


Africanisation as an agent of theological education in Africa

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This article focuses on the response of Africanisation to Western theological education in Africa, which has for centuries become a theological problem for the African context. In this 21st century, Africanisation is at the centre of the African discourse and focuses on the realities of our African context. Therefore, theological education in Africa should be Africanised in order to seriously engage the aspects of Africanisation. The struggle against colonial education was to ensure that Africa is liberated from unjust educational oppression, socio-economic oppression, poverty, racism, political oppression and gender injustice. In this regard, Africanisation is an agent to address the introduced Western theological education in Africa. Yet the two concepts, namely commercialisation and commodification, have an influence on theological education in Africa.

Introduction

One cannot speak about Africanisation without its definition, according to Tinyiko Sam Maluleke (1998):

Africanization is about liberation – the comprehensive liberation of all Africa and all Africans – but more specifically the liberation of the poor, the Black, the women and most specifically Black or African women. This has implications for religious and theological education. (p. 16)

It was at the National Initiative for Contextualising Theological Education Conference in 1998 that Africanisation was recognised as central to contextual theological education in South Africa to advance as an agent of change for theological education in Africa (Williams 1998:2). Africanisation promotes human rights culture and dignity in order to cultivate and enhance the theological education in Africa through an African agenda for liberation. It is a critical reflection to resist the power structure of the Western theological education to ensure that Africans are liberated from the colonial forms of education. Africanisation is not the betrayal of the black people and the poor but their liberation lived experience in order to be empowered spiritually, politically and socio-economically. The task of Africanisation is not an ideal freedom but a continuous demand for freedom for Africans to experience the true humanity found in an African conceptualisation of Ubuntu.

For Mogobe Ramose (1998), Africanisation:

holds that the African experience in its totality is simultaneously the foundation and the source for construction of all forms of knowledge... Africanisation is a conscious and deliberate assertion of nothing more or less than the right to be an African. (p. iv)

This affirms the Africans' rights to contribute to their African theological education in terms of their African experience and knowledge without the intimidation of colonial education. African experience and knowledge have power to resist the oppression heresy and sinful colonial education. This means Africanisation provides hope for the African society and human destiny in Africa. For higher education in Africa, Malegapuru W Makgoba (2005) eloquently defines Africanisation in that:

Africa universities to be truly useful to Africa and the world have to be grounded in African communities and cultures. African university is an institution that has the consciousness of an African identity from which it derives and celebrates its strengths and uses the strengths to its own comparative and competitive advantage on the international stage. The African university draws its inspiration from its environment, as an indigenous tree growing from a seed that is planted and nurtured in African soil. (p. 15)

The African university should provide the freedom for service of others from its original environment as a life place of ubuntu. Therefore, African universities should provide the education of liberation to overcome the colonial education that has oppressed the African people. It is essential that Africanisation of theological education at the African universities be tracked beyond

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African Women's Theology, African Theology, Black Theology, Reconstruction Theology and other contextual African theologies.

In this article, the word 'transformation' is used to engage the role of theological education in Africa. According to Bloomquist and Sinaga (2010:661), 'Transformation has to do with how we individually and our social realities are changed'. Ofelia Ortega (2010:xx) views theological education as a process of transformation that applies criticism and commitment to achieve the common Africa and the world according to God's plan for the new creation. According to Jesse Mugambi (2013:117), transformation of the curriculum for theological education in Africa is an urgent need and necessary for the African liberation agenda, not an option. This African theological curriculum transformation must begin from the context of the learners to help them with relevant knowledge in liberation. These trained learners will provide appropriate needs for each particular context. Thus, transformation of theological education should be a lifelong transformation geared towards the liberation of the African context in wholeness of life.

It is important to note that the conceptualisation of commercialisation and commodification has an impact on Africanisation of theological education in Africa. Jenny Theron (2005:6) describes commercialisation as an act of commercialising something in order to ensure maximum profit. It is relevant to security cooperation for a maximum profit. It emphasises on the aspects of profit through quality productions (Theron 2005:6). Commodification comes from the word 'commodity', which means a product or service following the process of production. Commodities are important products that are necessary for personal use. According to Okoli and Uhembe (2014:597–598), commodification is a process whereby a material value is used to exchange value. Thus, commodification is a central quality of capitalism. Capitalism has led to over-commercialisation and commodification of society. Radder (2010:4) argues that commodification is identified with commercialisation for the purpose of profit in the field of academic institutions for their researchers and expectation. Commercialisation and commodification have daily influence on research, learning and teaching in the academic space and society. This has led to disadvantages for students because of the affordability of theological education. Nico Koopman (2013) observed:

It also impacts on how we prepare pastors to function in communities of poverty and the ongoing struggle for survival. Without being co-opted by the agenda of the economisation and commodification of theology, we also need to equip pastors to develop social and systemic entrepreneurial skills in order to minister faithfully in poverty-stricken communities. (p. 361)

The commercialisation and commodification of theological education in Africa is relevant to African countries such as South Africa as long as it does not marginalise and exploit the critical importance of theological education in universities. If theological institutions are financially and resourcefully independent, they could build and own their universities as

agents of change in service of the African society. African theological institutions are existentially imperative because they address the rapid change that takes place within the African continent. This article looks deeper into the importance of Africanisation as an agent of theological education in Africa. It is in dialogue with the concepts of commercialisation and commodification. Throughout Africa today, it is necessary that black African theologians prioritise theological education to facilitate sound and deeper African Christian theology. This article first examines the relationship between commercialisation and commodification on higher theological education in Africa. Secondly, it briefly discusses the origins and history of Africanisation. Thirdly, the task of theological education and the importance of equipping the clergy through workshops are explained (i.e. to provide qualitative training to the 'laity'), and lastly, it discusses the crisis in theological education and Africanisation to theological education. Methodologically, a literature review was made through research in preparation of this article.

The context of higher education in Africa

Western education hegemony in the higher education context is funded and controlled by colonial capitalists to sustain power inequalities in Africa. It is evident that commercialisation and commodification of education influences education policies in Africa. Indigenous knowledge contributes to African higher education and invites the colonial funders of Western education to reform and fund African higher education. Africans need an education that engages their context and call colonisers to allow Africans to lead and shape their own African education. African theological education can bring value of the theological curriculum to prepare theological students in order to engage in suitable economic development and liberation that is centred to the African needs. A conference on 'The Commercialisation and Commodification of Theological Education in Africa' organised by the College of Human Science: Department of Philosophy, Systematic and Practical Theology, University of South Africa on 14–16 September 2016 opens the door for the analysis and reflection on the current model of ministerial formation in Africa (Naidoo 2016:1). This conference continues to serve the vision and mission of the two handbook publications, namely *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity* (2010) and *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa* (2013), for the interest of what Andre Karamaga (2013) importantly observed:

Theological Education is central to the life of a living and growing Church. The ministry and service of any Church is a reflection of the quality of theological education given both to its leaders and members. (p. xviii)

This is even critically appropriate during this 21st century in our African context. Therefore, commercialisation and commodification on higher education in Africa can only survive, exist and be defined within the values of Africanisation. It is evident that financial considerations

determine the role of higher education in the management of higher education institutions in Africa today. The struggling masses in Africa continue to experience poverty, unemployment and underpayment, which result in the unhealthy living conditions of Africans because of the oppressive models of class and racism created by the elites and those who are in power. The contribution of African theological education is endangered by the domination of educational commercialisation and commodification in Africa. Educational commodification is the global project that needs theologians to problematise the theological curriculum that has been taught at the higher education. Although education has been viewed as the key to success, politically, socioeconomically and spiritually it is part of the history of human society in Africa. This calls for an urgent need to continue with the historic liberation movement to recognise the need for free education as a vehicle for community development in Africa. Weinberg and Kistner (2007) lament:

Transformation has become aligned with the commercialisation of education, with restructuring and rationalisation and, in post-apartheid South Africa, with conflicting directives of Africanisation, employment equity, job creation and poverty alleviation. This marks one of the peculiarities of South African post-apartheid higher education. On the one hand, the state's policies have created openings for the play of market forces in tertiary education, creating conditions for corporate managerialism; on the other hand, they are advocating redress and curriculum development. (p. 1)

The commercialisation and commodification in higher education should contribute to free education, mobilise churches and states to provide free education in Africa. Free education in Africa should not be viewed as a threat for transformation but as a timeline for an African agenda in community development. African writers clearly argue that the historical commercialisation and commodification of higher education in Africa has supported Western education and white people to be empowered economically and politically and to oppress the well-being of Africans and sabotage their *ubuntu* human rights and dignity including the oppression of African women (Phiri 2009:114). The commercialisation and commodification in higher education should be viewed and implemented from the perspective of Sekone Maimela's (1983) views on the African agenda:

God liberated Israel not only from spiritual sin and guilt but also from oppressive political and economic deprivation, God will again liberate all oppressed people not only from personal sins and guilt but also from the historical structures that are evil, exploitive and alienating. (p. 51)

For higher education in Africa to thrive and be relevant, we should indeed address the historical oppressive structures by providing free higher education that is more African without additional systems of oppressing others. This is the design for Africanisation to view God actively in a struggle for liberation and justice in Africa. The collective effort for liberation and transformation of free higher education in Africa can be achieved when we agree

with Maimela when he challenges the church to openly denounce the injustice and oppressive structures of society and advocates for a radical transformation of the current structures to be in solidarity with God to force liberation and dignity methods for the African people (Maimela 1983:52). Higher education in Africa should be influenced by equal community engagement, although the African institutions of higher education provide quality education through their skilled method of analysis. The African community is legally instituted to play a political community role to define the political, civic, religious and social will in developing African higher education institutions and the curriculum.

Origins of Africanisation

Africanisation is born out of African Theology in the 1960s and Black Theology in the mid-1960s and other mainstreaming African issues such as Black Women's Theology as the new African scholarship (Maluleke 1998:15). Theological education in Africa is exposed to the notion of the Bible: it engages Africanisation grounded on historical African Christianity and liberation theology. John Mbiti is of the view that the Bible in Africa is closely and carefully related to an African way of living and African values (Mbiti 1998:141). Mbiti's critical thought is that the writings of the Bible are derived from the African social, cultural and religious aspects. He calls Africans to study and engage the Bible from the African perspective and to live their daily lives from the African Christian context. Mbiti (1998) writes:

For the traditional Africa, the world of the Bible is not a past world of two to three thousand years ago, but a real world of yesterday, today and tomorrow. (p. 142)

This gospel calls on Africans to engage and get rid of the Western way of reading the Bible, as if it originates from the white missionaries. Theological education in Africa ought to revisit African scholars' writings, which advocate for African Theology and other theologies to highly engage Christianity through concepts such as reconstruction, re-examination, reinterpretation and reconsideration. Christianity in Africa can only be shaped by Africans with their African spiritual lifestyle. The Bible is nothing but something which ought to be studied, interpreted and applied in the African context. It is within this engagement of the Bible that Jesse Mugambi biblically argues that the term 'liberation' is the root of the Israelites' historical experiences of oppression from Egypt, hence their liberation to the Promised Land (Mugambi 1995:2). The Bible could be founded on an African grassroots when it is engaged as a tool of liberation and transformation in Africa. It should be an encounter of the gospel that is central to Africanisation to ensure the African agenda, which is an agent of change to address African problems. Theological curricula in Africa should approach African spirituality and the Bible from the liberation perspective, to ensure that the African community progresses in all spheres of human life, informed by the *ubuntu* concept and human rights and dignity. This is clearly explained by Gabriel Setiloane (1986):

Liberation the concept, is wide and deep and far surpasses, though encompasses, the socio-political context. For life is more than meat and drink. The Liberation, African Theology strives for, is that of the very 'Soul of Africa' from the imprisonment in the vaults of Western conceptualism and discourse, from cerebration and pseudo scientific-ness to humanness, Botho, Ubuntu, authenticity born out of a living practical experience of MODIMO, Qamata, Lesa, uMvelinqangi, is the totality of life. It is diffused in and permeates. (p. 45)

Through our conceptualisation of botho, African theological education is expected to play an important role to empower our African citizens with religious, political and socio-economic liberation and development. The commercialisation and commodification of theological education in African can be revitalised through botho, which is vital in Africa.

The task of theological education

Mugambi (2013:118) attests that the relationship between theological education training and contextual relevance ought to effectively address the issues of African ecumenism and move beyond the 'denominational rivalry and competition inherited from the mission agencies'. Frank Chikane states that the pivotal role of theological education in Africa is that 'We need to analyse what is obstructing us, therefore, from doing what the people want, and what we want coming out of a struggle of the people' (Chikane 1998:8). What is central about theological education in Africa is that, commercialisation is needed to run the affairs of theological education and it should be critical to prepare and train theological students, theologians and clergy; to collectively work with the African community in achieving its goals towards overcoming the challenges of the African context.

African theological education must be a priority and a basis for the struggle for transformation, to promote the African agenda within justice, human rights and dignity in Africa. Listen to what John S Pobebe says: 'To be an African was to be discriminated against and treated as inferior to the white man, Africanisation tended to be preoccupied with political rights' (Pobebe 1992:25). Theological education in Africa should commit to Africanisation by moving beyond discrimination of black people, to respond adequately to the changing Africa. Stanley Mogoba (1980) emphasises:

The other important factor is the need for theological colleges to contextualise the training of their students, so that they may be able to relate to their training to the needs and situations of the people they shall be going to serve. (p. 30)

The task of theological education is to train theological students to collectively work with their communities who daily experience oppression, poverty and other challenging issues. These issues need the principle of liberation theology and development theology so that they can be eradicated. This curriculum will also be inclusive of the positive view of the African worldviews and religion, which take the African studies and context very seriously. This approach will indeed be the task of African theology to liberate and to stimulate creativity to prioritise Africanisation. Mogoba is in solidarity

with those who advocate that 'The church should seek to establish a non-racial seminary with a view to making the church truly non-racial' (Mogoba 1980:27). This will truly lead the African leadership to produce African communities that are genuinely African. The African theological task should offer a theological curriculum that really addresses African concerns, as a key commitment to theological education and Africanisation. This becomes real in what Isabel Apawo Phiri (2009) states:

We need to educate the churches and theological institutions locally and globally, that the community of women and men should work together to decide on the type of theology that should be taught in the theological institutions. (p. 117)

It is critically important to note that an African theological education must contextually take the issues of gender justice very seriously, especially in the African context, to fight against oppressive patriarchal movements. Thus, theological education in Africa must train women and men to fight against the oppression of women by this patriarchal movement until the liberation of women is achieved. Equally so, women must not be trained to oppress and abuse men. Gender justice calls for a partnership between women and men, women and woman and men and men to live together and to promote the human rights and dignity of human gender. Thus, women and men must be empowered to form an African society that is gender liberated.

Theological education in Africa exists to equip the clergy and 'laity' precisely for community development (i.e. from spiritual, socio-economic and political liberation). There is a strong conviction that in Africa the church, family and community are relational, as anything productive or unhealthy implemented in either of these institutions is collectively affected. From the African church and African perspective, Molefe Tsele (2001) emphasises:

We must state from the beginning that our development project is concerned with something qualitatively different, something that has to do with the totality of our social well-being. This kind of deployment seeks to achieve a more human society and greater equity in the distribution and sharing of resources. (p. 207)

Thus, theologically speaking, Africanisation is at the centre of community development. The church does not exist in isolation with an African agenda for community engagement. Thus, the church has been called by God to take care of the role in community development. Its task is to transform the community through educating its members to be productively responsible in the community, to push and monitor the African agenda for an awareness of justice and human rights with dignity. This critical concern which is more on genuine Africanisation advocates for community development that enables Africans to share God's resources equally without exploiting the other people. Theological education prepares the church to challenge the African and global governments and private institutions to make an impact for a positive community development.

In conversation with Tsele, Oladipo (2001) adds the economic aspect on the question of community development in Africa that:

The church has great strengths in promoting the formation of self-help groups and in enhancing their capacity for self-actualisation. The development ministry organs of the church should expand into formation and facilitation of cooperatives and associations built around the objectives of marketing and input supply. They should work for the emergence of local processing facilities that add value to the primary products of each local economy. The church should spearhead processing for export and also promote linkages with already existing fair-trade organisations in the North that are promoting direct exports from small producers in the developing countries. (p. 228)

This challenges the church leadership that the church in Africa should explore the territory of commercialisation and commodification, as the church should be people centred because God has always been the centre of her or his church. African Church leaders are trained to exercise their creativity towards community development inside and outside the church. This becomes a reality that the church has a capacity of self-actualisation for its commitment to Africanisation. Church leaders are proactively equipped for the task of an African community development. This development begins within the church before it can belong to the community in Africa. Church leaders ought to be critically challenged on the way they implement and think about community engagement and how church life is actualised in community development.

Equipping the clergy and 'laity'

Theological institutions in Africa should create sustainable and relevant training support to the clergy and theologians. They need to do this to prepare them with theological training methods for the 'laity'. Maluleke (1998) states:

Theological educational institutions and theological educators have not been voluntarily and seriously reviewing their curricula. But the Africanisation of Theological Education implies deliberately seeking to impact the content, method and outcomes of theological education. (p. 14)

Western theological education curricula have remained a problem to the African context for centuries; thus, an African theological education curriculum should emerge as the liberating tool for African theologians, pastors and congregations. Africanisation of theological education is still far from reaching its mission because of some supporting African theological education curricula and some being against this African agenda for transformation. These differences impact as a crisis for the development of African theological education and agenda for transformation. Maluleke is against the method of theological and religious education that continues to be 'foreign to the African context and often alienate Africans from Africa' (Maluleke 1998:16). To force an implementation of Western theological education in Africa can clearly be seen as anti-Africanisation, against the African agenda and a criminal act.

Pobee (1992) is radical on equipping not only the clergy as:

It has always been our firm conviction that if the enterprise of *skenosis* is to succeed, then the leadership of the church of God, whether they be ministers, theologians, lay and ordained, etc., we should be well-prepared and ready to prosecute the tasks set them by God in their given real circumstances. It is not my intention to suggest that theological education is for only a clique, a professional class. I believe the whole people of God should have theological education; from the moment a human being begins to reflect on the good news of Jesus Christ, whether cerebrally or celebratedly, sacramentally or morally, theology is being done. (p. 127)

Pobee, as an African theologian, believes that all African Christians ought to be equipped to respond to their African context for their development of spiritual responsibility and social, socio-economic and ethical values. They are trained to enhance the African theological education that promotes human rights and dignity and African leadership methods that are responsible for the transformation, liberation and development of the African agenda. This theological training engages the Christian scriptures and African spirituality as necessary for contextual theological education in Africa. In order to equip theologians, clergy and 'lay' people, theological institutions have to develop analytical resources towards qualitative African theological education. Theological students should continuously be equipped for a task of theological development and community engagement, to require more than resistance on the oppression and marginalisation of the Africans. Thus, African theologians, theological institutions and churches should take seriously Nadar's (2007) comment that:

Theological institutions in Africa will obligate us to develop new theological curriculum within our various institutions which adequately reflect the contexts in which we work, and develop our own research and publications so that they reflect not only cognizance, but also our commitment to context. (p. 241)

The process of equipping the clergy and 'laity' critically challenges African theologians, to provide critical curriculum and tools needed to address African challenges. Training of clergy and 'laity' needs rigorous theological engagement that addresses the current African context. All these happen in order to transform Western theological curriculum to the Africanised theological curriculum. As we reflect on the relationship between the clergy and 'laity', Nadar (2010) wrestles with the views of contextual theological education in Africa when she asserts that:

Further to preparing students for becoming the critics and conscience of society, contextual theological education does have as its ultimate goal, the transformation of society. This means, that central to the teaching of contextual theology, is an advocacy task. While democratic classrooms are encouraged, one has to be aware too that we are living in increasingly conservative religious times. (p. 136)

The African transformation of society should lead to justice, peace and liberation. This requires African contextual theological education to provide a critical thinking and

reflection on the democratic classroom and conservative religious context from the liberating perspective. Theological students should be trained from the liberative perspective in order to engage the conservative religious context without any harm but to assist this context to achieve our African liberation.

Crisis in theological education

Maluleke states that theological education in South Africa faces a crisis of both restructuring and down-sizing (Maluleke 1998:14). Theological education in South Africa is in a crisis of being forced to transform or being closed because of the higher education policies, which push an agenda for secular state and inclusive society. This crisis gradually continues to affect the African continent as well. Maluleke argues that the theological education crisis is the result of limitations to funding by the state and other international contributors, that is, a split of ecumenism to denominationalism and the threat to close theological institutions (Maluleke 1998:14). Mogoba raises the implication for the crisis in theological education: 'Ecumenicity (or a sharp awareness of the catholicity of the church) usually needs to be deliberately cultivated. This becomes necessary because we easily become conditioned to separation of individualism' (Mogoba 1980:29). A crisis in theological education can be resolved by what Oladipo (2001) states:

It is not unhealthy that for the church in Africa to continue to have external funding support for its development ministry. What is not desirable is for the church to expect external funding for meeting its own internal 'club needs'. Church members should provide the funds for the internal administration of the church. They should fund the synod conferences and other administrative meetings. But in its ministry to the poor, the church in Africa should not feel ashamed to continue to solicit external funding support. It should see it as providing a service to donors-by signposting them to worthy causes that deserve their funding support and by providing the efficient and effective management of these funds to improve the lives and prospects of the poor. Sustainability should promote widely as a thematic priority, but we should be all clear about what is meant by sustainability of social services. (p. 233)

The church in Africa has failed to fund theological education for decades. It should prioritise its funding to the theological education as an investment to deal with the challenges of the poor and the marginalised. The church should not be afraid to commercialise and mobilise some of its church buildings and resources to be turned into business opportunities. The business opportunities would help to fund theological education to respond to the needs of the poor and the oppressed in Africa. It is critically important for the church to note that theological education is a campaign which is continuously improving the needs of the African people. Theological education as an agent of transformation and development equips the church that knows the needs of its own members and community in Africa. The church is equipped to deal with those institutions that aimed to destroy the well-being of the African people in order to bring peace, justice and stability in the venerable African continent. It will not allow a negative impact on the African's life such as economic injustice, racial and gender discrimination,

corruption, the underpayment and the unemployment and abuse of human rights and dignity. The African community loves to live within a dignified *ubuntu* concept, to change the way people live from a corrupt society to an equal society without poverty and oppression. However, institutions such as the World Council of Churches and other overseas funding by ecumenical partners need to indeed fund African theological education without dictating to the African church on what kind of theological programme should be offered. The African church must also use overseas funding for the African development agenda to empower African communities. The African church leadership must not use African church funding and overseas funding for corruption. The church leadership overseeing donors' should not use funds earmarked for African ministerial training for their own gain and corruption. African theological funding cannot afford personal gain; it is meant for African community development.

Africanisation to theological education

Maluleke's (1998) critical point is as follows:

Even more importantly, Africanization needs to be problematized. There are and can be as many conceptions of Africanization as there are Africans-but not all that claims to be or looks like Africanization is Africanization. (p. 15)

In order for theological education to be relevant in Africa, we should get the liberation of Africanisation. This theological education should respond to the challenges of the black oppressed women and men and the poor, to equip them to be their own liberators who will always be critical of their context. African higher theological institutions and educators should design African theological education curricula in consultation with African communities, which will also be relevant to basic education. It takes the liberated African theological curriculum to push the spirit of community engagement which leads to an authentic Africanisation. Theological education should be motivated by Africanisation as the method for the liberation of Africa and Africans. This is a priority to the black oppressed and the poor and includes the black women who are oppressed and the poor; the oppressor should be liberated from their methods of oppressing others.

In order for theological education in Africa to be relevant, Africanisation should be informed by the African agenda's liberation. This happens within the framework of a higher theological curriculum; its universities or institutions and educators must be liberated in order to prepare the pastors or clergy and church. Maluleke's (1998) view:

Liberation must be the main criterion and the goal of all Africanization proposals. Africanization is not merely a change of form it is a change of content, method, objective and vision so that theological education, religious and church praxis contributes to and facilitates the total liberation of the poorest of the poor in Africa. (p. 16)

Africanisation does not promote oppressive methods of African culture. It means an education that speaks

theologically from the African liberation methods. Radically so, Madipoane Masenya (*ngwana' Mphahlele*) argues 'Let us make theological education a worthy tool for transforming not only South Africa, but also Africa and the whole global village' (Masenya 1998:26). This means that theological education cannot be a tool to marginalise African theological students, but should be a tool for radical transformation and liberation for the African church, theological institutions, theologians and pastors to transform the African community. Theological education in Africa should critically engage the historically marginalised black people, the dehumanised, the poor and the oppressed, as the evangelical demand for transformation and liberation.

Ecumenical encounters for theological education in Africa should serve within the critical solidarity on Black Theology and African Theology, with those women and men who continue to be with the outcast and the unjustly treated (Maimela 1983:55). This should be done in order to break Western theological education that marginalises the African thinking and agenda. A critical engagement on the commercialisation and commodification of theological education in Africa could be used to improve poor African communities. This implies that the African governments and Western supporters can now be in a position to fund theological education in Africa to correct oppressive education by previous Western supporters. Hence, this could be done in the name of allowing Africans to produce their own liberating and thinking theologies. This happens without the Western theories dictating to the African agenda and for the African governments to promote oppressive systems (Getman & Cochrane 1998:38). Theological education in Africa needs financial capacity to influence Africans to have shared massive economies, on how we understand our Africanisation and its transformation for the commonplace among African communities. It is critical for all governments and the church to allow theological institutions to rethink theological education in Africa. Theological institutions should rethink theological education as a product to explore new possibilities for transformation and liberation, to achieve Africanisation in the periphery of African higher theological education for a conversation with basic education. The church should not be afraid to build its own universities, to avoid governments that want to get rid of theological education in higher education institutions such as universities. This proactively assists the church to secure the Africanisation of theological education for the promotion of the African agenda of liberation, non-racial and non-sexist in order to create an ecological justice for the African community. Thus, African theological education should be a vehicle for an African progressive community that struggles to analyse and respond to the African changing context.

Masenya (Ngawana' Mphahlele) (1998) observes:

The fact that, though women form a sizeable number of the population in our country, and therefore also a significant number of our student and church populations, their concerns or contexts have always been ignored in our theological endeavours.

It is no wonder that our continent, let alone South Africa, is conspicuous in the absence or scarcity of Black women theologians and biblical scholars. (p. 20)

Theological education in Africa is incomplete without African women theology and black women theologians' participation. African Women Theology and its black theologians can provide a fascinating sight of gender issues to everyone concerned with the plight of Africans today. The contribution of black women theologians can play a major role in resolving the grassroots concerns in Africa. Phiri (2009) observes that theological curricula must engage gender issues:

The Circle also promotes the teaching of gender issues in the theological curriculum. This means making gender a concept in theological analysis. A gender approach to theology refers to exposing the injustices that exist in the church, culture and the Bible in the relationship between men and women. It acknowledges that human beings construct culture, therefore cultural practices in the Bible and our own cultures should not be confused with the will of God. (p. 113)

As a matter of fact, a true Africanisation of theological curriculum should seriously engage the question of gender issues as the liberating and transforming tool to produce a genuine African community. Theologically, it is important to affirm that women and men in an African setting are created in the image of God and through the spirituality of *botho* [humanity]. The universities and other theological institutions ought to offer gender modules as the key aspects for African theological curricula. This becomes a continuation of what Phiri indicated that the Ecumenical Theological Education of the World Council of Churches (WCC) would provide financial support to the theological curriculum in 2002 (Phiri 2009:114). The aim of this project was to share and explore a rigorous change to shape the religious leadership and institutions in the African continent. Thus, the commercialisation and commodification of theological education in Africa is not a priority, but theological education is critically the priority in Africa. Organisations such the WCC should continue to prioritise in assisting African theological institutions, to publish books, material studies and the establishment of universities that are key to theological education.

The words of Phiri (2009) are urgently calling for Africanisation to theological education:

Conscious of the fact that most theological institutions in Africa follow a curriculum that reflects the old European list of classical religion and theological courses, the Circle members who are at St Paul's University, University of KwaZulu-Natal and Institute of Women, Religion and Culture in Training Theological Seminary have developed strong libraries to sustain undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Gender and Religion. As of 2008, it is only University of KwaZulu-Natal that offers full degrees at Honours, Masters and PhD level in Gender Religion written on the certificate. (p. 114)

Phiri discovers that African black theological students who studied gender and religious programmes feared that their bishops would not approve their certificates. This engendering of theological curricula was declared to be

taught at the first level of all disciplines in all theological institutions. Not all African theological institutions are practising this important decision, and as a result it denies progress for theological curriculum transformation. Only a few theological students preach, teach and have programmes on issues of gender in the African churches. Other students do not even dare to facilitate gender issues; instead, they keep the unliberated traditions of their churches. Thus, Chitando (2010) critically strengthens Phiri's words that:

Gender transformation will occur when male graduates of theological education are willing to critique sacred texts and cultural traditions for gender bias. They must be willing to be agents of change in their community by forgoing privileges that accompany male religious leaders. Simultaneously, theological institutions must empower their women graduates not to retreat into shells of conservatism once they get their certificates. This will ensure that they will become actively involved in the struggle for gender transformation. (pp. 248–249)

In this context, all African theological institutions are urgently called to jointly empower both women and men students through theological training to transform the oppressive societal and religious conservative contexts into liberating gender transformation contexts. This Africanisation on theology education must empower African women to ensure that women are equal partners with men in the society, theological education is very contextual to meet the current African demands and African communities become economically and politically empowered for the service of others.

Conclusion

In conversation with this article, the solution to Africanisation as an agent of theological education in Africa is that the church as an institution of faith and the state as an institution which protects the African community, should provide more funding and moral support to the project of African higher theological education to benefit the African society. African theological education at the universities and other higher educational institutions ought to offer to develop theological research, innovation, learning and teaching. These African institutions should provide learning and teaching that is methodologically contextual to Africa. It should engage with the African community and basic education in order to design the curriculum that promotes Africanisation, for liberating and transforming the Africans. This African theological education agenda becomes the vital vehicle for an agent of change in the theological education discourse and the community engagement. Furthermore, this theological education should be a transformation-centred education for African churches and society. Indeed, it is clear that theological education in Africa has a pivotal role in the church and community. The church and community have a collective responsibility to improve the African context. It has to rise above environmental degradation, corruption, abuse against women, children and men, racism, poverty and economically oppressive systems. Theological education exists to ensure that the church becomes an agent for social change and transformation in Africa. This ought to happen through the

theological institutions and church, theologians, clergy and church members working together for community engagement and community development.

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