

# THE INTERFACE BETWEEN “MISSIONARY” AND “NATIONAL” THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE FREE PENTECOSTAL FELLOWSHIP IN KENYA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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## *Abstract*

Largely informed by the oral histories of the early African clergy within the Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya (FPFK), this essay explores the interface between ‘missionary’ and ‘national’ theological education in FPFK. The Scandinavian missionaries instituted a model quite familiar to their home countries, which has continued to be used in both colonial and post-colonial Kenyan contexts. The nationalisation of FPFK which, as a process, started in 1976 has not succeeded in replacing the missionary model of theological education despite multiple contextual changes. This ‘inherited model’ is largely perceived to be crippled with irrelevancy and yet it is seemingly treasured as a strong part of heritage and identity. Based on an unwritten history and a gradually disappearing oral witness, the inherited model is more symbolic than functional. This essay investigates its history as a beginning place for both dialogue and reform.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

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The challenges facing Karen Bible College (KBC) were highlighted by the Principal, Reverend Joseph Mungai, in his report to the 2004 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya (FPFK) held in the college campus in Nairobi. The deliberations that ensued afterwards centred on the general tenure of theological education in the organisation. It was obvious that the majority of the representatives were neither content with the status quo nor informed of the historical developments of theological education in the denomination. As a result of the change of leadership from white missionaries to indigenous Africans (which occurred during the nationalisation process), there exists a discontinuity between the missionary and the national churches in relation to the purpose and identity of theological education. Attempts to upgrade the institution to a degree offering institution are constrained by threats of imminent closure precipitated by financial and administrative challenges. The college's lack of written history of the college, the gradual disappearance of oral history in theological education as a whole and the recent change of leadership "face" as a result of the nationalisation process have led to both an identity crisis and functional disparity in the FPFK theological education. There was thus a need to establish the role, the challenges and the status of theological education in the FPFK in order to enable stakeholders of FPFK theological education to meaningfully decide on its strategic role in the national church.

The purpose of this research therefore is to make sense of the present challenges facing FPFK theological education and provide a written historical account that would become a resource in deciding the way forward. This essay intends to demonstrate historically the plight of theological education in the FPFK since the missionary era (1950) through to the nationalised church (1986).

## 2 LITERATURE SURVEY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology relied upon both written and oral sources. The Project monographs written by the Capacity Building and the

Women Literacy projects were easily accessed from the archived materials in the FPFK head offices in Nairobi, Kenya. The General Secretary provided the AGM and the National Board meetings' reports, which highlighted the organisation's deliberations on both theological education and the Karen Bible College in the recent past. Books and academic journals were important resources for obtaining information about the Scandinavian history of theological education and the Kenyan pre-colonial context generally. The main source of historical information, however, came from interviewing people. I conducted ten different interviews with two administrators of theological education, three former students (retired African pastors, three missionaries, one National Board member and one Course Centre coordinator. These interviewees included the general secretary of the FPFK, the principal of KBC, the Academic Dean and European missionaries. These interviews were all in English and all were tape-recorded except three that were conducted in the Swahili language and then transcribed.

### 3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF FPFK

The Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya (FPFK) owes its origin in the East African missionary work pioneered by the Pentecostal Churches of Norway and Sweden as early as the 1950s.<sup>1</sup> Championed by missionary Strubble Gustafson, the *Swedish Pentecostal Mission* crossed the border from Tanzania to Kenya and settled its new work in Nyeri, currently an agricultural town located in the Central province of Kenya. In 1952, Gustafson pioneered missionary work in Menengai, a remote part of Nakuru in the Rift Valley Province. This work grew at an amazingly swift rate. His son, Rhode Strubble, worked as an evangelist in Nairobi. Accompanied by evangelist Landedat,<sup>2</sup> they established the Kawangware church, and bought a missionary house on the Argwings Kodhek Road in Nairobi. This house was later sold and the funds were used to purchase the present head office building along Kindaruma road in Nairobi.

The *Swedish Pentecostal Mission* continued to evangelise and its work blossomed southwards towards the coast, in the 1960s. Ulla Strubble, Gustafson's daughter, also joined the missionary team and

did significant work in Nairobi. Oscar Legestrom built the magnificent Kawangware pastor's house. Some missionaries went to begin work among the Kamba people in Machakos, the eastern part of the country, while others went on to Mombasa in the coastal region. Others still diverted to Loitokitok and worked among the Maasai community. In the 1970s, there was an influx of a new generation of missionaries, where the sons and daughters of missionaries joined their parents in "planting" churches. These churches were distributed into various mission centres. It was during this period that missionaries such as Stigg Gustafson relocated from his field in the former Zaire, now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to the Kenyan Coast and women missionaries such as Margarita Hankinson and Moode Anderson intensified their efforts in Nairobi and Nakuru. The *Swedish Pentecostal Mission* was later registered in East Africa as the *Swedish Free Mission*. In 1973, it changed its name to *Evangelical Free Mission – Kenya*. The term "free" was meant to emphasise the fact that it consisted of those churches that, in Sweden itself, were not state-managed. The mother mission, *Sweden Pentecostal Mission*, is strong and still active.

While Swedish missionaries were busy evangelising in the Central, Eastern, Rift Valley, and coastal provinces of the country, the Norwegians concerted their efforts in the Western region.<sup>3</sup> In 1950, Missionary Bustargard was sent by the *Norwegian Pentecostal Mission* and settled in Nyanza Province. Together with the efforts of other missionaries, he managed to establish work that became the Thessalia and Oyugis mission centres in Luo land. The work was more successful than he had actually expected. Two years later he expanded his efforts to the Western province. There he established what later came to be known as the Nyambare and Gusii mission centres among the Kisii people, and the Kiptere mission centre among the Kalenjin people. This enormous growth in Kisii and Kalenjin lands could be credited to the efforts of later missionaries such as Gunner Ostrem and wise African "elder" pastors such as Arista Arico of the Luhya community (among many others).

Both the Norwegian and the Swedish missionary centres were autonomous in terms of administration and financing.<sup>4</sup> The centres were properties of well-established churches in Sweden and Norway.

Missionaries were sent by individual church congregations in Europe, and these missionaries remained directly answerable to their respective local churches in Sweden or Norway. Just like the mother congregations back in Europe, the centres had no legal national ties whatsoever. They met each other rarely, in conferences, during which they usually submitted reports (voluntarily). In other words, the Pentecostal churches in Scandinavia were only functionally united and were not legally bound.<sup>5</sup>

The missionaries established churches in Kenya under the same structure they had witnessed and were part of in Scandinavia. Individual churches, mostly under African lay ministers and evangelists, were answerable to the missionary. The missionary was in charge of all the churches under his or her mission centre and answerable to a sending church congregation in Scandinavia. Pastor Denis Kiragu of the coastal region remembers quite clearly that “mission centre was the capital and the centre of all operations as well as the link with Europeans”.<sup>6</sup> The mission centres themselves had nothing in common except yearly organised conferences. Projects of each mission centre were financed and supervised by the sending church congregations in Europe. Training of the African clergy was done by the missionary himself (or herself) in the mission centres.

Kenya became an independent republic in 1964. The pre-colonial British dominated administrative system was replaced by a national government under President Jomo Kenyatta. The Scandinavian missionaries found it increasingly difficult to operate with a colonial model in a context that was progressively being nationalised.<sup>7</sup> In 1976, all Pentecostal missionaries from Scandinavia who were operating in Kenya came together to form one local body. The *Evangelical Free Mission* (Sweden) amalgamated with the *Norwegian Pentecostal Mission* (Norway) to form the *Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya (FPFK)*. The reform of church financing and administration was, however, a slow and gradual process. The FPFK was hence registered in the Kenyan Act of Societies even though the church groups continued to operate independently. There was not a constitution, but only a collection of agreements and decrees, and the two fellowships continued to exercise uninterrupted autonomy. It was not until 20<sup>th</sup> February 1997

at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at Karen Bible College (KBC) that the two fellowships started to operate as one body under one legal constitution.<sup>8</sup>

The journey toward nationalisation has never been an easy one. Indeed, it has been one characterised by strife and sluggishness. It took over thirty years for the registered FPFK to come up with a constitution that would legally synchronise the churches' operation and reduce their dependence on the mother churches in Scandinavia. It is now ten years after the constitution was passed (1996-2006) yet there still exist traditional rifts between the Norwegian and the Swedish church "blocks", and there is a definite schism between the local leadership and the mother churches. The conservative methodologies of the past appear to be set against modern liberal strategies; and experienced, elderly leaders tend to look down on the zealous, academic young leaders of today. It has taken over forty years for the FPFK to abandon the missionary model and adopt a contemporary nationalised model which, comparatively, is more effective in doing Christian ministry in Kenya. However, so far not much seems to have been achieved. Some mission centres still exercise autonomy by relating directly to mother churches in Europe without consulting head office. In short, the FPFK appears to be stuck with ancient methodologies in a context that has witnessed multiple paradigm changes.

#### 4 THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE FPFK

The story of theological education in the FPFK is characterised by humble beginnings and sluggish development. Theological education in the FPFK owes its origin and methodology to the Scandinavian model.<sup>9</sup> After the Reformation, Scandinavia recognised the Lutheran church as the state religion. Consequently, the ideas of Martin Luther and John Calvin became fundamental in the training of Scandinavian ministers.<sup>10</sup> The protestant seminary, which included the assimilation of Bible schools and institutes, dominated the scene. The Pentecostal movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was a categorical departure from the Lutheran tradition.<sup>11</sup> Pentecostalism had evangelism and mission as its key emphasis. As a result of its

evangelical emphasis, Pentecostal theological education replaced Bible schools and Bible institutes with professional schools such as a school of missions, a school of evangelism and discipleship, a school of music, and so on. Its training was mainly task-oriented, which meant that examinations and intensive class work were regarded as lesser priorities.<sup>12</sup> This background informed the Scandinavian Pentecostal mission agencies that pioneered what was later to be called the FPFK.

Only a few of the missionaries attended mission schools in Scandinavia before coming to Africa. Most missionaries were experts in other professions and heeded their missionary call. No sooner had the work been started in the mission centres than the missionaries sensed the need to train the new African recruits for the ministry. Course centres were begun in the mission centres. They offered monthly series of randomly organised theological training on particular subjects. The missionaries, most of whom did not have formal training in theology, became tutors in these course centres. In these course centres, there was no definite curriculum, no consistent standard and the duration of the courses varied. In fact, these course centres focussed on spiritual formation rather than theological education. It soon became obvious that there was a need for more formal training, and this led to the establishment of the Karen Bible College (KBC).<sup>13</sup> KBC was a joint venture, and the only one, between the Swedish Free Mission and Norwegian Pentecostal Mission; the venture was launched in 1976. Indeed, it was the KBC that laid the foundation for collaboration between the two mission agencies; they agreed to have the KBC as their headquarters and a centre for equipping workers and leaders for the mission field before they even agreed on working together! Theological education, and particularly the KBC, was the uniting factor among the missionaries. Theological education has historically continued to be the key promoter of unity and identity and a point of reference for both international mother bodies and local church congregations.

When it began, the Karen Bible College offered a three-month certificate in Bible Study. This was purely a boarding training taught by missionaries and elderly African pastors such as Arista Arico. The Principal, Rev Edward Mungai, who was himself a student in the first

intake, says that “it was satisfactory according to the time since no better program was available then.”<sup>14</sup> It was not until 1990 that the KBC started issuing ordinary diplomas following three years of intensive theological training. Those pastors who had a Bible Study certificate started coming back to the KBC to advance their theological studies. However, advancement to diploma level was strongly opposed by the missionaries for two reasons. First, they did not consider a thorough training in theology a necessity – they pointed out that they had not had such training, and yet were successful in their missionary work. Secondly, they did not want to be excluded from teaching. Because they were not trained formally, the highest level they could teach was certificate. The inclusion of a diploma was, to the missionaries, a way of eliminating them from the scene of theological education. This conflict of interest led to a withdrawal of European financial support. It was the efforts of the new and first African principle, the Rev Edward Mungai, who travelled to Europe that eventually restored donor confidence (in 1991).<sup>15</sup>

The Karen Bible College today offers an ordinary diploma and a certificate in Bible and Theology. With a minimum of financial sponsorship and a total reliance on part-time educators, the KBC has struggled to keep up with the growing competition from new institutions of learning in the country. In my research, I noticed that all the course centres are dormant except Kiptere whose continuity is by no means guaranteed. It depends, for its survival, on the availability of financial sponsorship from a mother church in Europe and the willingness of the missionary in Kiptere Mission Centre to organise a new session. Financial and administrative causes are attributed to the dormancy of the other seven course centres.

Another very significant contribution in FPFK theological education came from the Organisation Development and Capacity Building (OD & CB) project. This project was sponsored by Norwegian and Swedish churches and was initiated by the need to nationalise the FPFK. When this project started, the missionary agencies were changing their focus to other fields and African leaders were supposed to take over the leadership. However, African leaders had not been trained for this nationalising enterprise, that is, they themselves were unprepared to lead without the supervision of the



white missionary. Apart from individual unpreparedness, the organisation was lacking in leadership machinery. The new constitution was more of a paper work exercise than a pragmatic engagement for two major reasons: (1) the African leadership had no clear understanding of its role; and (2) there seemed to be confusion between people's roles and duties which led to a duplication of work and bureaucracy. In other words, there was a need to revise the constitution and communicate this revised constitution to the leadership at all levels. This was the task of the OD and CB project.

A missionary couple and a native leader- Arne and Vigdis Gjervoldstad and Joseph Ayieye, led the OD & CB Project. The main aim of the project, as explained in its manuals, was to strengthen the FPFK as a national self-governed church, to make it effective and adaptable in a changing environment. The project also aimed at improving leaders' understanding and skills through training and seminars at all levels – from the local church to national level.<sup>16</sup> It had as its objectives: (1) to enhance the managerial and administrative competence of FPFK leadership and personnel in order that the FPFK and its head office be managed effectively, and the churches and the community be served efficiently; (2) to train church leaders and project personnel in relevant areas of management and administration, (3) to create and increase awareness of church leadership in areas of management, administration, planning, financing, and leadership roles, and (4) to help in streamlining the structural set-up of the FPFK in general.<sup>17</sup>

The capacity-building programme conducted seminars and training all over the country where the FPFK church congregations were available. With the help of competent facilitators and an active office in the FPFK headquarters in Nairobi, by the end of its contract period in 2002, the project had definitely succeeded in improving the quality of leadership. However, its success was limited owing to two major factors: lack of continuity and the election of FPFK leadership. The project did not leave behind a library or an office that could provide refresher courses, and the FPFK leadership is constitutionally elected after every four years. Its trained leadership was therefore largely replaced after the training.

Theological education in the FPFK today is in the form of “scattered pockets”, which lack both a central coordination and a common standard of quality and measurement. The course centres are each trying to do their own education. This applies equally to the KBC and the Capacity Building Program.<sup>18</sup> This approach has led to an enormous waste of time and resources and, as a result, quality, relevance, and efficiency have all suffered. This lack of cohesion in FPFK theological education is inherent in the model of operation left by the Scandinavians. The missionary model was based on the autonomy of individual churches and missionary centres in matters of programmes, financing, and administration. Unsurprisingly, this model automatically sifted through into theological education where course centres, based in the missionary centres, operated autonomously regardless of duplication or irrelevance. In short, this model is outdated and ineffective in the current FPFK context.

## 5 CONTEXTUAL NEEDS IN FPFK

The context in which the Scandinavian missionaries operated has changed considerably over the years. The education system that the missionaries used is no longer relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the field of theological education, new needs are demanding serious attention and some of the approaches used by the missionaries are today both irrelevant and ridiculous. Some “old time needs” are no longer a general concern or are minor issues whose magnitude is overtaken by other pressing issues.<sup>19</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, for instance, slavery was a thorny issue in most African communities, as was colonialism, the need for social representation and the fight for freedom and independence. Communication was a big problem owing to the lack of a common language. Theologians of those days wrestled with the ideologies of communism, freedom fighters, and African traditional religions. In a swift turn of events, the establishment of new African states led to the stigmatisation of Christianity as “a white man’s religion” propagating a colonial agenda.

The needs in today’s FPFK context are surprisingly new and unpredictable. A chief characterisation of our time is not just that

things are changing, but that the rate of change has escalated. The African Christian is at present grappling with changes in his or her three worlds: the world of *modernity* championed by scientific discoveries, the world of *Africanism* influenced by African philosophies and customs, and finally, the world of the *Bible* informed by divine revelation and the salvation story.<sup>20</sup> The task of theological education is not only to respond to present problems but also to discern future needs and prepare the community so that it can handle those needs efficiently. In 1997, the AIDS pandemic was declared a national disaster by the Kenyan government. The fact that this virus infects one out of every ten Kenyans<sup>21</sup> means that the church cannot continue to bury its face in the sand over the issue. Theological education must become the pointing finger in the rightful response of the church community to both infected and the affected members. It must grapple with alternative preventive options and their effectiveness in curbing the menace. The theology of the epidemic should not be left to the speculation of the masses, but should be addressed in a spirit of creative theological enquiry. Poverty and famine are also worrying phenomena in the minds of the average Kenyan. Unemployment and corruption have wrecked the economy and frustrated development efforts. Terrorism, banditry attacks and general insecurity are on the increase. Ethical issues such as abortion, homogeneous sexual practices, and drug abuse have plunged Kenyan society into dilemma and disarray. General moral decay, street children and families, plus refugee problems are all rampant in the Kenyan community, a community that is engulfed by political instability. Gender disparities are demanding from us an appropriate theological response. If the FPFK is ministering in such a “chaotic community” then its theological education ought to be both relevant and adaptive.

As we look at the Kenyan context we need to remember the global context. John Cobb and Joseph Hough specify two major reasons why theological education must look far beyond the locality: (1) local problems are manifestations of systems that extend far beyond that locality, and (2) to treat local problems in their local context only fails to approach them with the Christian concern of indivisible salvation for the whole world.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, theological education in the FPFK must grapple with international concerns such as world peace,

terrorism, human rights, environmental concerns, and the challenge of science in issues such as weapons of mass-destruction and cloning technology.

## 6 AN EVALUATION OF THE FPFK'S THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The FPFK's leadership structure, ministerial style and theological persuasions are similar to those exhibited by the white missionaries in Kenya and the mission churches in Scandinavia. The Scandinavian missionaries, the majority of whom were Norwegian and Swedish, imported (consciously or otherwise) the gospel in its "Scandinavian cup" into the Kenyan context. Not only was the gospel content new, but so was the language of communicating and spreading it.<sup>23</sup> To date, this has had a permanent impact on the FPFK, both positively and negative. At the core of this importation of the gospel message and cultural values, however, is the theological training that was handed down by the missionaries to their chosen African leaders as a fresh "package" to be handed on. The FPFK not only retained Scandinavian theological articulations, but also the mode of transmission of that theology as relegated by the missionaries.<sup>24</sup> In fact, this has continued to surface as the predominant model of theological education used by the FPFK ever since.

This inherited model, which once flourished in Scandinavian countries and in colonial Kenya, has turned sour and ineffective in post-colonial Kenya. Consequently, both the growth and the relevance of the FPFK ministry have been adversely affected. The model consists of a Bible college as a centre of learning within the denomination and eight course centres. Challenges facing this model are many and varied. First is the overemphasis on the clergy at the expense of the laity and the scholar. The Scandinavian Pentecostal churches did not see any need for extensive training. As a matter of

fact, training was only needed in simple task-oriented areas to prepare the evangelist for his or her work. As a result, the FPFK churches perceive scholarship in theological education as a luxury, they can neither afford nor have room for.<sup>25</sup> Like the Scandinavian Pentecostal missionaries and their European churches, in the FPFK, academic scholarship is set against spiritual anointing. This is why the KBC almost collapsed in its fight to progress to diploma level and has struggled fruitlessly to become a degree-conferring institution;<sup>26</sup> it also explains why the average training for FPFK ministers is barely a certificate with only a handful possessing diplomas and college degrees.

Equally neglected in this model is the training of the laity. It is ironic that, even though the FPFK heavily depends upon lay leadership, these leaders are not considered as candidates for theological education. There exists a tension between the authoritative yet untrained lay leadership and the congregations demand for professionalism. This has led to a massive loss of elite membership. This tension is rooted in the missionary control of the mission centres, something that has been passed down to modern African clergy.

The second shortcoming facing the traditional model in the FPFK theological education is the lack of professionalism. Most of those who train ministers in the FPFK are not professional educators but pastors and evangelists. This is not meant to demean the teaching capacity of the pastor, far from it. However, not all persons who have had some formal theological training are necessarily able teachers. Teaching is a calling as well as a profession and should not be confused with pastoring, discipling or even missionary work. In the FPFK this view has its roots in the functioning of missionaries as teachers, when they lacked even minimal qualifications. The hazards of this view (i.e. that anybody can teach) are evident in the unpreparedness of most graduates in handling and articulating the word of truth to a hurting society.<sup>27</sup> The School of Religion and Theology (SORAT) in the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) would probably provide the FPFK with a good example of how to assimilate theological education with practical ministry whilst still keeping in touch with professionalism.

There is also a lack of standard and control in the FPFK's theological education. As a result of the fragmented administrative style inherited from the missionaries, all centres of training are organised and run differently.<sup>28</sup> The Scandinavian Pentecostal churches are not related nationally or regionally wise. Each local church is autonomous. The churches only come together when they want to and usually for reasons of fellowship. This inherited phenomenon has led to fragmentation and autonomy in FPFK theological education.<sup>29</sup> The course centres are autonomous in terms of financial sponsorship, teaching staff, and their curricula. This has led to a serious compromise of training standards generally. Besides, graduates who want to transfer credits to other institutions, or those who develop an interest in furthering their studies, or even working with organisations not belonging to the FPFK, find themselves at a disadvantage, this being the international unacceptability of FPFK training. Quality and standardisation of theological education within the FPFK can only be achieved through a national control board, which is inconceivable given the current fragmented model of theological education.<sup>30</sup>

Fourth, there is a lack of contextual sensitivity in the present theological education system. The curriculum of both the KBC and the eight course centres are aimed at evangelising and not at impacting on the holistic life of Kenyan society. This is due to their missionary orientation: the major courses are in church planting, pneumatology, soteriology and ecclesiology. The Christian minister in Kenya today needs to be trained on how to counsel HIV positive people, on how to address corruption and terrorism, and how to relate to environmental conservation (among other contemporary issues). A radical revision of the entire curriculum and teaching methodology is long overdue.

Lastly, the current model suffers from inconsistency, as can be seen in the current ecclesiastical structure and missiological paradigm of the FPFK.<sup>31</sup> Whereas the current FPFK constitution has undergone eight subsequent revisions, the theological education that serves this revising has never itself been revised, let alone made indigenous. In the original missionary leadership structure, only those individuals that had served as evangelists for a given period of time could be

ordained as pastors. The structure has changed considerably since. Ministerial offices are viewed in a more broad and professional manner in an attempt to encourage specialisation and calling. One can simply sense a definite pastoral calling and serve as a pastor without having to become a church evangelist. The inherited model presupposes that potential students have certain experience as church evangelists before commencing their training. The model only provides for a generalised training and assumes that the graduate will always begin at the level of a church evangelist in practical ministry. This model, which worked well in colonial Kenya, is not only ineffective in post-colonial Kenya, but seems to perpetuate wrong attitudes and values.<sup>32</sup> That a young man cannot be called and effectively serve as a pastor without the experience of being an elder or an evangelist presupposes the existence of a hierarchy in the ministerial offices and undermines the very nature of spiritual gifts.

The same inadequacies in the leadership structure can be paralleled in the area of church missions. The original model flourished in a missiological paradigm where Kenya was on the receiving end and where missionary work was exclusively seen as an enterprise belonging to the westerner.<sup>33</sup> The good news is that the FPFK is a missionary sending church!<sup>34</sup> The bad news, however, is that theological education is neither equipping the church in this endeavour nor strategically equipped for the task. The current model therefore lacks the ability to train a minister in the specialised ministries of the church; it also lacks professionalism and does not guarantee national or international recognition.

Besides the above shortcomings in the traditional model, theological education in the FPFK as a whole is also faced with external changes. In the past, theological education played a key role in the unification of the Norwegian and the Swedish blocks of the church and between mother churches in Europe and local congregations. The nationalisation of the church in 1996 saw the handing over of leadership from the missionaries to local people, and the establishment of a national head office. As a result theological education lost its central place in the organisation and was regarded of little interest by both international and local bodies. This has led to

difficulties in raising funds and promoting relevancy in the entire discipline.

Unless theological education in the FPFK is reformed it will ultimately die a natural death. Its present form serves a structure and a mindset that no longer exist. It is attempting to answer questions asked over forty years ago whilst neglecting present ones. The present form of theological education is thus only ceremonial and does not serve the interests of the FPFK. It is high time that a new structure, a new model and a new methodology replaced the traditional Scandinavian model.

## 7 CONCLUSION

In this essay, I have demonstrated that the current model of theological education in the FPFK is not functional in the current Kenyan context as a result of its historical orientation. It is not only foreign to Kenya, but is also irrelevant in the current leadership system. It was useful in the missionaries' legitimate efforts to bring Christianity to Kenya. However, it has since become a stumbling block in the realisation of the new mission, which is managed and financed very differently. Not only is theological education caught up in Scandinavian methodologies, but so is the denomination as a whole. Although that history is important as an identity and a heritage, its methodologies and persuasions should give way to a realistic creativity that can engage in the new challenges facing the FPFK church.

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## ENDNOTES

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- 1 See interview with the Principal of Karen Bible Collegel, Rev Edward Mungai, "Theological Education in FPFK", interview by author. Tape recording, Karen, Nairobi, 12 April 2004. See also Elizabeth Isichei, *A history of Christianity in Africa*. London: Holy Trinity Church, 1995.
  - 2 The second name of Evangelist Landedat and those of other missionaries could not be ascertained. This is a phenomenon caused by the lack of written records in the FPFK and the gradual disappearance of oral history.
  - 3 Interview with the Business Administrator of KBC and a KBC former student, Daniel Omolo, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2005, video tape.
  - 4 David Barrett, *Schism and renewal in Africa: An analysis of six thousand contemporary religious movements*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968, 363.
  - 5 Ibid.
  - 6 Denis Kiragu, Interview by author, Tape Record, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2005, Mombasa, Kenya.
  - 7 Thomas Beetham, *Christianity and the New Africa*. London: Pall Mall Press, 1967, 183-4.
  - 8 FPFK Organizational Documentation, *The constitution and rules* doc. 001. Nairobi: Uzima Center, 2001, 1.
  - 9 Mungai, Interview, 2004.
  - 10 Thomas Beetham, *Christianity and the new Africa*. London: Pall Mall Press, 1967, 23.
  - 11 Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning theological education: Exploring a missiological alternative to current models*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1999, 28.
  - 12 Victor Babajide Cole, "Toward integration in the Theological School Curriculum." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 23 (April 1999), 141-162.
  - 13 KBC was originally known as Karen Bible School (KBS). The name changed in 1990 when the institution started offering an Ordinary Diploma in Bible and Theology.
  - 14 Edward Mungai, "Theological Education in FPFK", 2004
  - 15 Ibid.
  - 16 Joseph Ayieye and Vigdis Gjervoldstad, "Church Leaders Seminar: Leadership FPFK Structure Management" FPFK Capacity building programme, OD &CB project manuals, Nairobi, 4.
  - 17 Ibid, 4.
  - 18 This is probably the reason why most of these course centres have been unable to run consistently and have ended in stagnation.
  - 19 Eli Buconyori, Alexandre. *The education task of the church*. Nairobi, Kenya: Christian Learning Materials Center, 1996, 23.
  - 20 The thought is from Samuel Ngewa, Samuel, Mark Shaw, and Tite Tienou, eds. *Issues in African Christian theology*. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers, 1998, iv-vi.
  - 21 Steven Forsythe and Bill Ran, eds, *AIDS in Kenya: Socio-economic impact and policy implementations*. Nairobi, Kenya: Family Health International, 1996, 5.
  - 22 John Cobb, B Jr & Joseph C Hough Jr, *Christian identity and theological education*. Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1985, 102.
  - 23 Ayieye, Joseph & Vigdis Gjervoldstad. "Church Leaders Seminar: Leadership FPFK Structure Management." FPFK Capacity Building Programme, OD &CB project manuals, Nairobi, 1999, 4.
  - 24 Ibid.
  - 25 John Bessen, "A Critical Assessment of Theological Education in East Africa: Academic Aspects." *Africa Theological Journal*, 6(1), (1977): 33-41.
  - 26 An interview with the KBC principal, Rev Edward Mungai. See Edward Mungai, interview by author, 24 April 2004, tape recording, Nairobi, Kenya.
  - 27 Paul Bowers (ed), *Evangelical theological education today: An international perspective*. Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1982, 20.
  - 28 The Pentecostal churches of Scandinavia have neither national nor regional leadership. Each congregation is independent. As a borrowed administration structure, the missionary churches in Kenya had little in common, and less in terms of leadership. Each congregation depended entirely on the mothering church abroad, so much so that even after the missionaries left, these structures, which are biased towards western affiliation, were left intact. This was revealed in an interview with the KBC principal,

- Rev. Edward Mungai. See Edward Mungai, interview by author, 24 April 2004, tape recording, Nairobi, Kenya.
- 29 Matshazi M J. In search for a distance education model: A look at practice and experience in Scandinavian countries (Oslo: University of Oslo, 1988), 23.
- 30 See interview with the KBC academic dean. Daniel Ogada, Interview by author, 22 May 2005, video tape.
- 31 Paul Bowers, *Evangelical theological education today: Agenda for renewal*. Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1981, 31.
- 32 See interview with Deputy Secretary General of FPFK, Rev John Kitur, interview with author, 22 May 2005, video tape.
- 33 Edward Farley, "Can church education be theological education?" *Theology Today* 42 (1985): 158-171.
- 34 FPFK Organizational Documentation, *The Constitution and rules* doc. 001. Nairobi: Uzima Center, 2001, 1.