Introduction

Having undertaken the research journey, thus far, this chapter shall now gather the key findings, summarizing what has been found and the significance of these findings. This research has gone on a vast historical journey. Covering a 17-year period of ministerial formation within two denominations has produced a significant amount of new information. This research was limited to the specific focus of ministerial formation within each denomination. As such, the investigation of church minutes was delimited to deal with matters relating directly to the formation task from the perspective of the church. Yet, even with this delimitation, the research still covered a vast amount of information. Through the research the method of comparative histories was used to structure and interpret the historical information gathered. A comparative methodology necessitated a theoretical basis from which to conduct the research; as such chapters 2 and 3 were dedicated to drawing out the theoretical basis. With the theory in place, the research then proceeded to draw out each denomination's individual history of ministerial formation. In line with the comparative method, these histories remained independent of each other. The history of each denomination, in this initial stage, was to come out organically. A concerted effort was made to not let the history of each denomination influence the historical investigation at this stage. Only in chapter 6, when being brought into comparison, could the history of the UPCSA and URCSA be brought into dialogue. This chapter helped distil and confirm findings from the individual histories, as well as to establish general laws and principles.

This concluding chapter shall start by summarising the six previous chapters. This summary shall help remind the reader of what has been covered up to this point and the importance of such. After the summary, the key findings of the research shall be detailed. Being one of the first studies of its nature, many findings were found throughout the research. In the conclusion, only the most crucial of these findings will be detailed. Finally, this research contributes to new knowledge that will be explained. Brief mention will be made to areas of further study, but the prime focus will be to clearly demonstrate the contributions to new knowledge this study has made.

As should have become clear throughout the research, ministerial formation is vital to the future of the church. It is through the ministerial formation process that those called into leadership in the church can be nurtured and trained to exercise their calling to the best of their ability. As it is often mentioned, the church is always one generation away from extinction. It is only by the continual flow of new members into the body of Christ that the church continues to be in existence (Kritzinger, Maponya & Mokoena, 2019: 1–2). Part of this flow, essential to the life of the church, is the training and development of new leaders. When the development of church leadership is lax, the church itself becomes lax. As such, each denomination strives to produce competent ministers to serve within their bounds. Yet, inevitably, there are certain struggles which the task of ministerial formation as a whole present and, also, those which are more akin to a specific denomination. As such, this research has been vital in drawing out the struggles faced by the UPCSA and URCSA to help the individual denominations, as well as to form general guiding principles for ministerial formation as a whole. The success of each denomination has been recognised and presented to help inspire and encourage those engaged in the development of formation programmes. Ultimately this research has worked from a reformed ecclesial perspective with the main aim of being beneficial to the church. It should be remembered that the University of Pretoria was used as a geographical limitation for the study, not as a specific object of investigation in itself. So, let us look back to the chapters of this research to remind ourselves what has been learnt.

7.1.1. Chapter 1

The introduction to this research opened by stating the need for such a study. Time was committed to drawing out the current challenges ministerial formation was facing. It was stated how ministerial formation was vital to the success of the church and had always been present in the history of the church. Initially an informal task of all believers, ministerial formation had developed to be a sustained task undertaken by church leaders. However, while unanimously understood as an important task, disagreement and debate were seen to surround the current nature of ministerial formation in South Africa. In this regard, formation was considered to be in a ‘crisis’. This was a strong term used to highlight the challenges of the colonial and commodified nature of formation studies and their apparent lack of relevance in the South African context. It was further highlighted that while academic

discussion on these matters was present, discussions from the perspective of the church were lacking.

The church itself was also seen to be struggling with ministerial formation in contemporary South Africa. As such, it became apparent that a study of ministerial formation from the perspective of the church was needed. Thus, inspired by the importance of such a study, it was explained how the UPCS and the URCSA would be used as case studies employed in a comparative histories' methodology. It was explained how comparative histories would help bring forth both information important for the two denominations investigated and ministerial formation in general; this was termed ideographic and nomothetic insight. This approach would then help fill in a contemporary perspective on ministerial formation from the point of view of the church. This history was to help each denomination to understand its own past and to contribute to wider discussions in ministerial formation. It was seen that this history would be vital in contributing to discussions around what approaches to ministerial formation were most effective and challenges facing the process of ministerial formation. What then followed was an implementation of this methodology. Chapter 2 and 3 outlined the theoretical background to be employed. Chapters 3 and 4 acted as the individual case studies which brought forth the ideographic insight, as well as the broad historical narrative. Chapter 6 brought in the comparative aspect to distil the ideographic insight and to develop nomothetic insight.

7.1.2. Chapter 2

As stated at the opening of this current chapter, the second and third chapters of this research were committed to establishing a theoretical framework. This was necessitated by the method of comparative histories. Chapter 2, in itself, focused on the theoretical nature of ministerial formation. After a brief explanation of the author's context and the potential impact this would have on the research, this chapter proceeded to establish the *why*, *how* and *what* of ministerial formation. The second chapter was purposefully abstract in its representation. Without being swayed by contextual necessity, it aimed to establish an 'ideal' of ministerial formation. This was a vital task, as it was with this 'ideal' that the real (the reality) of ministerial formation could be analysed and, ultimately, developed. However, starting from an abstract perspective necessitated starting from the *why* of ministerial formation. It was explained that by *why* it was meant the vision, or the core essence, of what

ministerial formation should be. The *why* was the driving force behind the *what* which we see in action. Working from a reformed perspective, it was argued that scripture was a key source in the establishment of Christian theology. As such, an exegesis of a few key passages around formation was provided. These exegeses helped to unearth the driving force, behind theology as a whole, of which ministerial formation was a part of. The driving force behind theology was accredited to the interplay between faith and reason. The core essence of theology, a task of all believers, is to come to know the divine through rational exercises and through one's own faith. Why do we have theology? Because God was to come into a relationship with us, revealing Gods-self to us impacting our daily lives.

This vision of theology was seen to be portrayed through the pastor-theologian. The pastor-theologian is someone who combines the world of the church and the world of the academy to help guide and support believers of their own theological journey. The pastor-theological was the norm for church leadership from the time of Augustine right up to the reformation. From this vision, the key principles of lifelong learning and church-academy dialogue were seen as a way of discerning how such an approach to ministerial formation was achieved. The chapter closed by defining ministerial formation. At first, a distinction was made between theology, the task of all believers; ministerial formation, a theological task for leaders of the church; and academic theology, a part of ministerial formation. Focusing on ministerial formation, this was seen to be a dynamic task. It was a theological task that did not subtract from the theological task of all believers. Rather it added to this task and was the dynamic process by which individuals were equipped to exercise their calling in church leadership. The concept of an apprentice was introduced to help draw out the dynamic nature of ministerial formation. Ministerial formation was to be a combination of academic knowledge, church learning and personal development. The chapter then closed by emphasising this dynamic nature of ministerial formation.

7.1.3. Chapter 3

Moving to the third chapter, the contextual reality of South Africa came into focus. Borrowing from Plato's idea of forms (see Wright, 1988b), chapter 2 attempted to describe the ideal form of ministerial formation, the perfect reality of ministerial formation. Chapter 3 was then a depiction of the earthly reality of ministerial formation, drawing out the limitations everyday South Africa has on the 'perfect' form.

Opening the chapter, contemporary history was delimited to help focus the contextual analysis. Contemporary was seen to be the same macro context in which the author wrote. In South Africa, this macro context was seen to have come into existence in 1994. Undeniably, the old context did not cease on the 31st December 1993 and the new start on 1st January 1994. Rather, 1994 is an externally imposed marker for the dramatic shift in the macro and micro social-political context of South Africa. This external marker was used to keep the contextual focused on democratic South Africa. However, democratic South Africa is a vast, complex and multi-dynamic context. As such, issues only specifically relating to ministerial formation were selected. From these issues, some were seen to be completely new to democratic South Africa, while others were seen as subsisting issues which have had a long-term impact on the country. As such, the contextual analysis was split into an analysis of all that which had changed and that which had remained.

Ministerial formation is not performed in a vacuum; as such the third chapter was vital in making sure the historical analysis was aware of contextual limitations and necessities. Looking at the new challenges the rise of technology; the impact of commodification; challenges with accreditation and the loss of ecumenism were seen as key impacts on ministerial formation. While looking at that which had remained the same gender discrimination, a lack of contextualisation and the religious nature of South African society were seen to be important. The rate of poverty in South Africa was also a key contextual factor and was included throughout the contextual analysis. All of these factors were presented as having a strong impact on the nature of ministerial formation and, as such, needed to be held in mind when constructing each denomination's history of ministerial formation. The third chapter also took the opportunity to explore the University of Pretoria in contemporary South Africa. As the focus on the UPCS and URCSA was delimited to only deal with the Pretoria branches of ministerial formation, the University of Pretoria was the only academic institution which would feature in the research. While not a direct object of investigation, the UP provided a shared factor between the UPCS and URCSA which was helpful in constructing the comparison. From the investigation of the UP, it was established that the university was struggling to adapt to a contemporary South Africa. Critiques of the commodified nature of education, as well as the lack of contextualisation of the programme were presented. It was seen how the institution was adapting, although not quick enough. However, the faculty of

theology at the UP was still among one of the best in Africa and as such, was seen to offer a high quality of academic theological education.

7.1.4. Chapter 4

The fourth chapter was focused on the history of the UPCSA from 2000-2017. With the theoretical framework set, the historical picture could be drawn. To draw the historical picture, church minutes were used as the main source. This was seen as a natural way to let the key issues, as understood by the denomination, to come forward. Interviews were also used to fill in some of the gaps and to give depth to the minutes themselves. The historical picture started in 1999 with the union of the UPCSA. This was a vital event in the denomination's history, significantly impacting the ministerial formation programme and, as such, warranted inclusion. The union of the denomination brought the PCSA and RPCSA together with all their similarities and disagreement. Unfortunately, it was the disagreement that came through most clearly in the minutes of the ministry committee. Working in a chronological fashion, and guided by the topics of the ministry committee minutes, the fourth chapter drew out the history of ministerial formation within the UPCSA. The historical investigation also stretched to 2018 as this year saw major changes in the approach to ministerial formation which help to interpret the preceding history. This chapter then closed by highlighting key findings and bringing in the categories of chapter 3 to further analyse the history.

7.1.5. Chapter 5

The fifth chapter, focused on the URCSA, worked in the same manner as the fourth. The key source of information was the report of the Joint Curatorium (later the ministerial formation task team – MFTT). Interviews were also conducted with URCSA associates to give depth to the minutes and fill in any gaps. This in-depth historical investigation started in 2002 as this was the year in which the Northern Theological Seminary came into existence. The introduction to the chapter explained the history between 1999 and 2002 and the transition in ministry formation the URCSA had been going through. The opening concern of the URCSA was which academic institution to partner with? In 2001 the faculty of theology at the UP had opened its doors to other denominations and, as such, was an attractive choice. However, the URCSA decided to partner with UNISA and UP. Hesitations around the UP resulted in it not becoming the sole partner institution for academic training in the ministerial formation

process. This hesitation with UP endured for most of the period of investigation and is one of the most distinctive features of the URCSA history of ministerial formation. Throughout the history of the URCSA, the ministry committee was seen to be proactive in nature and guided by a strong understanding of what the denomination saw ministerial formation to be. The fifth chapter also concluded by drawing out the key finding and using the contextual analysis of the third chapter to further critique the history.

7.1.6. Chapter 6

The sixth chapter saw the comparison of the comparative histories methodology come into play. This chapter's aim was to draw out both ideographic and nomothetic insights. Through comparing both denominations' histories the ideographic insight established rich contextual meaning. Here the key factors of each denominations approach to ministerial formation could be discerned. For the UPCSAs key factors included in-house fighting, a shifting of approach to ministerial formation brought on by changes in the secretary of the ministry committee and a growing commitment to deal with gender inequality. Unfortunately, the union of 1999 did not result in a unified understanding of ministerial formation. Continually the UPCSAs reported conflict between individuals and, in one instance, even between a whole presbytery and the ministry committee. This conflict was occasionally racial in nature, although for the majority of cases ideological differences were the main contributing factor. Disagreements over the number of formation centres; whether formation and practical experience should run concurrently or sequentially; if the probation year could be undertaken part-time; and the theological viewpoints of academic partner institutions were all divisive issues. In the period of study, three ministry secretaries took charge of the formation programme and under each of them changes in approach took place. Change is natural and even essential for growth, yet this change seemed to lack a unified vision. The six chapters demonstrated this through the use of accommodation by the UPCSAs. A lack of a clear guiding vision, the lack of a clear *why* to the formation programme, resulted in a continual shifting in the use of Sedibeng house. While the individual history of the UPCSAs showed shifts in approach, the comparison with the URCSA (which followed a relatively consistent vision) helped draw out the impacts of these shifts. Finally, the history of the UPCSAs also revealed challenges with gender equality. However, the fact that this issue was being discussed at General Assembly was seen as positive. Allowing the discussions to take place was the first step needed in the

transformation journey. This became even clearer when compared with the URCSA who had given relatively little comment to gender issues within the ministry committee, yet, had clearly skewed along genders amongst formation candidates.

Focusing on the URCSA, the comparison revealed the denomination to be proactive in their approach to formation, guided by a clear undergirding theological vision but struggling to identify discrepancies in gender. One of the key defining factors of the MFTT was that in the face of challenges the task team did not wait for a solution, but proactively developed solutions which then only needed to be approached by church governing bodies. In this way, momentum was kept within the formation programme which helped keep enthusiasm for the formation process. Another factor that kept this momentum moving was the establishment of a clear theology/theory around ministerial formation. This was laid out in detail in 2005 and then from that year on was continually referred back to in the decision-making process of the ministry committee. This vision thus helped guide operations and kept the programme running smoothly. Another factor, of which the impact is hard to discern, is the fact that for the whole period of investigation the MFTT had a consistency within its leadership. Prof JNJ Kritzinger helped to establish the NTS in 2002 and remained in the leadership role throughout. This long-standing leadership undoubtedly had an impact. However, the extent of this impact is hard to discern and may only become clear once Prof Kritzinger steps back from the leadership position. One of the key worries around the URCSA, however, was the lack of comment on gender inequality. While around only 20% of candidates were female, no comment is given to this matter and the committee seems complacent at what appears to be a discrepancy amidst genders.

The ideographic insight of chapter 6 was thus vital in helping discern the strengths and weaknesses of each denomination in their ministerial formation programme. Going forward the UPCSAs need to continue to focus on gender equality. Further, the denomination needs to establish a clear undergirding theology for the process of ministerial formation. This work has already started and 2018 was included in the historic picture to show the developments taking place. Yet going forward the initiative cannot be dropped and needs to find its way into the fabric of the ministry committee. The establishment of this vision may be vital in helping reduce in-house fighting, as it will show clearly what the denomination aims to achieve. This

clarity of vision will allow the leadership to reject any proposal that does not align with the vision and avoid unnecessary debates and squabbling.

With regard to the URCSA, the denomination needs to take pride in the formation programme it has established. However, going forward it needs to clarify its relationship with the UP. From the interviews negativity towards the institution was still present. However, if URCSA wants the UP to be an effective partner it needs to fully embrace the institution. External criticism will only serve to sour the relationship without changing the reality. The denomination needs to discern if it wishes to remain a partner, and, if so, how it can constructively engage its criticism.

Moving to the nomothetic insight, the sixth chapter established several rules or principles relating to ministerial formation in general. With regards to the curriculum of ministerial formation, it was seen that a church-academy partnership was a very effective approach if a denomination was willing to be active in the partnership. Training at an academic institution, coupled with church training, allowed for the dynamic nature of ministerial formation to be embraced and for academic, ecclesial and personal development to take place. However, a denomination could not purely send learners to an academic institution of higher learning and expect to receive fully formed ministers; church involvement was essential. This then related to the need for a clear theory of ministerial formation. It was established that a denomination must know why it is pursuing formation and what it hopes to achieve through it. This was one of the key differences between the UPCS and URCSA and, as such, established as one of the key principles for ministerial formation in general. Gender and racial issues were seen as important, although very much denomination specific. As such, it was established that denominations need to be aware of the issues but a more detailed principle could not be established. In a similar vein, it was discussed how denominations need to be aware of issue of contextualisation. Yet this is a phenomenon very much coloured by a denomination's own history. Consequently, principles around contextualisation relate very strongly to each individual denomination.

With regards to student numbers, it was established how a flexible approach to formation (part-time or full time, contact or distance learning) allowed for an increase in numbers but a decrease in standardisation. Yet, this increase was classified as a necessity given the

challenges of present-day South Africa. Denominations would do better to work out ways to standardise training across multiple approaches than to implement a less flexible approach to formation.

With regard to the administration of a ministerial formation programme, two key points were established; first, the importance of locally situated ministry committees in the formation process. Working on a local level allows the ministry committee to be deeply involved with practical issues of the formation process. Working on a national level can lead to detachment from the local reality. Then secondly, effective administration is one of the key, if not the key, principle in establishing an effective ministerial formation programme. Without effective administration, it does not matter how great the theology of ministerial formation is, or how excellent an academic institution is. It is the administration of a formation programme that allows all the facets of formation to be brought together and for the programme to function effectively. Under administration one can also include financial administration. Without a keen eye on the finances, a programme may either be bringing the denomination to bankruptcy, or underutilising available resources. Often discussions on ministerial formation focus around theory, yet in reality it is administration which is vital for the implementation of effective ministerial formation.

Finally, the sixth chapter also looked at the importance of academic institutions. Here it was established that while vitally important, the academy does not form the key to ministerial formation. The key to effective formation lies with the denomination. A denomination must take responsibility for a formation programme. Partnering with an academic institution, such as the UP, is a good way to make sure candidates receive a high quality of academic knowledge, and to avoid issues of accreditation. Yet partnering does not guarantee a good formation programme. An academic institution is responsible for academic learning. This forms only a third of the formation task. As such, a good academic institution is important in the formation process, but its importance should not be overrated. Academic research tends to fixate on the role it plays in ministerial formation. Yet it is the role that the church plays which ultimately makes or breaks a formation programme.

With this closing remark in mind, this concluding chapter will now put forward the key findings of this research. The summary has helped to remind the reader of what has already been discussed. This research will now turn to present what this discussion ultimately means.

7.2. Key findings

In this section, the key findings of the research will be detailed. The order in which the findings are presented is based on the order of the chapters. As stated above, not all findings from each chapter will be detailed, only those which are considered significant.

The second chapter presented important foundational information in terms of how ministerial formation should be understood. The second chapter shows the necessity of a dynamic understanding of ministerial formation. In this dynamism, three key factors were put forward. Namely that formation involves the individual, the church and academic learning. It was this finding which was then used to analyse the history of ministerial formation. As such, the dynamic nature of ministerial formation is not a trivial matter, but vital to remember. Without the incorporation of all three areas, a programme cannot class itself as ministerial formation. It is only with the combination of all three areas that individuals can develop to be a leader of a church. Too often discussion on formation focuses on only one aspect of the formation process, ignoring that it is the whole, not the sum of the parts, which makes up ministerial formation. To focus on the academic over the personal or ecclesial aspects, or on the personal over the academic and ecclesial leads to a skewed view of formation; each part is important and warrants investigation. Yet, it is important to remember that when investigating a part, it is just that, only one part of the whole process.

The third chapter again provided an important foundational theory for this research to build on. Often contextual analyses look at the complete change of South African society or the complete lack of change. In the third chapter it was highlighted how the current context is a mix of change and continuation. In a very real sense, the contemporary context of present-day South Africa is drastically different from anything experienced before. Issues of commodification and the effects of technology are akin to the 21st Century. Specifically, the use of technology has only become an issue in the last 20 years with the development of such technologies. Digital technology simply did not exist for the majority of the 20th Century. As such, it is only in this age that ministerial formation has had to comprehend what this new technology can achieve and the benefits and disadvantages of such. Yet in another real sense,

very little has changed in South African society. Issues of gender discrimination and a lack of contextualisation still persist. While the fact that South Africa still remains a religious society in a post-modern world also has a key impact. It is this dynamic interplay which forms the current context in which ministerial formation takes place and it is vital to pay attention to this context. Ministerial formation is a contextual task and, as such, it is a necessity to take this into consideration. While many studies have looked at the South African context, it is the interplay between change and continuation which was the key point established in this research. One aspect cannot be focused on over another, to do so would lead to a misunderstanding of the context. This misunderstanding would then lead to the development of a ministerial formation programme which is actually ineffective in the everyday reality of South Africa.

While the second and third chapters did present key findings, it is with historic insight gained from chapters four and five that brought forth significant new information. Being one of the first studies of its nature, much new knowledge surrounding the history of ministerial formation in the UPCSA and URCSA was presented. In terms of the UPCSA, it was discovered how the denomination had tried, over the period of research, to implement an effective ministerial formation programme. Many hours and much effort had been put into the UPCSA's ministerial formation programme and this programme had been developed over many years. However, the development was often derailed by in-house fighting and good ideas/early initiatives not being fully adopted. As explained in the summary, in-house fighting was a common facet of the history of the UPCSA. This was present right from the start of the union and continued to be present for the whole period of study. Occasionally these disagreements were racial in nature. From the interviews, it was discovered how in the early days of the union the UPCSA was unsure of how to place black probationers in historically white congregations. Further, hints of racial tension were found in S Duncan's resignation as Sedibeng house manager and the undermining fiasco of 2012. Yet, to depict the in-house fighting a purely racially charged would be far from the truth. The UPCSA is a denomination which was formed by two former denominations that had a history of racial division. With the union, the two former denominations were brought into one. This has led to disagreement. Yet this disagreement is for the most part theoretically and theologically, not racially, charged. Recalling the call for SATS to become a partner institution, one can see clearly how it is

theoretical and theological views which brought the proposal forward. However, what is key to note with the in-house fighting is not the nature (racial, ideology or otherwise), but the effect. The lack of a unified vision with the UPCSA has led to a ministerial formation programme which does not clearly understand what it wants to achieve or how to go about this. In house fighting and the desire to develop an 'ideal' formation programme, has led to the reality of a committee spending more time on trivial matters, not the daily reality of formation candidates.

Another key factor in the history of the UPCSA was the lack of a clear undergirding theory of ministerial formation. While the two former denominations have naturally led to the instalment of divisional lines in the UPCSA, the lack of a clear theory surrounding ministerial formation has not helped in breaking down these lines. In 2002 the UPCSA attempted to construct an undergirding theory of ministerial formation under the title 'passage to ordained ministry'. This theory was strongly inspired by the Propeller Conference of 2000. Theoretically, this was a clear move in which to develop a theology and theory to guide ministerial formation going forward. In reality, the gains of the Propeller Conference were lost and needed to be resurrected. As such, for most of the period of study the UPCSA functioned without a clear theory undergirding the ministerial formation programme. Not only did this leave the denomination without a clear standing point on which to judge the formation programme, and too quickly rebuke suggestions not aligned to the vision. It also left the denomination without a clear guide to developing the ministerial formation programme. The purchase of Sedibeng house demonstrates this well. While purchased early, and with good underlying logic, the house was not consistently developed and went through multiple phases of functionality.

Moving to the URCSA a very different historical picture was put forward. Not only did the MFTT operate on a regional basis, as opposed to a national basis, the URCSA also experienced a lot more stability and unified vision around ministerial formation. The greatest instability to the formation programme came through financial challenges. It was the lack of finances that delayed the purchase of the NTS house in Sunnyside, it was a lack of finances that saw the delay in appointment of staff and it was a lack of finances that nearly resulted in the NTS not being established at all. Yet, the URCSA and the MFTT in Pretoria managed to control the budget enough so that operations could take place. One of the key findings from the URCSA's

history was the centrality of an undergirding theory of ministerial formation in the administration of the programme. In the 2005 general synod, a clear theory of what ministerial formation was and what it aimed to achieve was put forward. This vision saw formation as the responsibility of the church, an action which involved skills, knowledge and attitude and something which aimed to produce 'African and Reformed' ministers. In other words, 2005 clearly stated the vision for ministerial formation. Yet the key point is that following 2005, this vision was followed. Seen most clearly in 2014 with the creation of a manual for ministerial formation, this manual continually referred back to the decision of 2005. While the UPCSA, by the end of the period of study had not developed a manual¹⁰¹, the URCSA had not only developed one but in its development demonstrated the longstanding clarity of vision around ministerial formation.

In chapter six these key findings mentioned above were confirmed and other key findings were added. Building on the clear undergirding theoretical vision presented by the URCSA, it was established how this was essential for ministerial formation. As a general principle, a denomination needs to know what it wants to establish through the formation process and what it believes formation should be. It is this clarity of vision which helps a ministerial formation programme to succeed. However, this vision also needs to be achievable in daily reality. This was one of the strengths of the URCSA vision, its simplicity and ease of application. As such, the necessity of having a clear theological vision of ministerial formation was a key finding, but another key finding was the necessity of balancing this with everyday reality.

This leads logically into another key finding of the research. Focusing on the theoretical is not the most vital aspect of ministerial formation. The theoretical is important, yet what will make or break a formation programme is its administration. Is the programme practically achievable? Can the denomination manage to oversee the daily running of the formation programme? Is the vision for ministerial formation financially achievable? These and other such pragmatic questions are of ultimate importance. This may not sound the most profound or theological conclusion but that is precisely the point. So often academic studies get caught up in higher theological thought or demonstrating their own worth in the formation process.

¹⁰¹ Call for a manual for ministerial formation within the UPCSA has been raised, but at the time of writing no manual had been produced (Mogashoa & Makofane, 2017: 5).

Yet, while these things matter, it is the everyday administration of a formation programme which is the most vital aspect. This research aimed to work from the perspective of the church and in doing so criteria of investigation differed from standard academic investigations. The focus was not on the University of Pretoria or on establishing a new theology for ministerial formation. The focus was on the history of the church and what that history can tell us about ministerial formation over the last 17 years within the UPCSA and URCSA. Thus, one of the key things that this history has informed is the importance of administration. This administration ranges from financial management, to intra-denominational communication, to the everyday support and development of ministerial candidates. The URCSA, with its pragmatic approach, showed the importance of getting the everyday nitty-gritty right. While the UPCSA, often waited for wider consensus before proceeding, and struggled with communication. As such, it was the URCSA which, from the historical picture, appeared to have a more successful ministerial formation programme. While the presence of a theoretical vision helped, it was the practical implantation of the vision which was so essential to the success of the formation programme. Thus, one of the key findings of this research is the importance of administration, of practical matters, in ministerial formation.

In relation to the above finding is the fact that, while academic institutions are important in the formation programmes, they are not the most important element. As mentioned above, the pragmatic every day running of the ministerial formation programme is what is essential. However, an academic institution does play an important role. Both the UPCSA and URCSA chose to follow a curriculum which utilised a church-academy relationship. In the history of both denominations, this approach proved to be effective. While some candidates felt the University of Pretoria offered a “limited” perspective, all saw the benefit of attending an academic institution with such high standing. This high standing was seen to ensure a good quality of academic theology which was important in the formation process. When a denomination clearly understands that the formation process is a collective effort, then partnering with an academic institution is a very effective means of formation. By partnering with the UP, candidates of both programmes received degrees from a highly recognised institution. Not only did this navigate the issue of accreditation, but it also avoided the challenge of trying to develop and finance a college/seminary of a similar standard. By partnering with the UP, denominations did not have to worry about issues of accreditation.

This was one of the key challenges raised in chapter three. Accreditation is a costly process and hard to maintain. Thus, by letting the UP take responsibility for academic learning, the denominations avoided a potentially crippling cost. Further, the UP, as an established academic institution, offered a standard of academic learning which would be hard to replicate elsewhere. Thus, by joining the UP, candidates automatically received a high standard of learning. Each candidate has to afford university fees, but tuition fees are much more affordable than a denomination trying to support its own academic centre. That is to say, taken as a collective, denominations will find it easier to subsidise university fees. Opposed to the cost attached to establishing, accrediting, running and maintaining a private training centre. As such, partnering with the University of Pretoria had clear benefits. However, both the UPCS and URCSA understood their role in the process. The University was not seen as the whole solution to formation, but only a part of it. Each church, all be it to varying degrees of success, implemented their own in-house formation programme in unison with academic studies. As such, each denomination followed a church-academy relationship described in the depiction of the pastor-theologian. The concept of the pastor-theologian was provided in chapter 2 to show how historically ministerial formation programmes had functioned. As such, both the UPCS and URCSA were attempting to continue that historic vision. Thus, the key finding is that while an accredited institution of higher learning provides great benefits to the formation programme it is not the solution. Individual denominations need to play their own role. It must be remembered how it is the pragmatic, effective and sustainable church administration, which is vital to the achievement of an effective programme of ministerial formation.

7.3. Conclusion

Thus, it has now been made clear what the key findings of this research have been, but what is the significance of this? First and foremost, this is among one of the first studies of its kind. As mentioned above, academic studies tend to focus on academic matters or work from an academic perspective. This research was conducted from a church perspective, through academic methodology, and focused on church needs. As such, this study brings a new perspective on ministerial formation into the academic arena. Some of the findings of the research do concur with current academic trends. While other findings provide insight and information which had been previously missed or overlooked in academic work. The concept

that administrative matters are essential to the effective running of a ministerial formation programme may sound trivial but has often been overlooked. Research from inside the academy has focused on the theoretical and the theological. Studies such as Naidoo (2011) taking a quantitative approach and Du Preez and Hendriks (2014) have looked at the need for greater spiritual formation in academic theology and the for a more missionally focused curriculum to see how ministerial formation can be improved. Yet, while these studies are important, this research has shown how their insight or potential benefit is wasted if the administration is not considered. No matter how good theory is if it cannot be practically implemented it will not happen. As such, this study has started to bridge the needs of the church with the knowledge of the academy. Ministerial formation is a current topic within academic circles and the academic dialogue will benefit strongly by tacking consideration of the main challenges the church faces in the implementation of ministerial formation. One such challenge is how to standardise ministerial formation across multiple platforms. This research established that flexibility in the formation programme is essential in maintaining numbers and allowing as many people as possible access to the programme. It should be one's ability to complete the programme, not one's access to the programme, which determines if they are called to ordained ministry or not. However, in implanting flexibility a challenge to standardisation and the quality of the programme is produced. As such, further studies can be conducted on how to develop an effective formation programme across multiple platforms.

Not only is this research one of the first studies of its kind, but it also focused on the only two mainline denominations in South Africa to come into being through union since 1994. As the third chapter explained, ecumenism since 1994 has struggled in South Africa. A constitutionally united country ironically led to division among churches. Yet the UPCSA and the URCSA have defied the trend and managed to unite. This is no small feat. While criticism of the unions is present, one must not overlook what has been achieved. This study is thus vital in showing some of the challenges and benefits to ministerial formation which occurred in the united church. One of the key benefits the union afforded both churches was that it gave them the opportunity to assess their ministerial formation programme. Bringing former denominations together meant that old approaches could not continue unchecked. Thus, in the union, both the UPCSA and URCSA critically analysed their formation programmes and

sought to introduce new agendas more relevant to the South African context. While the UPCSA may have struggled to implement this for various reasons, the Propeller Conference of 2000 was critically aware of the need to develop the ministerial formation programme to align to contemporary South Africa and to prepare candidates to serve in that reality. Within the URCSA, this union afforded the opportunity to develop the Northern Theological Seminary and one of the most robust ministerial formation programmes in South Africa today. This research also uncovered the challenges which the union brought. This was most clearly present in the UPCSA. In-house fighting, brought on by the merger of two differing views, was a key trait of their history; however, with the developments of 2018, the future for the UPCSA is positive. In-house fighting is starting to subside and the denomination is developing a clear undergirding theory of ministerial formation to help guide further developments. As such, while the history revealed challenging circumstances, this should not be allowed to tarnish the more recent successes within the UPCSA. Under the leadership of Pat Baxter, the ministerial formation programme is starting to develop a clear undergirding theory and a balance between church, academic and personal formation. As such, what this study has shown is the benefits of unification to the ministerial formation programme. The issues which have plagued the UPCSA are issues which are present deep within South Africa society. Yet, by unifying the denomination was forced to deal with these and, as such, presents a much stronger formation programme. The URCSA presents an equally strong formation programme which has been developed since the union. Bringing previously opposing voices together resulted in creative tension. While that tension in the UPCSA may have gone beyond an acceptable level at times, it eventually helped to develop a stronger formation programme.

Being one of the first studies of its kind there are undoubtedly areas which could benefit from further investigation. One emerging area of research would be to compare denominations such as the Apostolic Faith Mission. Also formed in 1994 and sending an increasing number of students to study at UP, the denomination would form an interesting comparison from outside of the Reformed family of churches. In fact, with the rise of denominations outside of 'mainline' churches sending students to the UP there are multiple potential avenues for further study. Another perspective which would be beneficial to research is that of the congregations themselves. Research with regular church attendees over their expectations and experiences of newly trained ministers would offer further insight and guidance for

formation programmes. Yet, what this research has brought forward are key principles to help guide further development of ministerial formation. In line with the methodology, these findings have been brought about in both ideographic and nomothetic insight. The ideographic has brought meaning to the history of each denomination and provided an insight pertinent to their individual development. Nomothetic insight has produced general laws and principles which can be applied to ministerial formation in general. In relation to the ideographic knowledge, it has helped show the UPCSAs how it needs to take pride in the recent theological developments of ministerial formation and to make sure that these become part of the culture of the denomination undergirding the formation programme. The theory has been developed, now what is needed is to make sure it is implemented. Further, it has shown how too often in-house squabbling has derailed the formation programme. As such, going forward the ministry committee needs to make a concerted effort to maintain effective communication and to enforce the theoretical vision of the denomination as a guiding principle for future discussions. In this regard, the enhancing of regional centres would be beneficial in communication and execution of the formation programme. Volunteer roles do exist on a regional basis but the formalisation of these, with clear responsibilities attached, could be useful. Further, the UPCSAs need to decide clearly if it will maintain multiple centres or it will establish one centre of training. In view of this research, flexibility is essential to the future of ministerial formation. As such, maintaining multiple centres allows such flexibility and avoids financial and geographic challenges of having one national centre of instruction. Quite rightly, a standard of academic learning needs to be maintained, but as this research has demonstrated, an effective way to do this is to partner with local academic institutions

With regards to the URCSA, going forward the main challenge is to continue to maintain and develop the current standard of ministerial formation. One key challenge in this regard will be the departure of Prof JNJ Kritzing. Having such a long-standing influence has helped create stability and unity of vision, yet with his eventual departure, the question remains if the new leadership will be able to continue that vision. As the history of the UPCSAs showed, a change in leadership has a strong impact on the ministerial formation programme. Another key issue which the NTS needs to attend to is its relationship with the UP. This relationship has always been critical. Before the partnership in 2011, the ministry committee clearly highlighted its issues with the institution. However, since the partnership public criticism has

ceased. However, from the interviews conducted it is apparent that the very same issue continues to subsist. As such, the URCSA need to critically assess if the UP is right for them. In the view of this research the UP offers academic excellence hard to find elsewhere. Thus, while it is struggling to contextualise its theology, it can offer candidates academic knowledge unlike that they could receive elsewhere. In this regard, the NTS needs to accept the reality of the UP and accept that transformation will be a slow process. Yet if they can come on-board fully, it is a process they will be able to contribute to. Then, with regard to the clear theory of ministerial formation which undergirds the URCSA, the denomination should take pride in how this has helped guide and develop their programme. What they have achieved over the 17 years of existence is not an easy task. As such, there should be a sense of pride in their achievement which can motivate them for the years to come.

This research then established nomothetic insight. Working from information gathered from the case studies evidence of strong causal relationships could be established. From these relationships, general principles for ministerial formation could be established. This method imposed a positive paradigm which could be seen as problematic. But, as stated in the introduction, it was seen of greater value to attempt to establish principles, than to resign to epistemological defeatism. As such, in relationship to the nomothetic insight, this research has shown the need for practical matters to take preference in the ministerial formation programme. Ultimately, it is the practical that will make or break the formation programme. In 2012 it was practical issues of the breakdown in communication which contributed to the undermining fiasco. If the practical can be handled well, then the theoretical can be implemented. In this regard, a clear theory of ministerial formation is important and, so too, is partnering with an academic institution, but the denomination needs to be able to manage these. It needs to be possible to execute the theoretical undergirding of ministerial formation. Administration is vital to ministerial formation. In this regard, it was seen how the accessibility of a formation programme plays a key role in terms of its numerical success. Numerical success is also a vital pragmatic factor in avoiding a deficit of ministers. As such, going forward it is the view of this research that distance learning and flexibility of formation programmes needs to be the norm. This does create challenges in terms of standardisation, but the pragmatic has to take preference. It is better for a denomination to look at how to provide a

good ministerial programme across multiple platforms, that to look at having to close a programme down due to a lack of candidates.

Through this research, the aim has been to help develop the future of ministerial formation. Key challenges on how to provide a quality of education across a flexible formation programme and how to address gender imbalances and lack of contextually need to be faced going forward. Yet, on the whole, the historical picture of ministerial formation is a positive story. The URCSA has developed and implemented successful formation programmes which combine the personal, ecclesial and academic to develop well-rounded ministers. While the UPCSA has faced challenges, the end of the historic investigation started to show the fruits of those challenges. As such, in answering the research question of how have the UPCSA and URCSA trained their ministers over the last 17 years this research has provided a historical picture of hope for the future. Key challenges were uncovered, but so were success and effective means of conducting ministerial formation within South Africa. It is hoped that the insight gained from this research, in conjunction with current conversation on ministerial formation, will lead to continued effective ministerial formation in the years to come.

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Appendix 1 - research questions



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Questions for candidates

Title of the Study:

A contemporary history of theological education from the perspective of Uniting Churches
at the University of Pretoria (2000-2017)

Researcher:

Jonathan M Womack. University of Pretoria
Cell: 0725341465 Email: u13226012@tuks.co.za

Demographic

Race:	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Other:
Age:	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Sex:	Male		Female		
Denomination:	URCSA		UPCSA		

- What year did you complete /expect to complete ministerial formation:
- Highest qualification and year completed:
- Current occupation:

General

- Do you think theological education is important in church ministry? Please elaborate on your answer.
- What, in your opinion, is the correct environment for theological education aimed at ministerial formation to take place (e.g. public university, seminary, correspondence, other)? Please explain.

Formation process

- Please describe the current process of ministerial formation.
- Has this process changed since you began OR completed your training? If yes:
 - Please describe the process of ministerial formation you received.
 - In what year did the process change?
 - How did it change
- Did the process of ministerial formation adequately prepare you for ordained ministry?
- Did the process of ministerial formation foster a true expectation of what life in the ministry would be like?
- What was good about the process of ministerial formation?
- What were some of the problems with the process of ministerial formation?

- Is there any form of continued education after ordination? Please elaborate.
- Did the process of ministerial formation provide adequate personal development and adequate theoretical knowledge to perform your task in the ministry?

University

- Do you feel the University of Pretoria is an appropriate environment for ministerial formation?
- What, if any, are some of the benefits of training at the University of Pretoria?
- What, if any, are some of the disadvantages of training at the University of Pretoria?
- Did/Do you have a mentor while receiving your training? Yes or No? Please describe the effect you feel this had/has on your training.
- What do you feel the church expects from the University of Pretoria as a training institute (e.g. Transformation? Acquisition of knowledge? A combination?)?

Appendix 2 – Interview 001

Demographic

White

Male

56+

UPCSA

- 1) 1977 ministry and missionary training
- 2) Phd 2001, 2005
- 3) Retired – university lecture

General

- 1) Absolutely – work from a vision that embrace a number of theological and educational principles. One of them is the principle of life long learner, linked to that is the concrete need for praxis (reflection on practice leading to praxis arising out of reflection). Believer that theological education needs to embrace the intellectual and spiritual and that the intellectual has a spiritual dimension and the spiritual has a theological academic dimension. One of the reasons ministers struggle and often leave is due to the lack of being able to reflect on practise and practise what they reflect on meaning their spiritual and academic life is out of sync. University is weak in this area, not that they should train ministers, but they do need to teach students to reflect on issue that are spiritual. Not happy about dichotomy between two institution, can't ordain someone just becomes they are so "spiritual". Has to be an ongoing two way street between reflection and service and has to be lifelong. As a diagram a spiralling up circle of experience and reflection
- 2) Fedsem a skewed view as a seminary but also a place of powerful academic learning. Needs to be within an academic context. The formation needs to be done concurrently with the academic and practical training. How its done can take various forms. Getting the balance right and not overburden the student in any of the three aspects (often favouring academic over spiritual development or practical work). Needs to be a strong mentorship to help student exercise self-control without experience. Mentorship allows student to learn to make decisions and realise basic facts of ministry (time management – regular Sunday commitments and need for balance). Mentorship needs to be able to teach tough lessons.

Formation Process

- 1) Starts with young person identifying the call and has initial meeting with minister. If minister sees fit he refers the matter to the session. If the session sees fit they recommend to presbytery. Then the applicant enters the presbyteries fellowship of vocation. To do so must have been a member for at least 1 year and must be in FoV for at least a year before applying to become a candidate for the ministry. Has to do so with Pres approval and the application is submitted to ministry committee and ministry committee on basis of application and recommendation will decide (or not) to invite candidate to a discernment conference. 3 possible outcome of conference: acceptance, rejection, deferral. Each decision is motivated. If candidate accepted Ministry committee has responsibility to determine what form of academic education is required if any.
- 2) Changed in 2006 with appointment of Germiquite as sectary and remined until her retired – there was no ministerial formation.
- 3) Trained through a different process of church attachments. Was fortunate to train under 3 good bishops in home presbytery. Still have church attachment but not sure how strong

relationship between bishop and student is. Also had practical experience in a psychiatric hospital which was very character forming

- 4) No – never subjected to the pressures and the conflicts (personal conflicts) that I found on the ground. Not taught how to managed prioritising of task that needed to be done. Pastoral care of terminally ill. How to manage difference between calling and family (fortunately wife was very understanding for the most part)
- 5) Made lifelong friends, still in contact with 1 lecture and 1 bishop. A year of students that scattered widely. Not just Scotland but also SA, cypress, Canada, Chaplain at Aberdeen and rest parish ministry.
- 6) (needless) Worry about money. Wife worked, I worked holidays and kept on an evening job managed between ourselves and support of friends – actually ended up quite well off.
- 7) At the moment nothing structured, up to each individual minister. Many do. But concern that most black ministers pursue academic, white ministers pursue skills based. But trying to devise a system at the moment – an ongoing MF
- 8) I learned from experience of mentors and in early days in SA had a great mentor in Eastern Cape. Academic training not necessarily to prepare you to be a minister. You learn to be a doctor by going on the wards with a background of theoretical knowledge which helps make sense of the theory. Academic training not to make ministers, you learn by doing. Academic the theory to help be applied on the job.

University

- 1) Think that until African institutions take cognisance of the fact that they are situated in Africa they do not make that provision. WE are constantly operating with modes of thinking that are derived from Greek dualistic or enlightenment individual in a context where the foundation of life is communal and holist – so no
- 2) (1) Well-resourced university, (2) draws students from a broad spectrum of SA society and SA church society. Highly trained staff, but a staff which has not sufficiently grasped the vision of an Africanised theological curriculum. Advantage of training in a context with a multiplicity of disciplines and faculties – otherwise you get into a seminary context which is almost monastic (abstract form the world). (story of how when training student we started social outreach to give students practical experience in social outreach – the practical work had to be passed before academic module could be passed. On campus theology students can encounter others, others they can help and others they can receive help from. Learning to network from the earliest stages, one of the biggest problems is ministers think they're the expert of everything)
- 3) (1) lack of resources, has the infrastructure. All ministers need to be lifelong learners and researchers, the university does not facilitate research. It expects a great deal but does not facilitate (lack of research grants and availability of funds to aid research).
- 4) Not trained at UP but in all my degrees has an advisor of studies, ministry training also had a bishop. Not someone who is afraid to ask for help. One of the challenges in ministry is not been able to admit we need help (lot of wounded ministers that haven't sought healing). Always found that if we allow our students into our lives they can enrich them through mentorship. Forget that in ministry training even students have received a call that means they have a task to exercise ministry wherever they are. Often students have been the best support I've had available to me. A lot of lectures won't allow themselves to open up to students. Forget that in MF these individuals will be colleges and some come with great experience of life which we don't acknowledge. Mentoring is vitally important in the growth

process, you need another to see you in the way you can't see yourself – works best when it is life long

- 5) I think the church expects too much of the uni. Too much = expects its to do some of the churches work. But it certainly does expect acquisition of knowledge. Great lie of the church – the church does not expect transformation. Church will claim critical thinkers, those that can engage with issues, those that will be leaders – but when we produce that the church kills them off as these new products challenge the church and have the be eliminated as quickly as possible. Church does not want critical thinker's innovators; the church wants people to help maintain the status quo. Not sure if the church is self-aware of this. Church spends too much time on its high horse and doesn't get real with itself. Not a bad institution but a human institution – needs to acknowledge that. Kung being Christian is to be full human (authentically human). Churches are essentially conservative which is why they have survived. Change does not maintain institutions and change is risky.

Appendix 3 – Interview 002

Demographic

Black

46-55

Male

UPCSA

2004 – UP

2005, Masters

Reverend

General

1. Extremely important, can't be a good minister without theological education. 1) how do you begin to understand and interpret scripture if you don't have a good theological education, danger of false interpretation. 2) contextualisation is important
2. Not too worried as long as it is done properly. Sound theology, exposure of students to real life. Own formation were expected to be at faculty at 7 for prayers and every Sunday to participate in a church with a tutor, then Monday morning would analyse prayers and sermons and where we went wrong and what was right – was reflecting on education in a practical situation. Combined expose and theory. Whatever the environment does not matter as long as practice and theory combine. Universities good in that they don't brain wash students, one-way approach is problematic. Problem with theology at uni is that they still want people to learn a western theology, then when you go to the parish you battle. One size fits all is a problem

Formation Process

1. University where you study, placement at church while you study, at the uni need to practise and learn doctrine, go out and do, get in and get taught. After university need post-academic training which is part of MF. Not sure if the process is producing what it is intended to do.
2. Still the same
3. Yes for me it did. For me I was involved in the church before. Elder for many years, joined training in mission youth in mission. Studies at Fort Hare with a very different approach, then joined TUKS, white Afrikaans and it was all different but helped assist the formation. Could bring together all the different views and perspectives.
4. For me yes, but mainly because of the exposure, came prepared. Would not say the same with many of our people. Many of the students stumble when they get to the congregation. A lot are no longer in fulltime ministry.
5. Giving you an insight of what to expect. Preparing YOU for the life ahead of you, especially the involvement in a congregation while you are still a student, it really opens up your eyes.
6. Can be a rigid package, don't give people space to experience the life of a student, they to form them too quickly. Students need to be students and experience different ways of life, can't shut off ministers from their student life. Expect too much from students. Fail course punished, no one wants to find out why people are failing. Not journey with the student as a church. Not everyone is clever, but too quickly punish and judge students for failing.

7. You are on your own literally, you decide what you want to do. No expectation of continued training is a personal decision. Congregations are not interested in further training, don't put money aside. Compliancy among ministers is a problem.
8. Depends what adequate is meant. Not sure one can ever be adequately prepared. Does provide some preparation to a degree. There you are all taught one thing, when you are alone in a congregation you have to learn afresh and contextualise. Formation does not teach you how to deal with corrupt eldered

University

1. Yes it is, to such a degree. UP Is one of the best institutions of course it needs to be pruned. Lots of stuff that needs to be changed, issue with the appointment of some professors, some should not be given it, some should not even be professors. They are not producing papers or teaching students but they are called professors. When it comes to transformation, UH. Brining black faces is not transforming the university. Black and white I see people. UP theology only trying to drop a few black faces to appear transformed, is window dressing. What experience does your dean have, just arrived, given a senior post (not an academic guy) now the dean when people who are there for a long time and very good academics. Where are you heading with the UP if you are doing this. We are doing things based on Black and white, not on qualification. Not truly transforming, but window dressing and sneaking in people to tick a box. Not looking at the long standing qualified professors. Playing cheap politics at university, playing with people's lives. Transformation has nothing to do with being black, or black lives, it is about we do the right thing together. If theology cant assist the world who will assist the world.
2. It made me to be who I am, I don't take things at face values, made me think and to be critical, brilliant thing is its diversity
3. Ok disadvantage, I try to be positive and think, UP one of the best, just needs to get itself together (prunce, transform)
4. Not officially but made a few people to be my mentors. Me choosing to have my own mentors gives me a liberty and freedom to choose what to do and take. Official mentors can find that you copy the mentor, not learn from the good and leave the bad. Would not have worked to have weekly mentor meetings, I liked my freedom.
5. Combination, you cant only expect people to just gain knowledge. The church expect to see lives being transformed because the institution is transformed. There has to be transformation from you, as you have learnt transformation. When we arrived at UP there was no English classes. When we arrived created an English class started at 13hr00. Exams were in English in Afrikaans, one race was given preference. If other students were taught in home language surly they would master them. The uni did very well as they brought English classes to the morning. Had a willingness to change. Now there are options of translator. If the uni is willing to compromise, it teaches others to compromise. Shouldn't compromise too much, but sometimes we need to.

We are afraid to tell the truth and they are created due to a lack of zeal to tell it how it is. WE are theology we should approach disagreements biblically, go to the other and confront. These are lectures, the people that are meant to be teaching people. They need to be locked in a room and let it all out. The reality is the tension spills and overflows to the cup and students can see it. IF im so far from the uni and see it, what about those that are close.

Appendix 4 – Interview 003

Questions for candidates

Title of the Study:

A contemporary history of theological education from the perspective of Uniting Churches at the University of Pretoria (2000-2017)

Researcher:

Jonathan M Womack. University of Pretoria
Cell: 0725341465 Email: u13226012@tuks.co.za

Demographic

Race:	Black
Age:	36 – 45
Sex:	Male
Denomination:	UPCSA

- What year did you complete /expect to complete ministerial formation:

I completed ministerial formation in 2006.

- Highest qualification and year completed:

I completed 2007 MTh majoring in Church History in the same year I did probation, then I got ordained in 2008. I went further to do MA in Practical Theology which I completed in 2013. Presently, my highest qualification is PhD which I obtained in 2017.

- Current occupation:

I am serving as full-time Chaplain in the South African National Defense Force in South African Air Force Division.

General

- Do you think theological education is important in church ministry? Please elaborate on your answer.

It is highly significant as it enlightens and challenges one's way of epistemological thinking as far as matters of spirituality and research studies are concerned. I believe ministerial leaders should have theological education to equip themselves in church ministry. They can assist the congregations effectively and respond to the current challenges. Theological education adds value to one's calling and shape one's ministerial approach to some of the complex issues. Some of the biblical narratives need deep historical back ground and knowledge on ancient culture in order to understand the interpretation. This needs theological education in order to ascertain such information especial as the spiritual leader.

- What, in your opinion, is the correct environment for theological education aimed at ministerial formation to take place (e.g. public university, seminary, correspondence, other)? Please explain.

I personally do not have any experience from other institutions of theological education formation except the public university. In my experience, I would express in this manner: In an academic public university theological training formation is mostly on a higher level of academic epistemology. I would say it espouses critical thinking, reflection on socio-spiritual issues, economic-political matters and other dynamic matters affecting the country and internationally. Theoretical framework and academically knowledge prepare one to advance himself/ herself on both national and international debates based on religious and spiritual matters. However, spirituality, core sense of calling, ubuntu, humanity, simplicity, and Christ-like-life from clergy coming from public universities appear to be deteriorating. I have shared with some clergy coming from the seminaries though they are all far older than me. It seems that their theological education is more focused on congregational life development and building up of the local church as compared to the university production. University is more philosophical than spiritual. Most of these clergy studied in seminaries during the apartheid era and have made an incredible mark in the life and work ministry of the Church. They also held some important leadership positions both in the Church and the country. A good example is Bishop Mvume Dandala (MCSA). On the other hand I would believe that at that particular time opportunities for them to study in universities were limited than these days. The history unfolds that some black ministers studied at Rhodes some time back (e.g. Rev. Dr. Qgubule (MCSA) Rev. Ncevu (UPCSA) and University of Fort Hare was introduced for Blacks (e.g. Rev. Dr. B.B. Finca, Rev. J.V. Mdlalose and Rev. B.D. Yanta) later on FEDSM became a prominent seminar for developing ministerial formation for the Africans. In closure I would say public universities are still relevant for training environment for theological education formation only if that particular Denomination do have their own minister's attaché to the university to ensure that Church polity and practical formation of their students is adhered to. Having had conversations and engagements with clergy from seminaries/ correspondences especially in the military, I found their thinking very shallow and narrow minded. In this case these are the clergy that are produced at my time and similar age with me.

Formation process

- Please describe the current process of ministerial formation.

The current process of ministerial formation is a challenging one based on the fact that our ministerial candidates in UPCSA are not trained in one institution, they are everywhere in South Africa alone. Though the UPCSA has declared UP as the most preferred institution which also has a house of studies. The training also differs on racial line, it seems blacks are coerced to come to UP while most of the whites' candidates come everywhere. In some cases when black candidates finished their theological training in another institution, there is a tendency of forcing them to come to UP to do one year honours in practical theology.

- Has this process changed since you began OR completed your training? If yes:

No, there is no change.

- Please describe the process of ministerial formation you received.

During my time, there was a lot of ministerial candidate's intake by the Church and I was fortunate that I stayed full 6 years in the university. Students came, passed me and left me in the university, I had an opportunity to meet all level of students undergraduate and postgraduates. We had ministers who were employed as full-time lecturers in the university from our Church who were part of ministerial formation. We were attended thoroughly, we were exposed to the Church teachings, doctrines, Calvinism, Church polity, church administration, life expectation of a minister, dangers in ministry and Church controversial issues. I believe we were trained very well as we were prepared to go out of the university and make it out there. The only critical issue that was lacking was the exposure to the presbytery life involvement. On my side, I started at the University of Fort Hare 2001, there student life and congregational life attachment was very effective. It was a great experience that always reminds us that you are a ministerial student different from other ordinary university students. We knew very well that we are student ministers and the students of the university knew us unlike UP. The Amathole Presbytery around UFH involved the congregations around the university and the ministers were in touch with the students. The congregations were open to us unlike the hesitant white congregations at Tshwane Presbytery. At UFH all students were black inclusive of foreign students (Zambia and Zimbabwe) and the congregations were also black around the university. In Tshwane presbytery we were the first black students from the Church who came in 2002 as undergraduate and supposed to be expose to the ministerial formation in the university and the presbytery. However, I only preached for the first time in a white congregation in Scotland in December 2002 on a trip which was organized by Prof GA Duncan. We were told that it was still a discussion in our congregations on how to place us and involve us in historical white congregations. At Tshwane historical white congregations compose the same number with black congregations and the nearby congregations to the university were all English congregations. As the result personal I was involved in an Anglican Congregation St. Wilfrid's under then the leadership of Rev. Fr. Mark Spyker who played a vital role in preparing myself on how to interact within the white congregations. There I was involved in the same way that I was at UFH and Prof GA Duncan was also supportive on my ministerial exposure, it was never been a threat that I may probably leave the Presbyterians to the Anglicans. Transformation in the Anglican Church was rather forced through the episcopal authority of a Bishop by then it was the Rt. Bishop Dr. Joe Seoka the most controversial Black Anglican Bishop that the ACSA has ever had at that time. Unfortunate, Mark Spyker was fired by the Bishop and received by the Diocese of Grahamstown in Eastern Cape.

- In what year did the process change?

No change instead of changes in ministerial formation it became worse. Students continue to come from anywhere and some come already with Master's degree and the Church sees an opportunity that they won't spend money to educate that individual one get on (Fellowship

Of Vocation) FOV in their presbyteries and go straight to selection process and pass and go for probation and become ordained ministers. There is no consistence at all. The age is also an issue some are very young others are very old and only left with 10 years after ordination to pension. I'm saying there is no change based on my opinion that now the Church has allowed working individuals to remain at work while doing probation, and these individuals have done their theological training in correspondence. I believe our UPCSAs ministerial formation is tainted by the South African Socio-political issues and economic survival, it is complicated to discern the calling. The historical white congregations are running short of ministers, some go overseas, others leave the ministry on various reasons and there is no new one coming. This brings an easy way of acceptance to ministerial formation to any white believing to have been called for ministry. Historical white congregations resist to take black ministers. Instead white congregations/ministers clown their own blacks to become their ministers. On the other hand blacks are taking advantage of the white, they have high number of ministers but few congregations sustaining full-time ministers. They opt to work as seconded ministers and full-time ministers for the sake of survival. Hence now the Church accepts working individuals to apply for selection, probation and ordination without any leave of absence from their secular work. I have a strong belief that this process is lowering the standard of the Church and compromising the ministry. Now it is no longer ministers belonging to the Church, rather it is the Church belonging to the ministers. Some of the decisions are not made base on authenticity rather they are based on emotions and on racial interest. There is high manipulation in the UPCSAs training formation of ministers.

- How did it change

No change

- Did the process of ministerial formation adequately prepare you for ordained ministry?

In nutshell, I would say I was prepared enough having had to expose myself to various training from my student life beside the formal ministerial formation offered by the Church and the academic learning.

- Did the process of ministerial formation foster a true expectation of what life in the ministry would be like?

Not really, somewhere and somehow things were not exactly the same I expected or prepared. I had to find my own way to fit in. I felt like there is a need to get a senior mentor to guide me, advice and someone available whenever I need some help.

- What was good about the process of ministerial formation?

It was great to have an opportunity to get your belief system challenged and also broad ideas about ministry especially that I came from the rural areas where there was less exposure to some of the true critical challenges about ministry. My sense of calling was challenged and understanding about God became multiverse than shallow thinking. Fortunately, my faith had never been shaken by theological controversial teachings. I never lost my faith on the way.

- What were some of the problems with the process of ministerial formation?

I think there is not enough process of discernment, I believe the Church should put more effort in fellowship of vocation, meditation, and ministerial calling. I feel there is a rush to ordination. Exposure to what cost one for becoming a minister and desire for one to become a minister should be taken seriously. The problem starts from the FOV and becomes worse in the selection conference as it is more on language fluency than the character of a candidate. Some of the candidates come from disadvantage background, from poor schools and language disadvantage than the reality of calling. The other challenge is our congregations and presbyteries who sent candidates to the General Assembly selection conference. An individual is known by his/her congregation and presbytery than the General Assembly. The failure in selection conference starts from the congregations and presbyteries as they submit names of the candidates knowing exactly the character of the person. Our ministerial formation standard is going down. The lack of job opportunities in South Africa also affect the church and the calling of ministers. It seems others is an option to get employed than the sense of calling.

- Is there any form of continued education after ordination? Please elaborate.

There is high chances for one to continue education after ordination. I have experienced it myself and I am still studying even now. However, the geographical place where one is placed can also disadvantage one to have that desire or chances can be slim to pursue further education. The other challenge is that theological qualifications are not broadened enough for one for other job opportunities. In the present day's society beside personal knowledge people also seek ways of survival and affordability in current life challenges. Ministry is not about high qualifications it is about calling and passion for the redemption of humanity. It encourages simple life and desire for everyone to be saved. One should study also other disciplines beside theology.

- Did the process of ministerial formation provide adequate personal development and adequate theoretical knowledge to perform your task in the ministry?

The answer would be yes and no. The next question would be why? There were/are time of satisfactory and time of dissatisfactory. I understand that ministry is not for the lazy and the weakest. There is what the Church could do for an individual and what the individual should do to develop his/her own skills in ministry. The other part on this question is that ministry is also mysterious as it is not one's work rather God's work through us. So in closure I am not certain on what to say. I think personal development and theoretical knowledge I have indicated already in the above questions. Personal performance in ministry is another story, personal I did not do as what I thought I could do, I never stayed in full-time ministry for more than 5 years since my ordination. Now, I have been ordained for 10 years and I am not proud of what happened to me as I feel I did not do enough for my initial desire in ministry. Things did not turn out in the way I thought or how I grew up and also on the ministerial way that I was exposed to.

University

- Do you feel the University of Pretoria is an appropriate environment for ministerial formation?

Theological it is a great institution and most lecturers are ordained ministers from the Reformed tradition Churches. So, I still reckon as the best environment for ministerial formation. The only challenge it is resisting transformation indirectly and formidable black theologians appear to be sidelined in managerial positions. Those blacks are compromised and substituted by either Coloureds or Indians in the name of transformation. Whites still want to maintain white supremacy in their own way.

- What, if any, are some of the benefits of training at the University of Pretoria?

It is internationally recognised and acknowledged worldwide for excellent academic research record and it is one of the best 10 universities in South Africa. It is still having a great ethos and ethical adherence in academic life. One can still be proud of being an alumnae of UP.

- What, if any, are some of the disadvantages of training at the University of Pretoria?

It is pro-white and challenged with Afrikaans resistance and some transformational issue. Sadly, most historical white institutions always find a smart way to run away from South African black qualified and eligible leaders by either appointing a foreigner or a Coloured person or an Indian in the name of transformation. Not that I argue as if others shouldn't be appointed. However, this is always done on account of structural racism to devoid blacks with black consciousness. Even the appointment of the recent Vice Chancellor and principal of UP, I have some reservations.

- Did/Do you have a mentor while receiving your training? Yes or No? Please describe the effect you feel this had/has on your training.

I had to find my own way, my home minister died while I was doing my third year. I did not have a direct mentor. I just adopted some senior ministers along the way. I had made it through that I cannot complain.

- What do you feel the church expects from the University of Pretoria as a training institute (e.g. Transformation? Acquisition of knowledge? A combination?)?

The Church expects both transformation and acquisition of knowledge to take place, however, the church herself is experiencing the same challenge of not transforming and that could not be a miracle expected to be performed by the institution alone. Both the Church and the institution should be authentic in their idealism.

Appendix 5 – Interview 004

Demographic

Black

36-45

Male

URCSA

General

2006

MA Theology, 2006 – need MA before you can be licensed

Minister of Word at congregation, part time principle of NTS

General

1. I think it is important. a person who is going to lead a religious organisation, a church, it is important that the person undergoes theological training. Living in a time when people are exposed to different things. With technology people can get information on anything at a blink of an eye. If one did not undergo training, the formation process, you won't be able to reach the people you are leading. In MF there is management and human resources, if you have these skills that will put you in a better position to lead the people you are part of.
2. **It has to be where the people are.** MF should take place where the people are. Can't remove the student from the people, they are going to serve the people. Theoretical must be linked to practise. University level is where it should take place, where they are located must be in the midst of the people. Relationship between university and seminary. Uni does theology as a science, seminary where you are doing things according to the denomination, in house courses – the things the university cannot provide but there has to be a very clear and good relationship between the two.

Formation Process

1. **URCSA 3 formation centres** Cape Town, Free State and NTS, each centre has the right to do what they see fit for the formation. In NTS first speak to church council, application form from NTS, church council complete form, Presbytery recommends to study, sent NTS. When application form arrives sent to assessment committee, if paper in order given opportunity to become ministry student. NTS subscribes to UNISA and UP, process 5 years. 3 year BTh (with languages) and other African language other than your own (helps prepare for the field), upon completion of undergraduate do honours (comprehensive) but assignment on one key topic. Then masters, dual option. Specialised or general/ ministry masters (coursework). If you specialised but apply to Curatorium and have 65% and supervisor and topic of relevance. During the five years students need to do ministry practical's starting from first year. Doing 100hrs a year on ministry practical's (total 500hrs of practical's). Each year choose a congregation and a focus. After completion of academics and practical go to trial worship service and if successful can be licensed. **Three key areas** need to be met during formation, academic insight (what is theology and what is it all about), ministry skills

(ministry practical's address this, learn about humanity and what ministry is all about) – theory and practical done at the same time, spiritual formation ethical behaviour (needs to be formed, help a spiritual awareness and competence) also behaviour as a minister is important, how one conducts themselves.

2. **It hasn't changed but it has improved. Students used to complete with BTH** and Greek and Hebrew. 2006 onwards been the dream of the church that students must have masters. Students want more, not just ministers, but also want to be doctors (PhDs) have inspired learners to pursue more and move forward. With ministry skill in the past had students wandering all over (not continuity or plan) now have a clear process to follow and clear allocation of congregations (either for year or period of study). Didn't used to have mentors, used to get practical over Christmas when minister is on leave, only church council to give guidance. Now ministers to be mentors.
3. **Enough.** Area that it did well was me being a minister in the congregation, independent thought and discernment and theological engagement. Area in my time that was neglected was personal formation, to be a better family person. Our denomination is stuck with old fashioned views, must be married and pastors wife to do some of the duties. Neglected teaching on being a family man as well as a minister of the word. Academic and practical was good. Although did not have to log hours and reflect on them, just attended a congregation and left. People did try there best to make sure we are well equipped in our ministry.
4. **Yes,** it think it did, on some level. Exposed to different events and activities, people who came and shared experiences in different congregations. One observed how people engaged with each other in the church and its issues. Create a real expectation and how to navigate some of the challenges.
5. (6) Only challenges was... to give some history NTS birthed in 2003, former seminary was in Limpopo collapsed 98/99. When we came to Pretoria to open seminary challenge of issue of curriculum, people still trying to find their feet – what do we want students to learn. Each year protests over curriculum. Second issue over university of preference, UNISA or up. 2003 I was only NTS student at UP, all other were at UNISA. Scholarship forced me to go to UP. UNISA had no classes, students just stayed at the accommodation, UP had lectures. Financials; when seminary opened NTS did not have financial muscle to maintain seminary. Student struggled to pay rent and afford groceries and look presentable. At UP if you pass well then you get financial subsidies. Finances was a problem, some dropped out due to finances, UNISA attractive due to cost. Within the seminary was a tension between student body and management. Management not seen as supportive, only came to seminary to punish, saw as people that only came to settle a score, but where not there through the formation process. Amongst the students was a "sibling rivalry"
6. (5) sitting as a community, especially contact session. In contact session all student convene at Melodi ya Tswana. For the 3 days being taught and doing in house course. Sitting there as brothers and sisters in Christ. Also when we tried to help one another, those who weren't necessarily selfish but wouldn't share, but where those that would share what we had with each other. Depending on one another as students were good days. Knowing that my fellow students will help me if I had a particular challenge. Was not computer literate at that time, had to be typed assignment. Some of us never switched on a pc, and now we must write assignments to certain specifications. Writing assignments one would read while the other typed letter by letter. My first assignment typed from 10-4 just to complete. Days where you learned to fend for yourself and to work on tie management. Those were good days and when I see students today with laptops they know we have come a long way and I'm happy to be where we are today as a formation centre.

7. Yes, CMD (continuing ministerial development) to be honest we are struggling to get it off the ground. WE just hope that those going into ministry now will be able to buy into the idea. Those in the field for a long time (last year we had a session where we called all ministers to explain CMD but majority of ministers did not attend). That is the area that is lacking, now the idea is for me as part time principle to come up with programmes to engage ministers on a small scale and see how that can expand, to give a full fully fledged programme of post ordination development.
8. Theoretical knowledge it did, but as far as persona it was personal for me as an individual. It has done some good, but as for me, especially as a husband, there was something lacking. The way we are formed really includes these two aspects.

University

1. I think UP is, faculty of theology has credibility, it comes a long way. The people teaching theology have done enough as far as teaching and learning research and innovation is concerned, they can really do things as far as research is concerned main challenge is that there theology is one sided more western, more western in such a way that majority of lectures are from a white background, not many from a black background. When one looks at the intake, many black students are coming in. There should be a balance between different cultures and how theology should be conducted at UP. Should not be certain denomination orientated. Must be more ecumenical, they claim to be moving towards ecumenism but don't see that happening. Though there are different partner churches the face of the faculty has not changed. Need to research which denominations are bringing students and also allow other denominations to contribute. Some student's complaint that the supervisor does not understand the context I'm coming from and what I'm trying to say, is a barrier of language and cultural ideas. Research good, but need for paradigm shift in teaching approach, needs to be from more of a south African context. The theology taught has to be the one that is written in Africa
2. **Contact sessions**, daily contact with lecture is best benefit. Going to sit in class and have someone facilitating the topic and listening to different views from different students – that is the benefits Rather than doing things on distance learning on your own. At UP that mood in the lecture rooms is really very good and interesting, and a good benefit
3. **Language**, is a problem. During our time you come into the uni for the first time, being spoon-fed by teaching. Where I come from they teach in English, but also teach in home language. When you come to uni whatever they teach you is basically in English. Due to this barrier you write in English, you think in your own language then translate into English. As such you are not writing English but your own language. Second challenge is fee, UP is expensive, if you don't have NRFS or bursary the fees are so expensive that they really disadvantage others.
4. **NO**, did not have guidance, now I am prepared to give guidance to any student. No having a mentor was like been put into the ocean but you can't swim. Ministers in service were happy that you made mistakes and learnt through them but was a bad attitude, need to be given a chance to teach before the mistake, to learn and journey with someone who can teach about the church council, admiration of the sacrament. Some of these things I learnt myself,

nobody showed me, was unfortunate that no one was available. That really created a tension between old and new, not shown how to do things so did them our way and received complaint from older minister.

5. **We** expect UP to really give our students a true teaching about theology. We expect them to equip our student to a level that they will think independently and be able to succeed when they go to their ministry. We expect them to transfer methodology of conversion and learning. They know that its not one size fits all, but give them the tools to really navigate this world. Helping them to have the tools to do things, knowledge they have acquired should lead them towards ministry and spiritual life.

Post formation – is important to have it. If a person acquires a degree and stops learning, they will rust. Post formation will really help people to compete with the world and learn the things that are happening. After 10 years what you learn could have shifted and there may be new ideas that are tending, need to move with times.

Appendix 6 – Interview 005

Questions for candidates

Title of the Study:

A contemporary history of theological education from the perspective of Uniting Churches at the University of Pretoria (2000-2017)

Researcher:

Jonathan M Womack. University of Pretoria
Cell: 0725341465 Email: u13226012@tuks.co.za

Demographic

Race:	Black	Coloured	Indian	White ✓	Other:
Age:	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+✓
Sex:	Male		Female✓		
Denomination:	URCSA		UPCSA✓		

- **What year did you complete /expect to complete ministerial formation:** 1998
- **Highest qualification and year completed:** Diploma theology FEDSEM (1998)
- **Current occupation:** Retired, (missionary of church of Scotland, Sedibeng house manager)

General

- Do you think theological education is important in church ministry? Please elaborate on your answer.
Yes, first came to SA husband was the one trained in ministry, if husband not around people looked to me for support. Felt inadequate as I didn't have training. So for self-esteem is one reason. Also going into an educated congregation and need to connect to those as well as the uneducated. Also good for own personal self-development and exposure to those of other options (1980s you radical black students)
- What, in your opinion, is the correct environment for theological education aimed at ministerial formation to take place (e.g. public university, seminary, correspondence, other)? Please explain.
Seminary set up. Not the education that is total. Not just book stuff but practical stuff. Learn to live with people from different background, learn to compromise, all sort of social skills that help you in a congregation. Also sharing. Had a washing machine and folk would ask to use it and in return share what they had. FEDSEM best experience of my life. Living with others and sharing of what we had. Even now if you meet someone from FEDSEM you have an instant connection (from a shared history, was that kind of place that nurtured a shared history)

Formation process

- Please describe the current process of ministerial formation.

Involves a selection weakened but not sure what they do on it any more. In the past was not adequate, was geared towards white candidates, very little account taken of black

- Has this process changed since you began OR completed your training? If yes:
 - Please describe the process of ministerial formation you received.
Psychologist from white background and geared towards white students. Many black candidates also struggled with language, could not articulate in English. Was designed by white who knew little of black life and black context
 - In what year did the process change?
 - How did it change
- Did the process of ministerial formation adequately prepare you for ordained ministry?
No – not really. It was very evangelical and was no room for something that wasn't evangelical. Was not broad enough and a lot of improvement that could be done (selection school). One candidate almost rejected but still got to training and at training almost taken off the course. But was realized that language was the problem, Now has a PhD and very capable theologian and minister. FESBEM yeah, was good because of context you were in, living with all races not only south African (from UK from rest of Africa). Learned discipline how to get on with people to compromise, to work out priorities. It was hard and a struggle (time of racism and fighting for rights also experience what some of black people had to put up with)
- Did the process of ministerial formation foster a true expectation of what life in the ministry would be like?
FEDSEM – yeah I think so. Was a microcosm of the church. Is one of the pros of the seminary training, especially if families are also present
- What was good about the process of ministerial formation?
FEDSEM – mixing of cultures and races, for me experience colored communities. Conflict wasn't avoided but handled and was challenged. Realized that to survive could not let things get buried under the surface. The staff were committed to the same vision
- What were some of the problems with the process of ministerial formation?
Jealousy. We had a tent, few colored guys came to borrow the tent, next thing a rumor that we favored colored's. Lot of issues over denominations, especially with regards to communion (Preby scattered bread, Anglican consume, Methodist only grape juice). Main issue was denominationalism not racism. Sate raids
- Is there any form of continued education after ordination? Please elaborate.
For me no not really
- Did the process of ministerial formation provide adequate personal development and adequate theoretical knowledge to perform your task in the ministry?

Yes, was they very reasons I did the training, I did a lot of aids training and work there.

University

- Do you feel the University of Pretoria is an appropriate environment for ministerial formation?
No not really. It's a university, it's a day center, people are not getting the same interaction they would in a seminary context. Is also a bit sterile because it's a university.
- What, if any, are some of the benefits of training at the University of Pretoria?
Perhaps academic excellence as the focus is on academia. Potential for interaction between faiths and denominations
- What, if any, are some of the disadvantages of training at the University of Pretoria?
Not being able to offer all round formation/ experience on a cross denominational platform. Seminary is a holistic experience, university is not
- Did/Do you have a mentor while receiving your training? Yes or No? Please describe the effect you feel this had/has on your training.
No not really. Not too much of an effect
- What do you feel the church expects from the University of Pretoria as a training institute (e.g. Transformation? Acquisition of knowledge? A combination?)?
Haven't got a clue. I'm out of touch. But I do think they look for academic excellence and there are issues of students not performing academically and I'm not always sure that should be a priority for ministry.

Further comments

At Sedibeng I often found students struggled coming from rural areas. Often afraid of showering / ashamed to ask for help as they did not know how they worked. They didn't have bad hygiene (as some people accused them of) but were used to washing in the river and so didn't wash at the seminary. Needed to help students acclimatise to life in a city and

Appendix 7 – Interview 006

Questions for candidates

Title of the Study:

A contemporary history of theological education from the perspective of Uniting Churches at the University of Pretoria (2000-2017)

Researcher:

Jonathan M Womack. University of Pretoria
Cell: 0725341465 Email: u13226012@tuks.co.za

Demographic

Race:	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Other:
Age:	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Sex:	Male		Female		
Denomination:	URCSA		UPCSA		

- What year did you complete /expect to complete ministerial formation: **Finished Honours at the end of 2018 at UP. Doing Probation as bi-vocational during 2019 and 2020**
- Highest qualification and year completed: **Lic in Theology and Bth Honours**
- Current occupation: **Family Ministries co-ordinator at St Mungos United Church/ Mission enabler for Egoli Presbytery**

General

- Do you think theological education is important in church ministry? Please elaborate on your answer. **Yes I think it helps in giving a big picture of the scripture as well as a chance to grapple with Systematic theology.**
- What, in your opinion, is the correct environment for theological education aimed at ministerial formation to take place (e.g. public university, seminary, correspondence, other)? Please explain. **Having studied initially at Cornerstone Christian college I feel that Pretoria and Stellenbosch University do not provide the same diversity that I experienced at Cornerstone.**

Formation process

- Please describe the current process of ministerial formation. **Normally a candidate would attend Fellowship of Vocation, Attend the Discernment conference and then study at Pretoria, Stellenbosch or TEE. Thereafter they would do Probation. I studied first, did twenty years of youth ministry and then went to FOV, did my Honours and attended the Discernment conference. Now doing probation.**
- Has this process changed since you began OR completed your training? **No** If yes:
 - Please describe the process of ministerial formation you received.
 - In what year did the process change?
 - How did it change
- Did the process of ministerial formation adequately prepare you for ordained ministry? **Yes, butt mentors also played an important role along the way.**

- Did the process of ministerial formation foster a true expectation of what life in the ministry would be like? **I found that youth ministry as a volunteer and then as an employed staff member were very different. I would say that doing a Lic in theology partly prepared me Ministry.**
- What was good about the process of ministerial formation? **At Cornerstone the development was not just academic but also included formation in small groups.**
- What were some of the problems with the process of ministerial formation? **I would not change anything from my journey. I think studying while involved in Ministry enabled me to apply things straight away.**
- Is there any form of continued education after ordination? Please elaborate. **Not that I am aware of.**
- Did the process of ministerial formation provide adequate personal development and adequate theoretical knowledge to perform your task in the ministry? **I would say that personal development happened mostly in a local church setting, although some did happen at the Bible college.**

University

- Do you feel the University of Pretoria is an appropriate environment for ministerial formation? **I would see the University as primarily a vehicle for academic training.**
- What, if any, are some of the benefits of training at the University of Pretoria? **It is a well-recognized Theological faculty.**
- What, if any, are some of the disadvantages of training at the University of Pretoria? **Not much spiritual formation or personal development.**
- Did/Do you have a mentor while receiving your training? Yes or No? Please describe the effect you feel this had/has on your training. **I would say that mentorship played an important role in my development in a local church context.**
- What do you feel the church expects from the University of Pretoria as a training institute (e.g. Transformation? Acquisition of knowledge? A combination?)? **Studying at a recognized institution was a requirement of the UPCSA Ministry committee.**

Appendix 8 – Interview 007

Questions for candidates

Title of the Study:

A contemporary history of theological education from the perspective of Uniting Churches at the University of Pretoria (2000-2017)

Researcher:

Jonathan M Womack. University of Pretoria
Cell: 0725341465 Email: u13226012@tuks.co.za

Demographic

Race:	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Other:
Age:	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Sex:	Male		Female		
Denomination:	URCSA		UPCSA		

- What year did you complete /expect to complete ministerial formation: 2012
- Highest qualification and year completed: MTH 2011
- Current occupation: N/A

General

- Do you think theological education is important in church ministry? Please elaborate on your answer.

Yes. The university fulfills a role for the academic and the intellectual side of things. The seminary fulfills the spiritual side of things. One is exposed to the community of Christians, Bible studies and enhances one's spiritual growth.

- What, in your opinion, is the correct environment for theological education aimed at ministerial formation to take place (e.g. public university, seminary, correspondence, other)? Please explain. *A collaboration of the university and seminary has worked well in our church. See my previous response*

Formation process

- Please describe the current process of ministerial formation.
- Has this process changed since you began OR completed your training? If yes:
 - Please describe the process of ministerial formation you received.

The requirements for being a minister were a Master Degree, ancient languages (Greek and Hebrew 1), marriage officer certificate and 100 practical hours per year.

- In what year did the process change?
- How did it change
- Did the process of ministerial formation adequately prepare you for ordained ministry? *No.*
- Did the process of ministerial formation foster a true expectation of what life in the ministry would be like? *No*

- What was good about the process of ministerial formation? *Being in the society of students, building relationships amongst ourselves. Those relationships were carried over to the congregations*
- What were some of the problems with the process of ministerial formation?
- Is there any form of continued education after ordination? Please elaborate. *Yes. When you sign your licensing oath, you make an agreement that you will continue studying to empower yourself.*
- Did the process of ministerial formation provide adequate personal development and adequate theoretical knowledge to perform your task in the ministry? *Yes*

University

- Do you feel the University of Pretoria is an appropriate environment for ministerial formation? *I only did my MA at UP. I do not have much encounter with the university.*
- What, if any, are some of the benefits of training at the University of Pretoria?
- What, if any, are some of the disadvantages of training at the University of Pretoria?
- Did/Do you have a mentor while receiving your training? Yes or No? Please describe the effect you feel this had/has on your training. *No*
- What do you feel the church expects from the University of Pretoria as a training institute (e.g. Transformation? Acquisition of knowledge? A combination?)? *A combination of transformation and acquisition of knowledge.*

Appendix 9 – Interview 008

Title of the Study:

A contemporary history of theological education from the perspective of Uniting Churches at the University of Pretoria (2000-2017)

Researcher:

Jonathan M Womack. University of Pretoria
Cell: 0725341465 Email: u13226012@tuks.co.za

Demographic

Race:	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Other:
Age:	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+

Sex:	Male	Female
Denomination:	URCSA	UPCSA

- What year did you complete /expect to complete ministerial formation:
I completed my ministerial formation in 2018
- Highest qualification and year completed:
MTh Theology
- Current occupation:
Reverend

General

- Do you think theological education is important in church ministry? Please elaborate on your answer.

Yes, Theology is very important in the church as it avoids preaching heresy and exploiting people using the Word. Theology helps to have empathy and patience in dealing with problems people bring forth. It helps to understand human relations and behaviors.

- What, in your opinion, is the correct environment for theological education aimed at ministerial formation to take place (e.g. public university, seminary, correspondence, other)? Please explain.

Both the seminary and university may compliment each other. The seminary in regards to denominational education and spiritual growth and the university in regards to critical thinking, writing, and academic research.

Formation process

- Please describe the current process of ministerial formation.

The ministerial formation process I received was both the university and the

seminary.

- Has this process changed since you began OR completed your training? If yes:

No

- o Please describe the process of ministerial formation you received.
- o In what year did the process change?
- o How did it change

- Did the process of ministerial formation adequately prepare you for ordained ministry?

The university provides theory that does not fit into the context I minister. Context is important but the university provides education that's a pie in the sky. The seminary attempts to groom through praxis but the monitoring and mentoring has not been fully developed.

- Did the process of ministerial formation foster a true expectation of what life in the ministry would be like?

Not at all. Besides preaching and conducting funerals, I only learn(ed) church administration and sacraments in the field. Everything is for the first time and whatever you do can either either make you or break you. When ministering in a congregation where church council have been there for many years, your every move is watched and we are not prepared to deal with such things.

- What was good about the process of ministerial formation?

The community of theological students and the theological debates.

- What were some of the problems with the process of ministerial formation?

The university took up most of my time which left time to do practicals at church.

- Is there any form of continued education after ordination? Please elaborate.

Not really.

- Did the process of ministerial formation provide adequate personal development and adequate theoretical knowledge to perform your task in the ministry?

Yes it has.

University

- Do you feel the University of Pretoria is an appropriate environment for ministerial formation?

The university can be a good place if we could learn relevant Theology in the South African context.

- What, if any, are some of the benefits of training at the University of Pretoria?

Being in class with students from different denominations.

- What, if any, are some of the disadvantages of training at the University of Pretoria?

Irrelevant Theology and lecturers are not demographically balanced according to race, gender, and denomination. The entry level to be a lecturer at the faculty is unfair as it excludes its own postgraduate students.

- Did/Do you have a mentor while receiving your training? Yes or No? Please describe the effect you feel this had/has on your training.

No.

- What do you feel the church expects from the University of Pretoria as a training institute (e.g. Transformation? Acquisition of knowledge? A combination?)?

The church needs to take part in the decision making of the faculty. What is the point of being a partner church when you do not have a say in what should be taught at the university? The university should be transparent to its stakeholders and seek their inputs.

Appendix 10 – Interview 009

Questions for candidates

Title of the Study:

A contemporary history of theological education from the perspective of Uniting Churches at the University of Pretoria (2000-2017)

Researcher:

Jonathan M Womack. University of Pretoria

Cell: 0725341465 Email: u13226012@tuks.co.za

Demographic

Race:	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Other:
Age:	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Sex:	Male		Female		
Denomination:	URCSA		UPCSA		

- What year did you complete /expect to complete ministerial formation: **2019**
- Highest qualification and year completed: **Grade 12, 2009.**
- Current occupation: **Student**

General

- Do you think theological education is important in church ministry? Please elaborate on your answer. **Yes, I believe it is important because it enlightens one's knowledge and gives more information on biblical bases and help to understand the Bible on a deeper level than taking it on a face value. It also strengthens one's faith because after studies one's become aware of what to believe and what not to believe.**
- What, in your opinion, is the correct environment for theological education aimed at ministerial formation to take place (e.g. public university, seminary, correspondence, other)? Please explain. **I prefer public university because the information and knowledge in the university is broad and bigger than in the seminary, it is open, it gives a bigger picture. It is not only specific to a certain denomination; it touches both spiritual formation and more of academics.**

Formation process

- Please describe the current process of ministerial formation. **An approved candidate for ministry in the local church is expected to spend a whole year doing practical work in his home congregation. After this period, the candidate will be transferred into a presbytery level for interviews, if the candidate passed the interviews, will also be expected to attend a Fellowship of Vocation for a year. After this period, if the presbytery is satisfied will then send the candidate to the assembly ministry committee where the candidate will also go through a 5-day interviews. After the candidate has passed the interviews, the assembly committee will register and fund the candidate for the studies for the duration the studies. During studies, the student then be expected to attend formation classes every Wednesday for the rest of the studies. After completing studies, the student will be sent for probation for a year, and then after the checks has been done, the student will get ordained.**
- Has this process changed since you began OR completed your training? **No:**
 - Please describe the process of ministerial formation you received.
 - In what year did the process change?
 - How did it change
- Did the process of ministerial formation adequately prepare you for ordained ministry? **Yes, it has prepared me and empowered me from the local church up to the assemble level. It has shown me the reality about ministry and helped me to discover the very specific field my ministry is based on so that I do not loose the focus and do not know which part do I qualify for or should I focus according my spiritual gifts and the God has called me.**
- Did the process of ministerial formation foster a true expectation of what life in the ministry would be like? **Yes, I am now aware what ministry is, it not about me but about the service to the people of God that I will be ministering. To serve with honesty and do what is right, not to mislead the people of God. Ministry is not a Job but it is a service, and requires humble servant to do it.**
- What was good about the process of ministerial formation? **It helped me to be sure of my calling, what skills do I have, which filed do I fit in the ministry, what spiritual gifts do I have and the right way to use them. It also helped me to discover some personal issues I had and open doors for me to get help before I could start my ministry so that they can not have bad impact on my ministry.**

- What were some of the problems with the process of ministerial formation? **Sometimes it takes longer than it is expected, like in my case where it took seven years before I could start my studies and this could kill someone's faith and ended up taking wrong directions. In most because this is caused by church politics, not necessarily because you have not met some requirements.**
- Is there any form of continued education after ordination? Please elaborate. **Yes, there are more opportunities to further your studies, either you continue with theological studies or you do something else, but the church will not fund you, you are on your own, and that is challenging in most cases.**
- Did the process of ministerial formation provide adequate personal development and adequate theoretical knowledge to perform your task in the ministry? **Yes, just as I have said above, it contributed both on my spiritual and personal being and that helped me.**

University

- Do you feel the University of Pretoria is an appropriate environment for ministerial formation? **Yes, because this is a public university and it has got many things that one could think of, and this teaches one to be responsible and know what to do and when to do it. It teaches one to be more familiar with the real world and things that are happening around the world, not to focus only spirituality and church doctrines. It gets one to be able to interact with people of different race, culture and domination.**
- What, if any, are some of the benefits of training at the University of Pretoria? **Yes, it both gives spiritual and academic training, the level of training is of the high quality which that qualifies one to become as scholar one. There are more opportunity when one have receive university training, like working in chaplaincy, becoming a lecture, a counselor, adviser etc.**
- What, if any, are some of the disadvantages of training at the University of Pretoria? **Some people turn to lose their faith, they get confused. Some focus more on academic side and decide not to take ministry at all. Sometimes university politics might affect one's studies and ended up not completing studies.**

- Did/Do you have a mentor while receiving your training? Yes or No? Please describe the effect you feel this had/has on your training. **Yes, I had one and it helped me a lot because is taking you from somewhere to someone, a mentor plays a role of being both spiritual and academic adviser.**
- What do you feel the church expects from the University of Pretoria as a training institute (e.g. Transformation? Acquisition of knowledge? A combination?)? **Excellent training, reviving and transforming the student and give the best information they could to better student's knowledge.**

Appendix 11 – Interview 010

Questions for candidates

Title of the Study:

A contemporary history of theological education from the perspective of Uniting Churches at the University of Pretoria (2000-2017)

Researcher:

Jonathan M Womack. University of Pretoria
Cell: 0725341465 Email: u13226012@tuks.co.za

Demographic

Race:	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Other:
Age:	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Sex:	Male		Female		
Denomination:	URCSA		UPCSA		

- What year did you complete /expect to complete ministerial formation:
2018, Mth Church history and polity
- Highest qualification and year completed:
2018
- Current occupation:
Reverend

General

- Do you think theological education is important in church ministry? Please elaborate on your answer.
Yes, very important because, for me, I have seen the difference between someone with a through theological training and someone who's been, let me just say, to bible school for a year or so. It's important as make you conscious of surrounding, to ask difficult questions before ascending the pulpit and to put you in the shoes of people in the church.
What, in your opinion, is the correct environment for theological education aimed at ministerial formation to take place (e.g. public university, seminary, correspondence, other)? Please explain.
Two institutions, the seminary of the church, and also the University. Seminary should be linked to university, seminary about the church stuff (URCSA stuff), the university should be a general theological approach, not just about a specific church. Im against bible school as we don't always know what is being taught and the doctrine that is being installed.

Formation process

- Please describe the current process of ministerial formation.
MFTT; if a student is eager to pursue a calling, the home congregation needs to meet with you first. Explain to the church council you want to go to theological school. After meeting, church council takes matter to presbytery (the ring). If

successful church council and ring willing, they write a letter of recommendation. Then you need to apply at NTS, be interviewed and then enroll in the seminary. After enrolling referred to a university. Can not be an nts student without registering at a university. Two have to run-concurrently. After acceptance at uni take letter of acceptance to NTS to complete registration. After completion of masters NTS gives you a license to allow you to take up a calling. Once licensed you are not under NTS guidance, now under the church care which can call you and place you.

- Has this process changed since you began OR completed your training? If yes:
 - Please describe the process of ministerial formation you received.
 - In what year did the process change?
 - How did it change

- Did the process of ministerial formation adequately prepare you for ordained ministry?

I think so, yes. When I started I felt the years were too long, but looking back and applying what I have been taught I can see why it took 5/6 years. The length of the years prepares one to handle quite a number of church dynamics and also to run church governance quite well.

- Did the process of ministerial formation foster a true expectation of what life in the ministry would be like?

To be honest, no. Some of us see the real nature once we got into the churches, and some of us are lucky that we have friends who are ministers in congregations so they get to tell us what's going on. The seminary did not adequately prepare us of what real ministry insight entails. The only thing they have more or less prepared us is practical works, going to congregations and preaching. But you don't get to sit and feel how it is to be a minister in a congregation. Not adequately prepared of what the ministry inside entails.

- What was good about the process of ministerial formation?

Firstly: living under one roof, the seminary, with other theological students from their own church, from all different backgrounds and cultures. I got to learn a lot from my theological colleges. The debate s which we had in that house are still running through my mind today. Living in one roof, cooking in one pot, eating same meal, watching save t.v – living like this enhanced our theological expertise. Even now I know what peoples skills and challenges are so we know how to place them. It helps us to become the leaders of our church tomorrow. So our seminary managed to do that very well.

- What were some of the problems with the process of ministerial formation?

Some problems, consistency (of treating students) – some of the students have been inside the formation for years; some of those that came later got to be released into ministry too early. (2) the programmer, amended curriculum, other students who have down other degrees (not theology) then join later skipping years. Other join from year 1 and have the full background. Problem is that we are producing different ministers in our church. Situation where the young

ministers trained full the full theological programmer do not take those that joined later. Is a problem and is still a problem, even the preaching you can see and hear when they do exegesis that this person didn't do a theology degree from the beginning.

(3) lot of vacancies' in our church, lot of churches without ministers, Program takes too long and production of rev. in our church is too slow. In a year produce 2 ministers and there are 200 vacancies'. Production of ministers is too slow and there are too many vacancies. .

Students come thinking theology is just the bible and then see its real stuff. Some correspond and don't have a strict time frame. With UP you have a time frame. Those with the amended or corresponded often fail or take a limited amount of modules so it slows down the production of ministers. Some take much longer than 5 years. The intake of full time students that stay at the seminary is very low. Have many part time but few full time students, is a challenge. Theology is not fashionable to the youth so they won't come to school, seen as something done by older people.

- Is there any form of continued education after ordination? Please elaborate.
Yes, program CMDF part of that committee, just to make sure that the new trends of the ministry, are sent to all ministers. New theology books and challenges to keep all ministers up to speed. It's not a strong program but it's there. Organized a conference in Limpopo last year and the turnout was bad, it kind of made the committee lose its momentum, but I think ministers are reluctant. Our church is a political church, so ministers skeptical to partake. Issue of who's leading it, why now are stumbling blocks. First need to debate and argue before we can embrace (is part of the historical background of the church)
- Did the process of ministerial formation provide adequate personal development and adequate theoretical knowledge to perform your task in the ministry?
Yes. Now I'm not only a minister I'm an academic (currently doing a PhD out of own interest) the church helped in making us go as far as masters level, if it was just a degree I would have just ended up in a church, but gave me the opportunity to student and go further in academia. Can present an adequate academic paper, can produce material for my church, can respond to many social challenges with my theological background, can go to conference and stand as a theologian without being called "just a pastor", can provide theological expertise anywhere. Can also work elsewhere, don't need to only depend on church.
Personal, the way I view life, the way I treat people it was able to help me a lot. Before you can meet someone you have to learn about where they are coming from, find the background of the person you see on the surface. Helped me to listen more and speak less, to be inquisitive

University

- Do you feel the University of Pretoria is an appropriate environment for ministerial formation?
Yes and no,
- What, if any, are some of the benefits of training at the University of Pretoria?
1) theology in UP is one of the best in the country and recognized globally, especially faculty of theology, is highest ranking faculty with most articles produced in entire country (not sure about globally). Some of the best profs, which are highly ranked in theological spheres.
- What, if any, are some of the disadvantages of training at the University of Pretoria?
UP still an apartheid institution, cannot run from this fact. Some of the decolonization programs have not taken place at all. The theology we are taught is still a theology that struggles to address the issues of race in SA, the challenge of injustice of the past, the struggle of poverty and those things. Once you have theology must do this yourself. Need to go the extra mile to make this theology work in addressing the challenges. Does not help us address the challenges the country is facing, race, poverty and issues of the past
- Did/Do you have a mentor while receiving your training? Yes or No? Please describe the effect you feel this had/has on your training.
Yes – I had 2 mentors Rev from the sending congregation (a spiritual mentor) and an academic mentor (Prof Kritzinger for academic and ministerial) it helped me a lot in how I viewed ministry and how to conduct myself, I think the conduct and the discipline as a minister I got from my minister at home and prof Kritzinger. It helped me a lot to understand the cutlers, especially of the DRC, and the differences between our church.
- What do you feel the church expects from the University of Pretoria as a training institute (e.g. Transformation? Acquisition of knowledge? A combination?)?
Moto of the seminary Africa Reformed praxis, that moto in UP is not been exercised, theology is not African, does not speak to the issues of Africa, is still a wester theology (not a problem, but theology should reflect the context it's found it) Barth over Boesak. Expected that from UP, to balance the curriculum, so have the wester theologians but also to include more and more of African scholars, into it being reflective of the situation it operates. That's what we expected.

Appendix 12 – Interview 011

Demographic

Race:	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Other:
Age:	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Sex:	Male		Female		
Denomination:	URCSA		UPCSA		

What year did you complete /expect to complete ministerial formation:

2019

Highest qualification and year completed:

Honors degree in Theology

Current occupation:

Student

General

Do you think theological education is important in church ministry? Please elaborate on your answer.

Yes primarily because of our church does not want cheap ministers of the word, that is why the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) while they do theological studies Greek and Hebrew is compulsory. So that the Bible must be understood critically.

What, in your opinion, is the correct environment for theological education aimed at ministerial formation to take place (e.g. public university, seminary, correspondence, other)? Please explain.

Both the seminary and the University. Because the seminary teaches its student the administration of the church such as how to run the church when one is called to serve within the church. The University only teaches the (URCSA) students theological modules such as Old and New Testament, Church dogmatic, Practical theology, church history.

Formation process

Please describe the current process of ministerial formation.

The general Synod appoints ministers from both South and Northern Synod called Ministerial formation task team (MFTT). The MFTT then appoints what is known as the (SMC) which deals with the day to day running of the seminary then the (SMC) appoints the Accesement Committee (AC) which deals with the documents of the students. Then we have the (SRC) a body which is the voice of the students.

Has this process changed since you began OR completed your training? If yes:

No it's still the same only with its structures the only thing that changes is the members which happens every after four years.

Please describe the process of ministerial formation you received.

I first wrote a letter to my church council, then had a meeting with them, then my letter was taken to the ring which is called the Presbytery consisting of 5 or 8 churches. Then the Presbytery would also have a word with me after there then my letter is sent to the Northern Theological Seminary (NTS). Here also I was interviewed then after some time a letter was sent informing that I was approved to come and study theology and to become a minister of the word once I complete my theological studies.

In what year did the process change?

The process did not change its still the same

How did it change

Did the process of ministerial formation adequately prepare you for ordained ministry?

Up to this far yes it did. With all the in-house courses we are doing at the seminary and the University level of teaching.

Did the process of ministerial formation foster a true expectation of what life in the ministry would be like?

Yes it because taking it from the code of conduct we signed as students, which is how to conduct yourself, respect and love each person. The Belhar confession also gave directions of how to expect in the ministry field and how to work with people and congregations.

What was good about the process of ministerial formation?

The order system which is conducted from the general Synod down to the AC of the seminary that is what is good.

What were some of the problems with the process of ministerial formation?

Form my side up to this far I have never seen anything wrong.

Is there any form of continued education after ordination? Please elaborate.

After completing the Master's degree as an ordained as a minister its up you weather you want to continue with your theological. Pushing up to PhD or even becoming a Professor in any theological department, such as such as Old and New Testament, Church dogmatic, Practical theology, church history.

Did the process of ministerial formation provide adequate personal development and adequate theoretical knowledge to perform your task in the ministry?

University

Do you feel the University of Pretoria is an appropriate environment for ministerial formation?

Yes because most the lectures at the faculty of theology are minister and they understands the system of (URCSA).

What, if any, are some of the benefits of training at the University of Pretoria?

I personally

What, if any, are some of the disadvantages of training at the University of Pretoria?

The theology that University of Pretoria is teaching it's a Western theology and yet we are in Africa. The continent of Africa is very rich in theology but the faculty don't teach the African theology.

Did/Do you have a mentor while receiving your training? Yes or No? Please describe the effect you feel this had/has on your training.

No. I don't have a mentor and not having a mentor I had to coy from how other ministers of the word do. I had to find a suitable character whom I would alien myself with and build my own character for the ministries.

What do you feel the church expects from the University of Pretoria as a training institute (e.g. Transformation? Acquisition of knowledge? A combination?)?

Due to our church been a transforming church, the students are expected to come and bring change to the life of the church.

Appendix 13 – Interview 012

Questions for candidates

Title of the Study:

A contemporary history of theological education from the perspective of Uniting Churches
at the University of Pretoria (2000-2017)

Researcher:

Jonathan M Womack. University of Pretoria
Cell: 0725341465 Email: u13226012@tuks.co.za

Demographic

Race:	Black X	Coloured	Indian	White	Other:
Age:	18-25 X	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Sex:	Male X		Female		
Denomination:	URCSA		UPCSA X		

- What year did you complete /expect to complete ministerial formation: **2019**
- Highest qualification and year completed: **Diploma in Theology, 2019**
- Current occupation: **Tutor: Religion Studies**

General

- Do you think theological education is important in church ministry? Please elaborate on your answer.
 - ✓ Yes, it is important.
 - ✓ Its servers as a guideline for spiritual formation. In a space like university one always need spiritual upliftment because faith might be shaken during the training course.
- What, in your opinion, is the correct environment for theological education aimed at ministerial formation to take place (e.g. public university, seminary, correspondence, other)? Please explain.
 - ✓ The university equip students to be able to think for themselves, to interpret the signs of the times, not to be just pastors but to also be leaders of the society. I think Universities are not limiting students to be narrow minded or to be fundamentalist. However, University is dangerous to those who are not rooted in their faith, one may be confused more and more. For that person, seminary is the best because it does not ask critical questions but teaches one to be fundamentalists.
 - ✓ University open a room for discussion and for fellowship and so the seminary. I don't think theological education by extension are effective enough especially to the beginners.

Formation process

- Please describe the current process of ministerial formation.
 - ✓ In the UPCSA we have spiritual formation classes led by UPCSA pastors outside university to nurture students with spiritual upliftment together with church polity.
 - ✓ Fellowship of Vocation (FOV) is one of the formations that assist equips students on how to balance church and society, Church and marriage. It also exposes students to useful methods on how to become an effective pastor in the church
 - ✓ The formation classes also equip students with Church polity of the UPCSA.

Theological education offered by the University of Pretoria and ministerial formation offered by the UPCSA ensures that a student leaves the university with contextual theology and spiritually fulfilled.

- Has this process changed since you began OR completed your training? If yes:
 - Please describe the process of ministerial formation you received.
In 2017, it more of Church Polity than Spiritual formation.
 - In what year did the process change?
Year 2017
 - How did it change

In 2018, the Ministry Secretary of the UPCSA, confirmed that ministerial formation will have both Church Polity and Spiritual formation. It came into her attention that students needs to be rooted continuously in their faith as they continue with their studies – the aim is to allow student’s faith to be shaken by uncomfortable questions of the University so that they will reflect on them critically and anchor them again back to Christ.

- Did the process of ministerial formation adequately prepare you for ordained ministry?

Yes, I am ready for probation because I am well equipped about UPCSA Church Polity. The University has challenged my theological lenses that I have to critically use all sources of theology before making critical decisions on matters. I am aware that the Bible can be a dangerous book if it is misinterpreted. Therefore, It requires people who will do thorough exegesis.

- Did the process of ministerial formation foster a true expectation of what life in the ministry would be like?

Yes, I know that the road will not be easy, especially in the country where there is high rate of gender-based violence against women, children, homosexuals and xenophobic attacks. I know that I am called into a broken world that needs healing, people will be asking difficult situations.

- What was good about the process of ministerial formation?

Spiritual formation took away my anxiety.

- What were some of the problems with the process of ministerial formation?

Church Polity classes seemed as a class of law not church.

- Is there any form of continued education after ordination? Please elaborate.

Not that I am aware of, but I know that ministers decide to study or not.

- Did the process of ministerial formation provide adequate personal development and adequate theoretical knowledge to perform your task in the ministry?

Not that much.

University

- Do you feel the University of Pretoria is an appropriate environment for ministerial formation?

Yes, depending whether a student is rooted in his/her faith. If not, I suggest that a student goes to a seminary – the UP theology makes students to think for themselves than to take what the Bible says.

- What, if any, are some of the benefits of training at the University of Pretoria?

A student becomes a leader of the society not just church.

- What, if any, are some of the disadvantages of training at the University of Pretoria?

A Student criticizes everything in the Bible or even in Church services.

- Did/Do you have a mentor while receiving your training? Yes or No? Please describe the effect you feel this had/has on your training.

Yes, having mentors assisted because I was asking things that were taught in classes and they prayed with me during the formation.

- What do you feel the church expects from the University of Pretoria as a training institute (e.g. Transformation? Acquisition of knowledge? A combination?)?

The UPCSAs wants ministers that can think for themselves, those who can ask critical questions in our changing times. I.e the acceptance of homosexuals in the church; the question will be **do God loves everyone just as they are?**

I believe UPCSAs also wants ministers that are leaders of societies who will listen to the cries of the society, while doing that, UPCSAs wants ministers who are centred in the discipline of Jesus Christ – those who serves in the mission of God alone.

Appendix 14 – Interview 013

Questions for candidates

Title of the Study:

A contemporary history of theological education from the perspective of Uniting Churches at the University of Pretoria (2000-2017)

Researcher:

Jonathan M Womack. University of Pretoria
Cell: 0725341465 Email: u13226012@tuks.co.za

Demographic

Race:	Black X	Coloured	Indian	White	Other:
Age:	18-25 X	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Sex:	Male		Female X		
Denomination:	URCSA		UPCSA X		

- What year did you complete /expect to complete ministerial formation: 2021.
- Highest qualification and year completed: BTH
- Current occupation: N/A

General

- Do you think theological education is important in church ministry? Please elaborate on your answer.
Yes, it is important, because it equips ministers with skills that are relevant for the ministerial work.
- What, in your opinion, is the correct environment for theological education aimed at ministerial formation to take place (e.g. public university, seminary, correspondence, other)? Please explain.

I think all institutions are a correct environment for theological education aimed at ministerial formation, but what is also required is practical training to be included as part of the course, whereby ministers in training will also be placed in different institutions to practice what they are learning. This will help to better prepare them for the real ministerial work.

Formation process

- Please describe the current process of ministerial formation.
- Has this process changed since you began OR completed your training? If yes:
 - Please describe the process of ministerial formation you received.
 - In what year did the process change?
 - How did it change
- Did the process of ministerial formation adequately prepare you for ordained ministry?

- Did the process of ministerial formation foster a true expectation of what life in the ministry would be like?
- What was good about the process of ministerial formation?
- What were some of the problems with the process of ministerial formation?
- Is there any form of continued education after ordination? Please elaborate.
- Did the process of ministerial formation provide adequate personal development and adequate theoretical knowledge to perform your task in the ministry?

University

- Do you feel the University of Pretoria **is an appropriate environment for ministerial formation?**
Yes, it is, but as I have mentioned above, there is a need for practical training to be included in the course in order to expose ministers in training to the
- What, if any, are some of the benefits of training at the University of Pretoria?
The University of Pretoria is known as one of the best University in South Africa and getting an opportunity to be enrolled in this University enables one to attain a qualification which is highly recognized in the world.
- What, if any, are some of the disadvantages of training at the University of Pretoria?
None that I know of
- Did/Do you have a mentor while receiving your training? Yes, or No? Please describe the effect you feel this had/has on your training.
Yes, I do and this enables me to get guidance and coaching on ministry work, which then strengthens my knowledge and confidence.
- What do you feel the church expects from the University of Pretoria as a training institute (e.g. Transformation? Acquisition of knowledge? A combination?)? Both transformation and knowledge acquisitions,

I think both the acquisition of knowledge as well as transformation, because knowledge acquisition also results to transformation.

Appendix 15 – Interview 014

Title of the Study:

A contemporary history of theological education from the perspective of Uniting Churches
at the University of Pretoria (2000-2017)

Researcher:

Jonathan M Womack. University of Pretoria
Cell: 0725341465 Email: u13226012@tuks.co.za

Demographic

Race:	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Other:
Age:	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+
Sex:	Male		Female		
Denomination:	URCSA		UPCSA		

- What year did you complete /expect to complete ministerial formation:

I am expecting to complete ministerial formation, around, the year 2022. Ministerial formation, usually ends when you become and ordained minister, however, as ministerial students, we are taught that even when we are ordained ministers, ministerial formation and training still does not end – we are also encouraged to continue studying (either academically or through individual study).

- Highest qualification and year completed:

Higher Certificate in Theology, completed in the year 2017.

- Current occupation:

Full time student

General

- Do you think theological education is important in church ministry? Please elaborate on your answer.

Theological education is important in church ministry – one of the main reasons why it is important (among other things) is, so that when people interpret the Scriptures they do not misinterpret the Bible nor take it out of context, hence putting a “stopper” on misleading or “misguiding” people (unknowingly).

- What, in your opinion, is the correct environment for theological education aimed at ministerial formation to take place (e.g. public university, seminary, correspondence, other)? Please explain.

In my opinion, one cannot specifically say which one is the “correct”, as each way of learning is different, and that which you learn from the different environments has its own benefits and “downfalls”. However, from personal experience, I have studied through correspondence and am now studying at the University of Pretoria, and have found that studying at a public university has been more beneficial, as I am now able to: interact with my lecturers, have discussions with not only lecturers but people from all walks of life, and people from different cultures.

Formation process

- Please describe the current process of ministerial formation.

Currently, we have two types of ministerial formation (offered specifically by the UPCS), namely, ‘Fellowship of Vocation’ (FOV) and ‘Formation Class’.

‘Fellowship of Vocation’ takes place once every month. It is where people (not only ministerial students but people who believe they are called into the ministry) gather and learn more about “situations” both in the church and pertaining to the church. FOV, also includes coming together and continuously discerning one’s call into the ministry of “Word” and “Sacrament”. It is a space where fellow ministerial students, people who are called by God (and have not gone through the process to become ministerial students yet), as well as other ministers from the UPCS, can come together learning from each other and learning more about God.

‘Formation Class’, occurs every Wednesday at 17:00. Here, predominantly, ministerial students are given the opportunity to learn more about the UPCS, as well as the origins of the UPCS. The class is usually headed by either Prof. Graham Duncan or Dr. Rev. Pat Baxter (who is the ministry secretary). Currently, we have been looking at the history of the UPCS, as well as, spiritual formation (especially the relation between our spirituality and our Theological studies).

- Has this process changed since you began OR completed your training? If yes:
 - Please describe the process of ministerial formation you received.
 - In what year did the process change?
 - How did it change

The process has not changed for me since I have been part of it.

- Did the process of ministerial formation adequately prepare you for ordained ministry?

Although we are taught that, one will “never” truly be “ready” for ordained ministry, as there will always be unexpected challenges (challenges that cannot always be “covered” in “training”). However, the current ministerial formation I undergo, in my opinion, does equip me sufficiently for ordained ministry.

- Did the process of ministerial formation foster a true expectation of what life in the ministry would be like?

The process of ministerial formation “did” or “does” foster a true expectation of what life in the ministry would be like, as no challenge in terms of the church, congregation or “personally” as a minister is “sugar coated” nor “hidden-away”.

- What was good about the process of ministerial formation?

What is good about the process of ministerial formation is that, we as ministerial students have the opportunity to learn more about the ministry and the church before we “fully” enter the field. Moreover, what makes the ministerial formation process “good” is the fact that, we as students are able to come into contact with other student, ministers and academics, and thus gain a “wider perspective” of the church and the ministry, as these are people from all walks of life and cultures.

- What were some of the problems with the process of ministerial formation?

One of the main problems with ministerial formation is “time”. In that, sometimes, it can become a struggle to find a time that suites everyone, to come together – as each persons schedule varies, thus not everyone is, always, able to make it to formation classes or meetings.

- Is there any form of continued education after ordination? Please elaborate.

Indeed, there are forms of continued education after ordination. Apart from further academic training, there are a wide variety of “courses” offered to ministers – these courses include, further training in pastoral care, the more practical side of the church (for example, preaching and dealing with congregations) and many more.

- Did the process of ministerial formation provide adequate personal development and adequate theoretical knowledge to perform your task in the ministry?

The process of ministerial formation, as it is currently provided, gives one a basic foundation when it comes to entering into the ministry. The process helps you to develop personally, and gives you a theoretical background. This process of ministerial formation also grants students a place where they are able to come and ask some of the more difficult questions they are faced with, either in their personal lives or from their academic work.

University

- Do you feel the University of Pretoria is an appropriate environment for ministerial formation?

The University of Pretoria, in my opinion, is an appropriate environment for ministerial formation.

- What, if any, are some of the benefits of training at the University of Pretoria?

One of the main benefits of studying at the University of Pretoria, is the multicultural setting. As a result of the multicultural setting at the University, we as students have had to become more open in our approaches to people, and as a result, we are able to work with and “deal” with people from all walks of life.

- What, if any, are some of the disadvantages of training at the University of Pretoria?

Something which is a slight disadvantage of studying at the University of Pretoria, is the lack of practical training in certain subjects, for example, ‘Practical Theology’ as students are not physically taught how to preach or do pastoral counselling (however I am not sure whether or not we receive more practical training in our third or fourth years).

- Did/Do you have a mentor while receiving your training? Yes or No? Please describe the effect you feel this had/has on your training.

Currently, I have a mentor (not provided by the University), the effect of having a mentor is “good”, as you have someone to turn to when you are struggling with either academic work, work in terms of the church or something “plaguing” you personally. Hence, you are not left to your own devices, and to fend for yourself.

- What do you feel the church expects from the University of Pretoria as a training institute (e.g. Transformation? Acquisition of knowledge? A combination?)?

The church, in my opinion, expects from the University of Pretoria, a bit of both – both transformation and acquisition of knowledge. The reason for this (opinion), is that it is through our studies that we gain new knowledge, and if we as students learn from it personally as well, we are transformed in the process.